

Implementing Accompaniment of Youth in Parishes

by Tom East, Director, Center for Ministry Development



An Emerging Vision for Accompaniment

Faith is God’s initiative, but it does not grow in a vacuum. We grow in faith through encounter, witness, and relationships. Every missionary disciple I have asked can name people and communities who accompanied them in faith. It is amazing to hear the stories of people of all ages who recount specific conversations, experiences, and turning points in accompanying relationships as crucial in their faith growth. Throughout the history of God’s friendship with the people he created in love, people have accompanied others in faith and life.

For something as basic and essential to the process of sharing faith, accompaniment has only been described in a significant way in the last several years. One of the first places this process is described in pastoral terms is in the *Aparecida Document*, written by the Episcopal Council of Latin American Bishops (known by its Spanish acronym CELAM). Cardinal Bergoglio, as he was known then, served as the leader for the committee that drafted this pivotal document. Pope Francis has drawn inspiration from this document for most of the pivotal writing of his papacy. In the *Aparecida Document*, the idea of accompaniment is mentioned eleven times and the word accompany is included thirty-one times. In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis names vocation as the horizon of all ministry with youth. This vision for accompaniment was first imagined in *Aparecida*.

During the process of vocational accompaniment, young people shall be gradually introduced into personal prayer and lectio divina, receiving the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation, spiritual direction and the apostolate.

CELAM, *Aparecida Document*, 2007, #446 c

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis builds upon this vision and invites all the church to the art of accompaniment.

The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other....

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #169

This vision for accompanying youth toward missionary discipleship and vocation was foundational to the process of preparing for the *Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*. We were reminded that we are called to accompany all youth, without exception.



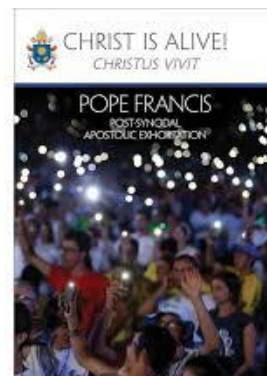
...just as our Lord Jesus Christ walked alongside the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35), the Church is also urged to accompany all young people, without exception, towards the joy of love.

Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, *Instrumentum Laboris* 2018, #1

To live into this role, parishes re-examine the way they minister with young people by recognizing accompanying youth in faith is the primary way youth grow in discipleship.

In such places...the person-to-person contact indispensable for passing on the message can happen, something whose place cannot be taken by any pastoral resource or strategy.

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, April 2, 2019, #218



We see this development of accompaniment throughout the recent documents of the Church, from *Evangelii Gaudium* to *Christus Vivit*. There is also convergence between these important documents and the growing body of research that currently highlights the isolation that young people are experiencing, and the need for youth to have companions in faith and life.ⁱ The felt need to connect by young people and the direction towards accompaniment calls us to look hard at the challenges in our current practices to consider embracing something new.

Challenges of the Current Models for Youth Ministry

Current models of youth ministry present a variety of challenges because they often only focus on a “group” mentality or are primarily catechesis and sacramental preparation.

- Traditional models of youth ministry reach only a small percentage of young people which leaves a lot of youth out. Additionally, in many parishes, the current models often do not address racial, ethnic and language diversity.
- In many faith communities, youth do not feel they are part of the parish. Research demonstrates that even youth who participate in programming continue to feel isolated unless they have accompanying relationships.ⁱⁱ
- Faith formation and sacramental preparations usually only focus on the content (learning) of the faith and may not provide a holistic approach to encounter, witness, and accompaniment.
- In most parishes, parents and families continue to remain only in a passive role.
- The parish and her members are often disconnected or unaware of the parish youth community.

The entire faith community is called to something new. We can still bring the best of what we are currently providing, but we need to ask ourselves the question – is what we are offering promoting accompaniment of youth toward discipleship?

...the task involves learning to allow for something new and not stifling what is new by attempting to apply a preconceived framework.

Preparatory Document for the Synod on Youth, Part 3, # 1

This new vision guides us to accompany youth on their journey toward holiness as missionary disciples. Youth can be accompanied by their parents, their family, faith companions, a youth community, and the entire parish. To accompany young disciples, parishes need to expand the ways that the community includes and accompanies young members, equips those who will accompany youth, and transforms all ministries to promote accompaniment.

Accompany youth in their journey toward holiness as missionary disciples.

- Engage the parish community.
- Empower parents and faith companions.
- Transform ministries.



Engage the Parish Community in Accompanying Young Members

Christus Vivit calls us to change the way we look at youth and the way we help them grow in faith. As a parish we are being called to remember our responsibilities for sharing faith with young people and for raising up young disciples. In many cultures, the highest celebration of their community's identity comes in forming and ritualizing the way that children grow into adults. Yet, in most Catholic communities the job of forming youth in faith has been delegated. We delegate this task to a youth minister or to a small group of adults. We delegate the task to catechists or to a particular youth community. In many ways, we delegate the task of evangelizing and catechizing our young people to publishers and those who develop media content. In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis describes a vision for a parish community that is collectively responsible for truly accompanying young people. This means that the community knows, cares for, prays for, and is in relationship with their young members. In this vision, the parish is in partnership with families in forming young disciples. Youth ministry leaders work to animate these relationships and engage youth in the life of the parish.

I was once spoke with youth at a parish who were preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It was an active parish, with a variety of youth ministry offerings. I asked the youth about their experience of the sacramental preparation process. One young man hemmed and hawed. It seemed he did not want to complain. When pressed, he shared that mostly the preparation process was watching videos with a speaker who lives 2000 miles away. He continued to say that the speaker clearly knew about the faith, but then he asked, "isn't there anyone in our parish who believes this stuff and cares enough about us to share it with us?"

It is true that sharing a living faith with teenagers is challenging. Struggling with their honest and tough questions is hard. Engaging families to participate can be an issue. But there is real, living faith on the other side of this work. When we walk with youth, share our faith, and lead them to Christ, we too join in the mission. Taking responsibility for accompanying our young people is part of our faith journey. The good news is our parishes are capable of this mission. We might even be surprised to discover that as we struggle to dialogue and articulate our faith, our communities might find themselves renewed in the process.

Accompaniment is about building mutual relationships between youth and members of the parish; relationships with peers, family, faith companions and the whole faith community. These relationships are described in the *Final Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment*:

Young Catholics are not merely on the receiving end of pastoral activity: they are living members of the one ecclesial body, baptized persons in whom the Spirit of the Lord is alive and active. They help to enrich what the Church is and not only what she does. They are her present and not only her future.

Final Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, 54.

Taking young people seriously, means integrating them fully within parish life. We include them in ministries, in leadership, in service, in catechesis, and in our community life. We engage them in our community and strive to become communities who fully witness Christ's presence.

Parishes Who Accompany Youth

- Look at the engagement of youth in liturgy, community life, and service.
- Look for involvement of youth in ministries, leadership and decision making.
- Look for the engagement of members of the parish community with young people.

Examples of Accompaniment

- **One Parish** - received a small amount of grant money that enabled them to sponsor a series of non-traditional gatherings for parishioners and youth. The first gathering focused on auto maintenance. Youth and people in the parish who knew how to work on cars were invited to join in this workshop and be mentored in car safety and basic maintenance such as checking the tires and changing oil. The parish's next planned gathering will focus on cooking. The idea was to provide connection points for youth and adults in the parish to build relationships in a safe, caring environment.
- **One Parish** - learned more about their community during the process of providing a workshop for parents and faith companions. They had planned to offer the workshop in English but were encouraged to provide a Spanish workshop at the same time. Currently, the parish had a Spanish mass but did not offer Spanish religious education or youth ministry. Because of this, they assumed that not very many participants would show up for the Spanish workshop. To their surprise, over forty parents showed up for the workshop, which caused them to have to change the event to a bigger room. Having such an overwhelming response to the workshop initiated pastoral questions about how to follow-up and create support for the Spanish speaking families in the parish.
- **One Parish** - partnered youth preparing for Confirmation with intentional disciples. There was a woman parishioner who was already providing meals each Monday at the women's shelter. An adult from the youth ministry team accompanied two parish youth who went with the woman on Saturday to shop for the meal (and talk and pray). The small group gathered again on Monday to prepare the meal and then travel together to the shelter to serve it (and talk and pray). After the meal, the two youth and the adult accompanier provided childcare for the moms in the shelter, so the women had a chance to build community with each other. This initiative became a regular part of the Confirmation preparation process. The parish leadership identified parishioners in various ministries who could mentor and accompany youth in discipleship.
- **One Parish** – during a regular Sunday liturgy, recognized and called by name each youth preparing for Confirmation. The parish made time to prepare the community the week before with ideas for conversation starters with young people. Then, during the scheduled liturgy, the parish invited each young person by name to stand so the community could pray for them. The ushers presented each youth standing a loaf of bread to connect the experience with the reading of the Gospel. After mass, the vestibule of the Church was filled with conversations as the parishioners greeted and talked with the youth holding their loafs of bread.
- **One Parish** - connected youth preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation to the ministries, service work, and leadership roles within the community. Youth were introduced to the various ministries of the parish during a weekend retreat. In one session, each young person created a resume that identified their interests and experiences. The leadership team then used the young people's resumes to connect them with parish ministry leaders and match them to a ministry position. After celebrating their Confirmation liturgy, the youth processed to the parish hall for a reception. Waiting for the newly confirmed was a line of parish leaders ready to meet and welcome them. Each young person was greeted with a specific invitation such as, "Alex, my name is Jane and I coordinate the lectors, we'd like to invite you to consider becoming a lector for our parish." This new tradition became part of the parish's Confirmation processes each year.
- **One Parish** - communicated the role and importance of the entire parish community in ministry with youth. Every year in October, the pastor would bless the youth ministry team during a Sunday mass. One year the parish decided to do the blessing differently by having the pastor invite the youth

minister to come forward at the end of liturgy. The youth minister then asked the members of the youth ministry team, the Confirmation team, and youth catechists to stand. The youth minister then invited parents and families of youth to stand since they are also part of the team. She asked the Confirmation sponsors and Godparents to stand. She continued by inviting parishioners who were part of ministries in the parish that included youth to stand and the people in the parish who work with youth in the community as teachers, counselors, coaches, healthcare workers, and employers.. She concluded by asking members of the parish who would be willing to pray for the youth in their community to stand. With the whole community standing, she asked, "Father, would you please bless our entire youth ministry team?"



Empowering Parents and Faith Companions

We need to be intentional in the ways that we support and empower all of those who walk with youth in faith. Pope Francis reminds us that this begins with families:

The family continues to be the principal point of reference for young people. Children appreciate the love and care of their parents, they give importance to family bonds, and they hope to succeed in forming a family when it is their time.

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 262.

Those in ministry with youth have been aware of the need to include parents and families more intentionally for the last thirty years. Unfortunately, much of the attention has been focused on trying to get parents and families to come to activities at the parish or do faith activities at home. The highest priority has been given to getting families to participate in the weekly liturgies. This common approach begins with an assumption that families are evangelized and that parents understand their job as catechists. Furthermore, this approach assumes parents just need to be encouraged to catechize their children or in the case of sacramental preparation, must be required to do the tasks of parenting for faith. The work of the New Evangelization reminds us that the challenge in our United States context is not bringing the message of Christ to people who have never heard it, but in helping people who have heard the message to know that it matters. To know that the faith message is about them and that it is a love story about a personal God who wants to be in their lives and with them in their everyday challenges. Youth ministry's connection to families should not just be about getting their support for the ministry or persuading parents to do their job of catechizing at home. Rather, ministry with youth about inspiring, evangelizing and ministering to the youth and their families.

In addition to parents, there are other family connections for people who could be faith companions for youth such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings. There are also people who have a sacramental relationship with young people such as Godparents and Confirmation Sponsors. In many cases, these potential faith companions are just waiting for the invitation and the starting point to enter the faith conversation with the youth to whom they are related.

We should also consider all other relationships in the parish where youth can experience faith companionship. These would include ministerial roles such as the pastor, and parish pastoral leaders, leaders in ministry with youth and young adults, catechists, teachers, and parish ministry leaders whose role touches young people. It could also include members of the parish whose work

and vocation puts them in contact with young people such as teachers, counselors, employers, health care workers, and others in the community. Peers also play an essential role in accompaniment. Their common base of experience lays a foundation for faith witness and companionship.

We can take a significant step in becoming a parish who accompanies youth by identifying and empowering all the faith companions in our communities. Imagine what would it be like if everyone in the parish who has a connection to young people understood their role and felt equipped to pray for, provide care for, and witness faith to youth?

The role of credible adults and their cooperation is basic in the course of human development and vocational discernment. This requires authoritative believers, with a clear human identity, a strong sense of belonging to the Church, a visible spiritual character, a strong passion for education and a great capacity for discernment.

Preparatory Document for the Synod on Youth, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, page 14

Empowering Parents and Faith Companions

Parents and Faith Companions

- Understand the process of accompanying youth in faith.
- Have skills for listening.
- Show empathy for youth and their families.
- Provide pastoral care for youth and their families, which includes referring youth for services as needed.
- Witness to their faith.
- Share faith with youth and engage in faith conversations.
- Pray for young people and their family's parish community.

To Empower Parents and Faith Companions

- Consider all of the potential faith companions for young people.
 - Family connections: Parents / Aunts / Uncles / Grandparents /siblings
 - Sacramental connections: Godparents / Sponsors
 - Ministry connections: pastor, pastoral leaders, ministry leaders, catechists
 - Community connections: teachers, counselors, community workers, employers
- Work to provide formation, resources and coaching for faith companions to equip them to care for and witness faith with young people.



Examples – Parish Gathering of Parents and Faith Companions...

- A mom described that she felt she was not having meaningful faith conversations with her teen and that her faith talks were more of a debate that she always lost. During a parent and teen event, she had the chance to role play a faith conversation with a young person and she learned some tips to

- help her feel more confident in expressing her faith.
- During a meeting with the parish youth minister, an older woman spoke about the various youth she connects with regularly including youth in her family, children of friends, and in the ministries that she is a part of. The elderly woman shared how she talked about faith and ways that she helped youth talk about faith with their parents. In this moment, the youth minister realized he had just discovered a treasure here in his own backyard (or parish!) by finding this woman who had potential to be a powerful resource and mentor for other faith companions.
 - At a parish gathering, parents shared success stories by describing the ways that they create opportunities for conversations with their own teens. One dad shared about conversations he had while walking the dog with his adolescent daughters. Other parents shared about using car time as connect time. One mom talked about the conversation opportunities that came from ironing her work clothes. She shared that she always set up the ironing board behind the sofa facing the television in the family room. She shared that, “there is something about the creaking sound of opening the ironing board that gets my teenage son away from his computer and onto the couch. He pretends to watch something with volume low, but really this is his chance to talk. One time, we were so engaged, I nearly scorched my favorite blouse when I re-ironed it for the fifth time.”

Transforming Ministries

To implement this new direction, we begin by looking at all the strategies, communities, and initiatives with youth in our community through the eyes of accompaniment. For many parishes, ministry with youth has been reduced to an emphasis on classroom based sacramental preparation, faith formation, and event-based youth ministry. With so much focus on programs, relationships become incidental and the actual “doing” of ministry retreats behind a podium. This method of ministry provides formation about the faith in the style of a broadcast of information, but often misses the one-to-one witness and accompaniment described in *Christus Vivit*.

Looking in new ways at our youth communities and programs means transforming our ministries to promote meaningful accompaniment relationships. This requires focusing on helping youth grow in both faith and discipleship. We love our young people and we long for them to experience the embrace of Christ as disciples, so we teach them to notice what God is doing in their lives. We help them to observe their choices in life and to see the possibilities for their life in Christ. To keep the flame of faith alive, parishes need to minister in a way that is aligned with God’s timing and purpose in growing in relationship with young people. Our generous God is always sending opportunities for encounter to His young people. Accompanying youth asks us to awaken young people to listen for God’s calls for encounter and to unite these experiences to sustainable discipleship. To be sustainable in our youth ministries, we must keep the interest of our young people. Even Pope Francis warns us not to “bore young people.” Sometimes we allow our fears about how much youth know or don’t know to dominate what we share and how we spend our time with young people.

...it happens that young people are helped to have a powerful experience of God, an encounter with Jesus that touched their hearts. But the only follow-up to this is a series of “formation” meetings featuring talks about doctrinal and moral issues, the evils of today’s world, the Church, her social doctrine, chastity, marriage, birth control and so on. As a result, many young people get bored, they lose the fire of their encounter with Christ and the joy of following him; many give up and others become downcast or negative. Rather than being too concerned with communicating a great deal of doctrine, let us first try to awaken and consolidate the great experiences that sustain the Christian life.

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 212.

A second quality of our ministries is flexibility. Ministries transformed by accompaniment place the emphasis on the relationships, the encounters, and the witness of community. Structure is provided to the extent that it facilitates the dynamics of growing in faith together.

The young make us see the need for new styles and new strategies. For example, while adults often worry about having everything properly planned, with regular meetings and fixed times, most young people today have little interest in this kind of pastoral approach. Youth ministry needs to become more flexible: inviting young people to events or occasions that provide an opportunity not only for learning, but also for conversing, celebrating, singing...

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 204.

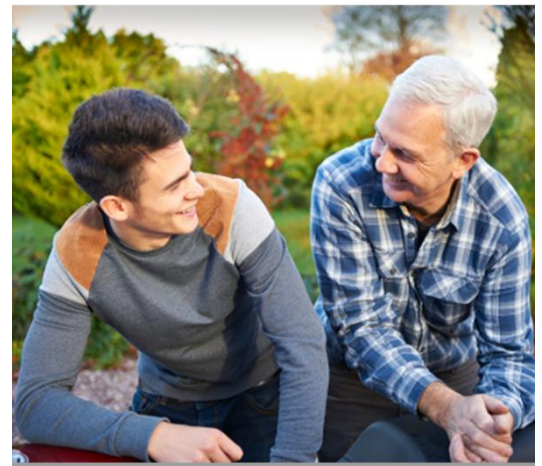
Transforming Ministries to Promote Accompaniment

Communities provide ministry that supports accompaniment.

- Build accompanying relationships within programs and membership.
- Allow for flexible ways to participate.
- Focus on opportunities for encounter and witness.
- Provide pastoral care for youth and families.

Evaluate current offerings and the needs in your community

- Strengthen existing programs to promote accompaniment.
- Eliminate some programs and strategies.
- Create new efforts paying particular attention to outreach.



Examples of Ways to Transform Ministries...

- **One Parish Community** - recruited and trained faith companions so that each youth in the ministry was part of a group with five other youth and two adult accompaniers. These small groups participated in ministries together and met regularly to pray with Lectio Divina and have conversations about life and faith. The accompaniers were also grouped into faith groups and provided with their own accompanier.
- **One Parish Community** - transformed their process for Confirmation preparation so that all youth were divided into groups of five to seven members with two faith mentors to accompany them through the process of preparing to receive the sacrament.
- **One Parish Community** - developed accompaniment relationships and mentors for each youth involved in leadership ministry and service roles in the parish by connecting them with adults in various ministries and providing training and support for the adult accompaniers.
- **One Parish Community** - engaged youth and families in evaluating all the ministries with youth in the parish to determine the strengths, the areas to grow, the gaps, and the ministries that were not working. At the end of the process, they identified ministries that could be strengthened, new ministries to create, and programs to eliminate. They held a party to celebrate the ministries that were being discontinued with sharing of photos and stories and opportunities to honor the leaders. This helped them create space for the new ministries that were needed.

Implementing Accompaniment in Your Parish

Parishes who truly accompany youth have a parish-wide vision for accompaniment. Accompanying parishes have structures in place to support accompanying relationships and they have the skills and resources needed to develop practices of accompaniment. The right vision, structure, and practices lead to dynamic faith building relationships and commitments for youth and their families. However, getting this right means change and change is sometimes hard.

Change in our parishes is challenging because people understand the way things are and sometimes even comfortable when the current practice is not working. Change happens when communities realize that embracing something new and letting go is better than the safety of holding on to “the way we have always done it.”

To make a transformation in your community, it will be necessary to gather together and share the vision. Take time to connect with the hopes and vision of the pastor and parish leadership. Build momentum by celebrating small successes and naming the resources in the parish that can work toward building accompaniment.

To accompany young disciples, parishes must have courageous conversations and develop effective skills for accompaniment. These powerful conversations can lead to growing the ways a parish community includes and accompanies young members, equips parents and faith companions, and transforms ministries to promote accompaniment.

Resource Opportunity

The **Accompaniment Project** is a grant funded initiative provided by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry in collaboration with the Center for Ministry Development. This project provided consultation, training, and resources to parishes in three dioceses to develop faith-building relationships to accompany youth toward discipleship. The project aimed to equip parents and faith companions to walk with youth in faith, and build youth ministry around accompaniment where the parish community includes, values, and cherishes young members.

This web page provides NFCYM members with resources to support accompaniment. The page includes general resources, resources and workshops for parents and faith companions, and a series of Conversation gatherings for parish leadership to lead a community through a process of embracing accompaniment.

<https://nfcym.org/member-portal/accompaniment-project/>

View the recording of the Implementing Accompaniment Webinar to learn more about the project.

<https://vimeo.com/524492046/28446678f1>

Step-by-Step to Growing as a Parish who Accompanies Youth

1. Begin with the parish's relationship with youth

- a. Look at the engagement of youth in liturgy, community life, and service.
- b. Look for involvement of youth in parish ministries, leadership and decision making.
- c. Look for the engagement of members of the parish community with young people.

2. Empower parents and faith companions

- a. Consider all of the potential faith companions for young people
 - i. Family connections: Parents / Aunts / Uncles / Grandparents /siblings
 - ii. Sacramental connections: Godparents / Sponsors
 - iii. Ministry connections: pastor, pastoral leaders, ministry leaders, catechists
 - iv. Community connections: teachers, counselors, community workers, employers
- b. Work to provide formation, resources and coaching for faith companions to equip them to care for and witness faith with young people.

3. Transform ministry efforts to support accompaniment

- a. Evaluate current ministry offerings and the needs in your community.
 - i. Strengthen existing programs to promote accompaniment.
 - ii. Eliminate some programs and strategies.
 - iii. Create new efforts paying particular attention to outreach.
- b. Provide ministry that supports accompaniment.
 - i. Build accompanying relationships within programs and communities.
 - ii. Allow for flexible ways to participate.
 - iii. Focus on opportunities for encounter and witness.
 - iv. Provide pastoral care for youth and families.



Implementing Accompaniment in Your Parish

Resources

Church Documents

Aparecida Document, 2007, Episcopal Council of Latin American Bishops (known by its Spanish acronym CELAM)
<https://www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf>

Evangelii Gaudium, 2013, Pope Francis
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

Preparatory Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, 2017
Synod of Bishops – XV General Assembly
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html

Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, 2018
Synod of Bishops – XV General Assembly
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20180508_instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html

Final Document for the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, 2018
Synod of Bishops – XV General Assembly
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html

Christus Vivit, 2019
Pope Francis
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

Research

National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults, 2020
<https://www.nationaldialogue.info/>

Belonging – Reconnecting America’s Loneliest Generation
Springtide Research Institute, 2020
<https://www.springtideresearch.org/belonging>

What We’re Learning about Developmental Relationships
Search Institute, 2020
<https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/learning-developmental-relationships/>

V Encuentro of Hispanic / Latino Ministry, 2018
<https://vencuentro.org/>

Going, Going, Gone – The Dynamics of Disaffiliation in Young Catholics
Saint Mary’s Press, 2018
<https://www.smp.org/product/5926/Going-Going-Gone/>



Implementing Accompaniment in Your Parish

NFCYM Resources

Accompaniment Project Portal, Resources to Implement Accompaniment in Parishes
<https://nfcym.org/member-portal/accompaniment-project/>

Christus Vivit – Resource List for Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Francis
<https://nfcym.org/resources/topics/christus-vivit-resources/>

Endnotes

ⁱ For more information about the convergence of direction for accompaniment in Church documents and research, see the listing of Church documents and research above.

ⁱⁱ *Belonging – Reconnecting America’s Loneliest Generation*, Springtide Research Institute, 2020
<https://www.springtideresearch.org/belonging>

“Nearly 40% of young people don’t have anyone to talk to. Attending religious groups or gatherings doesn’t have any affect unless they have a relationship with an adult who cares. 20% of young people who attend a religious service at least once a week feel completely alone.”