

# 5-Year Strategic Plan

FY22 – FY26



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## Message from the Executive Director

To all who invest their time, talent, and treasure,

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) celebrated forty years of support for those who accompany youth to encounter and follow Jesus Christ on January 20, 2021. Throughout the past four decades, the field of youth ministry has seen incredible growth and tremendous change, particularly in the trials of our Church and in the world. Currently, 20% of U.S. dioceses have youth ministry offices that are either understaffed, vacant, or closed. NFCYM has continuously evolved to meet these changes to better advocate for our members and those who accompany our young Church.



As part of this evolution, we conducted a nine-month process of prayer, research, internal assessments, and considerable dialogue outlined in this document. The result is our board of directors affirmed a new five-year strategy in May of 2021. Through the work of this strategy, NFCYM aspires to...

***Empower 15,000 ministers over the next five years to advocate for young people to be an integral voice within their local faith communities.***

To accomplish this goal, NFCYM will listen and respond with advocacy across four focus areas to equip the field of youth ministry. We commit to being agents of change as we build awareness around the priority of our young Church and invite you to join us in this vital work. It is time to think outside the box, innovate, and invite young people to lead. Do not be afraid; the Spirit is guiding us on our journey together.

Blessings,

Christina Lamas  
Executive Director, NFCYM  
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### Strategic Goal

*Empower 15,000 ministers over the next five years to advocate for young people to be an integral voice within their local faith communities.*

### Strategic Focus Areas



**Embrace the Essential Elements of Comprehensive Youth Ministry**



**Embrace the Profession and Practice of a Youth Ministry Leader**



**Understand and Engage Youth as Protagonists**



**Support the Growth of the Domestic Church**

# Organizational Overview

*The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) seeks to empower young people to be missionary disciples by supporting and strengthening those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ.*

*As a membership organization, we connect youth ministry leaders across the nation to collaborate in an authentic community and engage in Christ-centered formation.*



## COMMUNITY:

- **1,250+ current members** across associate, constitutive, diocesan, and organizational categories
- **1,500+ connected** through eleven topic- and role-based ministry networks
- **1,000+ heard** through listening sessions and member meet-ups
- **200+ engaged** in project teams to advance the mission of NFCYM



## RESOURCES:

- **1,000+ entries** in an online library of talks, webinars, articles, and more
- **10,000+ equipped through programs** such as Strong Catholic Families, *Fortaleciendo Familias en la Fe*, and the National Dialogue
- **650+ trained** through the New Diocesan Directors Institute



## EVENTS:

- **200,000+ teens have experienced Christ** at National Catholic Youth Conferences (NCYC)
- **35,000+ middle school youth ignited with the Spirit** at Holy Fire events
- **35,000+ pastoral leaders supported** through in-person and virtual formation events



## Who We Are

**PURPOSE:** To empower young people to be missionary disciples

**MISSION:** Support and strengthen those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ

**VISION:** The NFCYM looks to a future when young people see themselves as children of God who live as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ; when the gifts, struggles and diverse realities of young people are welcomed in Catholic faith communities; when ministry leaders have embraced the joy of the Gospel, and when families are living as the domestic Church.

The NFCYM commits to advancing the field of pastoral ministry to young people by:

- Forming, equipping, and supporting ministry leaders in their service to young people and their families
- Modeling and fostering a ministry of *acompañamiento* among young people of all cultures, languages, socioeconomic and geographic realities
- Partnering with parents and equipping families of young people as they witness to Jesus Christ in their daily lives

**VALUES:**

- Guidance of the Holy Spirit discerned through prayer
- Fidelity to the mission and teaching of the church
- Ministry rooted in prayer and sacraments
- Communion with the bishops of the United States
- Dignity and giftedness of each person
- Inherent goodness, unique gifts and charisms of all young people
- Baptismal call of each person to discipleship, mission, and holiness
- Richness of diversity
- Promotion of justice and peace
- Responsible stewardship of our resources
- Wisdom of shared leadership and collaboration



## Diversity and Inclusion Statement

NFCYM is committed to live into our values of richness of diversity, the dignity and giftedness of each person, and the inherent goodness, unique gifts, and charisms of all young people. In doing so, we have developed specific and intentional action steps to help our organizational leadership and our members become interculturally competent, address racism, and create a welcoming and inclusive culture. The steps include:

- A three-year diversity and inclusion plan tied to our strategy to help guide the organization to take steps to be more diverse and inclusive
- All board and staff members will participate in anti-racism training by the end of fiscal year 2022
- Intentional collaborations with organizations serving diverse cultural communities, including the USCCB Journeying Together process and the Raices y Alas 2022 National Congress on Hispanic Ministry
- New formation and programmatic initiatives to support current members and welcome new members from culturally diverse communities, including a new leadership formation program and a training for members to be piloted at the Annual Membership Meeting in 2022
- A project team dedicated to implementing the findings of the V Encuentro into NFCYM's ongoing strategy



# Strategy Preparation

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*Through a nine-month process of prayer, research, internal assessments, and considerable dialogue, NFCYM formed and affirmed a five-year strategy. The following pages in this document serve as an outline of the inputs that informed the development of the focus areas and the resulting strategy.*



## Establishing the Need

*To determine the key focus areas for the five-year strategy, insights were gathered from:*

- Results of the 2020 Field Survey
- Learnings and Implications from the FY21 Strategy
- Member Listening Sessions, Meet-Ups, and Annual Member Satisfaction Survey, and Event Survey Results

*The following were also taken into consideration:*

- Church Documents & Trends Surrounding Youth Ministry
- Organizational Goals – Areas of Strength and Opportunity
- Primary Audiences – Who We Serve
- Historic Performance – What Works Well vs. What Doesn't Work



## Key Insights & Trends

### NEW DYNAMICS IN THE CHURCH & MINISTRY

- Restructuring, financial hardships, consolidating roles, and layoffs
- Decline in full-time, paid youth ministry leaders
- High turnover among new youth ministry leaders
- Increase in volunteer leaders with limited training
- Disparate information and lack of consistency in essential aspects of youth ministry training
- Growing cultural diversity and demographic shifts in the field and in the Catholic Church nationally

### YOUTH AS PROTAGONISTS

- *Christus Vivit* and the National Dialogue emphasizes need to listen to youth and engage them to address issues and concerns of other young people
- Gen Z is the “loneliest generation” and in need of relationships that express Christ’s love to them
- 73% of ministry leaders seeking to better understand youth development and culture\*

### NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

- When faith is lived at home, youth are more likely to retain their faith into adulthood
- Pandemic moved ministry from church to virtual home setting
- 68% of ministry leaders desiring formation around engaging parents and families\*

\*Based on NFCYM 2020 Field Survey

## Reinforced in *Christus Vivit*

### ESTABLISHING A SYNODAL COMMUNITY...

- “At the Synod, ‘many pointed to the **shortage of qualified people devoted to accompaniment**....The Synod also recognized the need to train consecrated persons and laypeople, male and female, to accompany young people.’” (CV 244, FD 9)
- “I want to state clearly that **young people themselves are agents of youth [and young adult] ministry**. Certainly, they need to be helped and guided, but at the same time left free to develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity... I am more concerned with helping young people to use their insight, ingenuity and knowledge to address the issues and concerns of other young people in their own language.” (CV 203)
- “In fact, ‘Jesus did not grow up in a narrow and stifling relationship with Mary and Joseph, but readily interacted with the wider family, the relatives of his parents and their friends’ (AL 384).... Surely, they assumed, Jesus was there, mingling with the others, joking with other young people, listening to the adults tell stories and sharing the joys and sorrows of the group. Indeed, the Greek word that Luke uses to describe the group—*synodía*—clearly evokes a larger ‘community on a journey’ of which the Holy Family is a part.” (CV 29)

## Core Strengths of NFCYM



### NATIONWIDE NETWORK

- Largest community of Catholic youth ministry leaders across the United States
- Connected with hundreds of other national, regional, and local organizations dedicated to helping youth live their faith
- Access to resources and expertise across the field of youth ministry
- Growth in relationships with leaders and members of diverse cultural communities across the country



### KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

- Members are experts in youth ministry, with 50% holding 20+ years of experience\*
- Webinars and training consistently have high satisfaction rates year-over-year\*
- Repository of more than 1,000 existing resources to help form future youth ministry leaders



### CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

- 40 years of experience in working with Catholic youth ministry leaders
- Recognized as leading national organization in youth ministry by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Consistently high member satisfaction rates\*

*\*Based on NFCYM Annual Member Satisfaction Surveys*



## Putting It All Together:

# Utilizing Our Core Strengths to Meet the Needs of the Field

**Rooted in our purpose:** To empower young people to be missionary disciples

**Accomplished through our mission:** Support and strengthen those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ

Key Insights & Trends	Overlap - Informed Strategy	NFCYM Core Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Influx of new and volunteer youth ministry leaders with limited experience</li> <li>▪ Lack of consistent guide to establish a program and develop personal skills</li> </ul>	<p><i>Utilize our network and experience to establish and share consistent guidelines and resources for ministry leaders, with an intentional understanding of ethnic and cultural realities found within the Catholic Church in the United States</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collective member knowledge and experience in youth ministry</li> <li>▪ Nationwide network and resources</li> <li>▪ Trusted organization with platform to share information across the country</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Call to incorporate youth into planning</li> <li>▪ Desire from youth ministry leaders to better understand youth development and culture</li> </ul>	<p><i>Set a precedence by gathering a panel of youth advisors and share their insights broadly</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nationwide network to identify youth leaders to share their voice</li> <li>▪ Trusted organization with platform to share information across the country</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ministry leaders seeking help to better engage parents and family</li> <li>▪ Transition of faith formation to home-based setting due to pandemic</li> </ul>	<p><i>Demonstrate ways to partner with parents, guardians, and families and provide more family resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience engaging families in ministry through Strong Catholic Families/ <i>Fortaleciendo Familias en la Fe</i></li> <li>▪ Trusted organization with platform to share information across the country</li> </ul>

# Resulting Strategy

To accomplish our strategic goal, NFCYM will align work across four focus areas to advance the field of youth ministry with clarity and consistency within all ethnic and cultural realities found within the Catholic Church in the United States.

## STRATEGIC GOAL:

*Empower 15,000 ministers over the next five years to advocate for young people to be an integral voice within their local faith communities.*



**Embrace the Essential Elements of Comprehensive Youth Ministry**  
(Focus Audience – Ministry Leaders)\*



**Embrace the Profession and Practice of a Youth Ministry Leader**  
(Focus Audience – Ministry Leaders)\*



**Understand and Engage Youth as Protagonists**  
(Focus Audience – Adults)



**Support the Growth of the Domestic Church**  
(Focus Audience – Families)

\*Desired to distinguish program elements from personal development for guidelines and resources



## Our How

*Ensure all work is:*



### CHRIST CENTERED

Know, love, and serve Christ according to the gospel values



### AUTHENTIC

An honest awareness of who we are, what we do, and why we do it



### ENGAGED

Activate and empower the gifts and strengths of all members



### COLLABORATIVE

Working together with diverse voices



### FORMATIVE

Ongoing growth in professional practice and faith





## FOCUS #1

# Embrace the Essential Elements of Comprehensive Youth Ministry

### GOAL:

*Establish essential elements of a comprehensive youth ministry program and provide formation opportunities to align with these elements*

### MILESTONE DELIVERABLES\*

### TIMING

Guide of essential program elements, including a program assessment tool and training program established\*\*

FY22

Repository of internal and external resources, research, and trends, sortable by essential program element categories\*\*

FY22

Annual NFCYM formation programming based on essential program elements

FY22-26

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Essential program elements guide is commonly used tool across US dioceses
- Essential program elements training and resources utilization continually grows
- Maintain satisfaction rates of 75% or higher for essential program elements

\*Others are likely to be added as Project Team(s) work to accomplish the goal

\*\*To be reviewed/updated regularly to stay relevant to field dynamics



“

*“The 5-Year Strategy gives the organization a much needed, focused plan for how we will move ministry forward to the young Church and the new youth ministry leader. I appreciate the strategy of aligning the work of NFCYM with four focused strategies that focus on the Why of the organization. Having the assurance that all work will be Christ-centered, authentic, engaged, collaborative and formative is truly exciting. I am looking forward to what is yet to be with the organization.”*

*— Christie Smith,  
Diocese of Greensburg*



“

*“Presentations and webinars on pastoral needs the past two years have been terrific. Exploring ways to expand and diversify meeting these changing pastoral needs by tapping into member experience as well as expertise would be a welcome change. A list of links to resources has been a go-to option for many organizations.”*

*— Comment on the Member Satisfaction Survey*



## FOCUS #2

# Embrace the Profession and Practice of a Youth Ministry Leader

### GOAL:

*Establish essential elements of personal formation for ministry leaders and provide formation opportunities to align with these elements*

### MILESTONE DELIVERABLES\*

### TIMING

Guide of essential personal formation elements, including a program assessment tool and training program established\*\*

FY22

Repository of internal and external resources, research, and trends, sortable by essential personal formation element categories\*\*

FY22

Annual NFCYM formation programming based on essential personal formation elements

FY22-26

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- Essential personal formation elements guide is commonly used tool across US dioceses
- Essential personal formation elements training and resources utilization continually grows
- Maintain satisfaction rates of 75% or higher for essential personal formation elements

\*Others are likely to be added as Project Team(s) work to accomplish the goal

\*\*To be reviewed/updated regularly to stay relevant to field dynamics



## FOCUS #3

# Understand and Engage Youth as Protagonists

### GOAL:

*Model integration of young people into leadership roles and share insights and formation about trends in youth culture*

MILESTONE DELIVERABLES*	TIMING
Establish an organizational youth advisory council**	FY22
Partner with existing research organizations to identify research and trends on youth culture**	FY22
Annual NFCYM formation programming based on youth culture	FY22-26

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- NFCYM consistently reflects youth perspectives
- NFCYM becomes sought-after partner to share research on youth culture
- Maintain satisfaction rates of 75% or higher for youth culture formation element

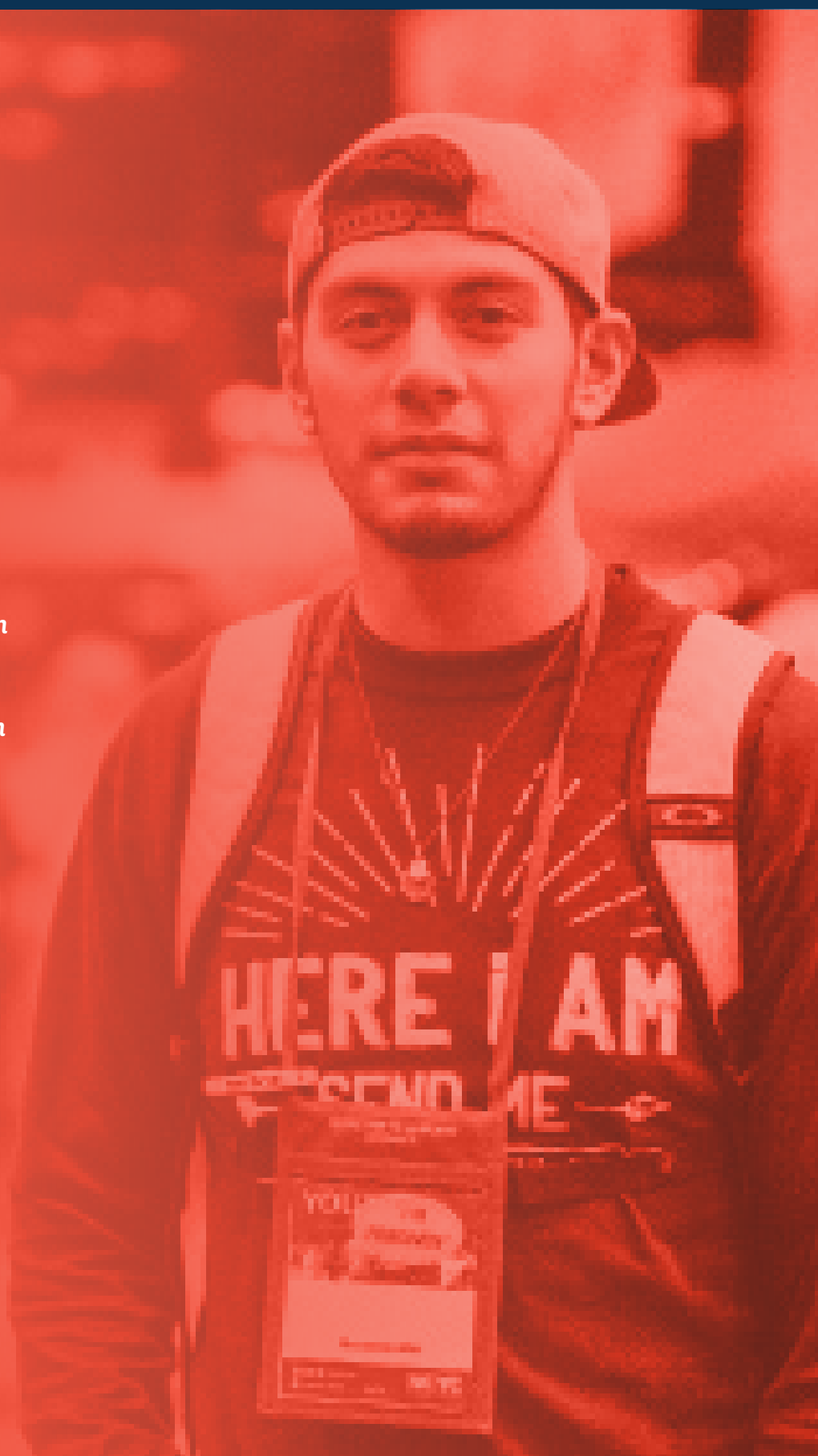
\*Others are likely to be added as Project Team(s) work to accomplish the goal

\*\*To continue through FY26

“

*“I am very excited by the holistic approach to empowering young people and those who serve them offered by the five-year plan. This strategy seems to balance formation and engagement with a realistic appreciation of the current situation of youth ministry in our country. I especially appreciate the drive for authentic discipleship from the “top-down,” including an engagement of youth as protagonists.”*

*— Daniel Pin,  
Diocese of Wilmington*



“

“Wow! This is such a great strategy to bring young people and their families to have encounters of Christ Jesus. Working together (Young people - Youth Ministry Leaders - Families - Volunteers - NFCYM - Holy Spirit) is the key to the success for this mission.”

— Jim Flanagan,

Director of Youth Ministry

Holy Name Parish, West Roxbury, MA

Associate Member



## FOCUS #4

# Support the Growth of the Domestic Church

### GOAL:

*Provide formation for ministry leaders to engage parents, guardians, and families and model engagement of them through NFCYM initiatives*

### MILESTONE DELIVERABLES\*

### TIMING

Guide of partnering with parents, including an assessment tool, utilizing the SCF/FFF program

FY22

Repository of internal and external resources for engaging parents, guardians, and families

FY23

Annual NFCYM formation programming based on engaging parents, guardians, and families

FY24-26

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:




- Renewed energy of parents, guardians, and families involved in youth's faith formation
- Parents, guardians, and family formation resource repository continually grows
- Maintain satisfaction rates of 75% or higher for engaging parents, guardians, and family formation elements

*\*Others are likely to be added as Project Team(s) work to accomplish the goal*

## How the Strategy Aligns with Our Organizational Goals




### GOAL 1

*Support, engage, and develop members to make a greater impact in the field of pastoral ministry to young people.*

-  **Focus 1: Elements of comprehensive youth ministry** – easier to identify and address key components to ensure a well-rounded approach
-  **Focus 2: Profession and practice of a youth ministry leader** – provides formation for the individual
-  **Focus 3: Help adults understand and engage youth as protagonists** – the more they know about those they serve the more effective ministry leaders can be in reaching youth and encouraging/elevating them to live as disciples

### GOAL 2




*Equip members to identify and enable adults in ministry to respond to the diverse needs and gifts of young people.*

-  **Focus 1:** Diversity and inclusion to be incorporated as part of the key components
-  **Focus 2:** Diversity and inclusion training to be included in essential elements of formation
-  **Focus 3:** Gen Z is the most diverse generation - therefore any research conducted inherently will address their unique needs

### GOAL 3



*Equip members to provide opportunities for encounters with Christ through dynamic engagements that foster mature discipleship and authentic accompaniment among adult leaders and young people.*

NFCYM youth programs (NCYC & Holy Fire) reflect four focus areas:

-  **Focus 1 & 2:** Inform adult programming to develop effective youth leaders
-  **Focus 3:** Ensure youth are engaged effectively
-  **Focus 4:** Support the growth of the domestic church - provide ways to help parents accompany their child through the programs

### GOAL 4

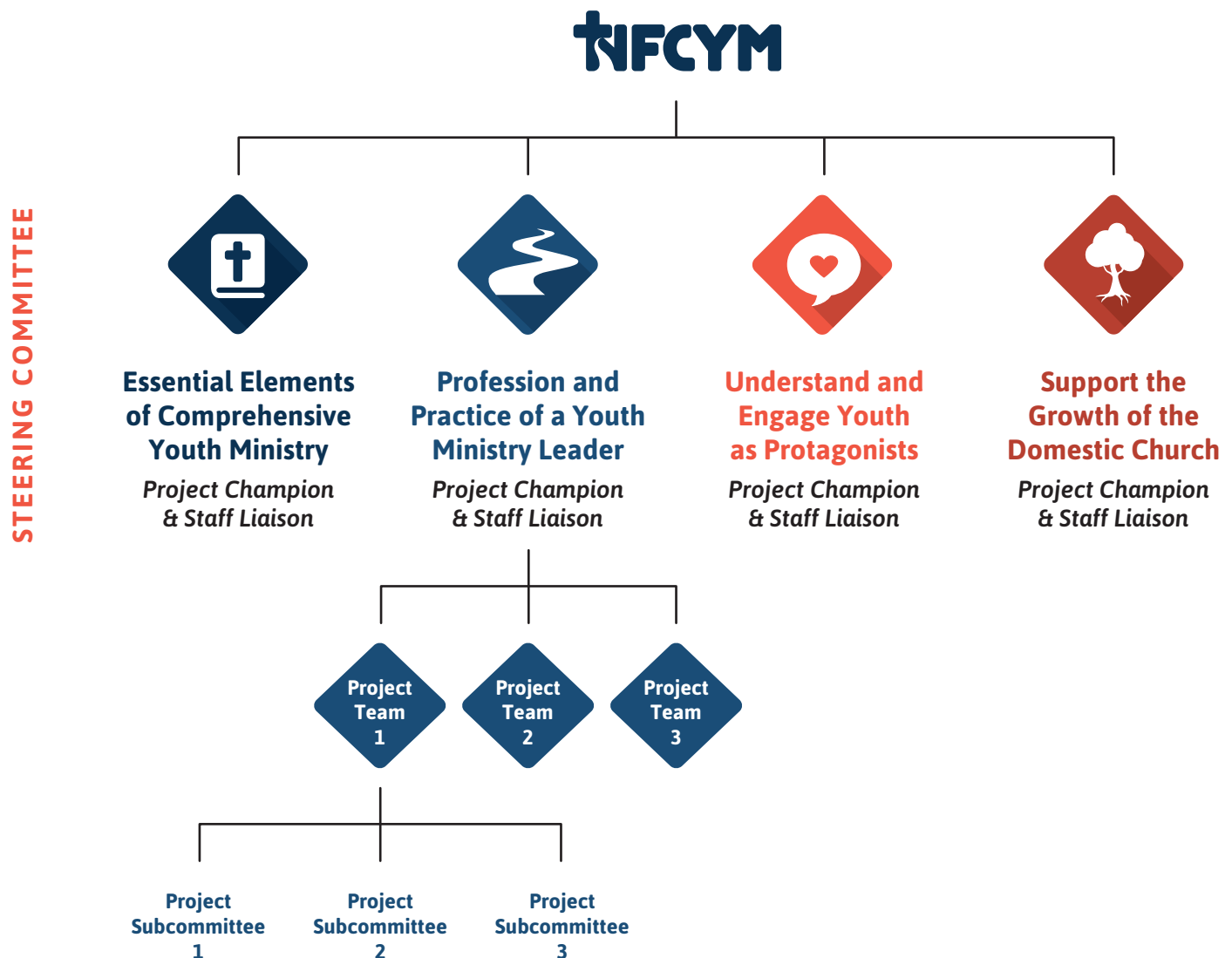
*Equip members to partner with parents to enhance their confidence and ability to accompany their children to seek, know and love Christ.*

-  **Focus 1:** Key program elements will include a special focus on engaging parents
-  **Focus 4:** NFCYM will model ways to engage parents in faith development of their children at NFCYM youth programs



# Process to Accomplish this Work

Each focus area will be assigned a project champion and staff liaison to serve as representatives on the steering committee. They will oversee all project teams assembled to accomplish the work of their designated focus area.



# Thank You!

## NFCYM Board of Directors

### REGION 1

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Diocese of Portland ME

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Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina

### ASSOCIATE MEMBER REP

**Jamie Kohler**  
Holy Redeemer Catholic Parish,  
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### ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBER REP

**Tom East**  
Center for Ministry Development

### AT-LARGE: ORGANIZATIONAL NEED

**William Kilmon**  
**Jim Lundholm-Eades**  
Leadership Roundtable

### AT-LARGE: CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Marthamaria Morales, Liaison**  
**for Ministry Networks and**  
**Alliances**

Department of Justice, Peace &  
Human Development, USCCB

**Cheryl Cattledge**  
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### EX OFFICIO

**Paul Jarzembowski**  
Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family  
Life, and Youth, USCCB

**Christina Lamas**  
Executive Director, NFCYM

### Special Thanks!

### To our outgoing board members

#### REGION 1

**Claire M. McManus**  
Diocese of Fall River

#### REGION 3

**Christie Smith, First Vice-Chair**  
Diocese of Greensburg

#### REGION 4

**Tex Phelps**  
Archdiocese of Washington

#### REGION 5

**Bill Staley**  
Diocese of Nashville

#### REGION 6

**Mark Mann, Chair**  
Diocese of Grand Rapids

#### REGION 11

**Katie Zeigler**  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

#### REGION 13

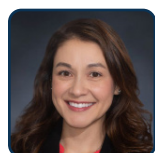
**Maria Ward**  
Diocese of Cheyenne

#### AT-LARGE: ORGANIZATIONAL NEED

**Rich Curran**  
Parish Success Group  
**Randy Raus**  
Life Teen International



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**Christ leads. We accompany.**

[www.nfcym.org](http://www.nfcym.org)

