

## Conversation # 7

# Leadership for Accompaniment – Leader Outline



By Tom East, Director of the Center for Ministry Development

*These resources are provided as part of the Accompaniment Project from the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and the Center for Ministry Development.*

This leadership gathering is designed to assist parish leadership groups and ministry teams to consider the leadership needed to support the accompaniment of youth. This will include exploration of the Coordinator of Youth Ministry Role and the development of a Youth Ministry Leadership Team.

### Prepare in Advance

- Set up a prayer space with a cloth, bible, candle and cross.
- Duplicate handouts, one per person.
- Prepare to provide a brief personal story about an experience of accompanying a young person in faith to share in conjunction with Slide # 4.
- Select wall space for sticky note process. Create sticky notes with these titles:  
PARISH  
COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY  
YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATING TEAM
- Large sticky notes: [https://www.amazon.com/Early-Buy-Sticky-Bright-Self-Stick/dp/B07VKMVMMS9/ref=sr\\_1\\_2\\_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=Large+Post+It+Notes&qid=1614974764&sr=8-2-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFaR1dFNepZWfU3RkcmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTA0MjQ1ODY3QkdQV0tHNFhHRjkmZW5jcnlwdGVkQWRJZD1BMDU1NDUyMzNEN0ZBR1Q5Rk5TTkImd2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGYmYWN0aW9uPWNsaWNrUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGljaz10cnVI](https://www.amazon.com/Early-Buy-Sticky-Bright-Self-Stick/dp/B07VKMVMMS9/ref=sr_1_2_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=Large+Post+It+Notes&qid=1614974764&sr=8-2-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFaR1dFNepZWfU3RkcmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTA0MjQ1ODY3QkdQV0tHNFhHRjkmZW5jcnlwdGVkQWRJZD1BMDU1NDUyMzNEN0ZBR1Q5Rk5TTkImd2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGYmYWN0aW9uPWNsaWNrUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGljaz10cnVI)
- Sharpie markers, one per person
- You will be recording answers in one of the processes on an easel pad sheet. Have an easel, pad and markers available, or post an easel sheet in a place that can be seen by participants.

## Introduction (5 minutes)

(Slide 1) Introduce yourself, welcome participants and distribute the handouts.

Introduce this conversation:

Greetings. Ministry with youth is being transformed by a vision focused on accompanying young people in faith. In this gathering, we are exploring the vision and practice of leadership for youth ministry in a parish who accompanies. For these communities, it is not really about the leaders; it is about the parish. The parish accompanies. The parish supports parents and faith companions for youth. The parish engages and includes youth. The parish provides vibrant ministry for youth, and reaches out to connect with young people on the margins. Leaders animate the relationship between the parish and the communities' young members.

(Slide 2) Read the quotation on the slide and provide this explanation:

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis describes the art of accompaniment and guides us to be humble and honor the person we accompany.

(Slide 3) Continue with the quotation on this slide.

We are called as Church to accompany all young people without exception!

(Slide 4) Read the quotation on the slide and provide this explanation:

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis identifies the method of accompaniment, person to person contact, as indispensable in passing on the faith. This accompaniment is something that cannot be replaced by any pastoral resource or strategy.

Provide a brief personal story about an experience of accompanying a young person in faith.

(Slide 5) Continue by sharing the quotation on the slide. Add this commentary:

Along with the family, the parish has a primary responsibility for accompanying young disciples.

(Slide 6) Opening Prayer

You and I share in this mission of accompanying youth with care, witness, and prayers. Let us join together in this prayer for all faith companions.

## Prayer for Faith Companions

Jesus, you accompany us and lead us to your heart.

We come before you humbly as echoes of your word of love.

Help us to be a companion; help us to be bread for the young people you entrust to our care.

- Bless us with the discipline to pray for them
- Bless us with the courage to connect with them.
- Bless us with the humility to listen to them.
- Bless us with the strength of heart to empathize with them.
- Bless us with the compassion to care for them.
- Bless us with the clarity of faith to witness to them.
- Bless us with love to join our voice to your call to them.

Open the ears of our heart to hear you and to follow you as we walk with young people to your waiting arms.

We ask this in the name of the one who walks with us in our questions, who warms our hearts and who sends us in mission. In Jesus name, we pray.

+Amen

(Slide 7) Introduce *Christus Vivit*.

We are at a historic moment. This seven-year process has led to *Christus Vivit*, which is the first Papal Encyclical written especially about young people.

Review the Synodal process and present the intended audiences.

(Slide 8) Continue with your presentation about *Christus Vivit*.

*Christus Vivit* invites us to see young people in a new way, to see new ways of being Church and Parish, and to understand leadership for ministry with youth in a new way.

In your handouts, pages 1 to 5 there is a description of 10 things from *Christus Vivit* about leadership. These quotations from the document point to the kind of leadership needed in an accompanying parish. We are going to divide up to look at these more carefully. I will ask each group to read over the quotation(s) and be ready to provide one or two examples of how we can live this out as a parish.

Process:

1. Divide into groups of three. Assign the leadership insights individually or in clusters depending on the number of participants. If you have a group of 30 you can divide into 10 groups. Assign one leadership insight per group. If you have more than 30, you can assign one insight to more than one group. If you have less than thirty, you can group two or three insights together as an assignment for one group, or you can provide examples that you prepare in advance.
2. Allow ten minutes for groups to read over the quotations and brainstorm examples. Ask each group to assign a reporter to share the example with the large group when called upon.

(Slide 9) Continue with your presentation about leadership in accompanying parishes.  
(Pages 1-5 in the handouts)

Our first insight is that Leaders in youth ministry reflect Christ. As people who love young people, our first job is to show Jesus Christ to the young through our words, actions and relationships. Let's hear from our first group – what are examples of ways we can reflect Christ?

(Slide 10)

Leaders accompany the young – in this quotation, the Emmaus story is provided as the example for us in walking with young people. We walk with the young in their questions and together we open ourselves to Christ who leads us. Group 2 – what are our examples of accompanying?

(Slide 11)

Leaders are young at heart - In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis shared that God views youthfulness differently. He encourages all of us to be young at heart. To be youthful is to be capable of loving. To grow old is to be stagnant and attached to things that pass away. We are reminded that Jesus did not tolerate those who dismissed the young. Group 3 – what are some examples of ways to show that we are young at heart?

(Slide 12)

Leaders take young people seriously, listen to them, and stay close to their concerns. Walking with youth in faith begins with our stance of truly seeing them, hearing their story, and responding. Young people often experience us as ready to jump in with the answer. Throughout the Synod process, we have been consistently urged to listen to youth with empathy and value their contributions and concerns. Group 4 – What are some examples of ways that we can value youth and listen with empathy?

(Slide 13)

Leaders are collaborative to provide ministry that is synodal. Leadership in parishes who accompany youth is not personality or ego based. We are urged to move together in ministry. This is described in Hispanic ministry as “pastoral de conjunto.” We move forward in ministry together by valuing the gifts, perspectives, and contributions of the members of the parish community. As a parish we strive to love young people in Christ’s name and accompany them toward holiness.

Group 5 – what are some examples of acting collaboratively?

(Slide 14)

Leaders are flexible. Pope Francis is urging us to make room for the spontaneity and enthusiasm of young people. In the preparatory document, we were warned of creating ministries that “dominate space.” Instead, we create space with room to breathe, where community can grow, and faith can be shared. Group 6 – what are examples of ways to show that we are flexible?

(Slide 15)

Leaders empower young people for mission. Growing in faith means growing in our awareness of our mission. Those of us who walk with youth have the privilege of providing ways to encourage and empower youth for service and leadership. Group 7 – what are some examples of ways to empower youth for mission?

(Slide 16)

Leaders awaken young people to encounter. Our generous God is always sending opportunities for encounter to young people. We are told to awaken youth to these encounters and consolidate these experiences to sustain discipleship. We are also warned – don’t bore young people. Sometimes we allow our fear to dominate what we share with the young and how we spend our time. Group 8 – What are examples of ways to awaken and sustain youth’s experience of encounter?

(Slide 17)

Leaders engage the parish to make a home for all young people. The Instrumentum Laboris document from the Synod reminded us of our call as Church to “accompany all young people, without exception, towards the joy of love.” (#1) In *Christus Vivit*, we are told to be bold and daring in making a home for all young people and to become a community who radiates Christ. Group 9 – What are examples of ways we can make a home in our community for young people?

(Slide 18)

Leaders support families who accompany the young. Families accompany young people in faith. Families are often the first place where young people experience acceptance, encouragement, and unconditional love. To accompany youth, families need support and resources. Group 10 – What are some ways to provide support and resources for families as they accompany young people in faith?

Thank the participants for their work in providing examples.

(Slide 19)

We can see through this vision, that parishes have a mission to accompany. Accompaniment isn't a piece of youth ministry, or a strategy – it is a way to look at all of the parish's ministry with youth. This is a summary of this vision:

(advance animation)

Parishes accompany youth on their journey toward holiness as missionary disciples.

This mission clarifies the role of leaders for youth ministry:

(advance animation)

Leaders in ministry with youth animate these actions by listening, planning, implementing, evaluating, and engaging the community in the accompaniment of youth.

(Page 8 in handouts.)

(Slide 20) Transition to providing an explanation of what leaders do. (Pages 6-7 in handouts.)

As I mentioned previously, the parish accompanies young people, working in tandem with families. Leaders animate the relationship between the parish and the communities' young members. They do that through a variety of actions that have one purpose: to support the parish community as they accompany youth on their journey toward holiness as missionary disciples.

### **Leaders Accompany**

Youth ministry leaders accompany youth in the parish community. This could include specific faith companion relationships as well as engagement with youth through the life of the parish and ministry offerings. Leaders also accompany the accompaniers, providing support for parents and faith companions for youth in the parish community.

(Slide 21)

### **Leaders Listen and Assess Needs**

Youth ministry leaders listen to young people and seek to understand their needs and aspirations. They pay particular attention to reaching out to youth who are underserved and are on the peripheries of the parish.

(Slide 22)

### **Leaders Utilize Resources and Research Best Practices**

Youth ministry leaders seek to utilize dynamic resources and effective models for the parish's ministry with youth and their families. This includes networking and research in identifying best practices for the accompaniment of youth, the transformation of ministries, and the engagement of youth with the parish community.

(Slide 23)

### **Leaders Plan and Implement Ministry Responses**

Youth ministry leaders plan and implement initiatives and responses to youth and their families on behalf of the parish.

(Slide 24)

To become a community who accompanies, leaders begin to take steps in this direction.

These are three important responses that leaders plan and implements to help the parish grow:

- Empowering the parish to accompany young disciples
- Equipping Parents and Faith Companions
- Transforming ministry to provide accompaniment

(Slide 25)

To become a community who accompanies, we begin to take steps in this direction. These are three important steps to help our parish grow:

- Empowering the parish to accompany young disciples
- Equipping Parents and Faith Companions
- Transforming ministry to provide accompaniment

(Slide 26)

### **Leaders Collaborate and Form Partnerships**

Youth ministry leaders collaborate and form partnerships within the parish on behalf of youth and their families. They also collaborate and form partnerships in the wider community, the diocese, regionally, and nationally to provide the best ministry responses and accompaniment for youth and families.

(Slide 27)

Share with the group some practical next steps for this process in your community, which could include ways to become involve or dates for future meetings and conversations.

(Slide 28)

### **Leaders Empower Other Leaders**

Youth ministry leaders are stewards of the gifts of the parish community. They are constantly seeking out new leaders to involve in the accompaniment of youth and the implementation of ministry programs and strategies that serve youth and their families. They are committed to the ongoing formation and support for leaders in ministry with youth. This includes particular attention to the empowerment and formation of youth as leaders.

(Slide 29) Lead the participants in a process of naming the parish role and the role of the coordinator and team.

It is important to understand the broader mission of the parish and the role of its leaders to carry out the mission. From the time that the Church first established youth ministry, there has been much confusion in our communities on how to successfully implement the ministry. Youth ministry is often delegated to a single person (the youth minister or coordinator of youth ministry) or to a small group of people (the Youth Ministry Team.) In some places, this delegation is much like checking ministry with youth off the parish to do list. However, delegating youth ministry as a separate, stand-alone ministry leaves youth isolated from parish life. If a parish community wishes to truly accompany youth in faith, it must name and claim the responsibility for its ministry with them.

I ask you now to work in (pairs or groups of three to five people) to identify what the parish is responsible for. Knowing that the coordinator and the team are part of the parish, you could then identify what the Coordinator is responsible for. For example, your group might identify “praying for young people” as a responsibility of the parish, including the coordinator and team. You might identify, “creating an annual report about youth ministry” as a responsibility of the Youth Ministry Team.

I am distributing large sticky notes and sharpie markers to each group. You will notice that I have these headlines on the wall. This is where we will collect these ideas. Please write one idea per sticky note and assign it to the parish (everyone), Coordinator, or the team.

Distribute large sticky notes and sharpie markers to the groups. Allow 12 minutes for groups to work, then instruct the groups to place the sticky notes on the wall.

Read over the lists and engage the group in thinking through what belongs where.

Ask participants if there are any items for coordinator or team that could be moved to the parish.

Move things around as needed. For example, if the group placed “accompany youth – talk to youth about faith” as the role of the coordinator, you could suggest moving this



to the listing for the Parish. After moving things, ask the participants what they noticed about this exercise and what does this remind us about leadership for youth ministry.

(Slide 30)

This process helps to clarify the role of leaders – Parishes accompany youth – leaders support that accompaniment. Please turn to page 8 in your handouts for this description of the tasks that leaders do to help parishes accompany young disciples.

Review the listing of tasks described on page 8. Invite feedback and address questions from the participants.

(Page 8 in handouts)

(Slide 31)

We have identified the role of the parish and the roles for the coordinator and team. We have also named what leaders in youth ministry do. It is important to name that leadership goes beyond the Coordinator, Youth Ministry Team, and specific youth ministry volunteers. There are many other leaders in the parish whose pastoral ministry connects with youth.

Advance animation.

We know that the pastor is responsible for all of the souls within the boundaries of the parish, including young people. Besides the pastor, which leaders or leadership groups are connected to our parish's ministry with youth?

Record these individuals and leadership groups on the easel pad sheet that you posted. Start the list with "pastor." Consider these individuals:

- Pastor
- Associate Pastors or Parochial Vicars
- Deacon
- Director of Religious Education
- Pastoral Assistant for Worship and Liturgy
- Pastoral Assistant for Initiation
- Pastoral Assistant for Justice Ministries
- Pastoral Assistant for Family Ministry
- Pastoral Assistant for Adult Education
- Coordinator for Young Adult Ministry
- Coordinator for Sacramental Preparation (including baptism and marriage.)
- Parochial School Principal
- Parish Facilities Staff
- Parish Administrator

Consider these groups:

- Parish Council
- Faith Formation Advisory Team
- Worship Advisory Team
- Justice and Service Advisory Team
- Community Life Advisory Team

(Slide 32)

With these things in mind, I would like to ask you to turn to page \_\_\_ in your handouts. Let's review together these suggestions for the Leadership Role for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry in a parish committed to accompaniment.

Review the role description on page 9 in the handouts – ask the participants if they have questions or comments. Invite the participants to identify anything not on the list that could be added for their parish.

(Slide 33)

This discussion is a brainstorm exercise that will assist parish leadership in making decisions about the role of the Coordinator.

Ask the participants to turn to page 10 of the handouts and discuss these questions. Ask someone to record the discussion responses.

What are some personal qualities we should seek in the Coordinator of Youth Ministry?

Who should take on the role of Youth Ministry Coordinator for Our Parish?

- A volunteer
- A part-time or full-time staff person
- Assign the position to one of our existing staff

Who would supervise this position?

What kind of background, experience and skills would be helpful?

Where could we look, who could we talk to in searching for this position?

What support should we provide?

(Slide 34)

With these things in mind, I would like to ask you to turn to page \_\_\_ in your handouts. Let's review together these suggestions for the Leadership Role for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry in a parish committed to accompaniment.

Review the role description on page 11 of the handouts – ask the participants if they have questions or comments. Invite the participants to identify anything not on the list that could be added for their parish.

(Slide 35)

This discussion is a brainstorm exercise that will assist parish leadership in making decisions about the role of the Youth Ministry Coordinating Team

Ask the participants to turn to page 12 of the handouts and discuss these questions. Ask someone to record the discussion responses.

What are some personal qualities we should seek in members of the Youth Ministry Coordinating Team?

What kind of background, experience and skills would be helpful?

Where could we look, who could we talk to in searching for members of this team?

What support should we provide?

(Slide 36) Check-in with participants to see if there are remaining questions. Let them know that the follow-through for this conversation will include work with parish leadership in planning for the parish’s ministry with youth and the leadership needed to support it. Provide concluding comments.

In this conversation, we have explored the role of the parish and the role of leaders for youth ministry, inspired by the work of the Synod on Young People and Pope Francis’s exhortation, *Christus Vivit*. Through this exploration, we see that parishes accompany young members working in tandem with families. Youth Ministry leaders support this accompaniment by engaging youth with the parish, supporting parents and faith companions, and providing ministries that provide for accompanying relationships.

This effort requires shared responsibility:

Youth ministry...should involve a “journeying together” that values “the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church’s members, through a process of co-responsibility...”

*Christus Vivit, # 206*

Announce the next steps in this process. Lead the participants in a closing prayer.

Let us close in prayer.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Loving God,

You call us to love young people in Christ's name and accompany them to active discipleship.

We pray now for all who are leaders in ministry with youth. We know that you give us every good gift. We pray now for the blessings that leaders will need to share your Good News with young people.

Ask each person to use one or a few words to name a gift or blessing that they ask God to give leaders in youth ministry. Provide this concluding prayer:

We pray now for these blessings. Open our hands to share blessings with each other and open our hearts to receive the gifts that you give us. We ask this with trust and confidence in the name of Jesus who accompanies us.

All: Amen