Youth Ministry Leaders’ Monthly Gathering Minutes
July 7, 2020 – Virtual Online Meeting


I. Welcome, Introductions, Opening Prayer. Group welcomed Samantha Brinning, new youth minister for St. James, Washington, and recognized Jasmin Tone as she starts her new position at St. Joseph, DeWitt.

II. Updates:

- Mental Illness Awareness Week Project.
  - Please share any mental health resource – AV, print, agencies, persons – you utilize in your area. Please include contact information for agencies and persons, links for online resources, and authors/publishers for books.

- ICYC-Middle School
  - Postponed. Waiting for dates from MMU for possibilities after January 1/Spring Semester.
  - Survey will be sent out as soon as dates are received to assess preferences, along with questions assessing the need for/interest in middle school resourcing this year.

- Steve Angrisano in September
  - Still up in the air about this. Steve echoed a much of the input given at last month’s meeting, and he would prefer to do a live location here in the diocese with satellite sites across the diocese to join virtually. He also suggested some time for him to do something specific for music ministers.
  - The uncertainty of the pandemic situation makes planning difficult. Stay tuned for more updates on this.

- Webinar: Building a Strategy for Weekly Online Youth Ministry
  - July 13, 9 AM; July 15, 7 PM
  - Register for each session at www.davenportdiocese.org/ff-ymleaders

III. Discussion:

1. Review of the “Electronic Communication With Minors Policy”
   - Recording the session. There’s a concern about privacy and confidentiality. In youth ministry, it’s important that young people feel comfortable in sharing what’s going on in their lives. Will recording sessions affect their trust of that?
     - One reason for this is that we don’t have control over who enters a room in the house where a teen is in one of our sessions and overhears something out of context and gets concerned. Having the recording can help clarify misunderstandings, as well as protect youth and adult leader.
     - About the length of time for keeping the recording. Why only 90 days? Presently for medical/liability forms, we keep them until the youngest person from the event reaches 21 years of age.
     - Would be very helpful to detail the reasons why recording the sessions is important.
Do we need a permission form that parents sign in order for their child to participate in them, just as we would for texting teens, taking pictures of teens, etc?

- Question about the number of adults in a virtual session. There is no mention of this. Is there an adult to youth ratio? If we had this, would it eliminate the need to record sessions, as we don’t do that for in-person sessions?
- What about the use of breakout rooms? If those are utilized in a session, we don’t think those are recorded. Also, what should be the ratio of adults to youth in a breakout room?
- Chats: What happens when a teacher has to communicate something specifically to only one student during a session, something that everyone does not need to nor should not see?
- Ending time. ProjectYM is doing national Alpha sessions that start at 9 PM Central. OLV pushed their Alpha session back to 8 PM, but they've gone past 9 PM especially when the discussion time really gets going.
- Sending session links. We understand that they need to go to parents, but does that mean the parent gets the link and then shares it with teen, or can teens receive the link as well?
- A professional setting... Some expressed concern that they don’t have a designated office space in their home. For many, it’s their dining room table, or even a desk they may have in their bedroom.
- One person indicated that they have a minor on the Parish Council, and the Council has been meeting on Zoom. Does that mean that the parish council meeting needs to be recorded?
- Seems like this document is specific mostly to Zoom, but what about other platforms that have other features to it. Flipgrid was specifically mentioned, but there are others out there that folks are considering using.
- One document applicable to all ministries. There’s appreciation for having only one document, but there is a suggestion that maybe the document should have a number of sections to it: info that’s common for everyone, then sections specifically for school settings, religious education settings, and youth ministry settings.
- Who developed this document, because it seems like no actual practitioners in the field (in parishes, or schools) were part its development. Appreciate the effort, but feels like there are things not specified or addressed. An opportunity to give some feedback and suggestions to make it grounded in the reality of how folks are actually using it the tools would be appreciated.

2. **Youth Ministry in a time of Pandemic.** The group did some sharing around some of the following questions:

- What have you realized/learned about virtual ministry?
- What’s worked/not worked for you?
- What resources have you found helpful?
- What do you want to know from others that could be helpful to you as you look to the year ahead?

  ➢ Has anyone used anything from FORMED?
    - Tommy has used it.
    - Evan’s been using Alpha. Downloads the video beforehand so you don’t
have to stream it. Can’t eat, but show the video and then conversations. Starting with adult leaders to get used to it. Not yet using breakout rooms on this. 3 adults 7 youth.

- Anyone done in-person social-distanced outdoor gatherings.
  - Sofia has a hike scheduled for Hickory Hill Park in the evening. Masks required. Getting to open space with a partner, and give them a bible passage to reflect on and talk about it, then come together to talk about it. Or maybe break up into two small groups.

- What can we do to fight zoom fatigue?
  - Julia’s not even going to try if schools go all virtual. Trying to focus on parents as head catechist, and coming up with weekly challenge that is attainable. Family movie night, discussion points for dinner (favorite memories growing up...). Looking for service activities as possibilities if we can gather. Going to be taking cues from school district.

- Anyone using flipgrid or tiktok?
  - Don’t use tiktok – it mines your data real bad.
  - For social media, Instagram is better for ministry (Jasmin). Follow Catholic accounts so students who follow you can see that. Invite students to post their favorite bible passage, saint, etc. Canva is good for making posters.
  - 40-day Lent Boost. (Sofia)
  - Adobe Sparkpost is another tool. Brett is using this for “Gospel in 60 seconds” – quick snapshot of Sunday Gospel coming up and do a quick reflection.

- Looking at this year through 3 different lenses: all virtual, being able to gather, combination of two

IV. Announcements
   - Next meeting: August 4. Opening Prayer - Sofia

V. Closed with the Prayer for Vision 20/20