Youth Ministry Is . . .

When taking a trip, there is usually a point when we come to a fork in the road. In which direction shall we head? Which path will bring us to our desired destination? In planning for our parish’s youth ministry the following statements point us in the right direction. These directions, grounded in the Catholic Bishops’ pastoral plan Renewing the Vision (RTV), help us to use our resources wisely as we respond to youth and families.

Youth Ministry is . . .

- Drawing youth into the adventure of discipleship
  Goal 1: Empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. (RTV 9)

- Helping youth to make the right connections
  Goal 2: Draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. (RTV 11)

- Growing young disciples
  Goal 3: Foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. (RTV 15)

- Responding to the needs and including the gifts of youth
  Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community. (RTV 1)

- Seeing youth as gifted and growing
  Youth ministry is most importantly an affirmation of the faith, gifts, energy, and fresh ideas of young people. (RTV 2)

- Seeing parents as partners
  The home is a primary context for sharing, celebrating, and living the Catholic faith, and we are partners with parents in developing the faith life of their adolescent children. (RTV 2)

- Seeing our parish as ready and able to respond to youth
  ...if parishes are to be worthy of the loyalty and active participation of youth, they will need to become “youth-friendly” communities in which youth have a conspicuous presence in parish life. (RTV 13)

- Seeing the wider community as collaborators and resources
  Community collaboration means building partnerships among families, schools, churches, and organizations that mobilize the community in a common effort to build a healthier community life and to promote positive adolescent development. (RTV 24)

- A relationship, not just a program
  The comprehensive approach is not a single program or recipe for ministry. Rather, it provides a way of integrating ministry with adolescents and their families into the total life and mission of the Church, recognizing that the whole community is responsible for this ministry. (RTV 19)

- Investing in youth with our time, attention, and resources
  Renewing the Vision is a blueprint for the continued development of effective ministry with young and older adolescents. Its expanded vision and strategy challenges leaders and their faith communities to address these challenges and to invest in young people today. (RTV 7)

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