Responding to Youth as a Parish Community

How can we respond to youth as a parish? How will we build up our youth ministry program? Parishes of all shapes and sizes from all over the country are answering this call by putting their creativity to work. The following five starting points can help parishes in a variety of situations to build and strengthen their parish ministry with youth.

Five Ways to Get Started

➢ Become a youth friendly community.
  o Promote a common vision for valuing youth in the community.
  o Include youth in planning for parish life: praying, learning, celebrating, and serving.
  o Make youth and families a central concern by supporting youth ministry efforts with time, facilities, and money.

➢ Build support for families.
  o Review all parish and youth programs to consider the impact on families.
  o Bridge youth programs to families.
  o Support parents by sponsoring education programs and providing family resources.
  o Connect families to each other to form a network of support.

➢ Link youth and families to programs, resources, and support.
  o Research programs, events, and resources for youth and families in your community.
  o Compile and share information about available support.
  o Connect youth and families to programs and events by sharing information and by creating access such as ongoing transportation.

➢ Connect youth to service, ministry, and leadership roles.
  o Research current service, ministry, and leadership roles in your community.
  o Create roles for youth to become involved.
  o Train adults to mentor, supervise, and support youth in a variety of roles.

➢ Develop programs and strategies that meet needs and include gifts.
  o Assess current youth ministry efforts.
  o Assess current resources available for youth ministry: people, facilities, and resources.
  o Gather information about youth interests.
  o Create programs that are targeted to the interests of younger and older adolescents, working towards a balance between faith formation, community building, outreach, and service elements.