

Youth Ministry Best Practices

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What were things like before using your best practice?

Teens had no regular meeting place.

Describe the best practice:

Teen dinner series inspired by *Grace Before Meals* Catholic cookbook by the "Cooking Priest" Fr. Leo Patalinghug. Teens meet at 6:30pm to cook as a team. We eat together at 7:15. I discuss upcoming activities and either I or one of our priests give a short reflection based on the week's Gospel, the liturgical season or a spiritual writer. Teens get a take home card with a scripture verse. We end with a door prize drawing because everyone loves a door prize. We use a wide range of recipes from family favorites to Taco Thursday or 'breakfast for dinner.'

The results:

Dozens of attendees from grades 9-12. Cooking as a team is a great icebreaker--plus teens learn skills (or demonstrate strengths) that help them grow in confidence and comfort. Eating as a group is a great opportunity to build fellowship. This is the welcoming engine for everything else we do.