

Definition of an Active Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Paterson (in sentence form):

A **top priority** in the parish, YM is championed by the **pastor** and supported by the parish as a whole, including **priests**, a dedicated **Youth Minister**, **parents**, and a **team of volunteers** to aid in the mission. A combination of invitations from **Youth Peer Leaders** and **social media** promotions are essential in drawing new members to programs, which should include **catechetical**, **service**, **social**, **spiritual** and **liturgical** events. It is important to note that an active youth ministry is **not simply Confirmation catechesis**, but a ministry that meets during and after the date of Confirmation, **meeting at least monthly** and seeking to **integrate the youth into the everyday life of the parish**.

Definition of an Active Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Paterson (in list form):

- **A top priority of the parish**
 - The future of the parish depends on the youth practicing their faith into adulthood. In the recent past, the youth lost interest in parish life until getting married and having children. This is no longer the case, as the Millennial Generation has no plans of returning to the parish or raising their children in the faith. A parish-wide prioritization of integrating the youth into parish life is now essential for the survival of the parish.
- **Championed by the pastor**
 - A pastor's prioritization of YM will inspire the parochial vicars, parish staff and congregation to prioritize YM. While the bulk of the YM activities can be delegated, the pastor needs define YM as a central priority, dedicating human and financial resources accordingly.
- **A priestly presence during youth events**
 - The YM Advisory Board agreed unanimously that a priestly presence is essential in every YM. YM cannot be an entirely lay movement, and while priests do not necessarily need to run events or come to every event, they need to be seen often and outside of the liturgical setting.
- **A dedicated Youth Minister**
 - At least one person, paid or volunteer, should be designated as the Youth Minister. This person builds a team of adult volunteers, develops a Youth Peer Leadership Team and communicates the importance of youth ministry to the parents of the parish.
- **Parental support**
 - More now than ever, parents are the gatekeepers of their children's activities. Parents have to want their children to be involved in YM. This desire cannot be assumed, but must be cultivated by the pastors, parish staff and parish community.
- **A team of volunteers to aid in the mission:**
 - One Youth Minister, even if working full-time, cannot possibly fulfill all sixteen components of an active YM alone. Having a diverse team with different skills can help with promoting and facilitating events.
- **Youth Peer Leaders:**
 - No one is more effective at inviting the youth than the youth themselves. A Youth Minister's time is better spent motivating a team of youth leaders to invite their friends than inviting youth by him/her self. The peer team provides critical mass at events and is trained specifically to make new members feel comfortable. Leaders in teams like this will make up the leadership of the future Church.
- **Social Media:**

- Parish Bulletins, emails and phone calls are no longer effective in advertising events to the youth. Each YM should have active social media accounts (perhaps facilitated by the Youth Peer Leaders). Each youth has approximately 1,000 friends on Facebook, for example. If ten Peer Leaders in a parish share a YM event, an audience of 10,000 people see the event ad at zero cost.
- **Programs:**
 - Each YM needs to provide a well-rounded programming schedule to be active. The YM Advisory Board identified five essential types of events; **catechetical, service, social, spiritual** and **liturgical**. Some events can address more than one category. A retreat for example can be both social and spiritual. The importance of Scripture-based catechesis was also highlighted.
- **Not just Confirmation Catechesis:**
 - The difficulties of present-day YM has encouraged some parishes to equate Confirmation Catechesis with YM, requiring attendance at service, social and other types of events to receive their Confirmation. The YM Advisory Board concluded that YM should be in addition to and beyond Confirmation Catechesis, fostering the continuation of faith for high school students following their Confirmation. This post-Confirmation ministry can only be successful with a dedicated Youth Minister, a team of volunteers and dedicated Youth Peer Leaders.
- **Meeting at least monthly:**
 - Some parishes host more than one YM event per week, but a minimum of one event per month is needed to be considered active, and the event can be from any category mentioned in the *Programs* section above.
- **Integration into life of parish:**
 - A major goal of YM is for the youth to be familiar with and involved with the adult activities in the parish. This benefits the youth as they become young adults, being already familiar with non-youth activities. The youth can participate in parish-wide liturgies, service projects and social events.

Definition of a **Semi-active Youth Ministry:**

Working towards having all 16 essential components of an active YM in their parish.

Definition of a **Dormant Youth Ministry**

Not working towards having all 16 essential components in their YM.