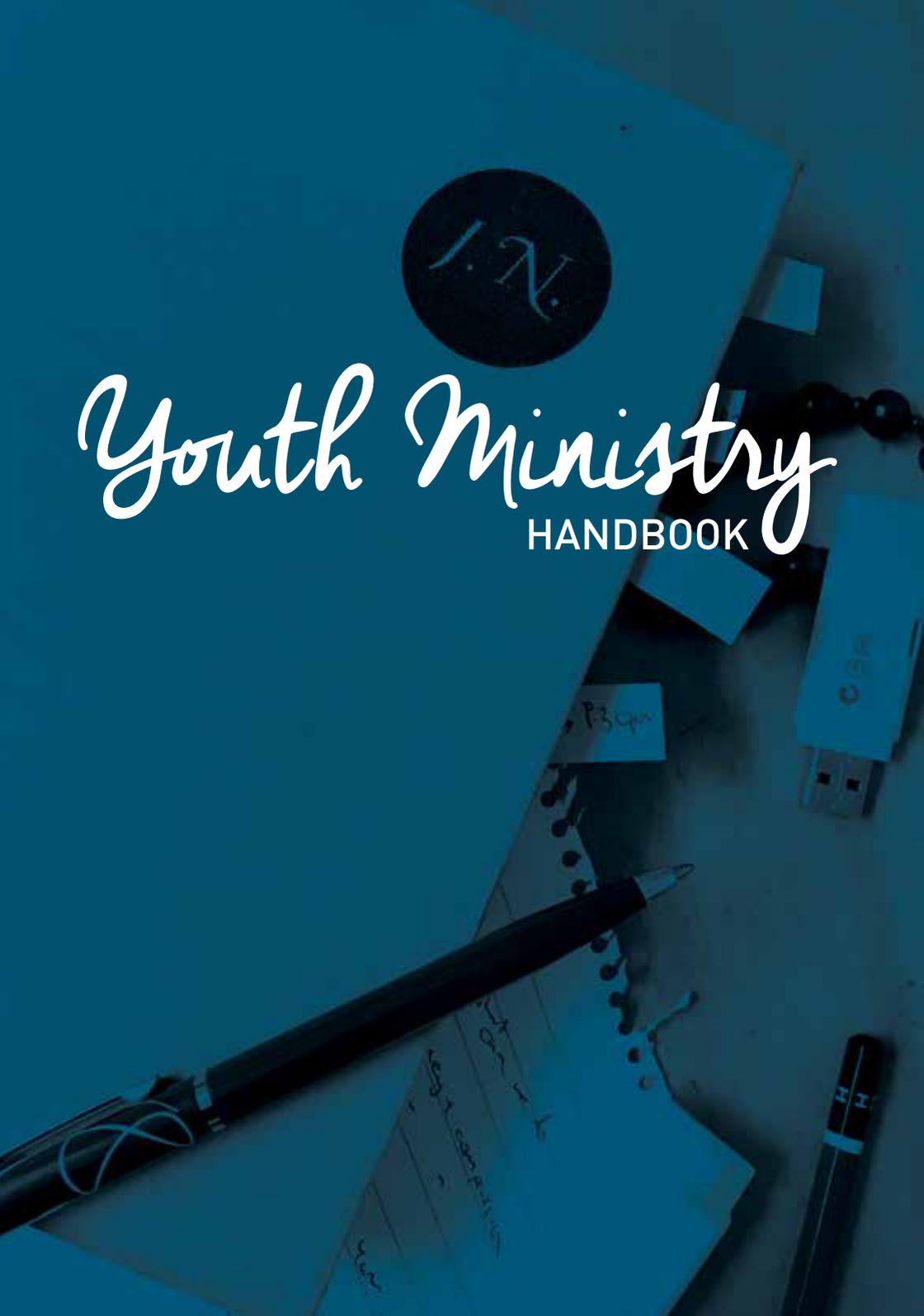




Youth Ministry

HANDBOOK



ALL DEPENDS ON PRAYER. BEGIN WITH IT AND END WITH IT.

ST MARY OF THE CROSS MACKILLOP

CONTENTS

How to use the resource	2
Who are we?	4
Youth group schedules	5
Giving a talk	6
Writing a testimony	9
Tips for leading small group discussions	10
Ideas for prayer	15
Introduction to Lectio Divina	16
Introduction to imaginative contemplation	17
Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet	19
Stations of the Cross	20
Liturgy of the Hours	22
Youth groups and the Sacraments	24
Journaling with your youth groups	26
Using music in a youth group setting and more!	28
Prayer stations	31
Games	33
Important policy for Youth Ministry	34
Anointed and Sent summary	35
4 key steps to fundraising	36
Scripture reflections for leaders	38
Our library	41
Appendix	
Youth group template schedules	42
Going to Confession	43
Holy Hour runsheet	45
Mercy night schedule for youth group	46

HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE

The Archdiocesan Office for Youth (AOY) as the nominated office working for young people in the Melbourne Archdiocese has a special role to play in prompting and assisting youth ministry in our Archdiocese.

We have developed this resource to equip youth ministry leaders with the basic tools for running a successful youth group. This resource provides practical tips on many of the fundamental aspects of youth ministry such as leading small groups, giving talks, leading prayer times and playing games.

This resource is a must read for anyone new to youth ministry or looking to brush up on the fundamentals of running a youth group.

WHO ARE WE?

The Archdiocesan Office for Youth (AOY) is an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. Our mission is to inspire and engage young people in the life and mission of the Catholic Church, and we aim to do this through initiating, supporting and encouraging youth ministry in Catholic parishes, schools and organisations. We support youth ministry that ministers to secondary school aged young people and young adults.

Our guiding principles are based on the eight focus areas of Anointed and Sent, the Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference vision for Catholic youth ministry, which are: prayer and worship, evangelisation, catechesis, pastoral care, community life, justice and service, leadership development, and advocacy. We seek to encourage all youth ministries to incorporate these areas into their activities. Our office also provides support in many different ways these include:

- Providing Leadership training and mentoring: This is done through our connect regions; AOY staff are each dedicated to a geographic region of Melbourne, to assist with youth ministry. We also run several events which provide leaders with formation and practical skills in youth ministry and support them to attend national leadership events. We circulate a monthly newsletter for youth leaders called the Youth Leader's Update.
- Our website www.cam.org.au/youth provides information about AOY run events, as well as promoting other local events through our events calendar. It has a youth group search function and interactive map and plenty of downloadable resources including, Hiring a Youth Minister, Fundraising Pack, Starting a Youth Group and many more. We also have job opportunities, ACYF information and WYD information.
- Whilst not our main focus, we run a number of youth events that people from all over the dioceses can get involved in, from a weekly Holy Hour of Adoration, to various talks, forums and social events.
- The AOY works with the National Evangelisation Team (NET), a team of young enthusiastic Catholics, to reach schools and youth groups across Melbourne. If you are interested in having NET come and visit your group, find out more on at www.cam.org.au/youth/Resources/NET-Team.

YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULES

Youth groups come in all different forms. Some cater to children, some adults, and some are massive while others are smaller. No matter the type of youth group that you run it is important to have a schedule. Schedules help bring structure and direction to each of the sessions. They also make it clear for each of the leaders to know who is doing what. A good schedule helps the night flow and is a better experience for your young people.

When writing a schedule it is important to think about the theme of the night. If that particular youth group session will be focused around a teaching of the Church it would look very different compared to a night focused around a prayer experience. Everything that is scheduled should be allotted specific amounts of time and however once the session is in progress, you have the flexibility to change the schedule. E.g. If the youth are really engaged in a prayer experience and the schedule says that it is time for a game, it may be better to continue the prayer experience for a little longer and substitute the game for a shorter one.

The schedule should be used as more of a guideline than a strict minute for minute outline of the night. For some nights it is good to throw away the schedule and just have a fun, social night. There are a few examples of different schedules in the Appendix section of this resource.

TODAY, WE NEED A CHURCH CAPABLE OF WALKING AT PEOPLE'S SIDE, OF DOING MORE THAN SIMPLY LISTENING TO THEM; A CHURCH WHICH ACCOMPANIES THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY... BUT WE NEED TO KNOW HOW TO INTERPRET, WITH COURAGE, THE LARGER PICTURE.

POPE FRANCIS, WYD RIO DE JANEIRO , 2013

GIVING A TALK

Giving a talk can be tough for people, especially new leaders but talks are the cornerstone of sessions where you have the opportunity to teach your youth about the faith or grow in relationship with them by sharing a testimony. There are few important tips that we have put together to help you become a more effective public speaker and engaging for the youth.

The content:

You may have been asked to speak about a specific topic however if you have a choice, choose a topic that interests you. Deciding what the best topic is can be a challenging process. It is always good to talk about issues that young people are facing in light of the Catholic understanding. Once you have your topic, consider the following tips:

- **Personal anecdotes and humour:** The use of personal anecdotes and humour throughout your talk can help it to become both more relatable and engaging for the young people. If you have stories about your own experience these can be great to use in talks - just make sure that they are on the same topic.
- **Have a clear message:** You should be able to summarise what you want the young people to take away in a couple of sentences. Aim to include only two or three key points.
- **Basic structure:** A talk will be more memorable if you use a clear structure. Start with an introduction outlining what you will speak about and briefly mention the key points you will cover. Only focus on one point at a time and ensure it flows on from the previous point and into the next point. Include a conclusion where you summarise the powerful points and the key message that the young people can take away.

Preparation:

Preparation for talks is essential if you want to give a good talk. Being organised is important if you have enough notice prepare the talk well in advance so that you have time to refine it and make it better.

- **Pray:** Before even putting pen to paper pray for inspiration, it is amazing what God can do with the talks you give, so make sure that you ask for his guidance.
- **Write it out:** Even if you feel like you know exactly what you are going to say writing it out can help order your thoughts into a logical sequence and if your mind blanks when you are speaking you will have something to jog your memory.

- **Practise it aloud:** Sometimes saying things aloud can be harder than it looks on paper – practise any tongue twisters and try and reduce the “ums”!
- **Check how you look:** This can be in front of a mirror, videoing yourself or even ask a friend to watch you and give feedback. This helps you to get a real picture of what the youth will see when you are speaking.

Practical tips on the day:

Even after all the preparation you have done in advance, it's handy to remember the following things on the day that will help the overall delivery of the talk:

- **Arrive early:** This will give you time to check any sound equipment and to set up the room the way you want. It can also reduce any nerves you have!
- **Pray:** Just before giving your talk, say a prayer to the Holy Spirit or your favourite Saint asking for some divine assistance. You can also ask someone else to pray with you or over you.
- **Don't fidget:** You don't have to stand completely stiff - using your space well is very effective, but fidgeting can be really distracting for your audience.
- **Speak slowly:** When you are up the front and a bit nervous time can feel like it is going really quick and you can feel like you are talking too slow. That is almost never the case. Taking breaths and pausing can help you become more understandable.
- **Speak loudly:** Often when people give talks, it is natural for them to mumble. This can make it hard for young people to hear. A good idea would be to situate a leader at the back of the room where he can give signals to the person giving the talk to speak up or to slow down.
- **Smile:** Make sure you smile 😊 This will help you to appear more approachable and relatable.
- **Make eye contact:** Using eye contact with the young people is a lot more engaging than constantly looking down at your notes. Focus on the on the people that are clearly engaged and nodding along - this can help your confidence.
- **Visual aids:** Using a slide show can help the young people follow along with the talk and have a clear idea of the main points from each part of your talk. Other visual aids can help make the talk engaging and memorable too – consider using something funny such as a toy or other prop.



WRITING A TESTIMONY

Giving a testimony can be one of the most powerful ways to reach young people at youth group. Testimonies can bond the leader with the young people and help them to understand they are not alone in the struggles they may be facing. A good testimony should generally go for 3-5mins. A formula that has been tried and tested and has shown good result for when giving a testimony is breaking it up into four different segments: 1) Life before Christ 2) How you came to know Christ 3) How your life was different after your conversion 4) An invitation/challenge to the audience. Make sure that you always stay age appropriate and moderate the details of your story depending on if the crowd is younger or older. Let's break open each of these points a little bit further.

1. Life before Christ

What kind of a person was I socially, spiritually and emotionally before my encounter with Christ? Be sure to be honest about your life before you met Jesus as this may help young people relate to the struggles they are going through. People can also fall into the trap of glorifying or exaggerating their sins. Just be you and be honest.

2. How you came to know Christ

Keep it real. Some people have massive moments where Jesus just makes everything clear to them and if that is you, that is awesome. There are also a lot of people who never have that massive wow! Instead you may have had little moments of recognition over a long period of time. Or you may have never gone that far off the rails. Maybe you still went to Mass and were a good person but you just weren't engaged. Whatever your story may be, it matters and it will touch the heart of young people. You don't need to add flare, just keep it real.

3. How your life was different after your conversion

Make sure, like all the other sections, you are honest. Just because you started a relationship with Jesus doesn't mean that all your problems have gone away. The difference is that now you know that Jesus has paid the price for your sins and there is contentment in that.

4. An invitation/challenge to the audience

Invite the people that you are addressing, to take a step out of their comfort zone and open their hearts to receiving Jesus into their lives in a new way.

Over the years your testimony will change. Apart from your main moment of conversion, you may also be able to share other testimonies about smaller conversions or themes. These can follow the same format as above.

TIPS FOR LEADING SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Small group discussions are a staple of youth ministry which help young people to reflect on a message and explore how it may apply to their own lives. Through a small group discussion the facilitating leader can help young people identify what they liked or disliked from a message, what encouraged or confused them, and challenge them to consider what they have taken from it. It can also be an opportunity where young people can be inspired by their peers and what they are sharing.

A small group discussion is not a place where the leader continues a teaching that has already been given. The focus is on the young people and their responses. Sometimes young people may leave a small group with more questions than they had entering it – that's ok. It's not the small group leader's job to know how to answer every question, though there may be opportunities to follow up some questions after you've done some research. Instead, the leader does something Jesus often did – put questions to people who are seeking and help them name what is moving in their hearts.

Small groups can be used for a number of different purposes. Sometimes if you are asking people to share something quite deep, for example about their prayer life, it might be appropriate to tell the group that you will not be asking any follow up questions. This may help the young people to feel free to share things that they do not want to go into more detail about.

Sometimes a small group may go in a direction where young people share openly about deeply personal situations in their life. As a leader you may need to use your judgement about whether the information being shared is appropriate (considering, for example, the age of the participants and how well they know each other), and you may need to gently re-direct the conversation. Emphasise that the small group is a safe place, where information shared will be kept private in the group, except in situations where a young person has shared that they or others are at risk of harm.

Other times small groups can be quiet and it might feel like a real challenge to get anyone talking. This is ok too, and we've all been there! Don't feel too concerned or discouraged about a challenging small group conversation, and don't feel that you need to fill the gaps with your own talking. Trust that God has used this time, even if you may not be privileged to know how.

When you are facilitating a small group discussion, you are always a witness to Christ. You can share your own experiences but be sensitive to where young people are in their journeys based on their age and life experience.

TIPS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

One

Pray beforehand. Trust that God has allowed you to share in this ministry, and be comfortable just being yourself and bringing whatever knowledge and experience you have to the discussion.

Three

Group size: An ideal small group number is 6-8 people. Make sure everyone is sitting at the same level (i.e. all on chairs, or all on the floor).

Five

Rules: Remind people that the small group is a safe space where what they share will remain in the small group, unless what they share indicates they or another person are at risk of harm.

Two

Be prepared! Have an outline of questions that you would like to ask, and try to memorise these. The questions are just a guide – be attentive to the flow of the conversation and where the Holy Spirit may be leading. Also have on hand resources such as the YouCat to assist you if you need to clarify an area of Church teaching.

Four

Start with a short prayer. You can lead this simply or if you are meeting with the same group of people over time, invite the young people to lead this prayer (preferably give a young person a heads up before small group time).

Six

Ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions do not have a yes/no or true/false answer, but instead probe deeper, asking questions like 'why' or 'how'.

Seven

Listen! This is the space for young people to share, and your attentive listening is an act of love which will help you know your young people more deeply. Let what you are hearing guide your follow up questions.

Nine

Be honest. If you are unsure about the answer to particular questions that asks about Church teaching, don't guess or make it up. Use your YouCat, invite a priest or religious into the discussion, or promise to find out the answer later (and make sure you do follow through on that promise!)

Eleven

Don't be afraid of silence. Sometimes young people need time to think about what they want to say and then time to build up the courage to share. Silence used well can help young people to come out of their shells.

Eight

Ask follow up questions. People may default to surface level answers, so get into the habit of following up with another question. Some examples are: What makes you say that? What do you think about that? How does that make you feel? Sometimes you may want to play devil's advocate a little: What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?

Ten

Body language: non-verbal cues are a massive indicator of how open a young person is to engaging in conversation. Being aware of young people's body language will help you know how to approach them such as asking for their opinion or just leaving them this time.

Twelve

Wrap up: Before the end of the small group time, try to guide the conversation to a place where young people are challenged to apply their insights from the message and group discussion to their own life in the upcoming week.

Thirteen

Be aware of the unfolding group dynamics. Different personalities in your group will influence the discussion in different ways. Be aware of who is in your group and the impact they are having.

- The talker: Hold back some of the stronger personalities through positive acknowledgement and by stating a desire to hear what others have to say.
- The non-talker: Try to help youth participate by using different strategies such as going around in a circle to allow everyone to share an answer. It might be ok to also prompt individuals for their response, especially if you can sense that they are following the discussion attentively. But young people must also have the freedom not to say anything. Don't force young people to talk. If there are some people who haven't said anything offer encouragement by saying something along the lines of "Thanks everyone who has shared and for those who didn't share this time perhaps you might like to share something in our next small group".
- The tangent starter: This person gets the group way off topic! Sometimes it can be worthwhile to follow these seemingly random tangents, as they may lead to areas which are especially relevant to the lives of the young people. At other times you may need to gently re-direct the conversation.
- The theorist: Some people love to question the implications of a particular message in wildly hypothetical scenarios. While this can be fun, it is more valuable to focus your small group discussion on the reality of the lives of the youth and the world around us. Similarly, some young people may distance themselves from personally responding to a message by getting distracted by the ins and outs of Church teaching. Respond simply to the theoretical questions and follow up with questions which challenge them to look at their personal response.

Fourteen

Final prayer: End your time together in a short prayer of thanksgiving. This can be a 'free-style' or you can use a formal prayer such as the Our Father or Hail Mary. From the discussion you may wish to include some of the young people in your own personal prayer in the coming week.



IDEAS FOR PRAYER

At its simplest, prayer is turning our hearts to God. As the whole purpose of our youth ministry is to lead people to God, our ministry cannot be complete without some form of prayer. How you pray with your youth will depend on several factors including: where they are on their faith journey, how long you are gathering for, your group's charism etc. Where possible it's great to expose your young people to lots of types of prayer. Some people will naturally be drawn to pray in one way and others will pray differently. Young people may have a limited idea of prayer and have a negative experience with it. By exposing them to different forms of prayer you can help them connect with God on a deeper level.

When introducing a prayer form that may be new to your young people, don't forget to give them a brief explanation. The following are a range of prayer forms you can try with your youth ministry over the course of the year. In the following sections this resource will provide more information about each.

Praying with scripture:

- Lectio Divina
- Imaginative contemplation

Praying with traditional prayers:

- Rosary
- Divine Mercy Chaplet
- Stations of the Cross

Praying with the church:

- Liturgy of the Hours
- Mass
- Reconciliation
- Adoration

Other forms of prayer:

- Journaling
- Music
- Prayer stations

YOUTH MINISTRY MUST ALSO RESPOND TO CONSTANTLY CHANGING YOUTH CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTS, GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES, TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE.

ANOINTED AND SENT, 2014

INTRODUCTION TO LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina (Latin for Divine Reading) helps us to listen to scripture as a living text which speaks into our lives. This can be a great way of approaching the bible in youth group. The traditional steps of Lectio Divina are:

1. Lectio

Read the Bible text, it doesn't have to be long - a chapter or even a few verses will do. Do this slowly. If you are praying in a group, you can invite two or three different people to take turns reading the text aloud. Remember to give out a copy of the text so people can read along as it is read aloud.

2. Meditatio

This is the meditation stage, where you slowly and gently ponder over the text in your mind. In a group, leave time for silence. Encourage the youth to notice which words or phrases return to them, which stand out. What do these phrases make them think to pray about?

3. Oratio:

Pray in your mind, or out loud, in response to your meditation.

4. Contemplatio:

In this time, we are aware of God's loving presence and listen. Invite the youth to let go of their own words, and be still.

5. Actio:

This is where the text translates into action. How might you respond to the way the text has spoken to you in your actions through the day? You may encourage your young people to share this in a small group or journal about it.

Lectio Divina can be done in a short amount of time or can be extended depending on your schedule. An example of how much time could be dedicated to each part of the Lectio Divina would be:

- Lectio - 5min
- Meditation, Oratio and Contemplation (these parts can all blend into one) - 10min
- Actio - 5min

You may like to give a handout to the young people explaining the steps or you may like to just give more general verbal instructions to the young people.

INTRODUCTION TO IMAGINATIVE CONTEMPLATION

Another way of praying with scripture is through imaginative contemplation. This style of prayer comes from St Ignatius of Loyola, who was certain that God could be found in 'all things', including our imagination.

Contemplating a Gospel scene is not just remembering it or imagining that you go back in time. Through the act of contemplation, the Holy Spirit makes present Jesus' life in a way that is meaningful for who you are now. It is a deeply personal prayer, which unfolds sometimes in surprising and unexpected ways.

In a group, this kind of prayer can be led by a youth leader who has prepared it in advance. It can also be prayed on your own. This is what is involved:

1. Get settled in a comfortable place. Ask God to open your heart and imagination.
2. Read through your chosen piece of scripture slowly taking in the broad narrative of the story. If you need to, re-read the scripture.
3. Close your eyes and set the scene. In your imagination take some time to notice the details of the environment around you. It can be helpful to be guided by the senses: What do you see, hear, feel and smell? Who else is there? Who are you in this scene?
4. Now begin to imagine the scene you have just read about. Who is in it? What is the mood?
5. You may begin to watch what happens as an observer, or you may be an active participant in this. From this point, just let your imagination guide you. Don't worry about details being historically accurate. Pay attention to how you feel at certain moments, and the words which you may say or which are said to you. Trust that God is revealing himself to you.
6. At the conclusion of your time of contemplation, write down in your journal your experience.



ROSARY AND DIVINE MERCY CHAPLET

The Rosary is a well-known traditional prayer of the Church which is prayed on a set of beads. The rosary is composed of formal prayers but in it we draw closer to Mary, the blessed Mother of God, and through her we are invited into the infinite love of Jesus. This prayer can be great for youth groups and generally lasts for about 20-25 minutes.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet is a less known prayer of the Church which is prayed on the same beads as the Rosary. The chaplet of Divine Mercy was revealed by Jesus to a Polish nun St. Faustina. It asks Jesus to shower his mercy on the whole world. It takes about 10-15min to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet which can be great for groups that might not be able to sit still for an entire rosary.

Here are some good ideas when it comes to leading the Rosary and the Divine Mercy chaplet in a youth group setting:

- Make sure each young person has access to the words of each prayer so nobody feels lost.
- Make sure that you have plenty of spare beads for the young people to borrow.
- Ask a different youth to lead a decade.
- Ask the youth to add different intentions to each decade.
- Read aloud a reflection for each decade of the Rosary.

You may like to contact Divine Mercy Publications if you want to get some small pamphlets on the Divine Mercy (there may be a small cost involved). The AOY has a set of 10 Rosary reflection books published by Life-Teen which you can borrow to use with your youth group. See the library section of this handbook for more information on how to borrow.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Since the early Christian tradition, pilgrims visiting Jerusalem would visit the places where Jesus walked and lived. They also spent time visiting and praying along the road where He journeyed to His crucifixion. Over hundreds of years this tradition has developed and we now have a set of stations that we can meditate on and pray with – even when we are not in Jerusalem!

The Stations help us to contemplate the suffering that Jesus experienced and to remember why – His love for us. As we think about Jesus' suffering on the Cross we are also able to unite our own suffering with His. We know that whatever difficulties we are facing, Jesus is there to walk beside us.

There are different versions of the Stations – some include 12 stations, others 14 or 15. It is not too important which version you use however make sure you decide in advance which version you are using so that your resources are all corresponding. Praying the stations with a youth group can be done in a number of ways:

1. Dramatisation

Drama can be a powerful tool in leading young people to prayer as it is very visual and helps them imagine the scene in real life. The Young Christian Students put together a Stations of the Cross manual which was published in the lead up to WYD 2008. This includes youth related reflections and prayers and also includes directions for dramatization. You can download a copy of their manual from here: www.ycw.org.au/Links/Way_of_the_cross.pdf

2. Using your parish church's Stations

Most parishes already have a set of Stations in the church. Take your group to the place of the Stations and pray them whilst meditating on the scenes.

- Make sure you go into the Church beforehand to work out which set of Stations your church includes.
- It may be a good idea to have a hand out for each person to join in with the prayers. The AOY designed a small booklet that you can download from our website via our online resources page.
- If the Stations are displayed on the walls of the church, make a pilgrimage around to each one.

3. Stations of the Cross outside:

This is especially powerful if you are able to go to a peaceful place in nature or a large garden.

- Locate a large wooden cross – this may be something your parish already has or perhaps someone could make one especially.
- As you pray each station, move to a different place in the grounds. You may have a leader who can guide the group on how far to walk in between each station or you may like to put markers up around the grounds in advance with each station labelled.
- Depending on how big your space is, you can walk just a few metres, or even a few hundred metres.
- You can sing a simple, appropriate song as you walk. Alternately you may encourage people to walk in silence.

Don't forget, the AOY also has a large youth cross that you can borrow. Contact the AOY for more information.

GO THEREFORE AND
MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL
NATIONS, BAPTIZING
THEM IN THE NAME OF
THE FATHER AND OF
THE SON AND OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT

MATTHEW 28:19

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

The Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office, is a set of prayers consisting of different Psalms, readings and reflections for every day. The Liturgy of the Hours is broken up into different parts including: the Office of readings, Morning Prayer (Lauds), Mid-morning prayer (Terce), Midday prayer (Sext), Mid-afternoon prayer (Non), Evening prayer (Vespers) and Night prayer (Compline). These prayers are prayed all over the world, every single day by priests, religious and many lay people.

The Liturgy of the Hours is a great tradition of the Church and sadly many young people today have never heard about it. Youth group is a great opportunity to introduce them to this type of prayer. One idea can be to pray a modified version of the prayers as they can be quite lengthy. Instead of praying the whole Vespers maybe pick one reading and two Psalms for that day. Another idea is to invite the Parish Priest to give a testimony about their experience with the Liturgy of the hours. You can access all of the prayers at this website: www.liturgies.net/Liturgies/Catholic/loh/loh.htm#compline.

There are also many apps that have these prayers - one of the best known would be Universalis. This is a free app that can give you the Liturgy of the Hours for that particular day and for a subscription fee, give you the entire year worth of the prayers.

**WHAT CAN WE
DO TO KEEP OUR
HEART FROM
GOING NUMB?
GO FORTH AND
PROCLAIM THE JOY
OF THE GOSPEL.**

POPE FRANCIS CUBA/
USA VISIT SEPT 2015



YOUTH GROUPS AND THE SACRAMENTS

It is important that youth groups embrace the Sacraments whenever possible. The two main Sacraments that a youth group will be able to access are the Eucharist in the form of Mass and Adoration, and Reconciliation.

Adoration

Youth groups can play an important role in fostering a love for Jesus in the hearts of their young people. A great way of going about this is to introduce them to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. It can be hard to get youth and young adults to sit quietly and pray for any period of time but there are some tips that can help you lead an adoration session.

- Give an explanation: It is very important that the youth have an understanding of adoration before starting so you may need to give a brief explanation. One description that can be helpful is the idea that adoration is pressing “pause” on the part of the Mass where the priest holds up the Eucharist. We adore the Body of Jesus who is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.
- Break it up. Don’t just go into a chapel or church and sit down in silence for 30 minutes. You can break this time up into different parts. An example of this could be starting the session with a praise and worship song to help people get into the right head space, followed by a rosary, a scripture reading, a meditation or an Ignatian style imaginative prayer. See the appendix for an example of a Holy Hour run by the AOY, which can be adapted to your group.
- Silence: Make sure that even though there are these options to prayer that there is still times of silence where the youth can pray or reflect personally.
- Add in confession: If a priest is available in this time of adoration, they could administer the sacrament of reconciliation.

Mass

Another way in which a youth group can engage with the sacraments is through Mass. You may like to have a special Mass with just your youth group (e.g. on a retreat day or camp), or you may like to attend the parish Mass as a youth group. Some people going to your group may have never had an experience of going to Mass before so the following ideas can help:

- Explain what is happening: People, especially young people can find Mass boring if they don’t have a good understanding of what is happening in the Mass. Consider preparing your youth by going through a series, whether that be talks or videos, which break open each part of the Mass. Check out the AOY library for resources currently available.

- Follow along: Ensure your young people have access to the words of the responses. If there is no AV in your parish try and find the Order of the Mass cards that most parishes have.
- Sit as a group: It can be daunting attending Mass by yourself. Consider having a pew or a couple of pews where the youth group can sit together during Mass.
- Get involved: Once the youth have an understanding of the Mass it is great to get them involved in different parts. Get them to do the readings or help with collection. This will help them to feel more a part of the community.

The AOY developed a resource to assist those ministering at Mass which may be helpful: <http://www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/MassResourceFA.pdf>

Reconciliation

A great sacrament that is underutilised is the Sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance). Through the Sacrament of Confession we have the opportunity to experience God’s loving mercy in a profound way. If Young people in your group have not been to Reconciliation in a long time, they need to be reminded that God wants to meet them right where they are and forgive them. There is nothing unforgivable. If you are offering Reconciliation to your youth group here are some things you can do to help:

- Introduce the sacrament: Many youth today know very little about this sacrament. If you have time, give a talk at one of your earlier youth group sessions reminding the group about this sacrament. If this is not possible, give a brief explanation on the night.
- What to say: It is important to have available some copies of a resource telling young people what to do to prepare for Confession and what to say in during the Sacrament. Find in the appendix a Guide to going to Reconciliation and an Examination of Conscience which helps them have a better confession.
- Warm them up: Most people need time to become open to participating in this Sacrament. One idea is to hold the Reconciliation within a camp (not on the first night!), during a time of Adoration, or a within a special Mercy Night themed youth group. There is an example run sheet of how a Mercy Night could run in the appendix.
- Priests: Having several priests available provides the young people with an option for who they want to confess to. Whilst we know it is Jesus we confess to, for those who are nervous, they may feel more comfortable going to someone they know – or someone they don’t know! This also reduces the waiting time and it lets more people receive the sacrament.

JOURNALING WITH YOUR YOUTH GROUP

Journaling is simple and it can be a great way for youth to express themselves by slowing down to focus on one thing at a time, perhaps remembering daily events and conversations, putting deep thoughts and emotions into words, or simply having a written conversation with God. There are no strict rules to journaling it can be done in whatever way works best for the youth. Some examples of different ways to journal include: recording experiences, reflecting on prayers and scripture, drawing, or writing to God as if they were sending him a letter. Over time, a journal can become a testament to how God is working in their lives.

Journal entries do not need to be for any other audience than the author and God; this gives them the opportunity to express themselves without the worry of judgement. As with many other things, it's helpful to lead young people in this practise and model how it can be done. Do this by scheduling in journal time during your youth group session and by encouraging the youth to try journaling at home. Don't forget to explain to them why journaling at home can be useful!

Another idea that some youth groups have adopted is giving out a special journal to each young person (they don't have to be expensive, even a simple notebook is fine) and encourage them to write a little each youth group. These are kept confidentially and collected up by the leader at the end of each session so that the young people don't forget to bring them.

When journaling the following steps are useful:

1. Find a quiet place, and take a few moments to make yourself comfortable.
2. Say a short prayer before you begin. Invite the Holy Spirit to be with you.
3. Keep things simple – write whatever comes to mind and don't be too concerned about spelling, grammar or having things sound nice.

**YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET
AND A LIGHT TO MY PATH.**

PSALM 119:105



USING MUSIC IN A YOUTH GROUP SETTING AND MORE!

Praying with music is a deep part of our Catholic tradition. For many young people, music provides an entry into prayer. It provides words with which to pray to God, and when words are not enough, music can express what feels inexpressible. Using music in a youth group setting can be an effective way of engaging all the young people in your group and helping them to pray in a more expressive way. There are many other great ways to incorporate music into your youth group.

Praise and Worship:

All through the Scriptures we are encouraged to praise God and where possible, using song. For this reason, Praise and Worship is a great way to connect with God. Some things to consider:

- Praise and Worship music is often contemporary, but there is also a large treasury of traditional hymns which can be used. Remember to expose young people to different styles – though of course, playing their favourites is more likely to be a winner!
- No matter what style of music you use it is important that you have the words easily accessible either on a handout or on a projector so that all young people can follow along.
- If possible, have a focal point as a symbol of God's presence. This can be an altar, icons, a candle or some other prayer focus. If you have live musicians, ensure they are off to the side to highlight that it is not a performance but rather they are leading the young people in a prayer.
- During Praise and Worship, encourage the young people to use their body in whatever way they feel moved to.

Rev –up:

Consider playing music as your youth arrive or leave. This can serve to get them excited for the session and give them passion as they are leaving. Note – it doesn't have to be "Christian" music (though of course, be aware of the words and make sure they're appropriate). Other groups like to end their youth group night with some dancing - pure fun!

Reflection:

A well-chosen reflective song can be very powerful during a time of prayer. The young people may listen to the words or it may be a good background noise that will help the young people focus on what they are doing. Instrumental music can also be used in this way.

Live music vs recorded

The question of whether you should use a professionally recorded song or get a few talented people to play live music is a bit individual and it really depends on what option fits your youth group better. Playing recorded music is much easier and can allow you access to a huge repertoire of songs. However, you have less flexibility in adjusting the music to the moment. Live musicians can be great, especially if they are experienced however it can be hard to find experienced musicians. Musicians who are still growing in their experience can sometimes be more distracting than helpful so careful discernment is needed.

Starting a youth choir or band

These can be a great ministry – both for the youth involved and those hearing the music. Many young people come to the faith through first being involved in "doing" something. They may be open to joining a choir or band but not interested yet in coming to youth group. These ministries take up quite a lot of time and require separate rehearsals and a certain amount of skill! It is always wonderful to have younger people leading the music at Mass and many parishes would be keen to get a youth band or choir onto the regular roster!

If you are interested in leading music in your youth ministry, the AOY Youth Ministry Library has a large collection of music scores. For beginners, we also recommend the *worshiptutorials* YouTube channel.

Some of our favourite contemporary Catholic artists include:

Fr Robert Galea	Genevieve Bryant	Steve Angrisano	Audrey Assad
Matt Maher	Steven Kirk	Emmanuel Worship	

These artists feature on our Spotify playlist – search for 'AOY favourites'.

Prayer postures:

There are various postures which can help us in our prayer. It might be worth mentioning these to your youth as you teach them about different prayer styles:

- Standing expresses reverence in God's presence.
- Having hands outstretched (this is the 'Orante' position) is a gesture of praise from the earliest days of the church.
- Sitting is focused on being in God's presence and listening to him in your heart.
- Kneeling makes ourselves small before. It shows our dependence on him.
- Prostrating is a stance of deep adoration.
- Folding hands expresses a desire to be united with God. It is also a gesture of petition where we ask something of Him.



PRAYER STATIONS

Prayer stations can be a powerful experience where young people have the opportunity to pray in more interactive ways. This lets the young people pray the way that best helps them encounter God.

Prayer stations consist of setting up a room with different prayer activities in different sections. Prayer stations work well as a reflective activity. When setting up prayer stations it is important to take into consideration the ambience of the room. Dimming the lights and adding quiet music in the background can help. It is a good idea (if possible before the youth enter the room where the stations are), to give an explanation of the prayerful nature of the next activity. It isn't always necessary to explain every individual station, just have some printed instructions at each of the stations, and put the instruction inside of photo frames to make it look better.

Some quick stations could be a Rosary station that has rosary prayer cards, rosary beads and a picture of Mary as a focal point. You could have a Lectio Divina station with instructions on how to pray in this format and a whole lot of scriptures on paper (or bibles). Another idea is a spiritual reading station where there are a range of spiritual books for people just to pick up and read. Here are a few more creative ideas:

1. Idol worship: This prayer station requires playdough and a safe surface for sculpting: "The Lord said to Moses: Thus you shall say to the Israelites: 'You have seen for yourselves that I spoke with you from heaven. You shall not make gods of silver alongside me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. You need make for me only an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt-offerings and your offerings of well-being, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you. (Exodus 20) 'What are some of the idols in your life – possessions, activities, attitudes and relationships that get in the way of your relationship with God? What worries or challenges in your personal life, work, or ministry seem to loom bigger than your trust in God? Use the playdough to create a symbol of those items, then smash this idol as a sign of your desire to move closer to God's centre.'"

2. Forgiveness: For this prayer station, provide a large bowl or dish filled with sand: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3: 12-14)"

As we look into our hearts, there are times when we need to be forgiven and God forgives us. There are times when we need to forgive. God gives us the strength to forgive. How will we respond? By a prayer of thanksgiving? By promising never to do it again? By praying for the person we have forgiven? Reflect on this. Is there something you wish to bring to God to ask forgiveness? Write or draw it in the sand. Ask forgiveness. Then pass your hand through the sand, obliterating the words or images as a symbol of receiving God's forgiveness. Is there something which you should forgive? Write or draw it in the sand. Ask God for the strength to forgive. Smooth the sand. Now, what will be your response be to God's forgiveness working through you? Write or draw your response in the sand and leave it for the next visitor to see."

3. The world: Items needed for this prayer station include a world map, coloured glass beads or rocks, and current news magazines or newspapers: "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day." (Genesis 1)

Take some time to silently focus on the many needs of the world. Perhaps use the surrounding magazines and newspapers for inspiration. Consider how your prayers, offered in this moment, move out and meet at God's centre with the cries for release from those in need around the globe. When you are ready, take one or more stones and place them on the locations on the map that have stirred your prayers today."

One of the best things about prayer stations is there are almost limitless stations that you can create. If you are ever struggling for ideas, google is your best friend! Just type in "prayer stations" and there are hundreds of different options.

GAMES

Games are a very useful tool to have at your disposal when running youth groups. Games are a great high energy way to break down barriers. Games can be used with younger youth to help them burn energy off before moving onto the next activity. They can be used as an ice breaker so that new members can become more comfortable with the other members. Games also give the opportunity for new/younger leaders to take charge by leading the game.

Here is a checklist of things to think about before choosing a game:

- What age group are you ministering to? Younger youth are generally more open to high energy games than older youth which might enjoy something a bit more strategic and lower energy (this is definitely not always the case).
- What do you need to prep? Make sure you take into consideration what you need to play the game, so you know if you need to purchase any equipment or prior set up.
- How long do you want it to go for? This may seem like a minor question but it is important to be aware roughly how long each game you are going to play will run for, especially for scheduling purposes.

Some of the best sources we know for youth group games are:

- Funninja.org
- Youthgroupgames.com.au
- thesource4ym.com/games
- jubed.com

You can also download the Games App from Don Bosco Youth-Net.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUNG PEOPLE'S PASSION AND ENERGY WILL HELP US ALL BECOME MORE FULLY ALIVE AS THE BODY OF CHRIST. BUT ALL OF US ARE CALLED TO A JOURNEY OF CONVERSION, WHICH REQUIRES AN OPEN HEART.

ARCHBISHOP DENIS HART, YEAR OF YOUTH PASTORAL LETTER

IMPORTANT POLICY FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

The Archdiocese of Melbourne is committed to supporting youth ministry which ensures the safety and care for all young people who come into contact with our parishes and communities. In Consultation with the Office for Professional Conduct and Ethics, the Archdiocesan Office for Youth has produced a resource called 'Seriously important things you need to know' to support parishes and organisations in running youth ministry which meets Archdiocesan and legislative requirements around caring for children.

This resource assists parishes and other organisations operation in our Archdiocese in applying *May Our Children Flourish* (the Melbourne Archdiocese Code of Conduct for caring for children) in this specific context of youth ministry. Youth ministry is quite unique as participants may include young people aged over 18 and under 18 together, and leadership teams may include volunteers who are close in age to the young people they are serving.

'Seriously important things you need to know' addresses the following aspects of safety in youth ministry:

- Youth ministry basics - why we run youth ministry
- Leadership and supervision
- Codes of behaviour
- Information collection
- Communications (including social media)
- Venues
- First aid
- Food safety
- Transport
- Responding to incidents

The most updated version of this resource can be downloaded from the AOY website www.cam.org.au/youth/Child-Safety. There are also easy-to-download templates for you to use in creating your own forms and codes of conduct. Please contact the AOY if you have any questions or require more information.

ANOINTED AND SENT

Anointed and Sent is a document which provides vision for ministry with young people aged 12-30 in the Catholic Church in Australia. It calls the entire Church to accompany youth through school and young adulthood and help them find their place in the Church. It calls youth to be more involved in their faith community and grow in their understanding of who they are as the Church of today.

As the Church in Australia continues to grow in experience of youth ministry, this ministry is increasingly focused upon "the new evangelisation" of those young people who are disconnected from the life of the Church, and upon ongoing formation and mission for those who are or may become more connected.

Anointed and sent focuses on "Why?" we engage in youth ministry more than "How?" offering a context for existing ministries and rationale for establishing new ones. It offers a comprehensive vision for the holistic development of maturing disciples.

Anointed and sent archives this through 3 goals for ministry which are:

1. Foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person
2. Draw young people into responsible participation in the life and mission of the Catholic faith community
3. Empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in today's world

Anointed and sent also gives 8 focus areas which all youth ministry should cover:

- Prayer and Worship
- Evangelisation
- Catechises
- Pastoral care
- Community life
- Justice and service
- Leadership development
- Advocacy

If you would like to read *Anointed and Sent*, the document can be found at this website <https://youth.catholic.org.au/anointed-and-sent>

KEY STEPS TO FUNDRAISING

There are so many amazing projects to fundraise for - from supporting youth to attend World Youth Day and ACYF to new youth group resources, to helping out with a Winter Appeal. For big projects, the key is to start fundraising early. If you ever need ideas on what to do for a fundraiser, there are thousands of different ideas on google, give it a look. For more in depth help with fundraising, the AOY has a separate resource full of ideas and planning assistance on our website (www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/FundraisingPack.pdf). But to start you off, here are a few things to remember as you start out:

Expectations/Planning

Fundraising can be tough and can take up a lot of time; therefore it is vital that you work as a team and that each team member knows the expectations of the group. Setting a target for fundraising is crucial not only will this help your team to stay on track but it is a great way to share with other parishioners how you are going and how much you still have to go. When fundraising it is important to plan thoroughly each event that you are going to be running. You must have realistic expectations for the amount of money each event will produce. For example, a bake sale isn't likely to bring in over \$750 (depending on who you are selling to), whereas a ball or a dinner dance will require more work but could potentially make you up to \$4000 or more. It is also crucial that you know your audience - what is the demographic? What would they enjoy? If the majority of your parish is over 50 years old, holding a dodgeball tournament after Sunday Mass probably won't be as effective as holding a bake sale or running a car wash.

Promotion

Promotion is key! It is a good idea to use every opportunity to promote your fundraiser. Some fundamental ways to promote are: putting your event in the parish bulletin, asking your parish priest if he could make an announcement at the end of Mass or if you could come up and share a little bit about what you are fundraising for and the events that you are holding, tell the parishioners the difference every donation is making and that it is helping your group achieve their goal. Social media, (plaster your event over Facebook, Instagram, even your parish website) is great but nothing beats a personal message or email to encourage people to come along.

Ideas

The different ideas that can help fundraise money are almost limitless. One idea that often gets looked over is writing a personal letter to parishioners and local organisations letting them know what you are fundraising for and that any donation would go a long way in helping your cause. There are three categories in which fundraising can be done. The first is selling and this can include bake sales, sausage sizzles, creating custom mugs and raffle tickets etc. There is also services that can be used to fundraise. This could include doing a car wash at Mass, helping out with gardening or even hiring out a youth for a day to do odd jobs. The final category is events. This can include parish dinners, dance and trivia nights. Events will take a lot of work but have a potential to have a big payoff. Whenever planning an event make sure that you know your audience.

Follow up and thankfulness

It is a good idea to write a short article highlighting the project/event that you held and how much money you have made. This can be put into the parish bulletin, Facebook or the parish website. People like to be acknowledged and a personal thankyou to those who donated goes along way.

“FUNDRAISING IS PROCLAIMING WHAT WE BELIEVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE OFFER OTHER PEOPLE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE WITH US IN OUR VISION AND MISSION.”

FUNDRAISING AS MINISTRY, HERI NOUWEN

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS FOR LEADERS

It is important for leaders to also be ministered to and although the opportunity comes around a lot less, leaders must remember why they are doing this good work. Here we have provided a couple of scripture reflections where leaders have the opportunity to think about their own personal call to this ministry and how they as a youth group keep Christ at the centre.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17)

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter; "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.



Questions for reflection:

- What is the purpose of our youth ministry?
- What are the most important values in our youth ministry?
- What do we do that sets us apart?
- Who do we currently serve?
- Who do we wish to serve?

Jesus Calls His First Disciples (Luke 5:1-11)

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Questions for reflection:

- When did you first hear the call to follow Christ?
- When did you feel called to become involved in youth ministry?
- Where do you feel challenged in your life to live as a disciple?
- What is your prayer for today?

OUR LIBRARY

The AOY Youth Ministry Library is a collection of books, DVDs, CDs, song sheets and other resources that you can borrow to use in your youth ministry or for your own personal development. We have resources on catechises, love and sexuality, youth ministry, music, prayer, spirituality, and more!

Anyone who is a youth ministry leader in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is welcome to borrow from the library. You will need to provide your personal contact details, and the contact details of the parish or community in which you serve.

You can borrow books and song sheets for four weeks, and DVDs and CDs for two weeks out but if you need more time, just let us know. Programme materials which are designed to run over a number of sessions can be borrowed for longer periods.

When you borrow an item from the Youth Ministry Library we'll give you our reply paid address so you can return items free of charge. You can also contact us at 03 9287 5565 to arrange a drop off time at our office or at Six30 Holy Hour.

If you are after resources about a topic that we haven't covered, contact us! We'd love you to tell us what kinds of resources would be most useful to your youth ministry.

Check out our catalogue online under library in our resource menu on our website www.cam.org.au/youth/Resources/Library

**THE LORD DOES NOT KEEP HIS DISTANCE,
BUT IS NEAR AND REAL. HE IS IN OUR
MIDST AND HE TAKES CARE OF US.**

POPE FRANCIS, CZESTECHOWA MASS HOMILY 2016

APPENDIX

YOUTH GROUP TEMPLATE SCHEDULES

1. This can be used for a younger group that like playing games and have shorter attention spans

Time	Activity
6pm	Welcome
6.30	Long game
7.30	Intro prayer
7.35	Activity to lead into a talk
7.50	Talk
8.00	Game
8.15	Supper
8.45pm	End

2. This can be used for an older group that helps come to youth group for formation more than games

Time	Activity
7pm	Welcome
7.15	Intro prayer
7.20	Video resource
7.50	Group discussion
8.10	Activity (can be based on the resource)
8.30pm	End

3. This can be used for a prayer night

Time	Activity
7pm	Welcome/ grace /dinner
7.45	Talk
8.00	Prayer/reflection session
8.25	Final prayer
8.30pm	Game

GOING TO CONFESSION

Before you go... Spend some time in prayer reflecting on what sins you have committed since your last confession. This is called an 'examination of conscience' and can help you identify areas where you need forgiveness and healing. You can write down the sins you wish to confess to help you remember. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your examination of conscience, and also to help you confess all your sins during your confession. When you enter the confessional, you can also ask the priest – who really represents Jesus – to guide you.

Examination of Conscience

I have sinned through my own fault...

- God – Is Jesus the Lord and centre of my life, or have I made gods out of money, possessions, pleasure or entertainment?
- Neighbour – Are there people towards whom I bear malice or who I am angry with? Do I fail to respect and honour people such as my parents, or those who hold authority in society?
- Self – Do I respect the freedom that God has given me and use it for good? Do I try to avoid all occasions of sin and temptations? Am I complacent about my sins, even the ones which seem less important, and don't try to overcome them?

In my thoughts and in my words...

- God – Have I misused the name of God or Jesus or Mary, or spoken badly of sacred things?
- Neighbour – Have I had envious, malicious or uncharitable thoughts of others? Have I spoken badly or unkindly of others? Have I spoken untruthfully about others? Have I gossiped or ruined peoples' reputation?
- Self – Do I seek to be humble, and accept myself as loved by God? Am I anxious about my past failings and areas of weakness?

In what I have done...

- God – Have I put my faith in Jesus as Lord or have I sought guidance through superstition or magic? Have I dabbled with evil spirits or witchcraft?
- Neighbour – Have I stolen others' property, and not given to others what is theirs? Have I respected and promoted the life and dignity of others, or have I intentionally caused harm or pain to others? Have I accepted Christ's teaching about not killing or have I had or encouraged others to have an abortion? Do I drive with safety and due care for others?
- Self – Have I told lies or tried to act in a way which is not true to myself? Do I intentionally sin by seeking sexual pleasure, alone, with others or in my thoughts

or conversations? In prayer do I seek myself and my own spiritual experiences rather than seeking God for his sake?

In what I have failed to do...

- God – Have I worshipped God, going to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation? Have I received communion properly and been regularly to confession?
- Neighbour – Have I failed to care for the poor, the downtrodden and those less fortunate than myself? Have I failed to promote life, failed to respect confidentiality and secrets, failed to defend those who are unfairly treated?
- Self – Do I look after my body, the Temple of the Holy Spirit?

Inside the Confessional:

1. The Priest will often begin with the Sign of the Cross or a greeting and blessing. You begin by saying “Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been (how long) since my last confession. These are my sins...”
2. You can state your sins simply, naming them and the number of times the sin was committed. If you can’t remember, just give an approximation (eg – often, more than I can remember). If you feel there is an important detail which shows the seriousness of a sin, then you can name that. Have courage- Jesus is very near to you!
3. At the end of your confession, say something like “For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry.” This will let the priest know that you are finished.
4. The Priest will usually speak with you about what you have confessed and he may ask questions to clarify.
5. The priest will give you a penance, which is something that you need to do as a response to God’s mercy. A penance can help us grow in following Jesus and help us avoid sinful choices in the future.
6. The priest will ask you to make an act of contrition. You can say the following or something similar: Oh my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against You. Because you are so good and with your help, I will not sin again.
7. The priest will extend his hands over you and pray the prayer of absolution: God the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of His Son has reconciled the worlds to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. You respond: Amen
8. The priest will say something like: God has freed you from your sin. Go in peace. To which you can reply Thanks be to God.
9. After you leave the confession, take some time to do your penance. Thank God for meeting you in this beautiful sacrament!

HOLY HOUR RUNSHEET

- 6.30pm Start with an entrance Hymn while the priest processes in and the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.
- 6.35pm Welcome: The priest gives a brief personal introduction before a time of silent adoration. The priest lets the people know that they can kneel or sit down during Adoration.
- 6.40pm Adoration
- 6.45pm Reading: the priest reads aloud reading (usual the Gospel of the day and then does a Homily/Teaching:
- 7.05pm Prayer of repentance*
Hymn
Silence (few min)
Prayer of intercession*
Hymn
Silence (few min)
Prayer of thanksgiving*
Hymn
- 7.25pm Benediction: The priest moves towards the altar and the Benediction hymn is started. The Blessed Sacrament is incensed and Benediction takes place. The Divine Praises are said. Once the Blessed Sacrament is reposed the recessional hymn is begun.
Recessional hymn

Appropriate time for any announcements

Marian hymn

7.35pm Quiet prayer and Confession continue.

*The prayers of repentance, intercession and thanksgiving are led by the priest. These can be in any form of their choosing e.g. some simple words spoken from the heart, a formal prayer of the church (such as the Kyrie or Hail Mary etc.) or the words/ reflection from a favourite Saint or text.

MERCY NIGHT SCHEDULE FOR YOUTH GROUP

Time	Activity
15mins	Gather as usual (including warm up games – if desired)
5mins	Move to the church and encourage young people to sit up the front all together
5mins	Opening song or songs (start with songs that are upbeat)
5mins	Short talk on Adoration (what it is, how you pray – i.e. you can sit or kneel etc.)
10mins	Short testimony from a leader about a time when they've experienced God's mercy in their lives
35mins	Expose Blessed Sacrament. Have times of silence and times of quiet music. Have confessions available. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up candles at the front for young people to come forward and light. • Written prayers e.g. write down a message to God asking/thanking him for His mercy. • Prayer teams – e.g. have two leaders sit at the back available to pray quietly with young people who are interested. • Scripture quotes with a mercy theme for young people to collect
5mins	Benediction
10mins	Finish time in the church with an upbeat song of praise
20mins	Gather for supper in church hall/ foyer

IT IS THE YOUNG WHO WANT TO BE THE PROTAGONISTS OF CHANGE. PLEASE, DON'T LEAVE IT TO OTHERS TO BE THE PROTAGONISTS OF CHANGE. YOU ARE THE ONES WHO HOLD THE FUTURE! YOU... THROUGH YOU THE FUTURE IS FULFILLED IN THE WORLD

POPE FRANCIS, VIGIL, WYD RIO DE JANEIRO, 2013

ARCHDIOCESAN
OFFICE
FOR

Youth



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

Produced by the Archdiocesan Office for Youth, an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

 Archdiocesan Office For Youth |  @aoymelb |  aoymelb |  www.cam.org.au/youth

The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults