

Evaluation for the National Symposium on Effective Youth Ministry Practices in Catholic Parishes

This event brought together parish leaders, diocesan leaders, publishers, training organizations and national membership organizations. Overall, the Symposium was evaluated highly as an important event for youth ministry and a needed boost for the development of effective youth ministry practices. Participants felt that this kind of conversation is very needed and overdue. They particularly noted that gathering people across the spectrum of those who are involved in leadership of youth ministry was crucial to this conversation and needs to continue. Participants also noted people and organizations to include in future discussions.

Summary of Evaluation and Summary Comments

Many of participants expressed that they felt honored and affirmed to be part of the conversation.

Having dialogue and shared understanding on these issues is important and needed.

- Participants were reminded of the importance of gathering the different voices together to focus on youth ministry.
- Participants expressed confidence that this dialogue will achieve enhanced ministry and affirmed the need for continued conversations.
- Participants noted that there is a need for greater collaboration and conversation among national agencies. (Some people were surprised by the surfacing of “turf” issues.)
- Participants noted a need for feedback to publishers.

Overall, there were positive comments about the atmosphere, the flow and the content of the symposium.

- Participants appreciated the prayer, hospitality and friendly environment of the event.

Symposium participants appreciated the qualitative research approach.

- Many participants enjoyed learning about qualitative research and found that the practice matched with a ministry approach.
- Participants appreciated hearing the quotations from the youth, adult leaders and parish staff members.
- It was inspiring and informative to hear “stories” of best practices in real parishes.

Some participants were critical of the format for sharing the research process and findings.

- Participants expressed a desire for additional time in small group discussion and less time in large group presentation.
- A concern was expressed that too much time was taken in explaining the research process and sharing the results.

In general, participants resonated with the findings and felt affirmed in the overall direction and vision for youth ministry.

- The convergence among the youth, parish staff and adult leaders pointed towards effective practices.
- Some participants noted that they were surprised that they weren't surprised by the identified practices. They were expecting to hear unfamiliar strategies and programs. Instead they were affirmed in many of the current directions in ministry.

Within the evaluation, participants affirmed a comprehensive vision for youth ministry as presented in *Renewing the Vision*.

- It was noted that “we have come so far but we have too far to go.”
- The effective practices reflected the vision.

Findings from Participants in Summary and Evaluation:

- Good Youth Ministry is good parish ministry – the two are interlinked.
- The coordinator of youth ministry is the “animator” of ministry for youth.
- It is important to listen more to Coordinators of Youth Ministry.
- Spirituality is an important element of youth ministry and an important need of youth ministry leaders at all levels.
- Ministry to families needs to be explored further.
- There is a need for greater collaboration among parish staffs.

Leaders at all levels talked about a process for integrating the findings from this research into their ministry

- Parish leaders talked about ways to reflect upon current practices, assess strengths and identify ways to grow youth ministry utilizing the effective practices framework.
- Diocesan leaders talked about listening to parish leaders and seeking out ways to support all parishes in developing effective youth ministry.

The symposium participants recommended that

- The results of this project should be shared with diocesan directors of youth ministry, Youth Ministry Leaders, Clergy, Bishops, and Others who collaborate in youth ministry.
- Processes be developed for local and regional conversations and dialogue about effective youth ministry.
- We publish a book that shares the findings and
 - is accessible, easy to read and stated in real language
 - explains practices to the inexperienced leader
 - includes reflection tools and a parish assessment tool with suggestions for implementing enhanced practices.
- We publish findings and tools on a website.

Areas that need continued research:

- Effective practices in diocesan youth ministry
- Faith formation / catechesis – (Note: These areas need more definition of terms.)
- Ministry with families of adolescents
- Collaboration
- Technology in youth ministry
- Ethnic and racial diversity / multiculturalism
- Ministry with youth who don't come to programs
- Spirituality in youth ministry

Goals / Outcomes for the Symposium

Please rate the effectiveness of the symposium in achieving each of these outcomes by circling one answer.

Explore the key findings within the research process and identify connections to their experience and the vision and practice of Catholic youth ministry.				
<i>Not effective</i>	<i>moderately effective</i>	<i>effective</i>	<i>very effective</i>	
1	15	21		
<i>Average Rating:</i>		3.54 (effective to very effective)		

Identify observable practices and behaviors that promote the practices as identified in the themes and key findings of the research process.				
<i>Not effective</i>	<i>moderately effective</i>	<i>effective</i>	<i>very effective</i>	
1	5	17	13	
<i>Average Rating:</i>		3.15 (effective to very effective)		

Identify practical and strategic ways to support parishes in developing effective ministry with adolescents.				
<i>Not effective</i>	<i>moderately effective</i>	<i>effective</i>	<i>very effective</i>	
12	20	5		
<i>Average Rating:</i>		2.81 (moderately effective to effective)		

Processes and Presentations

How effective did you find the following elements in helping us to accomplish our goals for the Symposium? (Please circle one. 1 = low – not effective / 5 = high – very effective)

Presentations about Qualitative Research				
1	2	3	4	5
1	4	3	13	15
<i>Average Rating:</i>			4.04	

Presentation of Research Findings and Break-out Groups						
1	2	2.5	3	4	4.5	5
	3	1	4	12	1	16
<i>Average Rating:</i>				4.01		

Theme Exploration – Group Work				
1	2	3	4	5
		6	10	19
<i>Average Rating:</i>			4.25	

Renewing the Vision Correlation – Group Work				
1	2	3	4	5
	3	8	15	11
<i>Average Rating:</i>			3.91	

Research Implications – Kindred Group Work				
1	2	3	4	5
			15	23

Average Rating:	4.62
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Large Group Dialogue and Summary					
1	2	3	4	5	
		4	12	21	
Average Rating:			4.45		

Other Aspects of Symposium

Hospitality					
1	2	3	4	5	
			2	35	
Average Rating:			4.68		

Symposium Site / Location / Housing / Meals *					
1	2	3	4	4.5	5
		2	15	1	18
Note: *One comment gave the Hotel site a 1 and the rest a 5.					
Average Rating:			4.46		

Prayer and Liturgy					
1	2	3	4	5	
	1	1	5	30	
Average Rating:			4.73		