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# Involving Youth in Ministries of Service

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**INVOLVING YOUTH IN MINISTRIES OF SERVICE**

A Pastoral Project  
presented to the Pastoral Institute  
University of the Incarnate Word  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in  
Religious Studies

by

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## MY THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

I still remember clearly the long winding driveway up to the little church on the hill. The bare branches on the many trees swayed and cast moonlit shadows on the white walls of the church. Outside it was dark and a little scary. Inside, despite the same branches dancing at the windows, it felt safe and familiar. This early memory of accompanying my father to the Stations of the Cross has never left me. As we traveled down one wall of the church and up the other, I comprehended very little of the mystery we were proclaiming in that devotion. Decades later it would become the epitome of what it means to live as a member of Christ's church. The paschal love demonstrated by Jesus calls us to live sacrificially for others that they may experience God's abundant life and hasten toward the resurrection (USCCB, *Co-workers* 39).

In our journey from baptism to an adult faith, we are given opportunities to respond to God's call to proclaim the faith and serve the Church. As we begin to act intentionally on behalf of the Church for the benefit of others, we build up the body of Christ, and we enter into that communal but deeply personal action that we refer to as ministry (Cahalan 109).

In this essay I will first explore the dynamic ebb and flow between communion and mission that mark a life of ministerial service. I will look at our faith journey as a path of continual conversion, nurtured by the liturgy and the bonds of community, expressed through acts of service, and guided by the Holy Spirit. Then, noting the positive effect of service on spiritual development, particularly in adolescents, I will suggest a catechetical approach for

youth that assists them in connecting the life of the Church with their life in the world.

Finally, I hope to encourage parish leaders to promote relationships of service within their communities as a means of increasing participation in the work of the Church.

The U.S. Bishops profoundly stated that “in the Church we are all at one and the same time brought into communion and sent on mission” (USCCB *Co-workers* 20). There is an equality and inclusivity to that communion that should keep us humble, ground us in the Eucharist, and remind us that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. As individuals we may feel inconsequential in the grand scope of God’s plan, but we are not. As a parish we may feel that our efforts are futile in light of the challenges to our beliefs that we face in the secular world, but they are not. One single church contains within it the entire universal Church; it contains the whole reality (Wood 164). Our efforts have the prayers of the whole church behind them. The spiritual communion of the Body of Christ binds, strengthens, and centers us in the Lord as we are sent from church to make a difference in the world.

It is difficult to imagine a life of Christian service without the Eucharist. In *A Place at the Table*, the U.S. Bishops declare, “It is at this altar of sacrifice that we hear the saving word of Christ and receive his Body and Blood. It is Christ’s sacrificial meal that nourishes us so that we can go forth to live the Gospel as his disciples” (1). The liturgy strengthens us by allowing us to encounter Christ in the Word, in the Eucharist, and in the community so that we can witness with our lives what God has done for us in Christ. As Gabriel Moran states, “Revelation of God in Christ can be found everywhere in life, but to truly meet Christ, the encounter in the Eucharist is the peak; all others are on the slope” (99). Through the sacraments and the liturgy, the Church nourishes and strengthens its people individually and

as community. Moments of conversion are sustained by receiving and becoming the Body of Christ (Fleming 120). "Do this in memory of me" cannot end with the breaking and sharing of the bread and wine. It impels us to extend the spirituality of the Eucharistic meal—outside the liturgical celebration (Austin 188).

Authentic ministry always imitates Christ (Rathschmidt 142). After his baptism in the Jordan River, prior to beginning his public ministry, Jesus retreated to the desert to pray. Our own efforts in ministry must likewise begin with prayer. Throughout his ministry—of healing, preaching, and teaching, Jesus focused on relationships. His encounters with the Samaritan woman, Zaccheus, Nicodemus, and others demonstrate his ability to connect with his listener first, then deliver his message in the context of that connection, and subsequently lead them to conversion. Jesus communicated his message as determined by the situation of the hearer. Jesus models for us the prayerfulness and humility required to do God's will. He teaches us that the communion he desires for his followers is meant for all people, regardless of their economic status, gender, past sins, or disabilities.

In our ministerial efforts we will meet people at all stages of spiritual development, faith knowledge, attitudes and practice. The common bond they share is the desire to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. I believe that as ministers we best assist them by guiding them to encounter Christ in the Eucharist and to imitate him in service to others. We have the greatest chance of accomplishing this when our ministry agendas include liturgical prayer and outreach to those in need—to teach by example as Jesus did. These actions of individuals, ministries, parishes and the Church universal are not unaided, but prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit. Having looked at the importance of Eucharist and service to ministry, we now reflect on the workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the minister.

My childhood notion of the church as a mysterious but safe place has evolved considerably as I have grown in my relationship with Jesus Christ and begun to understand what it means to be part of his Body. Initially, the Church was simply an institution that I visited weekly out of obligation and well-formed habit. That image is far from the one depicted in the *Acts of the Apostles* or in the *Gospel According to Mark* which portray the church as a community of disciples who practice the servant-leadership of Christ (Matera 4). My perception of church was certainly not the one presented by the Second Vatican Council: that of a people continually journeying with and toward the God who constantly called out to it (Ratzinger 76). A single unfolding mystery, it encompasses the human and the divine into one complex reality (Komonchak 77). Each individual believer integrates a variety of images or models of church to form their own unique perception of that reality.

To the society in which it functions, the Church is called to be a sign of God's saving love, an instrument of that love, and a beacon of justice and hope (Sullivan 137). Jesus Christ is the perfect manifestation of God's love for us. The Church he founded has the responsibility to share that love and be the manifestation of Christ to the world. *Lumen Gentium* opens with the proclamation that "Jesus Christ is the light of the nations." That statement does not allow the Church to remain behind closed doors, but challenges it to radiate the light and the love of Christ to every corner of the world. Komonchak sees the genesis of the Church as a moment in or a dimension of the genesis of the world. "Its very existence is supposed to make the world different" (77). I imagine that this conviction is what drives most of us who are involved in Church ministry—we firmly believe the Church, centered in Jesus Christ, gives the world hope that would not be present without it. This is precisely why the Church must continue to proclaim the love and mercy of God, defend the

poor and the unjustly treated, and continually discern how best to make the Gospel relevant in the lives of people today. That effort requires cooperation with the Holy Spirit, through whose abiding gift the Church maintains fidelity to this mission (Sullivan 218).

Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The Church continues his work through the community of believers who, nourished by the Word and the Body and Blood of Christ, and gifted by the Spirit, go out to be Christ to others. The Church is the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and voice of Christ. Moran reminds us that God's continuous and conscious relationship with humanity, his divine revelation which culminated in Jesus Christ, remains a reality because of the work of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers (62). The Spirit that came at Pentecost and filled the believers with the desire and the courage to go out and spread the good news is alive and working in the Church today. Our task in ministry is to avail ourselves to be instruments of that Spirit. St. Paul cautions numerous times to not grieve the Holy Spirit by creating obstacles to the gospel of Christ (Eph 4:30, 1Cor 9:12). As "co-workers in the vineyard" we invite and accompany, trusting that God can use any circumstance as an entry point to the path of conversion and any one of us as a faith-witness to others.

For the past ten years I have had the privilege of coordinating the Faith Formation programs at St. Anthony Marie de Claret in Kyle, Texas. My initial motivation for working in ministry was to impart knowledge. I had left the Church earlier in my life in search of something different, spent some years in the Bahai Faith, and eventually rediscovered the Catholic Church after rediscovering Jesus in a non-denominational church community. I was convinced that had I truly understood my faith—had I learned it better—I would not have left. I assumed others contemplating a search into other faiths or denominations simply

needed more knowledge about the treasure they already possessed. I felt strongly called to the ministry of catechesis and responded to that call with great enthusiasm. Working with hundreds of families, students ranging in age from pre-K through adult, classes for the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking, catechists with a wide range of skills and experience, several pastors and personnel changes has given me a renewed perspective on how ministry happens in the Church. My priority of imparting knowledge has given way to what must be the primary goal in ministry: helping others to encounter Christ.

Mark Markuly believes that most people struggle to connect church doctrine and the practical challenges of daily living (56). I have observed this disconnect between faith and life in all age groups, but it is seemingly more prominent in our young people. Desmond D'Abreo describes this disconnect as an iron wall that has separated the life of faith from the secular life (214). Our ministry should be one of bridge building between these two sectors to the point where life is lived through the lens of faith. Students must be enabled to encounter Christ who lives, speaks, and acts in his Church through the witness of the lives of the faithful (D'Abreo 212).

Catechetical ministers have a unique opportunity to provide that witness and show students that the faith we profess is not separate from the way we live. Our catechesis must extend outside textbooks and be action oriented if we want it to incarnate in the realities of our students' lives (D'Abreo 214). I am convinced that we have in parish life itself the components of a dynamic formation program which can engage believers and draw them into responsible participation in the parish community. Cahalan states that one becomes a minister by entering into and being established in relationships of service (157). I believe that within that concept lies great potential for fostering continual conversion.



One of my observations of the various church ministries is that they tend to function as independent entities within the parish community. While ministers become very involved within the confines of their particular group, there is often little interaction between groups. Parishioners view the activity of a given ministry as work specific to the members of that ministry, not a responsibility shared by all. This attitude is especially prominent in catechesis, where faith formation is seen as an activity that takes place in the classrooms. The reality is that the whole community catechizes by living out their interpersonal relationships in a way that gives a faith-witness. For instance, when the ushers and greeters embody the qualities of love and acceptance shown by Jesus in the gospels, and bring these to their relationships, they help others understand how Jesus loves and accepts them.

The involvement of the community is vitally important to successful ministry. The Body of Christ living out in a particular time and place the love of the risen Christ facilitates conversion (Hearne 9). It is the community that teaches us love, respect and forgiveness, and which prepares us to serve. Without the support and fellowship of the community, we are undernourished spiritually (Fleming 120).

I previously mentioned that parish life contains the components of a dynamic formation program. The catechetical ministry is in prime position to bring together members of the parish community who otherwise might not interact. Creating opportunities for adults to teach by mentoring and students to learn by doing give faith formation a new face. More importantly it gives students a way to apply the teachings of their faith to life.

Kerygma (proclamation) increases the effectiveness of all ministry efforts because it opens the heart of the hearer to respond to the Word of God. It is easy to get consumed in the work of the ministry and forget to proclaim the good news that is the reason for our joy and

our actions. The call for the New Evangelization reminds us that there are believers in our liturgical celebrations that need to hear the message anew. The catechetical ministry is especially complementary to kerygma because once the initial acceptance of the Gospel message occurs, catechetical efforts make that commitment to faith more conscious, living, and active in the new believer (Ramey 687).

The richness of our faith provides many avenues for spiritual growth. One of the most beneficial to the ministry of catechesis is service because it portrays faith in action and it makes the teachings of the Church relevant for learners. Just as the Church universal must engage with the world to witness to the Gospel, we must not allow our faith life to be something set apart, but instead to witness to our beliefs within our own circle of influence. One of the most effective ways to witness is service. Service enhances spiritual growth both individually and communally (Canales 8). For teenagers, it may be the critical piece. Jane Lindle, in assessing spiritual growth in adolescents, concluded that opportunities for service are necessary in the development of a young person's spirituality (Canales 8). Also, a 1993 Search Institute study showed service involvement to be a key factor in nurturing a young person's growth in faith (Benson 15). In my work with children and teens in faith formation, I have observed that they learn best through participation and subsequent discussion. John Westerhoff calls this learning by praxis the only satisfactory method for discipleship (60). The qualities we wish students to develop as disciples emerge when ministry is rooted in relationships where those qualities are modeled and faith is made tangible.

We have discussed the important roles of the Eucharist, catechesis, the community, and service in sustaining conversion to Christ and creating a sense of belonging to his church. Church is who we are—a people called by God, gathered in Christ and gifted in the Spirit

that comes together to journey in an imperfect world to a perfect end. Children of a loving and merciful God who has given us Jesus Christ, the pathway to salvation, we gather weekly to offer all that we are and receive all that he is “so we may continue to move forward under the sign of hope” (Ratzinger 76). Ministry is what we do in service to the community to build up the Body of Christ. It is about encounter and witness—helping others to discover the presence of Christ in their everyday situations, within themselves and in their neighbor, and encouraging them to share that joy with others. Ministry involves sacrifice, humility, and attentiveness to the needs of others. *Lumen Gentium* provides those in ministry with a very lofty goal: to follow in the footsteps of Christ, conforming to his image by doing the will of God in all things, devoting themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. By these holy actions we consecrate the world to God (34). May his kingdom reign!

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## PROJECT PROPOSAL

I am currently serving the parish of St. Anthony Marie de Claret as the Director of Religious Education. Prior to outlining this proposal, I assessed the strengths and weaknesses within our catechetical programs, looked at the dynamics of the St. Anthony community, and discussed the project with our pastor to obtain his preferences. The common thread of concern was the lack of involvement and presence of the youth in the life of the parish. I decided to design and implement a pastoral project, using my ninth grade class as the pilot group, which would allow students to serve alongside adult leaders in existing outreach ministries within the parish. In my reading on adolescent spirituality there is agreement that service is important to youth, and it is one of the better ways to positively influence spiritual growth. One of the goals of our confirmation preparation program is to develop in our teens a heart of service. For these reasons, I believe that the most effective area to integrate the youth into the community is to add to the curriculum a service unit in outreach ministry.

My intention is to identify the parish ministries and organizations that perform outreach, invite the leaders of each to come to our class and present an overview of their services, have the students select the ministries in which they are most interested in participating, and then assign them to a ministry for a period of six weeks. Students and parents will be contacted by the leader with details on meetings or events in which they will participate. Both leaders and students will receive forms on which to log participation, and an evaluation form to complete once the project is finished. Students will be given a pre- and post-survey to assess religious attitudes and practices. Class time will be devoted to the Works of Mercy, the scripture from

Matthew on the Judgment of the Nations, and Catholic Social Teaching. I have chosen the liturgical season of Lent to provide further emphasis on charity and sacrifice.

It is my hope that this project will become an annual addition to the ninth grade year in religious education, and that through it teens will feel an increased sense of belonging to their parish. Participation in this outreach ministry project will give the youth an opportunity to serve the poor, the incarcerated, the elderly, and others in need of assistance. Through this experience in applied learning they will see faith in action—both in ministry leaders and themselves.

## PROPOSAL POINTS

### PASTORAL SETTING

Kyle, Texas, located about twenty miles south of Austin, is one of a series of towns along a very busy interstate highway. Kyle has seen remarkable growth in the past fifteen years as the population has increased by 500%. The rapid residential growth has stimulated the construction of numerous new retail stores and restaurants. Socioeconomic reports from the year 2013 indicate that Hispanics make up greater than half of the population, and the median household income is \$76,000 per year. St. Anthony Marie de Claret Catholic Church has been an integral part of the community for over 100 years. St. Anthony currently has about 2000 families in its active registry.

For the past ten years I have served as Director of Religious Education at St. Anthony, making it the ideal site for my pastoral project. My responsibilities include all aspects of faith formation for children, teens, and adults. Our current enrollment is just shy of 1200 students. Faith formation has a crucial role in one's faith journey because it is the catechesis that sustains the conversion that occurs when there is a true encounter with Christ. Since many of our students have not had that "encounter" experience, our programs and processes must strive to provide opportunities for them to discover Christ in their everyday lives. It is my hope that this pastoral project will be one such opportunity.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Implementing a systematic plan for religious education within the parish community requires attention to diocesan policies, discussions with the pastor to obtain his preferences,



knowledge of parish precedents, and a good grasp of who is in the parish community, what their needs are, and how resistant they are to change. Although there is always a base curriculum (generally published materials approved by the diocesan bishop), faith formation is never solely an academic process. Knowledge of Christ and the doctrine of the Church he founded are important for proper promulgation of the faith. Moving from the stage of knowing about Christ to knowing Christ requires more than memorization of prayers and faith facts. There must be transformation of the heart. Thus, our faith formation programs necessarily blend the didactic with the relational, and make faith relevant to life.

Studies looking at spiritual development in adolescents during the 1980's, as well as in 2008, show that the majority of adolescents care about a relationship with God (Davis 269). They worry that they do not feel close to Christ (Davis 269), and report that they do not put their spirituality into practice (Grossoehme 71). As catechists and fellow parishioners, we have the responsibility to seek ways for our teenagers to encounter Christ. In the document *Renew the Vision*, the U.S. Bishops highlight the importance of creating spiritual experiences that allow young people to have that encounter through community. Ultimately we want to work toward the goal of drawing our young people into responsible participation in the life and mission of the Church. This statement by the USCCB, the declaration of the Year of Mercy by Pope Francis, and my research on adolescent spirituality led me to propose a project within our high school group that would lead to greater participation in the community through service in outreach ministries.

My position on staff and my current role within the Religious Education program as catechist for a group of 30 teenagers made a pastoral project with my class as the pilot group the most feasible plan. One of the observations that I have made during my time with these

teens is that there is a disconnect between their faith and their life—what is sacred stays in the church, what is secular is apart from that. More obvious is the lack of active participation in parish life. Perhaps this is because they do not feel invited, or they do not feel that they have anything to give, or as Arthur Canales states, “they perceive spirituality as something in their future, not in their present (9).” Teens who are not feeling a connection to parish life undoubtedly are less motivated to seek to be involved in the parish community.

Before drafting the details of my pastoral project, I met with my pastor to discuss my proposal. I asked if there was an area in need of further development, or a particular issue I might address. Fr. Duarte has repeatedly mentioned that he would like to see more youth participation in the parish, and eventually a merging of the catechetical and youth group components into one comprehensive youth ministry. Currently the Religious Education Program includes sacramental preparation and continuing faith formation, and the youth group meets separately and provides a faith-based social outlet as well as activities to increase spiritual growth. Creating a pastoral project with the goal of merging these components is not feasible, as it is too broad in scope and will require implementation in stages.

I remembered a conversation I had with one of our youth group leaders who had participated in a mission trip with the group. She commented on the impact that service to the poor had made on the students' faith, an observation is supported by the research on adolescent spirituality. My proposal is to increase the participation of youth in the work of the parish by identifying the outreach ministries in our parish, and connecting each participant with one of those ministries for a period of six weeks. I chose to use outreach ministries because studies have shown that service involvement is a key factor in nurturing

young people's growth in faith (Benson 15). In *Renew the Vision*, the U.S. Bishops site that youth take an important step toward developing a sense of belonging to the church when they are given the opportunity to serve side by side with adults (13). My observation of teens in Religious Education is that they often begin with little apparent interest in "religion," but over the course of their faith formation the Holy Spirit stirs the dormant desire to know God. Fraser speaks of an eternal yearning to be connected to something greater than themselves that characterizes most teens (18). Although I have witnessed conversion in varying degrees in our youth, I have not seen it lead to an integration of the youth into parish ministries, events, or activities. If anything, the Youth Group seems to be an isolated entity within the greater community, and Religious Education is viewed as the necessary classes to celebrate sacraments. Even the liturgical celebrations of those sacraments are more of an isolated event than a true parish celebration that makes the participants feel part of the community at large. I believe that if we want young people to remain in the church once they leave home, we must provide opportunities that connect them with the parish and give them concrete ways to be disciples of Jesus (USCCB, *Renew* 10).

Hagarty states that effective ministry with adolescents requires collaboration and communication among leaders to form significant relationships between youth and adults (14). I elected to implement a project using my own class of thirty high school freshmen. This would allow me to plan weekly classes with the students focused on topics complementary to their project participation, and it would facilitate evaluations, surveys, parent meetings, and other ancillary activities. The pilot project will require effective communication and collaboration between myself, the ministry leaders, the students, and their parents. It is my hope that the leaders will be a faith-witness for the teens, and the teens

will see a connection between their life in the church and their life in the world.

## FOCUS GROUP

New endeavors have a greater chance for success when supported by qualified advisors. I formed a focus group of four persons to assist me with process, evaluation, and survey materials. Members include an educational consultant, a youth minister, a ninth grade student, and a confirmation catechist. I selected these four to give me a well-rounded perspective on both working with the youth and formulating goals, objectives and evaluation tools. The two youth will be helpful with the wording chosen for written materials and presentations. The education consultant lends expertise in evaluation methods, data interpretation, and setting timelines. The catechist has many years of experience working with teens, giving her great intuition which will be valuable in the overall project planning. An initial survey will be given to the students to assess their religious attitudes and practices (Appendix A). The same survey will be used following their participation in the project to help determine change that may be attributed to their experience. The focus group will assist in the wording and content of this survey, review the draft and suggest changes. The youth minister and the catechist were pleased to see this project proposal as both feel that the youth in our parish participate primarily in ways that keep them with their peer group rather than integrating them into the parish.

## GOALS

My goals in bringing this pastoral project are to raise awareness in the youth to the involvement of the Church in outreach to the poor and underprivileged, to provide experiential learning that allows them to develop new skills and picture themselves as potential sharers in the mission work, to incorporate an outreach experience permanently into

the ninth grade curriculum by utilizing existing parish ministries that provide service to those in need, and to provide a mutual learning experience for youth and adults which will increase the bonds of community. This project is designed as a teaching/service unit within the curriculum plan for the ninth grade, and it is my hope that some students will continue to be involved after the project officially ends.

I will begin by identifying the ministries in the parish who are involved in outreach and invite their leaders to come to our class and give a presentation on the work that they are doing. The students will take notes and at the end of the session they will select their top three ministries of preference (Appendix B). I will assign them to ministries, and provide leaders, parents, and students with contact information for their particular group. Parents will sign permission forms (Appendix C), and leaders and students will be given activity logs to record participation (Appendix D1 & D2). This project will coincide with the liturgical season of Lent, beginning in late January with the ministry introductions and concluding just prior to Holy Week. Over the course of these six weeks, the students will participate in the activities of their ministry. Class sessions will focus on the Works of Mercy, the scriptural account of the "Judgment of the Nations" (Matthew 25:31-46), the Catholic Social Teachings, and the models of the Church with particular attention to its role as servant. At the conclusion of the six-week period, the students and leaders will complete an evaluation form (Appendix E1 & E2), and the students will repeat their pre-participation survey. By compiling these evaluations and comparing the pre- and post-surveys, we can assess changes in attitudes or practices. The focus group will assist in reviewing evaluations and suggesting correlations that might be present or be worth investigating.

## OBJECTIVES

Objectives for the pastoral project focus on information, relationships, perceptions and practical experience. Participants will increase their knowledge of outreach ministries in their local parish and in the Church around the world. My role will be to provide catechesis on mission and invite ministry leaders to talk about their services. Participants will form new relationships by working side by side with adult leaders to complete tasks in their chosen ministry. My role will be to assign teens to a ministry based on their preferences and facilitate communication when needed. Participants will show a positive change in the way they view the value of their own skills and abilities to parish work. My role will be to encourage and motivate. Participants will give of their time and use their abilities to help in the work of an outreach ministry for a six-week period. My role will be to assist in coordinating participation.

## KNOWLEDGE

Organization and implementation of this outreach project requires a knowledge base in the functions of parish organizations and ministries, youth catechesis and spiritual development, and religious education lesson planning. My position on the parish staff for the past ten years has given me the opportunity to interact with nearly all parish ministries and become familiar with their services. Serving as the Director of Religious Education necessitates coordination and collaboration with other parish leaders, catechists, and parents of children and youth enrolled in our catechetical programs. I am very familiar with catechetical resources for teens. I will be researching adolescent spirituality to gain more understanding of how teens develop spiritually. I plan to look at studies conducted in adolescents that look at their religious practices and attitudes toward faith. This research and

consultation with my focus group educator will give me the knowledge I need to prepare survey and evaluation tools.

## SKILLS

Design implementation and evaluation each require certain skills, some of which I will need to acquire. Designing the project begins with an overall vision and proceeds by breaking that vision into detailed steps. Setting objectives for each stage of the project will assist me in converting an abstract vision into concrete action. I have always considered one of my strengths to be coming up with the “big picture”—creating the vision for a retreat or workshop within our catechetical programs. I generally invite catechists who are detail oriented to assist me in the planning. For the pastoral project my focus group includes two members who are very attentive to detail, and will be great assets in my gaining more skill in this area. The implementation stage will require extensive communication via email, standard mail, phone, text, class reminders and group meetings. The ability to explain the project details clearly to ministry leaders, the students, their parents and to follow up to ensure the communication was successful are the essential skills required in implementation. Others include the ability to motivate and encourage students, and effectiveness in teaching about mercy, the Catholic Social Teachings, and the missionary role of the Church. Directing the Religious Education program involves continual communication to parents, students and catechists. My courses at the University of the Incarnate Word included Catholic Social Teaching, Culture and Catechesis, and conferences focusing on mercy and the models of the Church. All of these have aided me in instructing the students on the topics complementary to their practical experience. I plan work on adapting the motivational methods that I have used with children and adults to the teenage learner.

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## ATTITUDES

A realistic approach to project implementation anticipates obstacles and proactively manages them. For example, if I am attempting to communicate to parents through the students, lapses are likely to occur. I will need to use more than one method to transmit messages and follow up to confirm that information was received. I believe, however, that obstacles in process are less difficult to overcome than obstacles caused by negative or biased attitudes. This project requires confidence in the potential of the youth to show compassion, work with adult leaders and other youth, and give of themselves to less fortunate members of the community. Jack Rathschmidt states that when we fail to recognize the goodness in others, we rob ourselves of finding Christ (76). He goes on to name stereotypical thinking as one of the major factors that deprive us of finding Christ in other people (76). This is significant because at the core of this pastoral project is the belief that when we serve others we serve Christ. I have a positive attitude toward the teens and their capacity to do well in this project, and I am optimistic about having the support of the ministry leaders and parents. I anticipate needing an attitude of patience and perseverance because there are many factors I do not have control over. The teens' participation ultimately depends on the availability of transportation to the church or outside location at the time of the ministry event. One attitudinal issue that may occur is my tendency to have high expectations of performance, a product of the strong work ethic instilled in me by my parents. I tend to assume others have the same expectations but the reality is that families are on all sides of the spectrum, largely based on where they prioritize their faith life. I have learned to be flexible and to not be judgmental, but I do get frustrated when there is a lack of commitment. In addition to an attitude of acceptance and understanding, I anticipate the need for gratitude at all times.

Students will undoubtedly miss commitments to their ministry or be less than enthusiastic when they do participate. The ministry leaders give of their time and expertise to work with the students. I will need to thank them frequently for their service.

#### PROJECT CONTINUATION

It is my intention to incorporate an outreach ministry rotation into the curriculum for ninth grade students. These students are in their second of the two required formation years for confirmation. After the project concludes I will meet with ministry leaders to decide how best to integrate the outreach rotations, but it will definitely continue on in the future regardless of my involvement. I plan to have a written procedural manual so that future directors will have a blueprint to follow. The manual would also be beneficial to the ministry leaders because most ministries change leadership every two years.

#### PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS

My personal goals are to increase my own commitment to aiding the outreach activities of the church, to increase the awareness of the needs within our community and the role of the Church in meeting those needs, to influence parents to become more involved in mission and service, and to better understand the role of service in the spiritual formation of youth.

Professionally, I hope to improve my skills in communication and collaboration, bring to our teen faith formation curriculum an experience that makes their faith more tangible, complete my requirements for a Master's degree in Religious Studies, and raise the participation of the youth in the life of the parish while raising awareness in the parish to the presence of the youth.

The assistance and support of my resource person on faculty will be invaluable. Feedback on the theological essay, guidance on how to organize the different components, corrections

on formatting, and suggestions on what to include from the surveys and evaluations are the areas in which I anticipate the need for consultation.

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## PROJECT EVALUATION POINTS

### PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

Following their experiences in outreach ministries, the students were asked to complete an evaluation and repeat the survey of attitudes and practices given prior to the experience. The written evaluation posed questions about how their experience changed the way they saw the Church, other people, and their ability to contribute to ministry. Some students gave little thought to the questions and wrote very brief answers or left them blank. About half of the participants completed the evaluation in full, and their comments were overwhelmingly positive.

Most students knew very little about the church ministries before the project began. When asked if their experience changed their view of the usefulness of their personal skills and talents to church ministry, the majority replied that they were able to build on their skills by learning new things that could then be put to use in helping others. The participants who sacrificed participation in other activities in order to participate in ministry work stated that at first there was resentment, but ultimately there was satisfaction, as they realized that they were “doing the right thing.”

The survey concluded with a question about their view of Church. Nearly all students commented that they discovered a Church committed to assisting people in need, and that helping the community in times of need is part of being Church. One of the teens who participated in the Rosary Makers Guild mentioned that the Church became a place where

“she could talk to God and seek forgiveness.”

Perhaps the greatest change came in how the students viewed others. They were able to see first-hand the needs of people within their own community. The students who went to nursing homes commented on how important God was to the residents they visited. One observed that their loneliness was lessened only by the presence of an ever-present God who was always there for them. Another noted the happiness expressed in the faces of the residents when they received the Body of Christ.

Repeating the survey of attitudes and practices revealed positive shifts in 8 of 10 items on the survey (Appendix F). The greatest positive change was seen in the responses to the statement, “I believe that life is sacred and holy.” On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=never, 5=always), the initial average on this statement was 3.3. At the conclusion of the project the average was 4.6. The statement receiving the highest percentage of positive responses both before and after was “I believe that my life has meaning and purpose.” Responses were also quite positive to “I am aware of God’s presence in my life,” and “The way I live my life is consistent with my values.” The most consistently negative responses came to the statement “I have gifts and talents that would be useful to my parish.” In general, the statements dealing with practices such as going to mass or including daily activities to grow spiritually averaged lower than others more focused on the awareness of God, the dignity of life, and the importance of giving back through service.

The students’ evaluations showed increased sensitivity to the daily challenges of the poor, and increased awareness of the Church’s role in responding to their needs. They gained satisfaction from helping others, learned new skills, and improved their ability to relate to people who were different from themselves. The survey suggests that participants developed

an increased respect for the sacredness of life during the project timeline. I believe that this is a great first step in developing a heart of service, as all outreach hinges on the understanding and embracement of the dignity and sacredness of human life.

## PROJECT GOALS

In my Proposal Points I stated the following project goals:

- *Raise awareness in the youth to the involvement of the Church in outreach to the poor.* Through a combination of class lectures and activities and participation in an outreach ministry this goal was met.
- *Provide an experiential learning experience where youth could develop new skills and share in the mission work of a church ministry.* The time invested in their ministry varied among the youth, but I believe that the hands-on learning had a very positive effect. The development of new skills was in its first phase, and would certainly be enhanced by additional opportunities to share in the ministry work.
- *Incorporate into the ninth grade curriculum a unit of study that includes participation in outreach ministries.* The response from ministry leaders was very positive and definitely favorable toward making this project a permanent part of the students' formation.
- *Provide a learning experience that connects adults and youth and strengthens bonds of community.* One of the ministry leaders mentioned that a student in her group stopped by her classroom at the high school to talk about a retreat experience. Two other leaders spent time getting to know the students and had the opportunity to talk about their faith experiences. I believe that this outreach project has great potential to establish mentoring relationships within the parish community.

## FOCUS GROUP

My Focus Group had a beneficial effect on the project and a positive influence on the future of religious education programs for teens. I found it energizing to engage in conversation with the youth in the group. It surprised me to witness the genuine interest they showed in the Focus Group and the serious attention they gave to youth catechesis. Their ideas indicated that they had given both subjects much thought.

The two adult members of the Focus Group were a perfect complement to the youth. They have years of experience as catechists, and were able to provide structure to the enthusiastic suggestions of the youth. The youth felt validated by this feedback and were motivated to continue to offer their ideas. Our discussions affirmed the value of each member's input.

## RESOURCE PERSON

I did not have a project resource person within the parish, but I received valuable feedback from both the ministry leaders and the focus group. My Pastoral Institute instructor at the University of the Incarnate Word, Sr. Eilish Ryan, served as my main resource person for writing, organizing and formatting the paper.

## KNOWLEDGE

At the time of the project proposal, I anticipated knowledge deficits in evaluation techniques and adolescent spirituality development. I acquired the knowledge needed through research and discussions with the educator consultant in my focus group. I read multiple journal articles on spirituality in teens and the various assessment tools that researchers have used to evaluate it. I also found it fruitful to review resources describing youth service projects.



I stated at the onset that I was familiar with our parish ministries and their functions. I have discovered since that two ministries have implemented new outreach activities. Future implementation of this outreach project will require me to keep abreast of new developments in our ministries of service, so that I may approach them to participate in the outreach project.

## SKILLS

I anticipated needing to improve my skills in attentiveness to detail, catechizing youth, and communicating concisely. Focus on detail became necessary to keep track of progress with the students and ministry leaders. I made a consistent effort to maintain a disciplined approach. I assessed the project process daily, created forms to help leaders and students track their participation, and kept a spreadsheet to help me identify areas requiring more attention. I became more detail oriented as I worked through the project. To improve my skills as a youth catechist I reviewed supplementary curriculum from Life Teen and Ascension Press, and kept track of current events that might be applicable to class discussions. These resources provided great supplementary material to the class textbook. I also invited a member of the youth ministry team to help on with specific topics, and I asked a young adult to serve as my aide. I believe that through research, observation, prayer, and some trial and error, I improved as a catechist for teens.

Communication efforts accounted for much of the time invested in this project. I quickly discovered that I could not depend on email alone, nor could I assume that information would be passed from one family member to another. The ministry leaders communicated efficiently via email, as did a majority of the parents, but I was more effective with some parents and all teens using text messaging. Teens in the same group communicated with each

other via text. The ministry leaders had more success in bringing all of their students together when they recognized the value of a student leader texting the others in the group. Future project implementation would be enhanced by utilizing the text notification component of Parish Data Systems, our database for both church membership records and faith formation enrollment.

## ATTITUDES

I began this project with an attitude of excitement over the prospect of building a connection between parish ministries and parish youth. I knew that maintaining that positive attitude would be a challenge because there would be varying levels of cooperation from those students and parents who did not share my enthusiasm for the project. In my proposal points I indicated that I would have to resist holding participants to my own standards of compliance and effort. To do so would allow an attitude of frustration to creep in, thus I elected to concentrate on those factors I could control. I made sure that students were aware of the dates and times of their ministry assignment. I communicated the importance of their participation to the parents, and encouraged the students each week in class. Placing my efforts in these areas, I was able to maintain a positive attitude throughout.

The other area I mentioned in my proposal points was the need for an attitude of gratitude toward those in the ministries, regardless of their level of commitment. I hoped at the onset that the ministry leaders who agreed to participate would follow through with action, but on occasion that did not happen. It is disappointing when colleagues in parish ministry are lax in their efforts, but an attitude of appreciation increases chances of the ministry continuing with the program.

In the future I will work to convey a greater attitude of expectancy with the students.

Perhaps the introduction of a pilot project mid-way through the year led some students and parents to believe it was optional. It is common for confirmation preparation to include service hours, but cannot be a mandatory requirement in our diocese. I believe that if the outreach project is part of the initial calendar, and presented to the parents and students with an attitude of expectancy at the beginning of the year, the participants will approach it more seriously and participate fully.

### OBSTACLES

The obstacles I expected to encounter were in the areas of communication and accountability. To minimize misunderstanding or miscommunication, I used a combination of email, standard mail, group meetings, phone calls, and text messages. If ministry leaders had difficulty reaching any of the youth, I contacted them through direct communication with the parent.

Accountability was an obstacle I expected with the teens. I noticed that when the teens contacted each other, this became less of an issue. We were most successful having all assigned teens at the service event or meeting when one of them volunteered to notify the others. I had hoped that requiring them to track participation on a form might increase their accountability but it did not because they often forgot to bring their form with them.

One obstacle that I should have anticipated was absence from class. Part of the project was the inclusion of class discussions on complementary topics. Student evaluations and surveys were given during class time. Absences on the evaluation days were disruptive to the timing of the project.

The calendar year also presented an obstacle in timing as Spring Break and Holy Week were in consecutive weeks. That made our time to complete the project more condensed than

I would have liked. Most students completed their assignment by the first Sunday of Spring Break. The Water for Life group and the Prison Ministry required an extension into April.

## LEADERSHIP

This pastoral project expands the leadership capacity of others by introducing them to the mentoring process. Those in leadership roles within their ministries are accustomed to performing administrative tasks such as scheduling events, conducting meetings, promoting activities to the parish, and representing their ministry to other leaders and to the pastor. Participating in the outreach project requires the leaders to mentor the youth, employing a new set of skills. Several of the youth found that participation in their ministry allowed them to develop leadership qualities by giving pulpit talks, proclaiming scripture, and facilitating group discussions.

Pastoral ministry is the call to utilize one's skills and talents for the building up of the Body of Christ, which then continues the work of Jesus—establishing the reign of God on earth. A project which teaches our youth to seek Christ in others, especially in the most needy and vulnerable members of our community, and serve them as Christ would, contributes to the development of pastoral ministry.

## PERSONAL GOALS

Increasing my own commitment to assisting outreach ministries was one of my personal goals. I learned more about each of the ministries of service in our parish, and became more familiar with the Catholic Social Teachings and Works of Mercy in my preparation for class. I have become a more avid supporter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Gabriel Project. I believe that there is a way for each of us to contribute, be it monetarily or with our time and talents, and implementing this project has confirmed that belief.

I had hoped that the awareness of the plight of the poor in our own community and in underprivileged areas would increase, and with it the sensitivity of the parishioners to those issues causing and keeping people in poverty. The presence of the youth at Mass announcing their service projects likely impacted some parishioners who had become complacent in serving the poor. The teens who participated at the nursing homes related their positive experience to others, increasing awareness through that sharing process. I believe that when the project is implemented with a larger group of teens, awareness and sensitivity will increase within the community.

Another of my personal goals was to develop a greater connection between the youth and the religious education staff. My research pointed to service or mission as the best way to accomplish that goal. When a group of people work together toward a common cause, a connection is established that goes beyond the instructor/student dynamic in the classroom. The outreach projects opened up dialogue in the classroom which helps build relationships and increases a sense of belonging to the church community.

### PROFESSIONAL GOALS

Professionally I hoped to improve my skills in collaboration and communication. The project began with the leaders from participating ministries coming to our class to present their ministry to the students. A spirit of collaboration was established even though each worked independently of the others. As the project proceeded I discovered that communication can never be assumed to be successful, and should be sent in a variety of formats. Additionally, communication may or may not be passed from one person to the next so it is best to inform all parties. In the future I will be sure to explain the project orally while distributing written specifics on how it will unfold.

I believe that encouraging a heart of service in our youth is important to our future as a caring parish community. One of my major goals with this project is to integrate into our high school curriculum a service unit of study that allows the youth to work within their own parish in a capacity that helps the poor or underprivileged. This pilot project is a good start, and I will be working to coordinate all students at the ninth grade level next year.

Finally, a project of this nature should raise the awareness of the parish to the presence of the youth and the potential of the youth to be a vital part of the community. I know that the ministry leaders felt it was important for the youth to experience the work of the Church, but it is equally important for the parish to experience the work of the youth. With the expansion of the project to more students, this will certainly happen.

## PERSONAL ESSAY

The gospel of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Church he founded, offers a message of hope and a path to true happiness to a world in dire need of transformation. The task of spreading that message falls on those who believe in Christ and his Church, the Body of Christ. Through their day to day lives they carry out the ministry of Jesus with charity and humility within their families, their parishes and their communities.

There are many elements that interact in the practice of ministry. When I consider the various factors involved, I place emphasis on the spiritual and communal nourishment of the Eucharist, and the imitation of Christ in service. We join together weekly as a community to praise God and receive Jesus in Holy Communion. We are sent to “Go and live the gospel with our lives,” the continual calling and sending forth that marks the Christian life.

I elected to center my Pastoral Project around the service phase of the ministerial call because research indicates that this is a critical component in the development of adolescent spirituality. The connection of Christian service to the Eucharist was emphasized during class discussions and in the monthly Mass we celebrated together with our pastor.

My time with the project participants was limited, but interacting with them weekly as their catechist allowed me to note positive changes in their attitudes and demeanor in class over the past three months. Their evaluations contained small revelations of a new understanding of their faith and the role of the Church in society. Students had varied levels of participation due to both their own degree of commitment and the schedule of their ministry, but all came away with a better idea of what it means to be “sent to live the gospel

by our lives.” Initially they may have heard those words at Mass and subconsciously applied them to the adults. Participation in parish ministry should change that perception. I would not be surprised if the adults in the parish also view that challenge as one for adults now, and for the youth sometime in the future. As the youth become more integrated into the work of the parish, that sending at the conclusion of Mass becomes a more inclusive picture in the minds of both adults and teens.

I believe that yearly implementation of this project will lead to a changed dynamic in parish ministry. The vision of youth working in ministries alongside the adults creates a contagious enthusiasm. The resulting increase in collaboration between parish leaders and the faith formation team, the parents of participants, and the participants themselves will strengthen the bonds of community within the parish.

I was very encouraged by the positive response from the ministry leaders, two of whom made recommendations for expanding the project. One suggested the inclusion of liturgical ministries and the other a two-ministry rotation for each student. Working with liturgical ministries would help students connect the liturgy and the mission. Offering two different experiences in outreach gives students a more diverse exposure to the action of the Church in the community.

Pastoral ministry goes on to the extent to which we help the next generation use their skills and talents for the benefit of the building up of the Body of Christ. Creating a sense of belonging in our young people will be crucial to keeping them rooted in their Catholic Faith. Our best chance of doing that is to provide opportunities for them to encounter Christ. Our faith teaches us that we meet Jesus in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist where we become one with him, and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. I believe that with our



teenagers, that encounter is realized once the heart is opened by a tangible experience of faith. During this project the teens were able to witness adults living out their faith. Those who were able to directly interact with the group being served saw the joy that came from sharing the Word of God, praying together, singing praises to God, and receiving Jesus in Communion. Those who served the poor or incarcerated indirectly by organizing and packaging supplies or writing inspirational notes truly felt a sense of satisfaction that they had made a difference in someone's suffering or state of need. One inmate wrote to the students to express her gratitude, saying she was very touched by the kindness and generosity of time that went into making cards and writing letters to the inmates. Such experiences of faith-witness can change the lens through which teens view the Church, God, and others, and open them to the movement of the Spirit in their lives. If we want our youth to be active members of our parish community as they move into adulthood, we must form relationships of service that encourage them to use their skills and talents to build up the Body of Christ.

One of the most common challenges I have heard given to students on the day of their celebration of First Communion is "Be what you receive." Participation in ministries of service gives our youth the opportunity to do just that.

## APPENDIX A: STUDENT SURVEY

Read each statement and circle response using the following key: 1=never 2=occasionally 3= ½ the time 4= mostly 5= always	
I have an awareness of God's presence in my life.	1 2 3 4 5
I believe my life has meaning and purpose.	1 2 3 4 5
I feel that the ways I give back to the world please God.	1 2 3 4 5
I am part of a parish community that is aware of and includes the youth.	1 2 3 4 5
I have activities that I do regularly to renew my soul and get closer to God.	1 2 3 4 5
I believe that life is sacred and holy.	1 2 3 4 5
I attend Sunday Mass.	1 2 3 4 5
The way I live my life is consistent with my spirituality and values.	1 2 3 4 5
I have gifts or talents that would be useful to my parish community.	1 2 3 4 5
I consider my Catholic Faith as a part of who I am.	1 2 3 4 5

## APPENDIX B

### ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is an international Catholic organization of lay persons who seek to help those who are suffering. The St. Anthony chapter helps families who are unable to pay for electricity, medications, food, or shelter. Through prayer, meditation on scripture, and the sharing of the teachings of Jesus Christ, members seek to bear witness to the love of Christ as they respond to individuals in need. Working to find solutions to the situations that cause poverty while providing immediate assistance are the goals of St. Vincent de Paul volunteers who make home visits to assess needs.

The St. Anthony SVDP organization maintains a food pantry which requires regular attention to stock, date, and box food items. Students are not able to accompany members on home visits but will meet with the leaders to learn more about the SVDP mission, and will help organize the donations to the food pantry, and prepare boxes to go out to families. Feeding the hungry is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy.

### LADIES ALTAR SOCIETY – WATER FOR LIFE

The Altar Society is responsible for the care of the altar linens, priest vestments, and the Blessings and More Religious Articles Store. They are affiliated with the Diocesan and National Councils of Catholic Women. Their outreach projects include sponsoring an international child in need, and raising funds for Catholic Relief Services, specifically for the “Water for Life” project. Each spring they have a garage sale and send the proceeds to this project.

Students assisting with “Water for Life” will be creating a display board which describes the project. They will choose a Sunday to give a pulpit announcement about their goal to

supply a community water station to an area in need, and display their project in the narthex the same day. At the first group meeting they will find out more about the project and the people they serve. Giving water to the thirsty is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy.

### **GABRIEL PROJECT**

Members of the St. Anthony Gabriel Project provide immediate and practical help to any woman facing a crisis pregnancy. They also assist women in need of material, spiritual or emotional support during the months following the birth of the baby. Through Gabriel Project each mother receives one-on-one assistance given in a loving and caring manner by a trained "Gabriel Angel".

Students will help by organizing the many donations received (clothing, diapers, miscellaneous baby items, formula), organizing a fund raiser if needed, and praying for the families.

### **ROSARY MAKERS**

The Rosary Makers Guild is a fairly new ministry at St. Anthony that gathers monthly to make rosaries to give to mission projects. Currently they are working on a pledge to a pastor in Corpus Christi who provides rosaries to seamen when they come into port. Their meeting begins with Mass and concludes with the First Saturday Rosary, a monthly parish event held in the Meditation Garden.

Students will learn about the various projects that rosary guilds participate in, they will learn two different ways to make rosaries, and will be able to keep their first rosary as a reminder to pray for missions.

## **PRISON MINISTRY**

Comforting the incarcerated is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy. The goal of the St. Anthony Prison Ministry is to reach inmates in the Juvenile Detention Center in San Marcos and the Kyle Unit of the county prisons. Inmates are members of the Body of Christ and should not be forgotten. This ministry helps them in the spiritual transformation that can take place in prison as inmates use the time to reassess their lives. Only God can transform the suffering into victory. Ministers teach classes, read scripture, perform communion services or assist at masses.

Students will assist in whatever ways are permitted by the prison. At the initial meeting, possibilities will be proposed and students will form a plan. They are not permitted to actually go into the prison area, but can show support through cards and prayers.

## **CAMINANDO CON JESUS Y MARIA PRAYER GROUP – Nursing Home Mission**

Caminando con Jesus y Maria is a charismatic prayer group with a monthly outreach mission to the Texan Nursing Home in San Marcos. They provide a time of song, prayer, scripture and reflection in Spanish and English for all residents who desire to participate. Students will meet with leaders prior to the Saturday morning of the nursing home mission to go over the gospel reading and reflections and to decide in what way they would like to help (reading, singing, for ex.)

The mission takes place each first Saturday of the month at the nursing home. The group meets in the parking lot at 9:30am. The hour of interaction with the residents begins at 10am. Parents would be asked to provide transportation.

## HOMEBOUND MINISTRY

Homebound Ministers are trained to bring Holy Communion to those who cannot attend Mass. They carry consecrated hosts in a special holder (pix). Once they are with the individual or group they read scripture, pray with them, and give them Holy Communion. In the Nursing Home this is done in a group setting for those who are mobile.

Students will assist in the different parts of the service and will gain an appreciation for the reverence given to the Body of Christ and the joy felt by the recipients. The location is Orchard Park off 1626.

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PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERRED MINISTRIES BELOW BY PLACING A 1,2, & 3 IN THE BLANKS:

- St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Ladies Altar Society – Water for Life
- Gabriel Project
- Rosary Makers
- Prison Ministry
- Caminando con Jesus y Maria
- Homebound Ministry

APPENDIX C

**CONFIRMATION II OUTREACH PROJECT  
PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR PARTICIPATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of parent) give permission to my son/daughter  
\_\_\_\_\_ (name of student) to participate in the Confirmation II  
Outreach Project with the Ministry \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Ministry). I  
understand that participation will involve time outside of the time spent in class, will be  
completed between 2/1/2016 and 3/6/2016, and is the service component of the Confirmation  
curriculum.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

**APPENDIX D1**  
**TRACKING FORM FOR STUDENTS**

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

RECORD OF PARTICIPATION:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what you did: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what you did: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what you did: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Ministry Leader: \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX D2  
TRACKING FORM FOR MINISTRY LEADERS**

NAME OF MINISTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF LEADER(S): \_\_\_\_\_

RECORD OF PARTICIPATION

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING:	DATE:	DATE:	DATE:
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

COMMENTS:

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**APPENDIX E1  
EVALUATION FOR STUDENTS**

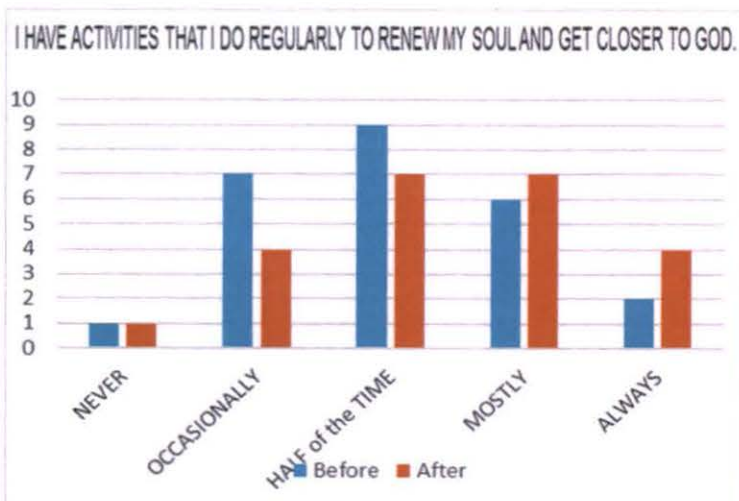
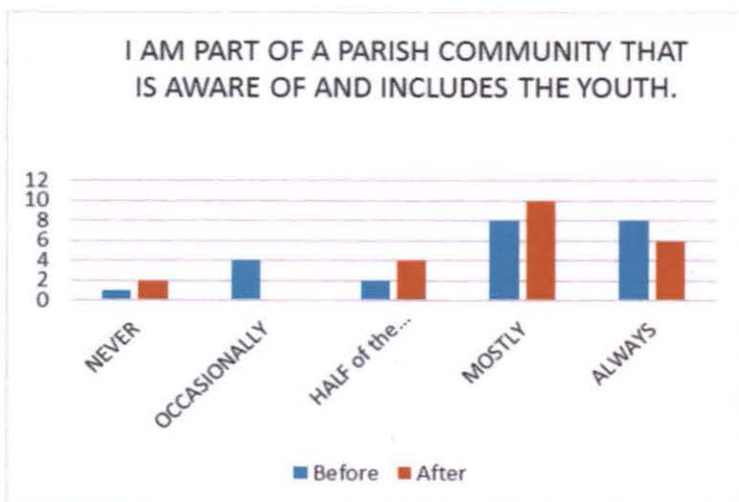
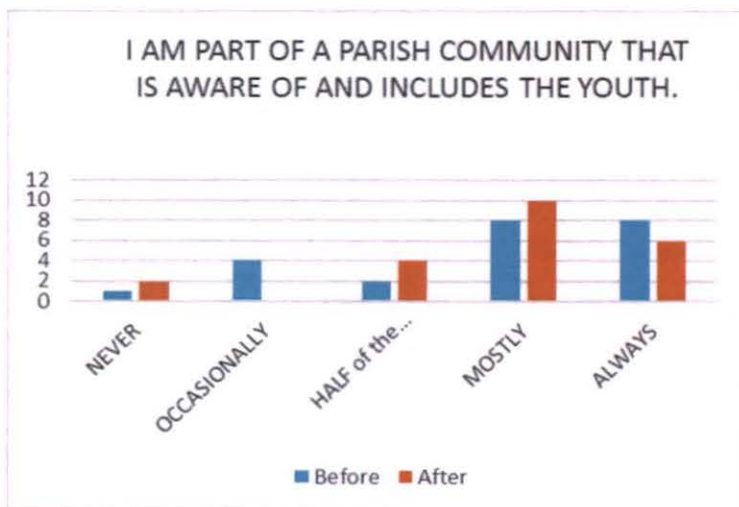
1. What did you know about the ministry you worked with before your participation?
2. Did your experience go as expected? Why or why not?
3. Did your participation change the way you feel about the usefulness of your particular skills and talents to church ministry? If yes, how?
4. Did you have to give up something you liked or wanted to do in order to serve in your ministry? Did you resent that? If yes, did your participation change the way you felt?
5. Did this experience change the way you view the Church? How or why not?
6. Did this experience change the way you view other people? How or why not?

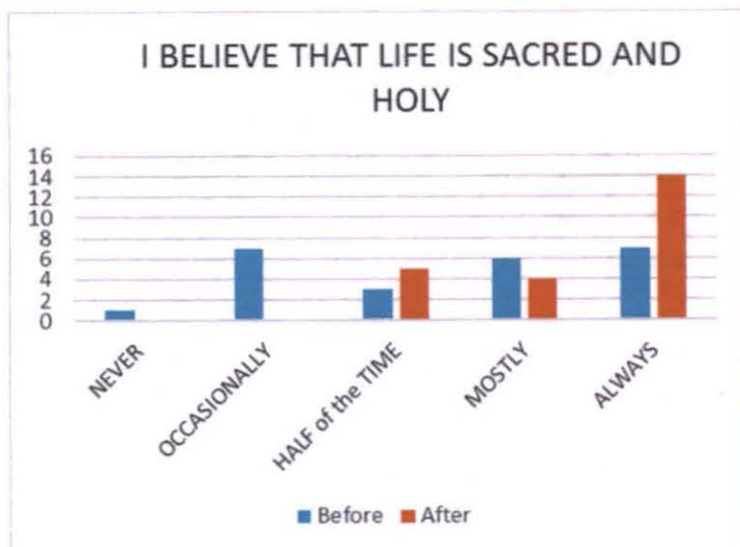
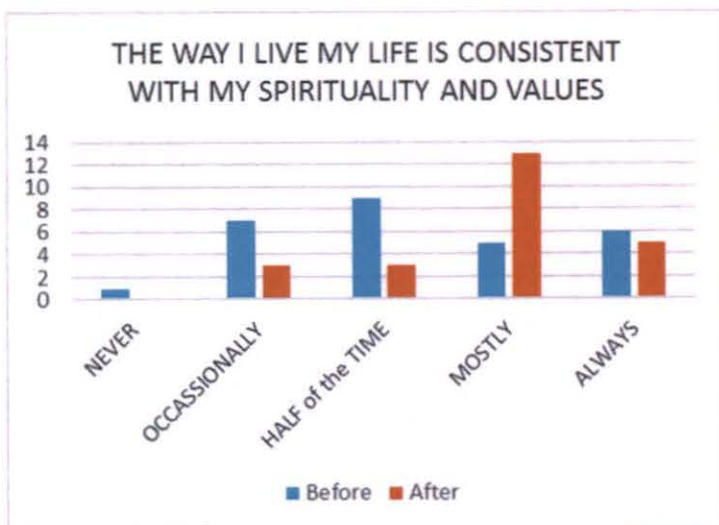
**APPENDIX E2**  
**EVALUATION FOR MINISTRY LEADERS**

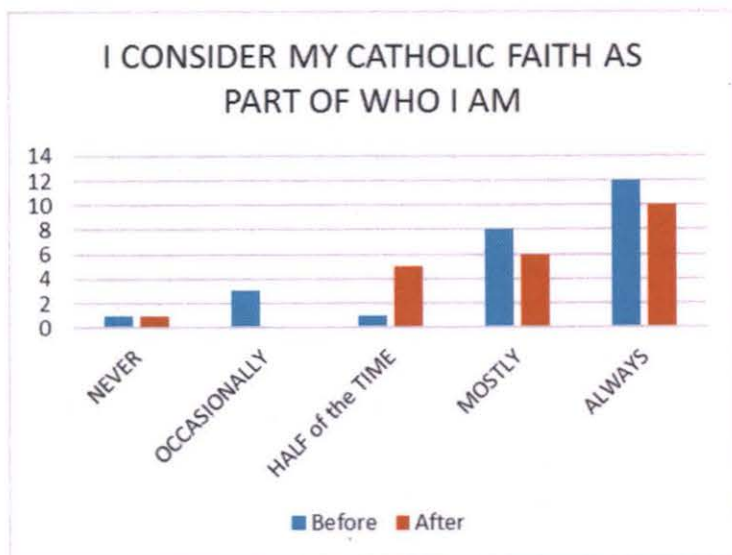
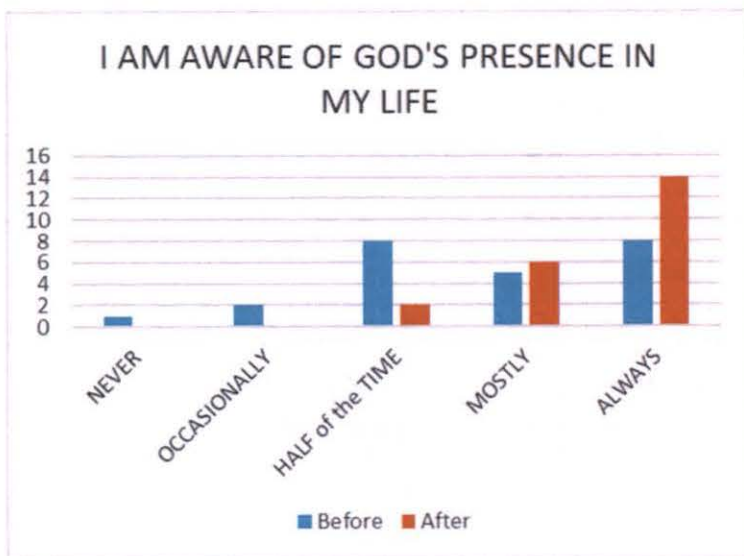
1. Did you feel there was value in incorporating the youth into your ministry?
2. What was the biggest challenge?
3. What was the most positive outcome?
4. In *Renewing the Vision* the USCCB states "Parishes should provide opportunities for youth to minister side by side the adults. This allows them to learn experientially and develop a sense of belonging to the church." Do you agree with this statement?
5. Do you have any suggestions for implementation?

## APPENDIX F

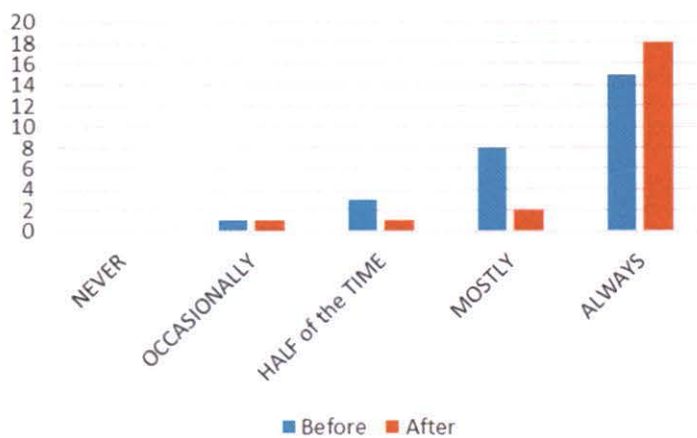
### COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESULTS BEFORE AND AFTER PROJECT



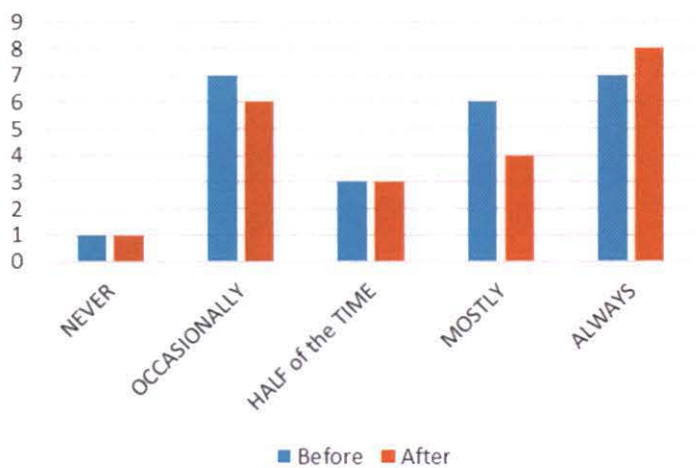




### I BELIEVE THAT MY LIFE HAS MEANING AND PURPOSE



### I ATTEND SUNDAY MASS



## SUMMARY OF PASTORAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

January 24, 2016

Class Session – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Students were given a survey at the beginning of the class session to assess their religious attitudes and practices. (Appendix A) The survey was prepared with the assistance of two members of the Focus Group.

Ministry Leaders representing seven parish ministries that do outreach to the needy in Kyle and surrounding areas presented a summary of their services.

Students took notes and then selected their first, second and third choices for participation.

These were handed into me at the end of class. (Appendix B)

I assigned students to ministries based on their preferences. Each ministry received 3-5 students.

January 31, 2016

Initial meeting with my Focus Group.

I held a meeting with the parents of the students who would be participating in the outreach project. The scope of the project was explained, and a summary of the work of the ministries given. Parents were asked to sign a form granting permission for their teen to participate in their chosen ministry (Appendix C). I answered questions posed by the parents.

The class session focused on the Corporal Works of Mercy.

February 1, 2016

Lists with contact information for the parents of the students were sent to each ministry leader. The leaders were to contact the teens assigned to them to invite them to the next meeting or event. I offered to assist them if there were any problems reaching the students.



February 7, 2016

The class session focused on the Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Students were given tracking forms to log their participation (Appendix D1).

Leaders were also sent via email a form to record the students' activity (Appendix D2).

Most students had been contacted by their Ministry Leaders.

February 14, 2016

The class attended Mass together. I did not teach a class session. I met with the students in the church after Mass to check on the progress of their service assignments. The students who selected the Gabriel Project had not been contacted. I followed up on that the following morning.

February 21, 2016

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes participated in the annual Saint's Retreat. Some of the material presented demonstrated the Catholic Social Teachings on Dignity of Human Life and Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

February 28, 2016

Classes were unable to meet due to a retreat occupying all of the classrooms. I contacted the Ministry Leaders to obtain a midterm report of the students' participation (Appendix G).

February 29, 2016

Second Meeting with my Focus Group. We designed the forms to be used for evaluation.(Appendix H)

March 6, 2016

Class session on Matthew 25: 35-46. Shared material from Fr. Michael Gaitley's book *You Did it Unto Me*. We also discussed the Servant Model of the Church.

March 13, 2016

The Outreach Project officially ended. Spring Break began on March 12<sup>th</sup>. There is one group that had to reschedule their pulpit talk and fundraiser to April.

March 20, 2016

Class session was on Holy Thursday – the institution of the Eucharist.

Evaluation forms were sent to the Ministry Leaders.

April 3, 2016

Survey given at the beginning of the project was retaken by the students. They also completed their evaluation forms.

April 4, 2016

Final meeting with my Focus Group.