

Charis Ministries' Gathering of Young Adult Catechetical Leaders NCCL –April 19, 2010

A. Overview:

During the 74th annual conference for NCCL, catechetical leaders in their 20's and 30's gathered with Charis Ministries to dialogue about the unique characteristics of people in their 20 and 30's, the opportunities the Church could provide to form their generation, the gifts and challenges of being a young adult catechetical leader, and what young adults need from the church to be more effective as catechetical leaders.

Below are key insights and learnings, opportunities for the church to reach young adults, and a synopsis of the questions and answers from the dialogue.

B. Key Insights on the unique characteristics of people in their 20's and 30's in catechetical leadership:

1. This generation is a unique, gifted, energetic, enthusiastic, passionate generation of adults. Like all adults, they are spiritually hungry and seek to belong to the Church and to be formed in the faith.
2. Young adults can be entrusted with the sacredness of our faith story because they want to be part of the story and they desire to integrate Christ into their daily lives.
3. Young Adults are present in parishes and dioceses. They come for Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation, and Reconciliation. They are present in Mass, bringing their children to share in the same faith story of which they are a part.
4. Many men and women in their 20's and 30's are already leaders in their parishes and dioceses working as directors, catechists, program coordinators, youth ministers, DRE's, etc.
5. At times, young adult catechetical leaders feel misunderstood and poorly perceived by older catechetical leaders because of their age and perceived lack of education and experience.
6. Young adults use technology as a means of communicating and seeking information.
7. Men and women in their 20's and 30's are the products of previous generations' catechetical leadership. The fruits of their labor, along with the Holy Spirit, should be recognized and applauded

C. Recommendations to form men and women in their 20's and 30's as catechetical leaders:

1. Recognize that some young adults are ministry leaders now and others could be, if invited and formed.
2. Be intentional in offering mentors for men and women in their 20's and 30's who are already in leadership and to those entering ministry.
3. Recognize that this generation is capable of leadership beyond youth ministry and young adult ministry. They are already leaders in adult faith formation, social justice, etc.
4. Listen to the needs of this generation.
5. Treat them as the adults they are.
6. Invest in their education and ongoing spiritual development that we all seek as adults.

D. Recommendations to reach and work with people in their 20's and 30's:

1. Recognize that there is a wide variety of young adults in various life stages that are present in parishes already.
2. Be open and willing to listen to what people in their 20's and 30's seek.
3. Hospitality is key—especially during liturgy. Welcome, Invite, Include! Welcome those with children at Mass. (One comment from several in the group: “Get rid of cry rooms!”) Include young adults as ministers at Mass. Invite young adults into leadership and into full participation in parish life.
4. Invite young adults into the life of the parish and to the adult faith formation programs that are already in existence. A separate young adult ministry is not always needed.
5. Journey with men and women in their 20's and 30's as they learn to incorporate their values into all decisions they make. They seek to integrate Christ into their daily lives.
6. Provide faith formation opportunities that build on young adults' knowledge and understanding of Catholicism and on their personal faith story.

E. Recommendations to NCCL:

1. Continue to have gatherings for catechetical leaders in their 20's and 30's at the annual conference to provide opportunities for dialogue and support.
2. Recognize the young adults as the leaders they already are.
3. Invite young adults to give workshops on topics other than young adult ministry.
4. Continue to invite new catechetical leaders to join NCCL and experience the annual conference.
5. Provide mentors for new catechetical leaders.
6. Recognize that young adults are part of the generations that need to be reached in adult faith formation programs.
7. Encourage dioceses and parishes to offer specific programs catering to young adults that invite young adults into the life of the Church such as retreats, Theology on Tap, small Christian communities, etc. Once they are connected, invite them to be part of the larger church experience.