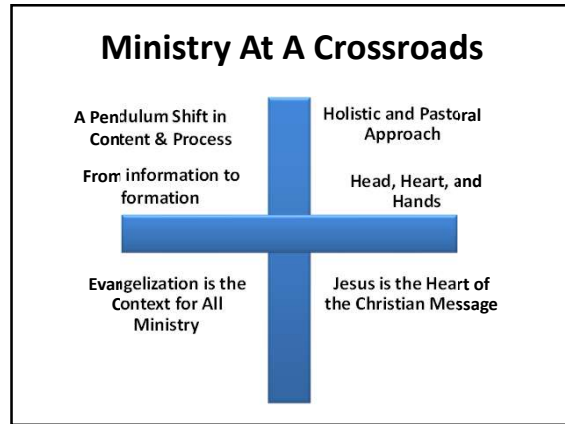





1



2

The Paradigm is Shifting:

- We shifted from storytelling and orthopraxis (living) to instruction and orthodoxy (believing) and now to ...
- We shifted from the pre-modern world to the modern world (science, technology) to postmodern world ...
- Three-legged stool: family, community, church and the seat of learning ...



3

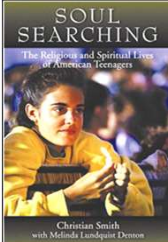
The Paradigm is Shifting ...

- Instructional Model: If young people KNOW what is true, they will DO what is right.
 - BUT instruction without lived experience will be irrelevant!
- Experiential Model: If young people DO what is right, then they will want to KNOW what is true.
 - BUT experience without knowledge about our faith will soon wither!
- Formational Model: Comprehensive approach combining experience and knowledge ...

4

THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT!



“Our distinct impression is that very many religious congregations and communities of faith in the United States are failing rather badly in religiously *engaging* and *educating* youth.”



5

THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT!

Engagement is a strong emotional connection to the faith community

6

THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT

It is more than involvement

7

THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT!

It is a sense of belonging to the community

8

WHY IS ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

A new paradigm: "In most cases, belief does not lead to belonging, belonging leads to belief"

Belonging behaving believing

9

Modern world: people come to worship to *know* more about God – "That sermon made me think"

Post-modern world: people come to worship to *experience* God "That worship really moved me" ... experience is the criteria!

10

ENGAGEMENT AS MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

The community is the context.

How do we:

- worship together
- build relationships
- foster participation and belonging
- live our faith
- know their names!

11

THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT!

AND ACCOMPANIMENT!

12



A Process

- Contact
- Conversation
- Connection
- Commitment

13



Contact

Be where they are

- skills for small talk
- spend the time to develop relationships

Be known

- develop a welcoming reputation
- newsletters, bulletin boards, billboards, parish/school life
- technology: website, email, podcasts

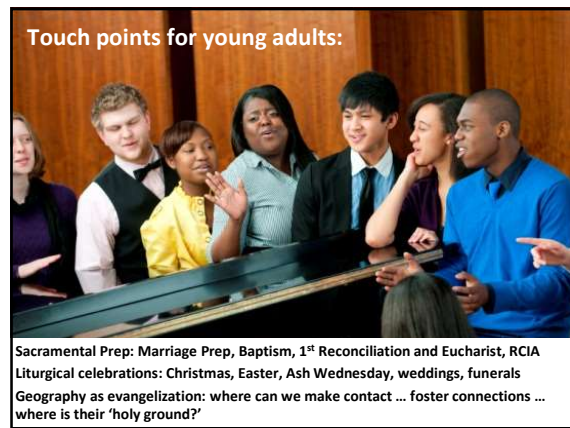
14



Encourage everyone to be "inviters"

- challenge the parish to move beyond their comfort zone
- help them understand the Gospel call to reach out
- help them develop a faith language

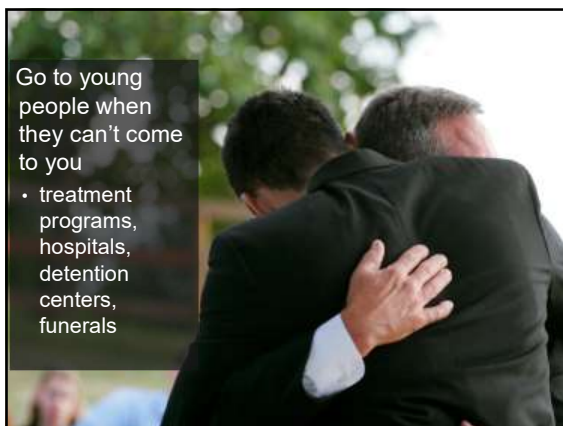
15



Touch points for young adults:

Sacramental Prep: Marriage Prep, Baptism, 1st Reconciliation and Eucharist, RCIA
 Liturgical celebrations: Christmas, Easter, Ash Wednesday, weddings, funerals
 Geography as evangelization: where can we make contact ... foster connections ... where is their 'holy ground?'

16



Go to young people when they can't come to you

- treatment programs, hospitals, detention centers, funerals

17



Conversation as accompaniment

Safe spaces for deep conversations ... and listening to stories


- Questions and doubts can be shared
- Non-judgmental
- Listen to understand ... (vs. respond)

- Open, honest, candid
- Hospitality
- Faith is a journey... ... questions are a sign of going deeper!

18

ACCOMPANIMENT

- Move beyond dictation and doctrinization.
- Go deeper/quicker. Address the issues and questions that young Catholics are thinking about at earlier and earlier ages.
 - Move from orthodoxy to orthopraxis
 - Create a catechesis of current events ... connecting life to faith.
 - Faith sharing
 - It's about Jesus!



19

Connection



Develop Personal Relationships
the heart of ministry

20

Connection

Invite young people into the pastoral, liturgical, leadership ministries



21



Connection is an intentional process or approach

Individuals: Contact/ask
Identify gifts/ interests
Connection
Support
Reflection

22

A Process or Approach:



Integrating 'groups of young people':

- Parish events (social, service)
- Liturgical events (Stations of the Cross, Adoration)

23

Integration and Engagement

- Mass:
 - ✓ Special commissionings
 - ✓ Special blessings
 - ✓ Youth reflections at Liturgy
 - ✓ Intercessions
- Create prayer partners with parish adults



24

Remember:

- The pastoral leader needs to provide/arrange for training as appropriate
- Involve the parish staff
- Involve the key volunteer ministers
- Create an 'engagement attitude' in your parish
- Make them 'connectors'




25

An Examination of Conscience

Key questions for pastoral ministry leaders and for the team:

- In each area of parish life, is there a role for young people here?
- What skills will my young people need?
- Who are the other key people?
- Which young people and/or their families are not integrated or engaged in the faith community?



26

Connection




Connect young people with Jesus
The goal of all ministry

27

Commitment

Personal Decision

- there is no 'right' way or process
- faith is a journey, not a destination
- comes from the heart – this is the way for me!




28

Commitment

Call to Discipleship

- to be a follower of Jesus
- to commit to a noble adventure

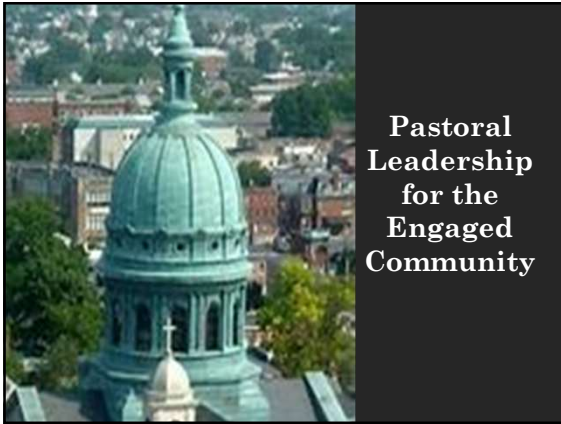


29

Reflection

- What are the implications of an engagement/accompaniment approach for our pastoral ministry?
- In what ways might the disaffiliated be 'innovators' of something new?

30



31



32



33



34



35



36

The Engaged Community

Reaches Out to the Un-Gospelized

Ongoing, systematic catechesis

Retreats and/or small group programs



37

The Engaged Community

Reaches Out to the Un-Churched

Outreach strategies
Homecoming events
Theology on Tap



38

The Engaged Community



Calls All People to Discipleship



Connects people with Jesus
Provides the skills for discipleship

39



40

THE CONTEXT... No previous generation of American Catholics inherited so little of the *content* and *sensibility* of the faith from their parents, as have today's Catholic youth."





Church historian R. Scott Appleby
Notre Dame University

41

WHAT IS NEEDED...

"The challenge of Catholic education and formation in our media-driven, cyberspace age is no less than this: older Catholics must be restored to, and younger Catholics introduced to, a *sense of Catholicism as a comprehensive way of life.*"



Church historian R. Scott
Appleby
Notre Dame University

42

Catholicism Rediscovered

To be Catholic is social

- *We are communal*
- *Catholic identity is connected with the community*
- *Belonging to behaving to believing*
- *Accompaniment*



43

To be Catholic is to be comprehensive:


- *vertical and horizontal spirituality*
- *head, heart, and hands = know, love, and serve God*



44

To be Catholic is to see differently


- *Catholic imagination ... Catholic world view*
- *Our sacramental lens*
- *Everything expresses the transcendent: beauty, the arts, ritual, gatherings, nature, devotionals*



45


To be Catholic is to engage the world through, justice, service, and heroic charity ...

Catholic Social Teaching ... discipleship in action



46


**The Jesus Experience:
The Heart of Catholicism as Spiritual Path**



47

Key Points


- We don't have a 'believing' issue, we have a 'belonging' issue.
- We don't have a 'youth' issue, we have a faith community challenge.
- Do we know their names? Do we know their stories?
- How are we effectively accompanying children and youth on their spiritual journey?
- How are we engaging young people in our faith communities?



48

Yearnings


Where are their hungers being fed?




49

"If we don't build loving, caring, intimate relationships with our children, it doesn't matter what we teach them or how much we pray for them, they'll walk away."

--Josh McDowell




50



In this outreach, we need to use above all the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational, and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life, and awakens hope and desires.

Young people need to be approached with **the grammar of love...** by those who radiate life, by those who are there for them and with them.

(CV 211)



51

Saint Mary's Press
catholicresearch.smp.org




Bob McCarty, D.Min.
bobmccarty@verizon.net

52