

A Quick Look at...

CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEENS

Diocesan Youth Minister Meet-Up Notes from September 22, 2020

Key Points from Presentation with Cate Harmeyer:

- **Reaching out to Catholic School youth:**
 - ◆ **Challenges:** It seems that Catholic school youth come in grouchy, entitled, and acting like they know everything. Sometimes it seems like they are only there to “punch their ticket” and are difficult to engage with.
 - ◆ **Why are they like this?** Catholic school youths still have all of the normal stressors that teens have. They also have a minimum of 3.5 hours of Theology class that week which includes homework, quizzes, tests, papers, etc. They perceive Youth Group, Life Teen, Edge, etc. as another class they have to take.
 - ◆ **Solution:** Focus on what parishes can offer to the teens that the schools cannot, and shift the focus from content to encounter and relationship. Parishes are their home for *life*, schools just for 4-7 years!
- **Our shared goal is the help the parents raise a saint!** Parishes should focus on the HOW of sainthood:
 - ◆ How to pray, how to make a fruitful confession, how to live a faithful live, how to go to adoration, etc. The schools do try to teach this but it is a privileged role of the parish to teach the HOW. The schools are more likely to teach the content knowledge – not the lived experience.
 - ◆ The parish can offer encounter and relationship. In the parish, you are able to reverently engage in celebrating the sacraments; it’s tried to be taught in schools but the gap from learning in the school to attending mass – it can easily be lost. Teach them how to pray and build trust with the Church through her people (youth ministers and other youth). And simple things, like single gender small groups, can have a profound impact that aren’t typically part of the Catholic school experience!
- **Practical things you can do to build a bridge with your Catholic schools:** visit the school with goodies, volunteer to speak with classes, go on the retreats, let the kids get to know your face, ask your pastor to help with Reconciliation at the school, go to the games, etc. Effort matters, youth see the effort and appreciate it.

- Q&A about Working with Catholic Schools -

1. **How can youth ministers make a solid pitch to the parents that youth groups will add value to their children’s lives?**
Sell the point that youth ministry is not a class. You understand they are learning in school, but youth group will add a whole other dynamic with to their faith! Focus on skills that they might not be teaching in the schools. Also, consider offering parents free enrollment in our faith formation programs since they are already paying for Catholic School.
2. **How can youth ministers connect with the middle school youth & the administration, especially now during COVID?**
Look at what the teachers and administration might need and engage with them so they can see and it can build a relationship! Sometimes seeing how you can directly support them, rather than their students, can be a huge bridge. Consider volunteering to help with a training or retreat for them. And ask if you can pop on their theology department Zoom and introduce yourself!



OFFICE FOR
EVANGELIZATION
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

