

Youth Ministry and the PPC

The three goals of youth ministry are:

- Empowering young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today.
- Drawing young people into the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community.
- Fostering the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

Consider how the PPC is working with the parish to meet these goals. Having young people or youth advocates on the PPC can greatly assist the parish in each of these three areas.

Youth Ministry as an agenda item

When “Youth Ministry” is listed as an agenda item for the PPC meeting, it is wise to give more detail as to what is expected to happen during the meeting.

Are the PPC expected to hear an update from the local youth ministry, provide input on how the parish can be further involved in a youth ministry event, or is there a guest speaker.

Detailing what is expected during the meeting will not only help the young PPC members, but the whole PPC.



**For further information
see website:**

Parish Pastoral Councils
in Australia
www.ppc.catholic.org.au/ppc

An initiative of the
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Written by Karen Lunney (2009)

Helpful resource:

Anning, C. (2007) 3rd edition
Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils



For details of contents, reviews and
online ordering see:
www.bne.catholic.net.au/opc/manual.html

Parish Pastoral Councils



Young people and the PPC

Role of a young person on the PPC.

There is a place for young people on parish pastoral councils, and many PPC's have elected young members to join their discussions. Although an active youth ministry is worthwhile, it is not a prerequisite to inviting young people to be a part of the PPC.

With the many demands that are placed on people's time, long meetings where they are expected to contribute to only one agenda item will not become a priority. This is just as true for young members!



Young people on the PPC should be encouraged to lend their voice and opinion to all matters at hand, not just those specifically relating to youth ministry.

Youth Advocates on the PPC.

Instead of, or in addition to young people on the PPC, consider appointing someone as a youth advocate.

This is usually a parishioner who has left their teens and 20's behind but has regular contact with young people, or an interest in youth ministry. Parents, teachers, government youth workers are often in this situation.

The youth advocate's role on the PPC is to consider decisions from the point of view of young people e.g. in deciding which Mass to cancel on a weekend, reminding the PPC that most young people prefer the Sunday 6pm.

Asking young people to be on the PPC.

Young people may not be accustomed to the usual format of a typical PPC meeting, and this should be taken into account when asking them to become involved. It is often wise to invite two young people, rather than just one, so they have a sense of working together, rather than being a token representative.

Be clear about the commitment that is involved, the value of their input and the expectations during and between meetings.

Young people are often passionate about issues, and will lend energy and enthusiasm to projects they believe are worthwhile. Outline the role of the PPC in the parish, and provide a realistic view of what the PPC hopes to achieve, and what is outside of its mandate to ensure that young people are not set up for failure.

Engage the gifts and talents of young people

Consider the gifts of young people on the PPC as well—you may have budding graphic artist willing to advertise the Lenten Program, or a student architect who can assist in the dreaming about the new parish centre.

School age young people are often involved in regular Religious Education classes, retreats or the like, and may have easy access to material for prayer or reflection. Encourage them to make the link between life and faith in this way.



Mentoring a young person on the PPC.

The role of a mentor for young people on the PPC is an important one. The mentor should be officially recognised in the role by the whole of the PPC.



Mentors are encouraged to catch up with the young members before the meeting, to remind them of the date and venue, check that they have transport, run through the agenda, think through the issues that will be raised, or help preparing reports.

During the meeting, a mentor may need to prompt for a young person's response to the item on the table, until they are more comfortable in the role.

After the meeting the mentor can debrief with the young person, checking that they felt their opinion was heard. If necessary, the mentor can be a facilitator for conversation between the PPC chair, Parish Priest and the young person.

Guest speakers on Youth Ministry

Often a PPC will invite the Diocesan Youth Ministry Co-ordinator, or another guest speaker to present at the PPC meeting. Introducing them to young members, mentors or advocates before the meeting is helpful, in order for them to have a greater sense of the community.

Planning for discussion time during that meeting and the next to make any decisions about youth ministry in the parish that may arise from the material presented is essential.