
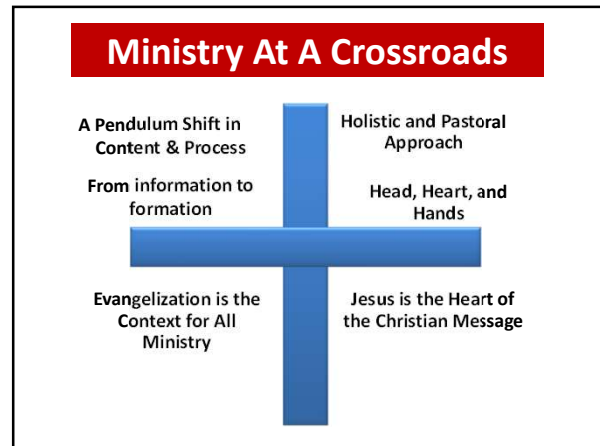


Passing on the Faith: The Challenge and the Blessing!



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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 ...



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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 ...

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Characteristics of Engaged Young Catholics

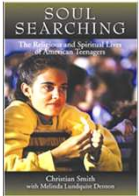
- Strong affective relational bonds to religiously committed family and friends
- Internalized Catholic beliefs through personal spiritual experiences so that faith was personally significant to them
- Engaged regularly in religious behaviors and practices such as prayer, reading scripture, and attending Sunday worship. (Smith)



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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.”



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A Process

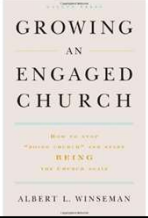

- Engagement
- Accompaniment

An Attitude

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THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT!

Engagement is a strong emotional connection to the faith community



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THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT

It is more than involvement



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THE DIFFERENCE IS ENGAGEMENT!

It is a sense of belonging to the community



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WHY IS ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

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

Belonging behaving believing



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ENGAGEMENT AS MINISTERIAL PARADIGM

The community is the context. How do we ...

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



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How does the community accompany and engage?

- challenge the parish to move beyond their comfort zone
- responsible participation in the life, work, and mission of the faith community
- an intentional pastoral activity



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For Consideration

**Disconnected families and young people
(outreach, invitation, and welcome)**



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For Consideration



Marginalized young people (the hidden, the at-risk, the poor, LBGQT, the newly arrived ...)

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Accompaniment



Develop Personal Relationships
Accompaniment is the heart of ministry

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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!

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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 an emphasis on orthodoxy to orthopraxis
 - Create a catechesis of current events ... connecting life to faith.
 - It's about Jesus!



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Engagement

Invite young people into the pastoral, liturgical, and leadership ministries



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Engagement


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



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Accompaniment and Engagement

- Assist parents in their own faith journey
- Assist parents in engaging their children in “faith talk”
- Assist parents in strengthening family faith practices



of parents!

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Accompaniment and Engagement



Connect young people with Jesus
The goal of all ministry

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The Challenge ...




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

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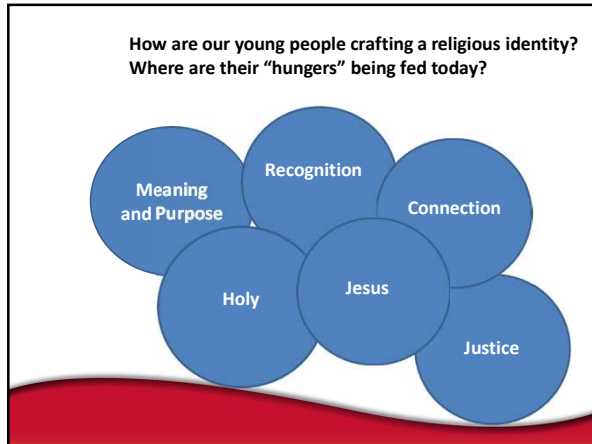
Engaged Communities



“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

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To be Catholic is to be social

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

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To be Catholic is comprehensive

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

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To be Catholic is to see differently

*Catholic imagination ...
Catholic world view*

- *Our sacramental lens*
- *Our rituals*
- *Everything expresses the transcendent: beauty, the arts, gatherings, nature, devotionals*

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To be Catholic is to engage the world


... through, justice, service, and heroic charity

Catholic Social Teaching ... discipleship in action

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The Jesus Experience


The Heart of Catholicism as Spiritual Path



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Key Points

- We don't have a 'believing' issue, we have a 'belonging' issue.
- We don't have a 'young people' issue, we have a faith community challenge.
- Do we know their names? Do we know their stories?
- How are we effectively accompanying young people on their spiritual journey?
- Pastoral ministry is about responding to their hungers and their yearnings!



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Reflection

- *What are the implications of an engagement/accompaniment approach for our pastoral ministry?*
- *What one strategy or initiative should we consider to enhance our efforts in passing on the Faith to our young people?*
- *In what ways might the disaffiliated be 'innovators' of something new?*

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Yearnings

Where are their hungers being fed?




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

--Josh McDowell




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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)



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