Youth Ministry: Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow

John Roberto

Three Eras

Youth Ministry 1.0 – 1930s-1960s

- The Catholic Youth Organization
- The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

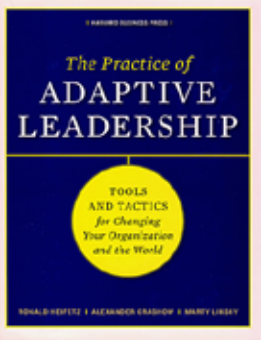
Youth Ministry 2.0 & 2.5 – 1970s-2000s

- Catholic Youth Ministry
- *A Vision of Youth Ministry* & *Renewing the Vision*

Youth Ministry 3.0 – 2010s –

- 21st Century Youth Ministry

Adaptive Responses to a Changing World



- ***Adaptive challenges*** are situations for which solutions lie outside the current way of operation.
- Require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments.
- Require learning new ways—changing attitudes, values, and deep-seated behaviors.
- Call for changes of heart and mind—the transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values.

Adaptive Responses to a Changing World

Successful adaptive change. . . .

- enables the capacity to thrive in a new environment
- builds on the past, making the best possible use of previous wisdom and know-how
- occurs through experimentation
- significantly displaces, reregulates, and rearranges some old DNA
- takes time to consolidate adaptions into new patterns and requires persistence

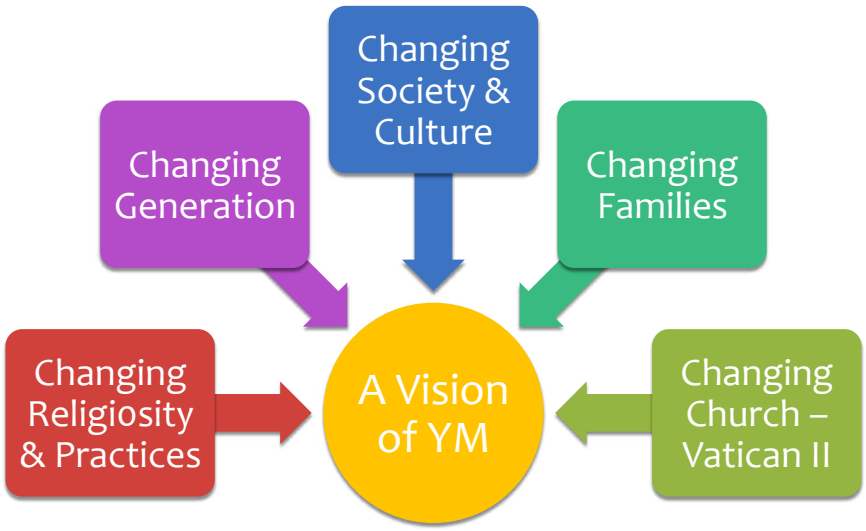
The World of the 1930s

YM 1.0 - The Adaptive Response Catholic Youth Organization

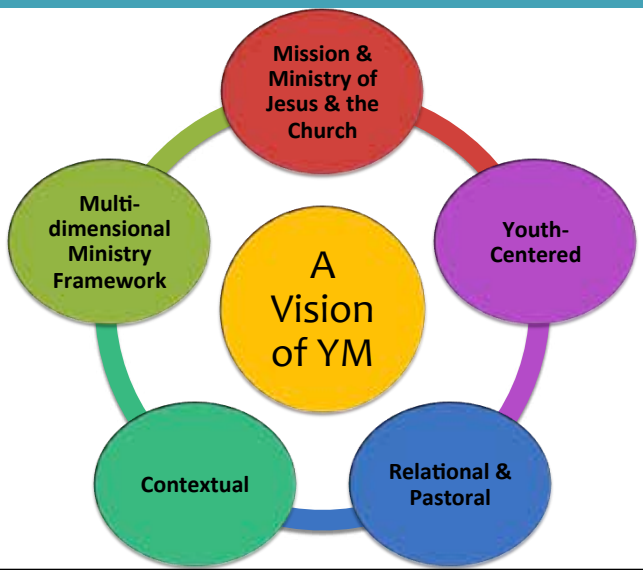
CYO sought to:

- promote among Catholic youth a recreational, educational, and religious program that adequately meet their physical, mental, and spiritual needs in their after-school hours;
- inspire, direct, and guide the natural creative instincts of young people into those worthwhile channels, which permit the widest expression of personality, individually or in groups, while instilling in the minds and hearts a true love of God and Country
- assist those people who are in need without regard to race, creed, or color.

The World of the 1970s



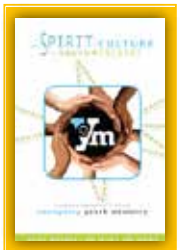
YM 2.0 - The Adaptive Response
A Vision of Youth Ministry

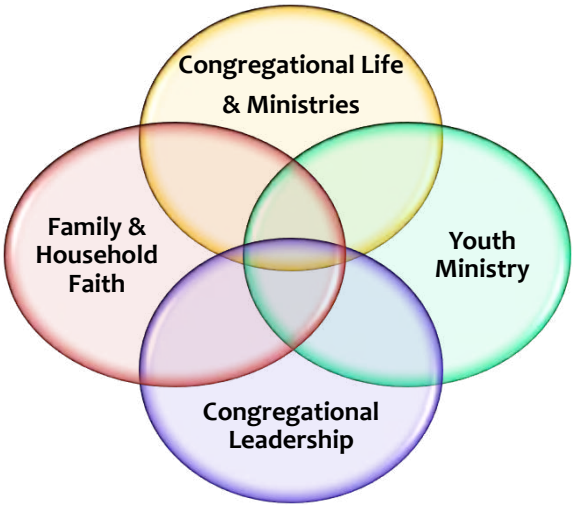


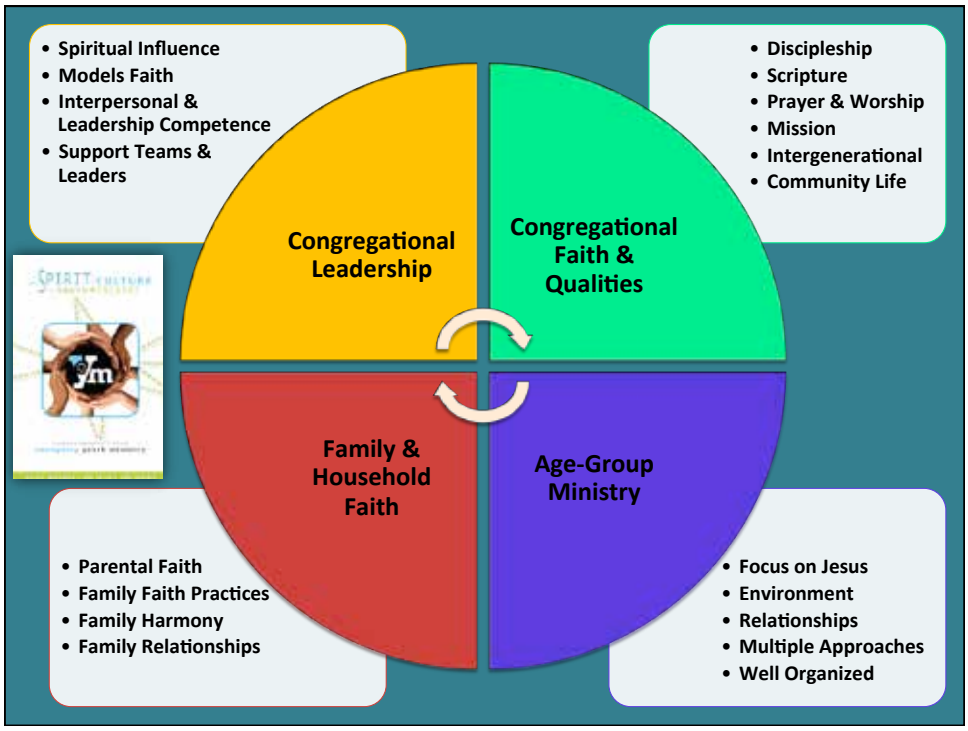
YM 2.5
Renewing the Vision of Youth Ministry

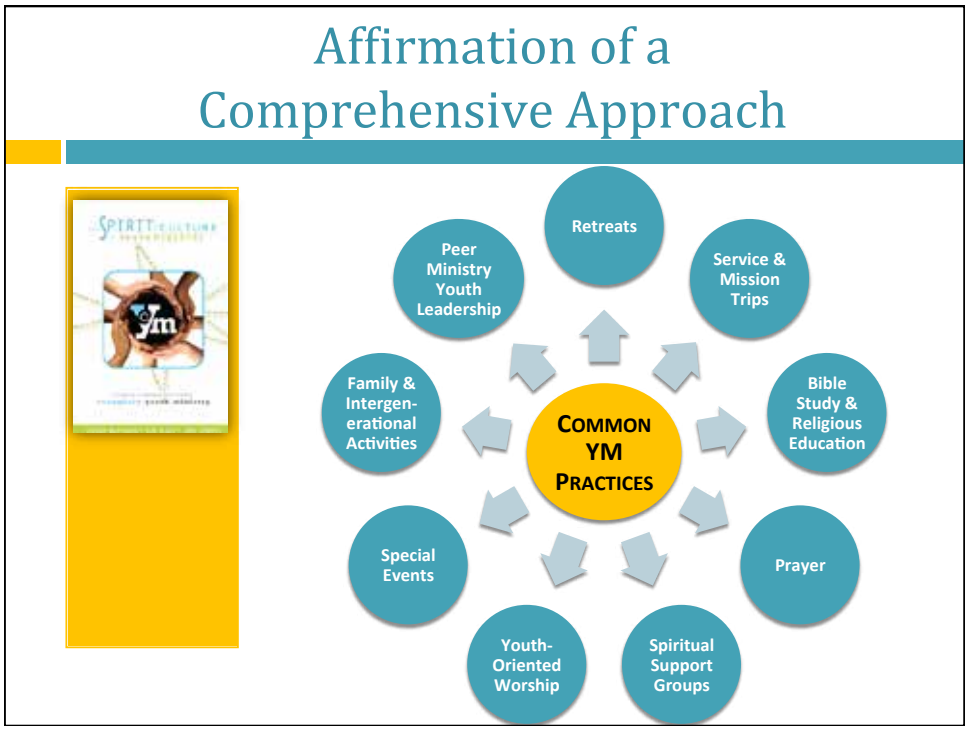
1. Deepened & expanded *A Vision of Youth Ministry*
2. Discipleship and maturing faith at the center
3. Developed an "ecological" view of faith growth
4. Articulated a fuller understanding of the comprehensive framework for ministry

Affirmation of an Ecological View






• Spiritual Influence
• Models Faith
• Interpersonal & Leadership Competence
• Support Teams & Leaders
Congregational Leadership
Congregational Faith & Qualities
• Discipleship
• Scripture
• Prayer & Worship
• Mission
• Intergenerational
• Community Life
Family & Household Faith
Age-Group Ministry
• Parental Faith
• Family Faith Practices
• Family Harmony
• Family Relationships
• Focus on Jesus
• Environment
• Relationships
• Multiple Approaches
• Well Organized

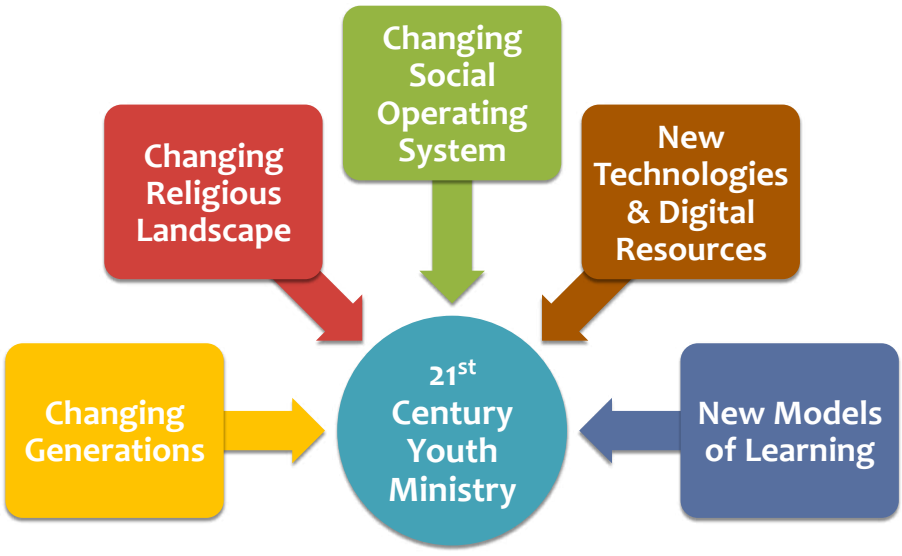

Affirmation of a Comprehensive Approach
Retreats
Service & Mission Trips
Bible Study & Religious Education
Prayer
Spiritual Support Groups
Youth-Oriented Worship
Special Events
Family & Intergen-erational Activities
Peer Ministry Youth Leadership
COMMON YM PRACTICES

Affirmation of the Impact of Youth Ministry: Discipleship

Impact of Young People's Involvement in Youth Ministry. . . .

- Deepen my relationship with Jesus
- Understand my Christian faith better
- Apply my faith to daily life
- Make serious life choices (future, relationships, values)
- Share my faith

The World of the 2010s



YM 3.0 – 4 Adaptive Challenges

1. Challenge #1. Addressing the spiritual and religious diversity of <u>all</u> young people & the parents
2. Challenge #2. Developing a "First Third of Life" ministry approach
   - with an intentional, embedded family/parent ministry
   - with strong intergenerational connections
3. Challenge #3. Utilizing the new internet and media technologies to build networks of ministry and faith formation to reach <u>everyone</u>
4. Challenge #4. Equipping young people & their families to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ in the 21st century world

Trends in Religiosity & Practice

- 19% of Americans claim no religious affiliation
- 30% of 18-34 year olds
- 18% of 18-39 year olds say that are "spiritual, but not religious"

Diverse Religiosity

Youth (teens)

Abiders	Adapters	Assenters	Avoiders	Atheists
20%	20%	31%	24%	5%

Emerging Adults (20s)

Committed Traditionalists	Selected Adherents	Spiritually Open	Religiously Indifferent	Religiously Disconnected	Irreligious
15%	30%	15%	25%	5%	10%

Youth Religiosity

1. **Abiders**: highest levels of religiosity and practice: believe in God, pray regularly, engage in personal religious practice, attend services, serve others, think about the meaning of life; most likely to say their religion is the only true faith
2. **Adapters**: high levels of personal religiosity + accepting of other people's faiths + attend religious services more sporadically
3. **Assenters**: believe in God and feel somewhat close to God, but they are minimally engaged with their faith and practice only occasionally. Religion is tangential to other aspects of their lives.
4. **Avoiders**: believe in God but have low levels of religious practice; God is distant, impersonal; and often don't name a religious affiliation.
5. **Atheists**: don't believe in God and don't attend services.

Young Adult Religiosity

1. **Committed Traditionalists**: strong religious faith; articulate beliefs; active practice; commitment to faith is a significant part of their identities and moral reasoning, at least somewhat regularly involved in some religious group
2. **Selected Adherents**: believe and perform certain aspects of their religious traditions but neglect and ignore others; more discriminating about what they are willing to adopt of their religious tradition's beliefs and practices
3. **Spiritually Open**: not very committed to a religious faith but are nonetheless receptive to and at least mildly interested in some spiritual or religious matters.

Young Adult Religiosity

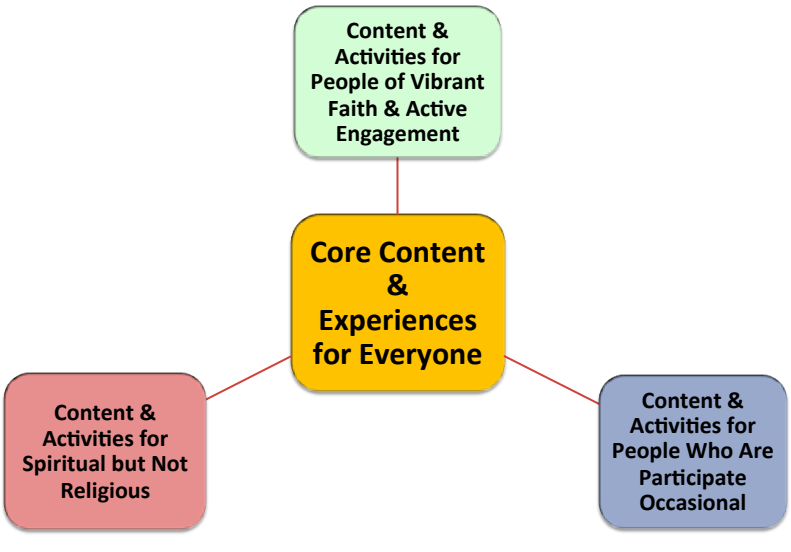
4. **Religiously Indifferent:** neither care to practice religion nor oppose it; simply not invested in religion either way; too distracted with and invested in other things in life and unconcerned with matters of faith to pay any real attention to religion.
5. **Religiously Disconnected:** have little to no exposure or connection to religious people, ideas, or organizations; neither interested in nor opposed to religion; faith simply has not been a part of their lives in any significant way.
6. **Irreligious:** hold skeptical attitudes about and make critical arguments against religion generally, rejecting the idea of personal faith

Targeting the Diversity

Differentiating & Personalizing

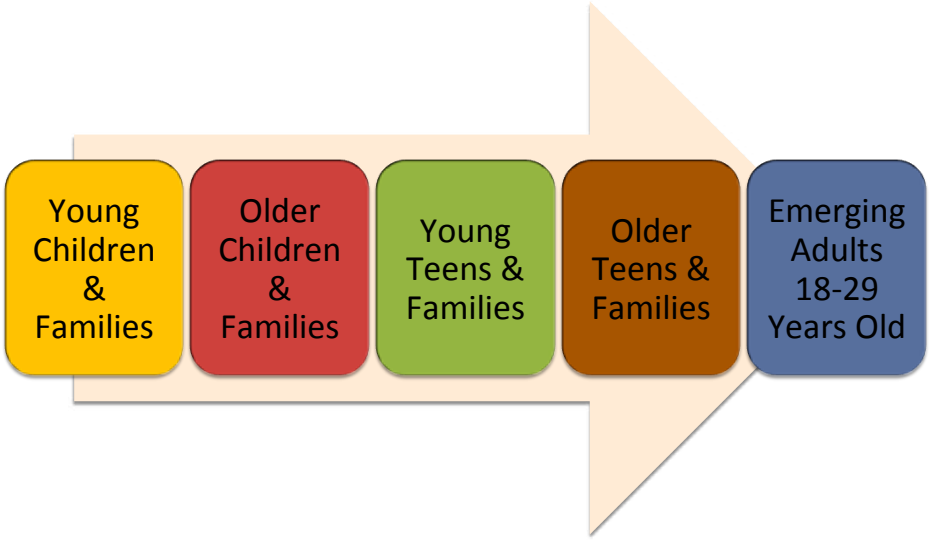
- Fashioning differentiated, personalized, & customized ministry and faith formation around the lives of young people (and their parents) – moving away from a reliance on "one size fits all" programs & resources
- Addressing young people's spiritual and religious diversity by offering a wide variety of religious content & experiences
- Developing personalized pathways for faith growth – mentoring, small groups

Differentiating & Personalizing



Theme #2. First Third of Life

Continuity in First Third of Life



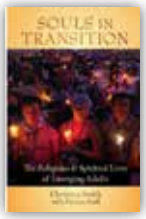
Factors that Promote Faith Growth

The combination of the following factors makes an enormous difference in religious outcomes during emerging adulthood:

1. the teenager's parental religion
2. importance of faith
3. prayer
4. Scripture reading
5. lack of religious doubts
6. personal religious experiences
7. having supportive nonparent adults in the church

These most influential factors make differences of sizeable magnitude in substantive outcomes.

Factors that Promote Faith Growth



- Approximately 70% of youth who at some time or other before mid-emerging adulthood commit to live their lives for God, the vast majority appear to do so early in life, apparently before the age of 14.
- Most make their first commitments to God as children or during the preteen or very early teen years.
- Many religious trajectories followed in the course of life's development seemed to be formed early on in life.

Extending Youth Ministry – with Children and Emerging Adults

- Apply a "ministry" model to children
- Start family ministry early!

Children

Youth

- Ecological approach
- Multi-dimensional ministry
- New Models, Approaches & Technologies

- Prepare youth for life after HS
- Connect with social media & online formation

Emerging Adults

Family in First Third of Life Faith Assets – Search Institute

Nurturing RELATIONSHIPS
- Positive communication
- Affection
- Emotional openness
- Support for sparks

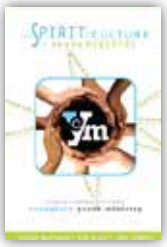
Establishing ROUTINES
- Family meals
- Shared activities
- Meaningful traditions
- Dependability

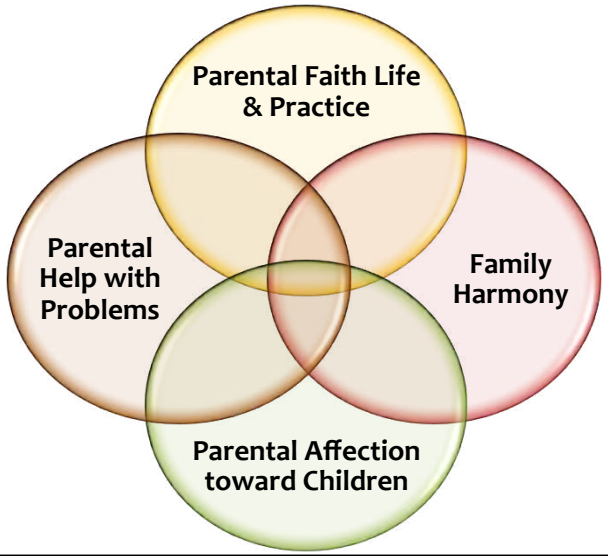
Maintaining EXPECTATIONS
- Openness about tough topics
- Fair rules
- Defined boundaries
- Clear expectations
- Contributions to family

Adapting to CHALLENGES
- Management of daily commitments
- Adaptability
- Problem solving
- Democratic decision making

Connecting to COMMUNITY
- Neighborhood cohesion
- Relationships with others
- Enriching activities
- Supportive resources

Family in First Third of Life
Family Faith & Wellbeing

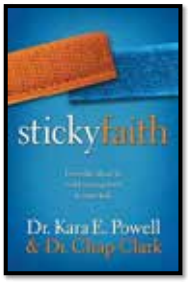




Six Key Family Faith Practices

Family in First Third of Life
Family Faith

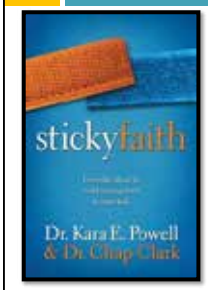
Intergenerational Connections in First Third of Life



Intergenerational connection and involvement during high school promotes mature faith in both high school and college – a "sticky faith."

- Welcoming and valuing young people's participation in the life of the church
- Worshipping with all of the generations
- Serving and building relationships with younger children
- Having significant relationships with adults in the church and having the community show interest in them

Intergenerational Connections in First Third of Life



Churches and families wanting to instill deep faith in youth should help them build a web of relationships with committed and caring adults.

Becoming a 5:1 Church

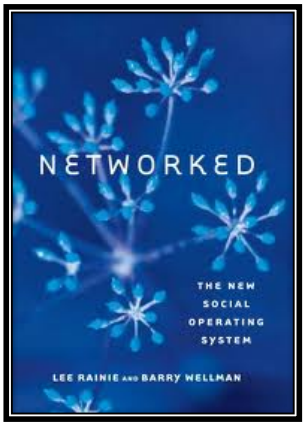
5 Adults to 1 Young Person
in
Worship, Teaching, Mentoring, Rituals, & Community Life

Intergenerational Connections in First Third of Life

1. Intergenerational Community Life & Events (arts festivals, music and concerts, drama)
2. Intergenerational Mentoring & Reverse Mentoring
3. Intergenerational Service
4. Intergenerational Learning
5. Intergenerational Retreats & Camps
6. Intergenerational Leadership
7. "Intergenerationalize" Age-Group Programs

Theme #3. Connected & Networked

Connected & Networked



The Triple Revolution

1. Social Network Revolution
2. Internet Revolution
3. Mobile Revolution

Connected & Networked

EMBEDDED

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Connected & Networked

Networked Individualism

The three revolutions have made possible the new social operating system – *Networked Individualism*. The hallmark of networked individualism is that people function more as connected individuals and less as embedded group members.

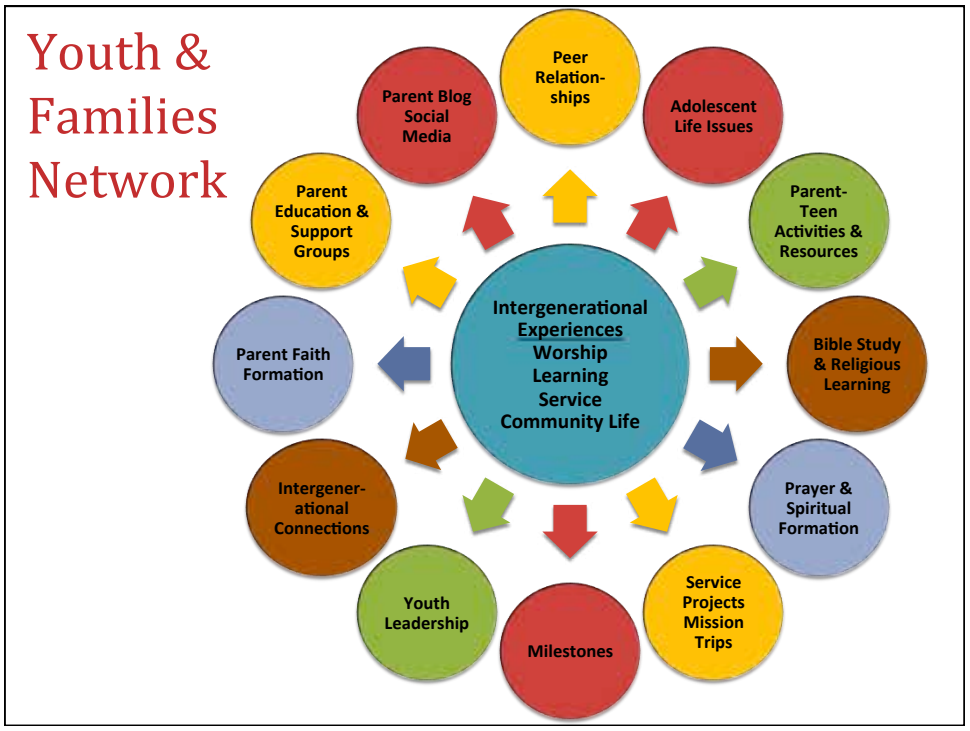
Connected & Networked

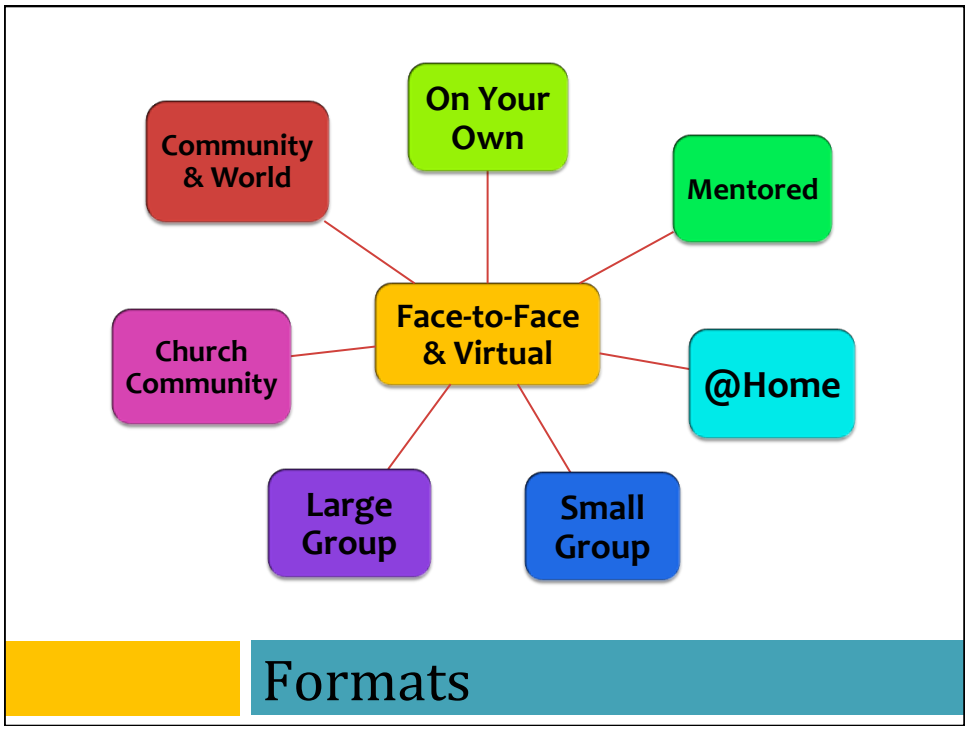
Connected & Networked

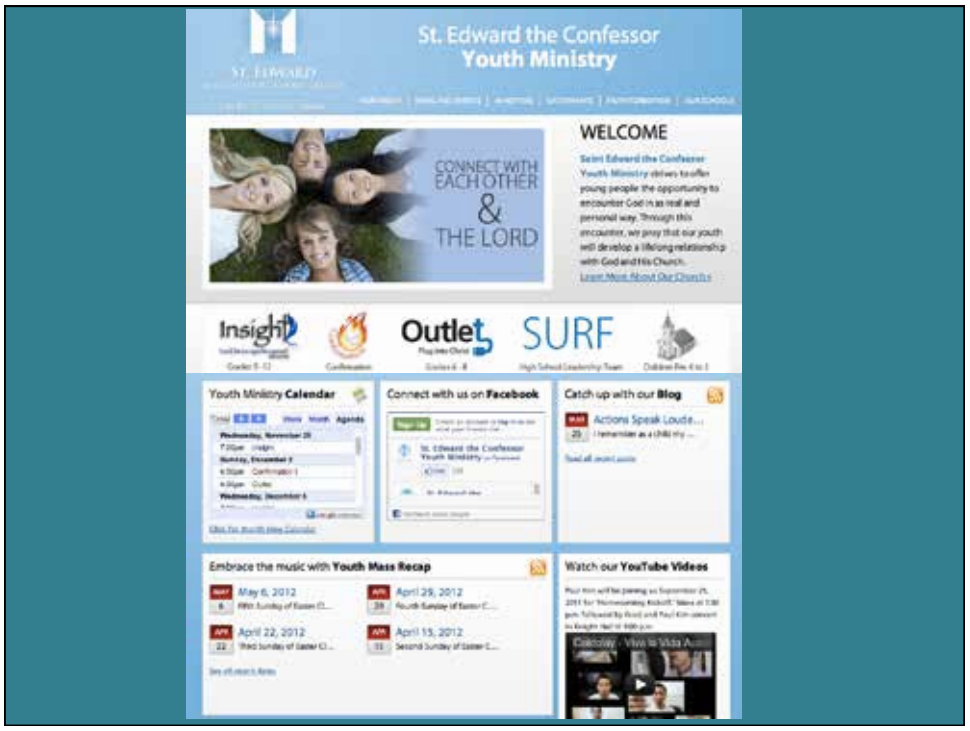
A Connected, Networked Approach

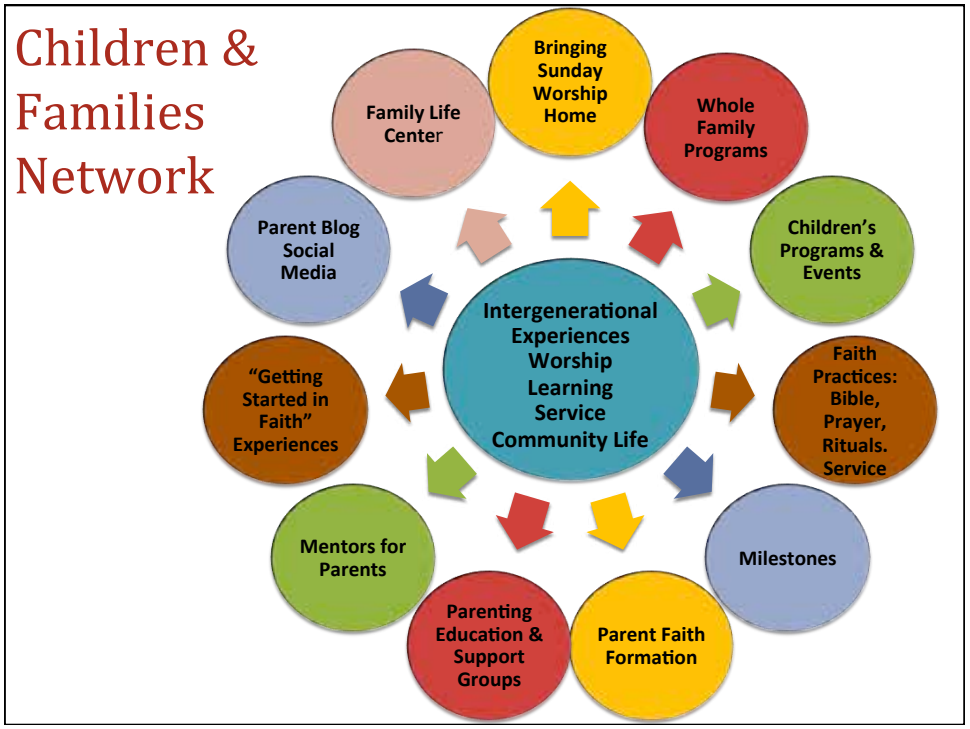
We now have the models, resources, and technologies to. . .

- **Expand** faith formation to address the diversity of people today – life tasks and issues, religious and spiritual needs
- **Deliver** religious content and experiences to people wherever they are, 24 x 7 x 365
- **Engage** people in a wide variety of experiences tailored to their needs, interests, spiritual journey, and busy lives
- **Connect** people to each other – in physical places and virtual spaces


Youth & Families Network
Peer Relation-ships
Adolescent Life Issues
Parent-Teen Activities & Resources
Bible Study & Religious Learning
Prayer & Spiritual Formation
Service Projects Mission Trips
Milestones
Youth Leadership
Intergener-ational Connections
Parent Faith Formation
Parent Education & Support Groups
Parent Blog Social Media
Intergenerational Experiences
Worship
Learning
Service
Community Life


On Your Own
Community & World
Mentored
Face-to-Face & Virtual
Church Community
@Home
Large Group
Small Group
Formats


St. Edward the Confessor
Youth Ministry
WELCOME
CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER & THE LORD
Insight
Outlet
SURF
Youth Ministry Calendar
Connect with us on Facebook
Catch up with our Blog
Embrace the music with Youth Mass Recap
Watch our YouTube Videos


Children & Families Network
Bringing Sunday Worship Home
Whole Family Programs
Children's Programs & Events
Faith Practices: Bible, Prayer, Rituals. Service
Milestones
Parent Faith Formation
Parenting Education & Support Groups
Mentors for Parents
"Getting Started in Faith" Experiences
Parent Blog Social Media
Family Life Center
Intergenerational Experiences
Worship
Learning
Service
Community Life

New Roles: Architects & Curators

- **Learning Architect:** creating a diversity of environments for ministry and faith formation – virtual and physical
- **Curator:** finding, evaluating, organizing, and delivering the best and most relevant content and experiences on a specific topic to match the needs of an audience

Becoming Curators

Curating. . . .

1. Programs & Activities: Church, Community
2. People Resources
3. Print Resources
4. Audio & Video Resources
5. Art, Drama, and Music Resources
6. Online Content: Websites, Courses, Blogs
7. Apps & Digital Resources

Theme #4. Discipleship

Envisioning Discipleship in the 21st Century

- *How do we understand the life, teachings, and praxis of Jesus in a 21st century world?*
- *What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus in a connected, networked, "post-modern," technological world?*
- *How do we practice the way of Jesus in a 21st century world?*
- *How do we engage younger generations in encountering Jesus and growing as disciples?*
- *How can we apprentice and mentor the younger generations in discipleship?*