



Youth Ministry and Parish Finances How to Budget and Budget It

The author wrote in Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: "To everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die."

Likewise, every parish youth ministry program has a budget and a manner of creating and maintaining the budget. One might say, to everything there is a budget, a time to spend, and a time to withhold from spending. The litany might continue. There are:

- youth ministry programs that run on very strict budgets, and others that just "ask Father whenever they need the money."
- youth ministry programs that run their entire budget on fundraisers, and others that are not allowed to raise funds from the parish.
- youth ministry programs whose budgets are scrutinized by pastoral councils, and others that claim they have no budgets at all.

It could be impossible to write a litany that would cover all of these different circumstances. It all comes down to income and expenses.

Why Budget?



Stewardship Demands that a Budget Be Created

It has been documented that the word steward is derived from the Middle English term for sty ward. Sty wards were people who managed pigs for the head of the household. The sty ward did not own the pigs. He merely managed the pigs.

Likewise, coordinators of youth ministry (CYMs) do not own the money donated to the church, or to youth ministry. CYMs simply manage the funds that are directed to youth ministry. CYMs must render an account for these funds, use them wisely, and advance the reign of God with the funds entrusted to them. Budgeting enables coordinators of youth ministry to manage this task of stewardship.

A Well-Constructed Budget Enables Coordinators of Youth Ministry to Work with Integrity among the Other Ministries that Place Demands upon Parish Resources

Youth ministry sometimes suffers from the Lazarus Syndrome. Remember the poor man Lazarus? He stayed at the gate of the wealthy man, and "longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table." Luke 16:21

Time after time, stories are told of parishes that would love to hire a coordinator of youth ministry, or begin youth ministry, "but there just is not enough money leftover in the budget." The time has come for youth ministry to stop receiving leftovers—scraps from the table. A parish budget is a type of mission statement. If youth ministry is a priority, then it should be reflected in the budget.

Parish budgets should not dictate priorities. Priorities should dictate the budget! Youth ministry need not wait for scraps to fall from the budget table. Rather, coordinators of youth ministry should be invited to dine with the others.

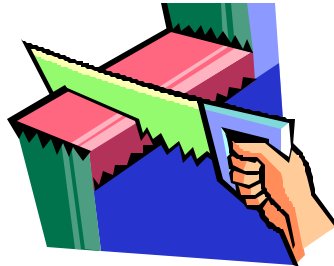
A Budget Allows for History to Be Communicated to Others Who Are New to an Organization.

Even in a parish where the pastor says, "there is no budget, just let me know what you need," a budget is helpful. If the coordinator of youth ministry records every expense, as well as income (including the "pastor's subsidy"), then when that

pastor leaves, a record will be available for an incoming pastor. Should the coordinator of youth ministry or bookkeeper leave, whether volunteer or paid, there is no need to reconstruct a budget. The budget tells the story. So, how should a budget be constructed?

Constructing a Budget

Budgets are about income and expenses. Working together, a youth ministry team should answer some basic questions:



- What is the vision of youth ministry in this parish, and how does this vision tie into the vision and mission of the parish?
- How do the goals of youth ministry and the components of youth ministry, articulated in *Renewing the Vision* (USCCB, 1997), influence and shape the vision of youth ministry in the parish?
- What will be the shape of youth ministry three years from now?
- What can be done this year to move toward the goals set for youth ministry?
- How can the youth ministry team assure that the proposed goals are realistic, measurable, and attainable?
- Who will accomplish each task necessary to achieve the goals?
- How much will it cost to achieve those goals?
- What are the sources of income?

To Build a Budget, Build Relationships

If answers are provided to the preceding questions and if a vision, goals, and objectives are articulated for youth ministry in the parish, then a more accurate attempt at budgeting can be achieved. Then, other tasks must be accomplished in order to finish the budgeting process.

The coordinator of youth ministry or youth ministry team should schedule a meeting with the finance committee, finance council, or the chairperson. Committee members can relay to the youth ministry personnel the intricacies of the parish budget process. Finance committees often consist of accountants, bookkeepers, financial managers, and planners who can aid the youth ministry personnel in the budget process.

It is important that the finance committee knows how difficult it is to project a youth ministry budget. This year's group of young people may possess certain needs that were not true of past groupings. Explain to the finance council members the

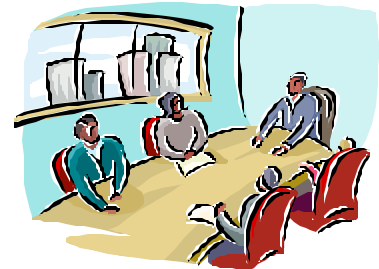
spontaneity that is inherent in youth ministry, which makes the budget process a more difficult task than other parish programs. One way to minimize this difficulty is to agree that, even though the events may change, the total amount of parish subsidy going toward youth ministry will remain the same. This enables the finance council to obtain a budget figure that can be predetermined, while allowing youth ministry personnel some flexibility in programming.

Find out who keeps the parish books. Often a staff member performs this task, while in other parishes a volunteer handles this duty. Ask the bookkeeper to provide a copy of the general ledger for youth ministry accounts. This ledger lists every check that was charged to the account, and all the income that was credited to the account. In this way it provides a history that is helpful in projecting the youth ministry budget.

Preparing a Youth Ministry Budget/Annual Report

Administration

The following items should be included in the *administration* portion of a parish youth ministry budget/annual report:



- Salaries, FICA, medical and life insurance, retirement, and professional development money (if a paid coordinator of youth ministry is on the parish staff).
- Fees and dues to professional organizations.
- General office supplies, including: paper, postage, computers and other equipment purchases, and equipment maintenance.
- Subscriptions and the cost of a youth ministry library.
- Travel expenses for local, regional, and national travel. Determine the rate for mileage reimbursement and build this line item accordingly.

Adult Youth Ministry Training

The following items should be included in the adult youth ministry training portion of a parish youth ministry budget/annual report:

- Registration for workshops and retreats for volunteers in youth ministry.
- Workshops and presentations for adults in the parish regarding youth ministry.
- Recognition for volunteer youth ministry personnel.

- Travel and registration expenses for representatives to attend the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry.

Youth Leadership Training

The following items should be included in the youth leadership training portion of a parish youth ministry budget/annual report:

- Arch/diocesan or parish leadership programs that provide leadership training for youth.
- Videos, books, magazines, and other youth leadership training materials.
- Travel and registration expenses for parish representatives to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference

Programming

The following items should be included in the programming portion of a parish youth ministry budget/annual report:

- Costs associated with athletics that might include: registration fees, uniforms, equipment, referee fees, field fees, trophies, and celebrations.
- Costs associated with retreats that might include supplies, transportation, facility, and the retreat facilitator.

Using the examples of athletics and retreats above, examine the remaining youth ministry programming and ask the following questions:

- What income is anticipated?
- What expenses will be necessary?
- What income and expenses will be associated with promotion and hospitality in youth ministry programming?
- Will fundraising efforts be necessary for certain programs?

Then, using the ministry components from *Renewing the Vision* examine the other aspects of youth ministry programming. The components include: advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, and prayer and worship. Ensure that family activities and intergenerational gatherings are included.

When the budget is complete, a few final questions remain for the youth ministry personnel of the parish:

- Are the vision and goals for youth ministry clearly represented in this budget?
- Have the expected income and expenses been adequately represented in this budget?
- Is the vision of youth ministry in this parish clearly articulated for others in this budget?

If the answer to these questions is a resounding "yes!" the budget process is complete. It is then time to begin another season of youth ministry in the parish setting.

Resources

Youth Ministry Management Tools

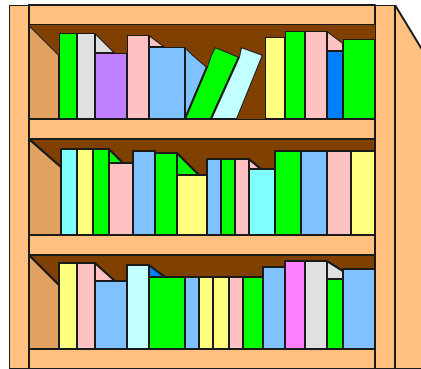
by Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot, and Mike Work
Zondervan Publishing House, 2001

Managing Youth Ministry Chaos

by Mike Woodruff
Group Publishing Inc., 2000

Hiring for Youth Ministry: A Process for Success

by NFCYM
NFCYM, Inc., 2006



Sample Youth Ministry Budget

Item	Income	Expense
Youth Ministry Administration		
Youth ministers' salary		
FICA		
Medical insurance		
Retirement		
Professional development		
Secretary and multicultural leader salaries		
FICA		
Medical insurance		
Retirement		
Professional development		
Postage		
Telephone		
Office supplies		
Computer/Machine rental and repair		
Books and periodicals		
Travel		
Youth Ministry Support and Training for Adults		
Registration for workshops		
Registration for youth ministry retreats		
Parish adult training events		
Parish support opportunities		
NCCYM		

Item	Income	Expense
Dues for professional youth ministry association, e.g., NACYML		
Youth Ministry Training for Youth		
Registration for training youth leaders		
Parish leadership training events		
Books and periodicals		
NCYC		
Youth Ministry Program		
Athletics		
Retreat		
Supplies		
Social Activities		
Service and Justice		
Adolescent Catechesis		
Peer Ministry		
Fund-raisers		
Youth Groups' Meetings		
Youth Liturgies		
Youth Ministry Meetings and Conferences		
Youth Ministry Program and Promotional Costs		

Sample Budget Sheet adapted and used with permission from *Hiring for Youth Ministry: A Process for Success* (NFCYM, 2006).

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