

SECTION TEN – Personnel Issue for Parish Youth Ministry

Hiring a New Coordinator of Youth Ministry

10.1 All diocesan guidelines regarding hiring, job description, recommended salary scale and contracts are to be followed as outlined in this document and as determined by the Human Resources Office of the Diocese of Wilmington.

Diocesan policies – and how the Office for Catholic Youth Ministry can help parishes follow those policies – are outlined in this section.

The Contract for use the Diocese of Wilmington, the job description for the parish Coordinator of Youth Ministry and the Recommended Salary Scale for Coordinators of Youth Ministry may be found in Appendix Two.

Parishes that are replacing a previous Coordinator of Youth Ministry or are opening the position for the first time will be involved in a search process. Although the Office for Catholic Youth Ministry does not hire Coordinators of Youth Ministry, the Office does serve as a resource center for both the parish and the applicant. This Section provides an outline of a parish search process, including the development of a Coordinator of Youth Ministry Job Description and a sample Coordinator of Youth Ministry Job Application and Reference Form.

Several months before a parish considers hiring someone, the Diocesan Director of Catholic Youth Ministry should be contacted so that he/she may assist the parish in this process.

Overview of the Hiring Process

Often, as parish youth ministry teams or parish councils consider strategies to meet the needs of adolescent parishioners, they consider the possibility of hiring a youth minister or coordinator of youth ministry (CYM). Employing a CYM is one strategy among many to grow a youth ministry program. If a parish were to consider hiring, where should it begin? What does a competent CYM do? How does a parish go about hiring a CYM most effectively? How can a parish find the right person—one whose vision of youth ministry matches the parish's vision of youth ministry?

At first it seems to make sense: hire a young adult with a lot of energy, good ideas, and good intentions. If sufficient resources are not available, then it may not be the right time to consider hiring. However, money is not the only resource necessary to ensure the success of the CYM. Physical resources, such as office space and equipment, must also be considered, as well as human resources, such as volunteers to assist with the

programs to be directed by the CYM. Parish youth ministry programs without a coordinator of youth ministry can be organized by a team of parents, young adults, and youth charged with the task of coordinating parish youth ministry. The Office for Catholic Youth Ministry is available to resource parishes in planning effective youth ministry programs.

The process of hiring a CYM can be broken down into 15 steps. This resource, divided into four chapters offer an overview of the entire hiring process. The decision to hire a CYM can provide a parish with a variety of opportunities and benefits. Unfortunately, by making quick decisions and skipping important steps in the hiring process, many parishes miss the opportunities that hiring a new CYM can afford.

Two key questions a parish must address are, "What do we want for the youth of our parish?" and, "How could hiring a CYM help us to achieve our goals for youth ministry?" Regardless of whether a parish decides to hire, it is important to remember that ministry to the youth of the parish is always the responsibility of the entire parish community. Because of this responsibility, parish leaders must consider the needs of the young people and parents whom the youth ministry program and the CYM will serve. In light of those needs, goals for parish youth ministry should be established and prioritized by parish leaders before hiring a CYM. A comprehensive hiring process helps to ensure that the right person is found to serve the youth and parents of the parish. Once the CYM is hired, the parish must find ways to support and supervise the employee.

Fifteen Steps to Successful Hiring

Step 1. Utilize the parish Youth Ministry Leadership Committee to lead the goal-setting process and possibly serve as a team of parishioners who, with the pastor, will guide the hiring process.

Step 2. Assess the needs of parish youth and define goals for the youth ministry program. Many resources are available to assist parishes in planning effective youth ministry. The diocesan office of youth ministry can assist parishes in acquiring these resources and in carrying out other aspects of the planning process.

Step 3. Identify parish resources needed to accomplish youth ministry goals. Once financial, physical, and human resources are identified, an informed decision can be made as to whether the parish should begin the hiring process or develop an alternate leadership structure to guide the youth ministry program.

Step 4. Establish lines of accountability, responsibility, and communication. The hiring committee needs to decide how it will conduct business on behalf of the parish. The committee and pastor should establish a process of communication and accountability.

Step 5. Identify the qualifications needed by the CYM.

This step includes reviewing the goals set forth by the parish for the youth ministry program and determining the skills and abilities the ideal candidate will possess.

Step 6. Develop a job description for the CYM.

The established goals for parish youth ministry provide the foundation for the job description. A well-developed job description gives the new CYM a realistic and honest record of parish expectations and holds both the parish and CYM accountable.

Step 7. Advertise the position.

There are a variety of ways to advertise the position. The committee should begin by contacting the diocesan office of youth ministry about potential candidates, and suggestions for ways to advertise the position locally and nationally. The Internet is one useful resource in advertising job positions.

Step 8. Review résumés and select candidates to interview.

Well-developed résumés provide valuable information. An application form also can be developed by the committee to solicit additional information from potential candidates. Once résumés and applications have been reviewed, the next step is deciding whom to interview.

Step 9. Check candidate references.

Pre-employment reference checks are imperative. While letters of recommendation can be helpful in the initial screening, reference checks are most efficiently made by telephone. Letters and forms rarely provide the type of information needed to obtain a complete view of the candidate.

Step 10. Schedule and prepare for interviews.

The key to successful interviewing is preparation, which consists of assembling a balanced interview team and developing thorough behavioral-based interview questions.

Step 11. Conduct the interviews.

The interview process should include time for the candidate to meet with the pastor and other key parish leaders who will make the final hiring decision. The committee also may want the candidates to meet (formally or informally) with young people, parents, volunteers, and parish staff.

Step 12: Decide to offer the position and negotiate the employment agreement.

After all the interviews have been conducted, the hiring team must consider the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. The discussion should focus on which person is most qualified to help the parish achieve the goals established for youth ministry.

Step 13: Welcome and orient the new CYM to the parish and diocese.

Let the celebration begin! The parish has engaged in the beneficial process of hiring a CYM; now it is time to introduce and welcome the new staff member to the parish community. In addition to introductions, the CYM needs to become oriented to the life of the parish and the local community. Sharing information and resources about the parish and diocese will help the CYM get off to a good start.

Step 14. Support the new CYM.

Through its ongoing support of the CYM, the parish plays a crucial role in creating a successful youth ministry program. If the CYM continues to develop in all aspects of ministry and personal development, then the youth ministry program will as well.

Step 15. Supervise the new CYM.

For some pastors, supervision is a new and difficult experience. However, it is a critical part of the employment relationship. The CYM needs to know how he or she is succeeding (or not) in achieving the goals of parish youth ministry, and how to improve.

How CYM Can Help in the Hiring Process

The job description, salary scale, and contract are all standard. The Office for Catholic Youth Ministry can assist parishes in the following ways:

- Proving parish leadership with “Hiring for Youth Ministry: A Process for Success”
- Training the Youth Ministry Committee as they begin the hiring process
- Creating and posting job announcements in nation-wide Catholic publications and online resources
- Previewing resumes and sending the parishes only those who meet the criteria set by diocesan guidelines and the parish youth ministry team
- Coordinating the interview process
- Providing orientation for new hires
- Providing ongoing support for Coordinators of Youth Ministry

Policies for Coordinators of Youth Ministry Positions

Each year the Office for Catholic Youth Ministry publishes the recommended salary scale for Coordinators of Youth Ministry.

- 10.2 Parishes are to make every effort to use the recommended salary scale when setting salaries for Coordinators of Youth Ministry.**
- 10.3 Each Coordinator of Youth Ministry must have a written job description approved by the Office for Catholic Youth Ministry.**
- 10.4 Each Coordinator of Youth Ministry must have a written agreement for employment.**
- 10.5 Three copies of the agreement are to be signed and sent to the Office for Catholic Youth Ministry annually.**
 - 10.5.1 A job description must be attached to the contract.**
 - 10.5.2 The agreement must also include a written agreement for Part B, Paragraphs #3, 10, 11, and 12.**

Agreements will be approved and signed by the Diocesan Director for Youth Ministry. Two will be returned to the parish (one for the parish, one for the employee), the other will be kept for the diocesan file.

It is recommended that a Coordinator of Youth Ministry be evaluated by his or her pastor or designate at least once each year. This evaluation should be in writing and should be shared with the Chairperson of the Youth Ministry Leadership Committee. The evaluation should include a discussion of highs and lows for the previous year as well as a discussion of goals and objectives for the following year. The outcome of the evaluation should be documented in writing and the pastor (or his designate doing the evaluating) and the Coordinator of Youth Ministry should both sign the final documentation.

If it is preferred that an evaluation template be used, please contact the Office for Catholic Youth Ministry for a sample evaluation.

