

Responding to Young Adults (20s & 30s, Married & Single) through Catholics Come Home

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Young Adult Ministry Office, Archdiocese of Chicago

We have prepared a number of options to assist your efforts in supporting the journey of young adults into more active participation in your parish. They include opportunities for young adults to enter more fully into the vision, traditions, and experience of our Catholic faith:

1. We would be delighted to meet with a team of pastoral ministers and/or volunteers in your parish (or deanery) to discuss ways of more effectively finding, inviting, and supporting the young adults in your area.
2. Consider hosting or collaborating on a program of catechesis (see below).
3. Refer those in their 20s and 30s to the Young Adult Ministry Office. In collaboration with the Kateri Ruah Center (located at Dominican Univ., River Forest) and the Isaac Hecker Ruah Center (located at Marian Catholic High School, Chicago Heights), we can inform them of and invite them to opportunities and events they might find helpful.
4. We are happy to be a resource for your planning. Through Theology-on-Tap and other programs, we have developed a "faculty" of strong speakers on a variety of topics. They can address the topics put forth by the US Bishops in the General Directory for Catechesis, as well as current events. Also, on our website (yamchicago.org), you will find additional resources that can assist your efforts.
5. Please inform us of happenings at your parish that young adults might benefit from attending. We will add them to the Master Calendar on our website (yamchicago.org), and refer Young Adults in your area back to you.

Here are some of the options for Catechesis around which we can collaborate:

1. Curious Catholics: This gathering is led by a clergy or religious person, and a lay person. After a brief introduction on the richness of our Catholic tradition, the floor is open to any questions participants have. The goal is to enter into dialogue around Catholic Church teaching, while making connections between our faith and daily life.

2. A Closer Look at Mass: as *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us* says, "Liturgy fosters ... ongoing conversion, uniting us in Christ and with one another, uplifting our spirits in thankful, joyful praise, and renewing our hearts in love for God, turning us to love of neighbor." (no. 101) Yet, a great deal of the beauty of Mass is lost if those participating do not have an understanding of our rituals, signs and symbols. We offer three options for helping young adults understand why we do what we do: The Catholic Mass with an Explanation, Mass Class, and a dialogue on Eucharist. We can also meet with your staff to discuss what young adults seek from Mass (good preaching, music, and hospitality), and brainstorm ways of inviting young adults into greater participation.

3. Within These Walls: Each of our church buildings is a treasure chest packed with a remarkable collection of reminders of our Catholic faith. A deeper understanding of these Catholic works of art, signs and symbols can greatly inform who we are, all that our faith calls us to be and do, and where our God is found. We can support your efforts in creating a brochure of the treasures within your worship space. Details can be found at http://www.yamchicago.org/Within_These_Walls.pdf.

4. Catholicism Revisited – Perhaps It’s Time to Re-examine Your Religious Roots: This program is a series of talks and conversation aimed at making connections between the questions young adults are asking about every day life issues, and the wisdom of the Catholic faith. The series will be designed around current questions and issues. Potential topics include: A Catholic Approach to Life; Jesus Christ: God with Us; Scripture: the Written Tradition; The Church: Keeping the Best Alive; Sacraments: Reminders of the Sacred; Eucharist & Reconciliation; and Our Role in the World.

5. Prayer & Scripture: This is a practical “how to” series based on these two important Catholic tools. Like Catholicism Revisited, this series presents information and invites young adults into dialogue. The specific topics are determined by the questions young adults are asking. Potential topics include: Praying from the Experiences of Our Lives; Becoming a Praying Person; Developing the Skill of Reflection; A Catholic Approach to the Bible; and Unpacking the Signs, Symbols, and Stories in Scripture.

6. An Adult Appreciation of the Christmas Story: Can you ever remember a time when you didn't know the story of the birth of Christ? Even as children, it had magic that captivated us: the birth of a baby, angels and shepherds, magi and kings, gifts, animals, a manger, and even a special star. This is not just a children’s story. It is the Gospel story, the proclamation of the Savior of the world. Fr. Cusick will unpack the story as told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Other presentations Fr. Cusick can give include: **An Adult Appreciation of the Passion and Death of Christ**, and **An Adult Appreciation of the Resurrection**.

7. Current Catholic Questions: There are a number of questions people have about the Catholic faith, that could be answered by informed ministers and some open dialogue. Such questions include: Why should I marry in the Catholic Church? Why should I have my child baptized? How do I teach my child to pray? Why send my child to a Catholic school? How does the annulment process work? How can an interfaith marriage work? Each gathering for *Current Catholic Questions* addresses one question, along with related issues.

8. Theology-on-Tap: The summer of 2010 will mark the 30th anniversary of this highly successful summer speaker and conversation series. Based on the topics put forth by the US Bishops in the General Directory for Catechesis (*nos. 84, 86-87*) and reiterated in the Bishops’ statement *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*, this 4 week series presents key teachings, and allows plenty of time for dialogue about what it means in our daily lives. TOT is hosted in one parish for young adults in that and neighboring parishes.

These are just some options available. If there is any way we can assist your efforts, please let us know: **Fr. John Cusick** or **Dr. Kate DeVries**, 312-466-9473. yam@yamchicago.org, www.yamchicago.org. Additionally, our Ruah Center Directors are also available to assist your efforts: *The Kateri Center for Young Adult Ministry*, 7900 W. Division, River Forest, IL 60305, **Ms. Elise Ainsworth**, 708-488-5112 or elisea-b@yamchicago.org; and *The Isaac Hecker Center for Young Adult Ministry*, 700 Ashland Ave., Chicago Heights, IL 60411, **Mr. Terry Shelley**, 708-756-9752 or tshelley@yamchicago.org. Thank you!