



FAITH FORMATION

- ◆ 170 young people are involved in four separate classes: 7th & 8th graders and high schoolers in English and Spanish.
- ◆ Our catechists and volunteers were celebrated during Howard County's *Divine and Wine* program.
- ★ Starting late spring, the ALPHA youth program will be offered in an effort to begin encouraging small groups for next year's programming.
- ★ A national speaker is being sought to assist with our kick-off program in September.

PARENTS

- ◆ There is increased participation from parents as volunteers and aides in our Sunday night as well as Confirmation programming.
- ◆ Each week in our e-newsletter, brief articles and hyperlinks designed are offered to assist parent in both parenting and faith sharing.
- ★ Designs have been drafted towards creating a season devotional for at-home use as well as assisting families in helping their young people find meaning in their daily choices.



RETREATS / CONFERENCES

- ◆ With Howard County YM's two retreats were co-hosted – one for Parents /High School Youth and another with the National Evangelization Team and our middle schoolers.
- ◆ Upcoming still this year is a Pilgrim

age in Annapolis as well as an Archdiocesan Middle School Conference.

- ★ Recruited for the National Catholic Youth Conference ended with no takers. It is hoped to return to the biennial Baltimore Young Catholic Conference in November.

COLLABORATIVE

- ◆ There has been collaborative efforts with the Howard County Youth Ministers (mentioned elsewhere) which included a middle school hay ride and a tailgating event outside of Wilde Lake football.
- ◆ Other collaboration has occurred with the Archdiocesan Young Adult Ministry group. We are developing local programming related to World Youth Day in Panama during January 2019
- ◆ The Appalachia Service Project has been supported with child protection training and certification as well as for send-off and return events.
- ◆ Both Boy Scout troops have experienced the same as well as assistance with troop chartering and Scout Sunday.
- ★ Scott has expressed availability for counselling for religious medals as well.
- ★ We must improve on our efforts with young adults.

CONFIRMATION / SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

- ◆ Our Core Classes have met throughout January with three different optional meeting times. As with last year, we are offering a fourth post-January "catch-the-rest" option. Thankfully, this year the class is significantly smaller. Again, parent participation was significantly increased.
- ◆ New this year was a participant workbook as well as weekly notes sent to sponsors encouraging their engagement with the candidates.
- ◆ Individual preparation for Reconciliation as well as Eucharist for teenagers has occurred throughout the year.
- ★ Towards the future, improvement is sought regarding the intentionality of our candidates' service efforts.

COMMUNICATION

- ◆ Each week, an e-newsletter is delivered to an extensive mailing list offering program updates, parent information, and cultural commentary.
- ◆ Each week, lesson plans have been sent from the Life Teen / Edge source materials. Recently, this has become formalized into a newsletter as well.
- ◆ See the note regarding sponsors above.

PARISH

- ◆ Throughout this school year video announcements featuring middle school students have been presented before Masses– first at Wilde Lake (and since the new year) at Oakland Mills.
- ◆ Scott participated in 50th anniversary planning and ensured youth involvement. Part of the anniversary celebration included hosting Homeless Jesus over Thanksgiving (along with prayer and discussion materials) as well as planning for an upcoming Parish Mission.
- ◆ Scott has been helpful with web-page development, Flocknote publication, as well as moving and storage.



SERVICE / SOCIAL JUSTICE

- ◆ There has been a significant increase in junior and senior high young people serving as aids in the Religious Education program on Sunday mornings.
- ◆ Support was offered towards the CRS viral campaign #ShareTheJourney regarding immigration in the fall.
- ◆ During the *Souper Bowl of Caring* weekend, Grassroots Crisis Shelter received nearly \$1300 in financial assistance along with nearly 60 bagged lunches.
- ◆ We are still committed to assisting with the Tanzanian Project as they are seeking to build a well.

At the meeting itself, Scott introduced the following quote from the movie *The Greatest Showman*:

He then invited the member to imagine (and imagine big) what could be the potential outcomes for young people through their participation in St. John the Evangelist... What does a SJERC kid look like?

Here are some of the responses:

- Move participation in parish activities, programs, liturgy. A desire to be a part of who St. John's is. Increase in faith-believe in themselves.
- Friends with each other Excited about coming to youth group More involved than they are currently Helping usher/ give communion
- I imagine that our St. John youth group have the same trial, peer pressure, and stress that other youth have. What I do see in our youth that they are focused, they live therefor, are committed to family. They are focused, participate, love their God. I hope that this direction continues throughout the years!
- Yo pienso que los jóvenes deberían tener un lugar donde reunirse para conocerse, compartir, divertirse
- Vision For Young Kids in The Church:
"I believe that kids should at some point in their life receive, the calling of God/God's calling: Its something that only they can truly feel in their hearts!" But this vision that I see for younger kids is that, sometimes based on how their raised and treated at home they feel like theirs no point I... they may not have a good time coming to church if they feel alone/without God in their heart...." But if kids are able to participate in activities that they feel are useful in their life with a purpose & a reward then they are more likely to do! The more kids participate like coming to catechists/ church class they should receive a reward like stickers. Prizes, etc. "Reward System" "if kids feel like they are not getting anything/nothing from church, then they won't/will not give anything back to the church!"
- Supported, resilient, Engaged, Empathetic, Seekers of Justice, Advocates for the Peace, Friends to the Poor, Introspective, outreaching, Out front during Mass- Lectors, EM, Ushers, Committee Members
- Go out and evangelize Be compassionate Loving, giving, Have an understanding of the term faith Know their faith as well as others Be involved in Parish activities
- Should look as they feel comfortable looking (we're there have) Should look like the culture they come from should look like they are happy
- Like ASP participation in other aspects of parish life to change the present Representation in all members of 50% of total. Serving at Mass as greeter at all Masses
- Truly involved in all aspects in the Parish life & witness & service
- Honesty & also love for the surrounding family. Natural A (cannot read the Last word)
- Be meaningful in their faith to act as convinced people



Would you like to participate. Please feel free to add your own comments by e-mailing scott.miller@sjerc.org

See the next page for some of Scott responses:

Finally, Scott referenced some research. Below, you can find them more fully expanded.

The Saint Mary's Press/CARA study found that the largest demographic of disaffiliated Catholic youth claim no religious affiliation. When asked their current religion:

- > 35 percent identified as having no religious affiliation
- > 9 percent said they are some other non-Protestant Christian affiliation
- > 14 percent identified as atheist or agnostic
- > 9 percent identified as Protestant
- > fewer than one in ten of the remaining responded with some other religious affiliation, such as Mormon, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Eastern Orthodox Christian, or Muslim
- > When asked at what age they no longer identified themselves as Catholic, 74 percent of the sample said between the ages of 10 and 20, with the median age being 13 years old.

<http://catholicresearch.smp.org/>

Based on groundbreaking research that involved over 250 congregations, *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* (Baker Books, \$19.99 hardcover, September 20, 2016) profiles innovative churches that are engaging 15- to 29- year-olds. These churches—reflecting the denominational spectrum, varying in size, and located all over the country—are growing spiritually, emotionally, missionally, and numerically.

Authors Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin show that reaching young people doesn't boil down to hyper-entertaining programs, trendy locations, or other attractions. What matter most are relationships, empathy, community, and Jesus. "Thanks to these remarkable congregations, tens of thousands of young people can't stop talking about how 'known' they feel in their church and how, no matter what happens, their church feels like 'home,'" the authors say. As one young churchgoer puts it: "Our whole church treats us like we are the church of today, not just the church of the future."

The authors outline six strategies essential to engaging young people:

- **Unlock Keychain Leadership:** Keychain leaders entrust others with access and authority, and empower all generations including teens and emerging adults with their own metaphorical "set of keys" to help influence and shape the direction of the church.
- **Empathize with Today's Young People:** This means "feeling with young people" as they grapple with existential questions of identity, belonging, and purpose; as they experience "systemic abandonment" due to divorce and the self-absorbed adults around them; and as they act out a desire for connection through social media.
- **Take Jesus' Message Seriously:** The authors were struck by how, in the churches studied, "Jesus reigns over poor theology and his words ring true for young sojourners hungry for life-giving direction." One young interviewee said, "The goal for our church is not really effectiveness with young people, but serving and following Jesus. And young people like me are attracted to churches that want to do that."
- **Fuel a Warm Community:** "Warm is the new cool" in these congregations, where authenticity triumphs over worship style or a multitude of programs. Young people who participated in the research praised their churches for "warm" attributes, such as welcoming, belonging, accepting, hospitable, and caring.
- **Prioritize Young People (and Families) Everywhere:** Churches in the study revealed a disproportionate prioritization of young people—an impulse that, rather than excluding older generations, breathed life into the entire congregation. As one pastor put it, "Everyone rises when you focus on young people." Involving young people in every ministry has allowed these churches to thrive with authenticity and intergenerational relationships.
- **Be the Best Neighbors:** The authors found that in churches growing young, the community accepts the difficult task of offering young people a thoughtful path to neighboring well. They provide opportunities for teens and emerging adults to serve others, pursue social justice, find their calling, interact with popular culture, and respond to heated cultural issues.

<https://churchesgrowingyoung.com/>

And... the morning after the mass shooting in Parkland, Scott pondered for what we are looking towards young people in the way of their faith and discipleship of Jesus.

<http://projectym.com/following-parkland-whats-next/>