

9A.3

Youth Report

MAY/JUNE 2018

May was a challenging month for Youth Ministry with the start of spring sports. We moved our nights from Monday to Friday evenings to accommodate for the change in most family's schedules, but still saw a decrease in numbers. Despite the lower numbers, youth still remained in contact with me and those who did not see me at Mass kept in contact via text on a regular basis. I do also have a family who has asked for referral to Christian family counselling. I am currently looking into this for them.

We did, however, do some baking to show appreciation to some of those who had helped in special ways throughout the year with a few of the youth helping the Youth Minister (writer) deliver them to each individual. We had a walking rosary night where we walked the loop around Imperial and prayed the rosary together and then played games/sports afterwards in the church yard/property. We had about 12 youth come out for this. We also continued with Theology of the Body for Teens seeing an average turnout for ToB of 13 youth. At the end of June, the youth went on a fun field trip to play Laser Tag in Red Deer for our "School's Out for Summer!" celebration. We had 22 youth participate in this activity. The Youth Grad Mass was also held on June 17 with 8 graduates present.

On June 1-3, I attended the bi-annual CCYMN (Canadian Catholic Youth Minister's Network) National Conference in Vancouver, BC. This was a three day conference where writer participated in workshops, keynote speaker (Chris Stefanick) sessions, as well as fellowship and networking with other youth ministers in Canada. I found this weekend to be quite rejuvenating in my ideas and thoughts about Youth Ministry, with the talks reigniting in me a desire to continue to make change and bring the good news of the Gospel message to the youth in our community. Though many, these are the key notes I took from the weekend. These have given me a lot to consider in how we move forward in our Youth Ministry at St. Stephen's:

- A lot of teens know about Jesus, but they don't KNOW him. How do we help our teens get to know Jesus and foster a personal relationship with him.
- We need to go where the teens are. They aren't coming to us.
- What is your internal dialogue? What is our dialogue towards others?
- Our youth are the TODAY of the church, not just the tomorrow.
- We are a part of a Love Story. Remove the love story and we are just left with a bunch of rules and a to-do list. (This is how a lot of our teens view the church. They don't see the love story. How do we show them this?)
- Youth Ministry is RELATIONAL work. We need to be INTENTIONAL and AUTHENTIC in our interactions with the youth. It does not look how it used to 15 years ago. It's time embrace the changes.
- Cultural realities of this time in society and how we can "turn the tide", Create a culture of life.
- Promoting positive FAMILY relationships!
- Point them to what they are looking for – it must resonate with them
- HELP people take the next step – EMPOWER our youth to be a part of God's mission, not ours

- Create space and opportunities for youth to experience God (retreats, prayer, food, celebrate the small things!)
- We have seen our youth as an OBJECT of our ministry. This is the wrong perspective
- Giving youth support to discern decisions, especially our older youth graduating and trying to decide what to do with the rest of their lives
- EMPATHY, SUPPORT, ENCOURAGEMENT
- INTERGENERATIONAL
- Be available – am I paying attention?
- Give yourself time to rest (you need to be healthy, sharp, and present for effective relationships/ministry) – SELF CARE
- Using the corporal works of mercy to encourage youth to come out of themselves, and to give to the youth
- The transition for youth going from High School to College. How are we supporting them and guiding them?? As a youth minister, making a personal connection to campus ministry for those heading off to college/university.
- How to recruit, train and form youth leaders
- 80% of people/youth leave the church (that's almost everyone!!)
- If you want youth to be excited about the faith, you need to be excited about the faith

Coming Up

Coming up in July and August, we will be planning a Youth Leaders evening with a campfire and dinner at Red Lodge Park. A small token of our appreciation for the work our leaders do!

We are planning a family hike at Big Hill Springs Park for Friday, July 27. This is for all families who want to join us, not just the youth.

VBS is happening in July. Many youth have asked if they can help, so we will encourage and invite the youth to participate in a way that is meaningful to them.

August – the youth have asked for a family campout. I am looking into the process of doing this.

September – Confirmation program begins with Parent Info Night on September 7 at 7pm.

October – Youth Programming begins