

Ministry Resources for Pastoral Care: **An Overview**

Effective pastoral care has three dimensions. The first is promotion and prevention, which includes training in life skills and being proactive in promoting healthy adolescent development. The second is caring for youth who are in crisis and providing direct assistance to youth who are in need. The third is advocacy, or developing strategies for challenging systems.

The focus of this manual is primarily on the first task, promotion and prevention. The twelve sessions in part B of this manual are designed to foster life skills in young people, giving youth the tools to build and maintain relationships and to deal with some of life's challenges.

Part C of this manual addresses the other two tasks of pastoral care. It includes a variety of strategies for connecting young people with the communities in which they live, providing resources for families with teens, and advocating for the inclusion of young people in all dimensions of the Church.

Manual Contents

Part A: Pastoral Care: An Overview

Chapter 1: Pastoral Care and Youth Ministry

This essay describes a broad understanding of the pastoral care component of youth ministry, including the five key principles and three interdependent elements that guide the development of pastoral care with adolescents.

Part B: Pastoral Care Sessions

This section includes twelve sessions for developing life skills and positive attitudes in young people.

Study It

The core sessions in this manual are 60 minutes long. The sessions are not sequential, so you may organize them in a way that is most appropriate for your situation.

Each session begins with a brief overview, a list of expected outcomes, and a list of recommended background reading, followed by a checklist of

the preparation required, including all materials needed. A complete description of the session procedure is then provided, including all activities and discussions, prayer, and some Live It options.

Within each session you may find additional resources, including options for extending the session through supplemental activities. A Bible concordance will provide additional citations if you want to add a more substantial scriptural component to a session, and music resources are available from a variety of publishers. Many of the sessions provide a list of media resources—such as print, video, and Internet—for more exploration. Family approaches provide simple follow-up suggestions for family learning, enrichment, celebration, prayer, and service.

Pray It

Each session also offers opportunities and suggestions for prayer that is focused on the session's theme, as well as lists of musical selections from *Spirit & Song*. Prayer forms include guided meditation, shared prayer, music, silence, prayer by young people, reflective reading, and experiences created by the participants. The Pray It component gives the young people an opportunity to bring their insights and concerns to God in prayer. The time frame for prayer experiences varies from 15 to 20 minutes.

Live It

This manual can be a springboard for connections with other youth ministry experiences. Therefore all the sessions include additional strategies to support the learning process. Those activities can be used to extend the session, provide good follow-up for the Study It core activities, and allow for age-appropriate assimilation of the material.

Session Overviews

Chapter 2: Faith and Friendship

- This session considers the basic qualities of friendship and invites the participants to consider the differences between acquaintances, friends, and intimate, or close, friends.

Chapter 3: Made in God's Image

- This session invites the young people to name the ways they make a difference in the world as children of God and parts of God's plan for the universe. It also encourages them to analyze the negative messages they get from the media and our culture.

Chapter 4: Dating Relationships

- The point of this session is to get the teens thinking about the topic of dating relationships in purposeful ways, so that they might avoid some of the pitfalls of relationships that move too fast or get stuck at a certain level, in which partners have different expectations, or that are hurtful. Throughout the session the young people are urged to think about what

is emotionally appropriate and what will bring growth to the dating relationship and to the individuals who are involved in it.

Chapter 5: Accepting and Honoring Others

- The point of this session is to raise awareness of emotional needs and the harm that is caused when people do not honor those needs in themselves and others.

Chapter 6: Choices and Decisions

- This session provides a decision-making process that, if followed carefully, can help teens make choices that will lead to a holy, happy, and healthy life.

Chapter 7: Managing Life's Ups and Downs

- This session provides the participants with the tools to understand and deal with the stresses they face, that is, the changes, challenges, and occasional crises that are part of everyone's lives.

Chapter 8: Handling Anger, Managing Conflict

- This session gives the young people the opportunity to explore their attitudes toward anger and to learn a process for evaluating and addressing conflicts in a positive and appropriate way.

Chapter 9: Dealing with Life's Changes

- This session helps the teens identify and deal with positive and negative changes and the resulting losses, and teaches them valuable coping skills.

Chapter 10: Parent-Teen Communication: An Intergenerational Session

- This intergenerational session invites parents and teenagers to seek out and develop effective communication skills for peaceful living and healthy growth.

Chapter 11: Helping Peers in Crisis

- This session builds on teens' natural tendency toward relationship, and gives them some tools to help friends who are struggling.

Chapter 12: Sexuality and Spirituality

- The purpose of this session is to help the participants understand the concept of sexual integrity as the ideal way to achieve the fullness of life of which Jesus speaks. They will also think about setting boundaries in their relationships that will help them achieve that goal.

Chapter 13: Finding Hope

- This session is about helping the young people see the connections between happiness, hope, and faith, and the role those elements play in bringing them closer to eternal life. It also helps them recognize internal and external sources of hope that they can draw on when needed.

Part C: Strategies for Effective Pastoral Care of Youth

Chapter 14: Pastoral Care of Youth

This chapter offers twelve suggestions for promoting positive youth development that go beyond the life-skills training offered in the sessions. Some of the topics are helping parents and families, networking within the community, promoting positive values, and participating in the life of the faith community.

Chapter 15: Retreats and Extended Events

This chapter combines sessions from part B into extended formats, including two daylong retreats and one extended session. In addition, it offers five more options for combining sessions.

Chapter 16: Supporting Young People and Families in Crisis

This chapter offers principles for providing care to young people who are in crisis, as well as a variety of ideas and strategies that provide resources and support for families that are facing alcoholism, drug addiction, eating disorders, sexual abuse, depression, suicide, and divorce.