

Three Initiatives of the Accompaniment Project

- Empower the faith community to care for, witness to, and accompany their young people.
- Provide resources, formation and support for parents and other faith companions for each young person in the parish.
- Transform youth ministry to support accompanying relationships

Empower the faith community to care for, witness to, and accompany their young people.

- Solicit individuals and organizations in the parish to pray for young people. One way to do that would be to have people send cards of support, care and prayers. Since you can't release addresses, these cards would initially be sent to you and your team to distribute to the young people. It might also be nice to have the pastor, priest, deacon, and youth minister send a post card note with prayer and encouragement. In these times, an old school "mail" response could mean a lot!
- Connect your pastor, priests, pastoral ministry leaders with young people.
- Create a plan to mark significant events for young people as a parish.
 - Graduation – lawn signs

Provide resources, formation and support for parents and other faith companions for each young person in the parish.

- I would recommend having team members develop outreach to parents. There are some wonderful resources for parents of teens.
- One of the things that people need during this time is an opportunity to process. You might schedule opportunities for parents to connect with you and each other to check-in. This would provide an opportunity to listen to and accompany parents. You would learn about ways for the parish to support parents, families and teens. You can also pray together.
- I would recommend being attentive to youth ministry team members (adults and youth). I would plan for opportunities to gather and check-in, provide some words of faith, hope and encouragement, pray together and provide a way to respond. One way that I have been doing a check-in is by using www.mentimeter.com. You can get a free account with Mentimeter. In an online gathering using a tool like zoom, or GoToMeeting, I share my screen and select a Word Cloud that I've prepared. I ask people to share one to three words that identifies how they are feeling at this time. After we view the words, I share a prayer lifting up these experiences and ask people to share more about what they are feeling.

Transform youth ministry to support accompanying relationships

Process for Accompanying Youth

- Check-ins
 - Phone / Video / Facetime / Zoom / Text
 - Pastoral Care / Walking in Faith
 - Make a Connection – follow-up and follow through
- Prayer
 - What can I pray for?
 - Pattern of praying for young people
 - Praying for ourselves as accompaniers – God, give me what I need to be your voice of love.
- Outreach
 - Notes / videos / texts / photos
- Gatherings Online
 - Group Check-in / Prayer / Faith Sharing / Fun
- Connections
 - Mass / National – Regional or Local Events
 - Ongoing groups in your parish

Safe Environment

- Work in Pairs
- Get permission from parents
- Follow guidelines for video calls and meetings

Determine a Ministry Context to Begin Accompaniment

- Youth involved in youth community
- Youth preparing for Confirmation / Sacraments
- Youth involved in leadership and ministries

Divide Youth into Groups for Accompaniment with Two Adults

- 30 youth = 5 groups of 6 = 10 adults = Each adult is lead for 3 youth / Back-up for 3 youth

Accompany the Accompaniers

- Provide check-ins / Outreach / Gatherings and Connections for the Accompaniers
- Get used to process of accompaniment
- Have source for accompanier's needs.
 - Note: An Accompanier can not go into an accompaniment relationship needing companionship, consistency, friendship, or affirmation. We're here to be Christ for young people – it is not about us.
- Provide orientation and formation as needed.

Start with Parents / Families

- You are also accompanying the parents and families
- Communicate and Get permission
- Provide occasional check-in's, outreach, and gatherings

Develop a Pattern of Presence with Young people

- Weekly Check-in (more if needed)
- Outreach (Ink card)
- Weekly / bi-weekly Gatherings
- Connections (can alternate with Gatherings) according to group needs

Check-in and Formation with Accompaniers

- Pray
- What's working? What's not?
- Pastoral Care Formation
- Faith Formation
- Consider Other Adults who could become Accompaniers

Resources:

COVID-19 Resources

<https://nfcym.org/covid19/>

<https://www.archindyym.com/covid-19>

Springtide Research Webinar

<https://nfcym.org/resources/webinars/crisis-webinars/>

Diocese of Youngstown - Permission for Direct Contact with Youth (revised June 2016)

<https://youngstownoyyam.weebly.com/key-forms.html>

Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend – Two-Way Video and Audio Communications in a Youth Ministry Setting

<https://app.box.com/s/biykwgvotaatxl2gsxs50p3tao44os5o>

Ink Cards

<https://sincerely.com/ink>