

DRAFT

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAM (STAY)

5-YEAR VISION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This five-year plan is intended to guide St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Youth Ministry for the years 2011-2015. Parish leadership recognizes the necessity for a comprehensive ministerial and pastoral approach to meet the needs of Catholic middle school and high school students in Palo Alto. Using the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' document, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, the following goals and objectives have been developed.

Population Served

- Catholic Middle-school and High-school aged students in Palo Alto.

Mission statement

The STAYouth Ministry program is committed to love, nurture, inspire, and motivate all middle and high school youth to be faithful, lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ who serve their community.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Objectives:

1. Provide systematic formation for middle school youth.
 - a. Incorporate the eight components of comprehensive ministry (advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, prayer and worship) in middle school youth programming.
 - b. Continue to use the Edge program, which is based upon the USCCB's Curriculum Framework, to provide ongoing formation in faith development at weekly gatherings.
 - c. Plan 1 retreat a year for middle school youth, separate from Confirmation.
 - d. Invite and engage the parents to experience an intimate encounter with Christ with their teens through the Sacraments and challenge them to be witnesses of the Good News to their families and communities.
2. Provide systematic formation for high school youth.
 - a. Incorporate the eight components of comprehensive ministry (advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, prayer and worship) in high school youth programming.

- b. Implement the LifeTeen program, which is based upon the USCCB's Curriculum Framework, to provide ongoing formation in faith development at weekly gatherings.
 - c. Plan 1 retreat a year for high school youth, separate from Confirmation.
 - d. Invite and engage the parents to experience an intimate encounter with Christ with their teens through the Sacraments and challenge them to be witnesses of the Good News to their families and communities.
3. Provide a program of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation for eighth through twelfth graders.
 - a. Incorporate components from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the USCCB's Curriculum Framework in sacramental preparation.
 - b. Implement the Oneight Confirmation preparation program.
 - c. Plan 1 retreat a year for confirmation candidates.
 - d. Develop a process of discernment for students in 8th grade and above for admittance into the Confirmation preparation program, which includes a formal check-in meeting with the priest and/or youth minister.
 4. Recruit and train a Leadership Team consisting of staff, young adult volunteers, youth, and interested parishioners for each of the ministries: middle school, high school, and Confirmation program.

Goal 2: Draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community.

Objectives:

1. Provide an opportunity for middle and high school youth to actively participate in prayer and worship at weekly Sunday evening youth-friendly masses.
 - a. Youth will be invited to participate in the ministry of hospitality.
 - b. Youth and adults will be invited to participate in the ministry of music that is lively and engaging.
 - c. Fully initiated youth will be invited into the ministries of Proclaimer and Eucharist Minister.
 - d. Clergy will be invited to deliver homilies that are engaging and relevant to young people.
2. Provide opportunities for middle school and high school youth to engage in and reflect on service.
 - a. Expand the STAY COOL program to include a monthly service project.
 - b. Collaborate with community organizations, such as Catholic Charities and YCS, to offer service events to middle school and high school youth.
 - c. Offer immersion trips to expose high school students to social justice issues.
3. Present opportunities for the youth to actively participate in Community Life.
 - a. Engage teens in Parish Life through events such as:
 - i. Parish BBQ
 - ii. Friday Night Light events

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- iii. Fundraising activities
- b. Plan outings and activities away from the parish, such as:
 - i. Ski trips
 - ii. Diocesan Youth Retreat
 - iii. Ongoing retreats
 - iv. LA Congress Youth Day
 - v. Other regionally organized Youth Day events
- 4. Provide a dedicated space for the youth programs at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish
 - a. Identify a space that middle school and high school students can call their own
 - b. Have periodic “beautification days” where teens decorate and re-decorate their space.

Goal 3: Foster the personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

Objectives:

- 1. Offer a Small Faith Community to high school students that meets weekly.
- 2. Support the 40 developmental assets model
 - a. Incorporate the asset model in STAY programming
 - b. train leaders in understanding the asset model
 - c. adopt the 40-developmental assets parish-wide

Parish Staff and Job Titles Involved in the Implementation

The key positions involved in this proposal are two youth coordinators, along with the clergy and other staff at St. Thomas Aquinas. The current parish staff members involved in the implementation are:

Chris Miller, Youth Ministry Director, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish

Alley White, Coordinator of Middle School Program, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish

Fr. Randy Valenton, Parochial Vicar

Fr. Matt Stanley, Pastor

Chris Lundin, Music Ministry

Nora Lundin, Liturgy Coordinator

In addition, the St. Thomas Aquinas Youth board plays a pivotal role in supporting the ministry programs. Current board members include: Mary Clifford, Kathy Lindholm, Karen Recinto, Vikki Howard, and Anna Zara-English.