

RESOURCE A



Evaluating youth formation ministries

TO BE USED BY	Parents, and perhaps students; teachers; youth ministers; DREs, CREs, CYFs; priests			
PURPOSE	These two worksheets can be used as a way to begin a conversation with DREs, volunteers, parents, etc. This would be a way to facilitate an honest conversation to assess the current and/or future program.			
PLEASE NOTE	Assessment scoring			

POOR

DECENT

EXCELLENT

1

2

3

4

5

The current blueprint for parish-based evangelization in the United States is the 2017 USCCB document entitled *Living as Missionary Disciples*. There, we read:

“The parish must be concerned with **bearing fruit** throughout the discipleship process.

This shift in focus ensures that attention is directed toward pruning what is ineffective so that new life and fruit can occur. Throughout Scripture, the metaphor of fruit is used many different times and in many ways in reference to mission. Jesus commands the disciples to ‘go and bear fruit that will remain’ (John 15:16). The work of pastoral planning ought to **bear fruit** and also involve effective pruning through planning, organization, and implementation so that new life and growth can occur.”

If we expect to see renewal within our parishes, especially with youth formation, we must begin to discipline ourselves with the practice of **focus**. Practically speaking, youth ministers would do well to ask specific questions in order to remain focused on the mission that has been given to us. It is important that we ask **why** we are doing something so that we can ask ourselves **what** we expect to see in people’s lives because of what we are doing. Thinking with the mind of *Living as Missionary Disciples* requires us to know **what** we are doing and so that we are clear about what type of fruit we expect to see in someone’s life.

The US bishops are calling parish leaders to establish objective evaluations based on fruitfulness within the discipleship process. The Bishops state: “This means, at the start of the process, **identifying the overall fruit** and *outcomes that a parish or diocese desires for its ministry*”.

So, what are the “outcomes that a parish or diocese desires for its ministry?” Specifically, what are the “outcomes that a parish or diocese desires for its” **youth formation**?

What is “good fruit” within a discipleship process? During the strategic planning process in 2016 the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux articulated nine dimensions of a fully mature missionary disciple. Commonly known as “the nine”, these dimensions reveal the very fruit that is intended in one’s life because of healthy formation. These are nine signs of maturity; nine dimensions of a fully mature missionary disciple. We developed these with **adults** in mind. In a sense, they are the fruits of an **adult** who is coming to know Jesus, to live with Jesus, and live like Jesus. If we see these nine dimensions visible in someone’s life, we see the “good fruit” of formation.



RELATIONSHIP

I have a **personal relationship with Jesus Christ** that gives my life meaning and direction.



CONVERSION

I say **YES** to that which brings me closer to God.
I say **NO** to that which pulls me away from God.
I have aligned my lifestyle with the Gospel.



DISCERNMENT

I want what God wants.
I begin to discern the little things.
I can recognize His voice, and I follow as He leads me.



SACRAMENTS

The Sacraments are a regular part of my life.
Sunday Mass and frequent Confession.
Additional Masses, especially during Lent and Easter.



HOLINESS

I pray daily. I am growing in virtue, particularly Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, Humility, Faith, Hope, & Charity.
I want to be a witness of holiness.



GROUNDING

My relationship with God is **no longer dependent upon whether I “feel” His presence**.
I study the Bible and Church teaching.
On-going study of my faith is a lifestyle.



COMMUNITY

I have people who hold me accountable.
I have regular conversation about where I am with my commitment to Christ.



OTHERS

I no longer live in a “me-centered” world.
My Faith is no longer just “me and Jesus.”
I see and respond to others as Christ does.



EVANGELIZATION

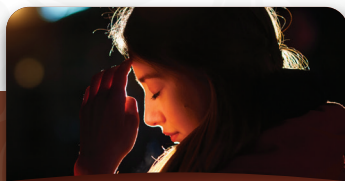
I know my testimony - the story of what God has done in my life.
I can share and do share that testimony with others.

If authentic and sustainable growth is to happen in the parish and in the lives of our **youth**, it is critical that each parish take an honest look at existing ministries as well as ensuring that there is an on-going assessment of any new initiatives. This assessment cannot be driven by subjective impressions or the fear of infringing upon relationships that may have existed in the parish for a number of years. There must be an honest evaluation of **“What is bearing fruit?”**

What is “good fruit” within healthy youth formation? Let’s translate the illustration on the previous page so that we are able to appreciate what would be the nine dimensions a healthy teenage disciple. What would we hope to see in a graduating high school senior?

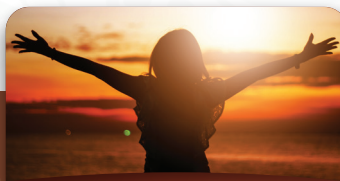
Imagine for a moment if all our teenagers looked like this as they were sent off to college.

Characteristics of a Teenage **MISSIONARY DISCIPLE**



RELATIONSHIP

Have a relationship with Jesus Christ
Pray more days than they don't for 20 minutes
in a contemplative manner with Scripture



CONVERSION

Have learned how engage their will
Seek out monthly confession
and a weekly examination of conscience



DISCERNMENT

Ask God to show them the way
Are able to pray and hear God speak.
Do what God and the Church asks of them.



SACRAMENTS

Committed to the sacraments
Go to Mass weekly, open to daily Mass.
Confession once a month.



HOLINESS

Growing in virtue
Growing in the virtues of
prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude



GROUNDING

Relationship with God not governed by feeling
They feel comfortable reading the Bible
and understand the Church on tough topics



COMMUNITY

They have others who hold them accountable
See small group accountability as a need
and know how to build it



OTHERS

It's not about “me and Jesus”
Have a general sense of being other-focused
and willing to serve on their own

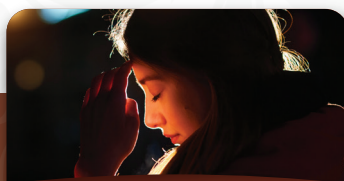


EVANGELIZATION

Not afraid to share their story
Are familiar with their own faith testimony
and want to share it

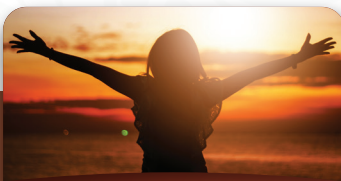
How can we assess if this is happening?
How can we assess if our youth formation
is helping teens grow towards
the nine characteristics
of a mature teenage missionary disciple?

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DIMENSIONS	CRITERIA	RATING	EVIDENCE
RELATIONSHIP	Youth, as well as adult mentors, have an active and illustrated relationship with Jesus Christ		
CONVERSION	Desire to change my behavior to be in more conformity with a follower of Christ		
GROUNDING	Experience the Faith through a deeper knowledge of Scripture and Tradition		
DISCERNING	Establish a docility to the Holy Spirit, which leads to following God's plan for my life		
HOLINESS	Experiencing a closeness to God through personal prayer and the establishment of virtue		
SACRAMENTS	Build a discipline of our youth attending Sunday Mass and frequenting the Sacrament of Reconciliation		
COMMUNITY	Build the necessary relationships that aid youth in remaining in their relationship with God, with accountability and love		
OTHERS	Emerging desire to serve others younger youth in the parish <i>For example:</i> <i>the poor</i> <i>mission trips</i> <i>etc.</i>		
EVANGELIZATION	Evident willingness of our young people to share their story of Christ working in their life		



Formation LIFE CYCLE

THE 5

DIMENSIONS	CRITERIA	RATING	EVIDENCE
CONNECT	<p>Provide healthy and inviting space for youth to grow in deep, meaningful relationships with their peers</p> <p><i>Are any isolated on campus?</i></p> <p><i>Are they bringing their friends?</i></p> <p><i>Do we witness authentic friendships?</i></p>		
ENCOUNTER	<p>Facilitate experiences where they personally experience the person of Jesus Christ</p> <p><i>Are they talking about this?</i></p> <p><i>Do we witness their prayer?</i></p>		
CONVERSION	<p>Equip youth with the appropriate resources and accountability structures for them to begin the process of conversion</p> <p><i>Are we providing Confession?</i></p> <p><i>Are they going to Confession?</i></p> <p><i>Are they holding each other accountable?</i></p>		
GROW	<p>Educate our teenagers in Scripture and Tradition, while relating the timeless teaching of the Church to an ever-changing world</p> <p><i>Can they explain: the Bible?</i></p> <p><i>Can they explain: the Eucharist?</i></p> <p><i>Can they explain: the Priesthood?</i></p>		
MISSION	<p>Equipping our teens to serve the rest of the Church through discerning their gifts and talents and putting them to best use</p> <p><i>Have we taught them their gifts?</i></p> <p><i>Can they name their gifts?</i></p> <p><i>Do they have a passion?</i></p>		