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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 212 686-0710

ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN, PRIMATE

April 11, 1974

TO: Reverend Clergy, Parish Council Chairmen & ACYO Chapters

SUBJECT: Youth Program

A number of our parishes have been slow in responding to the procedures set up for our youth program, in spite of communications from our office as well as from our youth director, Fr. Nersess Jebejian.

The basic structure that we seek depends first of all on our parishes. A youth leader or youth worker must be appointed in every parish who has qualifications or interest in this area and who will concern himself or herself primarily with this effort.

With such leaders appointed, it will be possible to get some movement on the local level, as well as to form regional councils from which mutual benefit may be derived. And these regional councils in turn can participate in national programs and plans, thus tying our entire effort together under the general supervision of a Diocesan Youth Director.

This is the plan all parts of our Diocese should work within.

Wherever youth leaders have not been appointed, they should be at once. And the work to establish regional councils and a national organization should follow immediately afterwards.

Prayerfully,

Abp. Torkom Manoogian
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

#18/74



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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016-4885 212 686-0710

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate

August 1986

TO: All Parish and ACYOA Chapters
SUBJECT: Parish Youth Director & Youth Ministry Reference Materials

Attached are several items developed for your use and reference regarding consideration of a parish youth director, as well as guides to assist in assessing the needs of the parish regarding youth ministry and programming.

The information provided on the first three pages should assist in formulating a clear understanding of what youth ministry is, and, an approach to considering appointing a parish youth director.

It is mentioned that while the need for professional youth directors is great in all parishes (large and small), it should also be mentioned that at present, none of the parishes is adequately meeting the needs of the young people of the Church of any age. While large parishes can afford one or more full time youth directors, smaller parishes can consider part-time appointments, or share a full-time a director with other parishes near-by.

One very important preliminary task to be performed is an assessment of the parish in terms of its youth population. Understanding the numbers of young people from baptism through young adulthood, as well as the potential numbers, and the numbers to come in the future as young families move in (or out) of the area, is necessary in planning a well-rounded and meaningful youth ministry. Of course everyone wants to do the best they can.


JAMES MAGARIAN

attachments.

CONSIDERING A PARISH YOUTH DIRECTOR

The need for professional youth programming in Armenian Church parishes is increasing with each passing day. The demands on pastors to meet the needs of their parishioners on all levels continues to grow as well. Needless to say, the necessary time and energy a pastor might have for young people is minimal at best. Therefore, pastoral assistance is needed in the areas of youth ministry and programming, which are essential elements for a parish to have a continued relationship with its young people that will be strong, influential, and meaningful as the years pass.

Understanding Youth Ministry

Youth Ministry is the response of the Church community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community - the entire parish.

Youth Ministry is TO youth.....

Youth Ministry is WITH youth.....

Youth Ministry is BY youth.....

Youth Ministry is FOR youth.....

The goals of Youth Ministry work to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. It seeks to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Church parish community.

Youth is a time of physical and intellectual growth. It is also a time of unique personal growth - of developing habits, values, morals and becoming responsible.

Youth Ministry is concerned with the total person.

Youth Ministry is rooted in relationship.

Youth Ministry is a call to community.

Youth Ministry proceeds as an affirmation of gifts.

True Ministry (youth or otherwise) duplicates itself.

The components of Youth Ministry include: Fellowship - Community Life - Prayer and Worship - Education - Service.

It is the interaction and program balancing of these components that lends to a successful and future-oriented Youth Ministry. The parish itself will directly reflect this balance and will feel and see the fruits of this labor in the years to come as these young people become the adult leaders of the parish.

Initial Steps

All parishes, large and small, rich and poor, must first realize that youth ministry and youth programming need professional approaches with at least part-time (but really full-time) attention. Youth people are the same all over the country - with the same needs, problems, talents, goals, desires, and questions that need answers.

In all cases, the parish must make an assessment of its youth population. That is, every young person that could possibly have a need, derive a benefit from, or even possibly have the least amount of curiosity about the Church and programs offered there. In other words, all young people who have even the remotest connection with the Armenian Church.

The youth population of the parish - from baptism to age 30/marriage - is the target market for youth ministry concerns. Some of these young people will have been active since the early grades of Church School. Others will have been occasional "drop-in" visitors. Still others will be from broken families, tragic circumstances and other realities of our society. There are two very important aspects to keep in mind: (1) Each individual is important and their needs (however unique or common) must be taken into consideration, if not directly addressed. (2) There are "common denominators" to which many young people will respond and relate to through programs and services.

Some of the questions to be asked in the parish survey/assessment:

How many families are living within the parish jurisdiction? How many young people come from those families?

How many families live nearby (within 3-5 miles); how many live fairly far (5-10 miles); how many very far (over 10 miles)?

How many young people make up the basic age groups? (baptism to 4 yrs., 5-9 yrs., 10-13 yrs., 14-17 yrs., 18-22/23 yrs. college, 24-30 yrs., young couples*) Sometimes school divisions are used: preschool, elementary, junior high, high school, college, post college/graduate/young couples*.

(* "young couples" are usually defined as those in their mid-to-late twenties and early thirties, most not married, usually prior to parenthood if married.)

Type of geographic area: metropolitan/urban/suburban/rural. Is the parish in a "college town" with students coming and going? Is the parish one where every young person goes off to college?

What are some of the attractions and distractions of the area? Are young couples/families moving in, or out, of the parish jurisdiction? (good vs. bad job market, housing market, etc.)

Are the school programs, and city/town recreational programs very active and family oriented? Do many of the parish youth participate in them?

These and many other similar questions must be asked, answers addressed and assessed to gain a full view of the youth situation in the parish. The answers play a vital role in choosing the best course for youth programming.

Upon realizing the numbers of young people, their age brackets and understanding the social circumstances of the area (in its broadest sense), an intelligent and meaningful discussion can begin concerning the young people of the parish, how to identify their needs, their personal goals, and how to direct them under the dome of the Church.

It is at this time, after this "homework" has been accomplished, that consideration of a Parish Youth Director can take place.

The Parish Youth Director

This person must bring to the position a genuine concern for the young people of the parish in terms of their religious and cultural orientation to the Armenian Church. The person must be more than a recreation supervisor; more than a baby-sitter; more than someone to unlock the door and in some way be "responsible" for the youth.

The person to fill the position of Parish Youth Director, a position with a very important ministry all its own, must be a person with special qualities that can be viewed as an example to the youth themselves. Good role models are hard to come by in today's society, and is a vital aspect to this position. The Youth Director will have everyday contact with the young people of the parish, and this contact must be high quality at the least.

In general, this person should have an educational background in teaching and education; psychology/sociology; counseling; and preferably theological and youth ministry training as well. Recreation, youth work, camp experience, school administration, and some office skills are also very helpful.

The Parish Youth Director will work very closely with the Pastor on a regular everyday basis. It is very important that a well-defined job description be clearly understood so that all parties (youth director, pastor, parish councilors, parishioners etc.) know what is expected and what is above expectations.

It should be noted that the Youth Director should not be viewed in terms of someone who will come into the Parish and solve all the youth problems. Youth Ministry is a complex and demanding position that will enjoy success and failure as in any relational/service work. In many cases, a youth director is hired and the people of the parish feel that they now have nothing to worry about, and have little or nothing to concern themselves with regarding youth - the Youth Director will think of everything, not need anyone's help, and will work out every problem situation with great skill and expertise.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. With a youth director, the adult community will be called on to do even more. The Parish as a whole will be asked to show support, lend a hand in youth programs, volunteer for transportation, etc., etc. Moreover, it is from the adult community - the parish in general - that resources, funding, assistance, recourse, and reinforcement will originate. Without the support of the parish as a whole, any youth ministry effort will be a failure.

Who can afford it?

After reading the above, smaller parishes are saying, "That's all well and good, but we can't afford the luxury." True, some parishes will never have the vision or the resources to appoint a professional to work with their youth, and, larger parishes will. The paradox is that neither can afford not to.

In areas where the demographics allow, parishes in close proximity should share a full time youth director. There's a greater need to work out details and job descriptions, but it can work out and to the benefit of all. Depending on the size of the parishes involved, one full time director could handle several communities.

For larger parishes, with the means and the resources, one full time youth director should be given immediate consideration. If it means selecting from among the members of the parish, paying for youth ministry training or whatever it takes, this should be pursued without delay. If it means selecting from outside the parish, and requesting the pastor to play a major role in training the person for the parish, so be it.

As it stands today, in all parishes across the Diocese, young people of our Church and community need full time concern and attention - children through young adults. There isn't one parish, large or small, rich or poor, than can say they have done all they can for their youth. There isn't one that can say there isn't something more to be done. There isn't one that is engaged in legitimate youth ministry work.

Now is the time to set priorities and do something about them.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

There are many ways to invite and encourage young people to participate in the life of the parish. It's easy to think of things other than having the youth serve a banquet or assist at the picnic. What is necessary is a clear vision of the role of young people in the parish community and what they are capable of doing. Naturally, our expectations cannot be too high for young adults who are in college or beginning careers and families. We should only expect minimal participation - but some participation just the same. The following are a couple of considerations to note:

Dialogue with Youth

Invite and encourage young people to participate in all facets of parish life, not all alone by themselves, but side-by-side with others and, most importantly, with other adults. This can especially be done during planning and development of projects and programs, such as policy-making, local by-laws, goals for the parish, priority setting, commemorative events, etc. Through this participation in the decision making aspects, a degree of "ownership" is felt by the young person, thereby connecting and relating to it more readily.

Subsidy in Parish Budget

There are still parishes without a line-item in their budget for youth programs, etc. This is not only to promote local participation, facilitate program planning, and generally assist the parish with youth ministry, but also can encourage participation in Diocesan Youth Programs: Choir Workshops, Church and Language Schools, ACYOA Seminars and Events, St. Nersess Summer Studies, etc.

Special Needs

Some parish situations call for special planning. There are those who claim that every one of their young people go away to private boarding schools and colleges. While this 100% figure remains questionably, we are assured of a highly educated generation in the years to come!

In such cases, planning should take place just like a family would plan things when everyone is home (for the holidays for example). Most students are at home during semester-break periods and the holidays. Parishes with all young people away at school should abandon monthly activities and plan for a large event when the young people are home. Thanksgiving Weekend, or the week between Christmas and New Years, or the early weeks of January, or early/late summer are primary times for such planning. These need not be elaborate events (although they could be) but an opportunity to keep in touch with them, and, for them to keep in touch with each other. It's important for the Church to provide the opportunity.

Invest for Highest Return

As mentioned above, young adults in college and initiating careers are a difficult group when it comes to commitments and time. While they cannot be neglected, the young people preceeding these is a more captive audience, ready to try new things, with time on their hands, and willing to commit their time and energy on projects. Perhaps it might be wise to invest more time and money into youth of the ages 10-13 and 14-17. While no one can stop the college student from leaving home and going away to study, if the right foundation is laid during the teenage years, they will go away to school secure of who they are, what their faith and ethnic background are. and most importantly, will return to the Church after their

Five Components for an Effective Youth Ministry

Evaluate your youth ministry in light of the five components of youth ministry described below. List programs you already have in each component, evaluate those programs on a scale of one to five (1 = lowest; 5 = highest), list strengths and weaknesses, and then add any comments you may have about your programs.

1. Christian Religious Education

Programs in this component: _____

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

Comment: _____

2. Community Life

Programs in this component: _____

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

Comment: _____

3. Justice and Peace and Service

Programs in this component: _____

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

Comment: _____

4. Guidance

Programs in this component: _____

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

Comment: _____

5. Prayer and Worship

Programs in this component: _____

Evaluation: 1 2 3 4 5

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

Comment: _____

Needs Assessment Methods

The three methods of conducting a needs assessment are (1) personal interviews, (2) surveys and questionnaires, and (3) observation. An outline of each is printed below. Use this form as a reference while your group discusses whether to do a needs assessment and, if so, which method to use.

1. Personal Interviews

Who: Youth of different ages
Parents
Significant community leaders
How: In person or on the telephone

Guidelines: Spend no more than ten minutes on the phone or fifteen minutes in person for each interview. Explain the reason for the interview. Write down responses to the questions. Thank the person for his or her time.

Sample questions

For youth: What are some activities our church could sponsor that you would participate in?

For adults: What are some of the specific needs of youth in our community?

2. Surveys and Questionnaires

Who: Youth, parents, and church leaders
How: Prearranged gatherings

Guidelines: Keep the questionnaire brief. Ask only what you need to know. Use simple language and format. Distribute questionnaires in person. Ask for age, grade, and gender, but no names! Publish the results and thank all who participated.

3. Observation

Guidelines: Ask yourself what the needs are of youth in your community. (Your experience is important!) Observe the efforts of other churches. Consider what you know about youth. Consider the characteristics, issues, problems, and concerns of your local community and its impact on youth.

BLACKLINE MASTER 9

Goals for Youth Ministry Survey

In light of the needs of youth in our parish, how important are the following goals? (Circle the appropriate letter.)

V = Very important
I = Important
U = Unimportant

In your view, how successful are we now in achieving those goals? (Circle the appropriate letter.)

V = Very good
A = Adequate
P = Poor

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| V | I | U | 1. To create a climate in which young people can share their struggles and joys with other youths and adults. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 2. To help young people feel like a valued part of the church. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 3. To provide social and recreational activities. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 4. To guide the development of faith and Christian values in young people. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 5. To assist young people in developing a healthy self-concept. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 6. To enable young people to make moral decisions. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 7. To foster the spiritual growth of young people through worship experiences. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 8. To assist young people in forming a responsible Christian approach in sexual matters. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 9. To provide youth with counseling as they face personal, spiritual, and vocational decisions. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 10. To respond to youth who suffer from poverty, handicaps, and injustices. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 11. To develop, support, and utilize the leadership abilities of youth. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 12. To develop collaborative projects between our youth ministry and those of other churches (Protestant and Catholic) in our area. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 13. To interpret the needs of youth and to advocate their concerns to leaders in the church and community. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 14. To provide for the ongoing education of the church community to the needs of youth and the direction of the youth ministry. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 15. To strengthen the family life of youth in the church. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 16. To involve young people in reaching out to serve people in need in their community. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 17. To invite young people to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. | V | A | P |
| V | I | U | 18. To assist young people in developing an appreciation for what is unique about their faith. | V | A | P |

Interest Finder Survey

This survey gives you a chance to make yourself heard about a variety of programs and activities that might be available through your church. Read each statement and decide whether or not it is something you would be interested in. Circle the number that best reflects your interest.

	No interest 1	Some interest 2	Very much interest 3
1. Learning to understand the Bible better and what it means to us today.	1	2	3
2. Recreation and social activities where youth get acquainted.	1	2	3
3. Better understanding of my feelings, moods, and self-worth.	1	2	3
4. Better understanding of my parents, teachers, and other adults.	1	2	3
5. Talking with other youth about things that are really important.	1	2	3
6. Knowing more about what it means to be a Christian.	1	2	3
7. Learning how to deal with drugs and alcohol.	1	2	3
8. Better understanding of my sexuality and Christian attitudes toward sex.	1	2	3
9. Learning to speak naturally and intelligently about my faith.	1	2	3
10. Experiencing a closer relationship with God.	1	2	3
11. Improving communication with my parents.	1	2	3
12. Being of service to other people in my community.	1	2	3
13. Developing a deeper appreciation of the meaning of Jesus for my life.	1	2	3
14. Learning about the Christian response to social problems like hunger, war, and poverty.	1	2	3
15. Learning how to pray in a personal, private way.	1	2	3
16. Learning how to deal with pressures people put on me.	1	2	3
17. Participating in a variety of prayer and worship activities.	1	2	3
18. Learning to make moral decisions as a Christian.	1	2	3
19. Learning how to make friends and be a friend.	1	2	3
20. Finding meaning and purpose in my life.	1	2	3

BLACKLINE MASTER 11

Program Development Form

COMPONENT:

PROGRAM:

DATE(S):

TIME:

PLACE:

RESOURCES, MATERIALS NEEDED:

LEADERS NEEDED:

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Developing a Program Model

The following calendar illustrates the cafeteria-style approach to youth ministry. Note the balance among the components, and the variety in content, schedule, and environment. Note the choice that young people are given, and the needs-based approach to program development.

SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

1. Evaluate the program model you have developed or are developing based on these key elements of the cafeteria style:
 - a. balance among the five components
 - b. variety of programming
 - c. variety in content
 - d. variety of environments
 - e. variety of scheduling
 - f. choice for the young people
 - g. based on needs of young people

2. What has your evaluation affirmed about your program model? What are some of the areas in which you need to make improvements?



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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 212 686-0710

ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN, PRIMATE

April 5, 1973

TO: REVEREND CLERGY
PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMEN

SUBJECT: PARISH YOUTH DIRECTORS

We all recognize the vital need for youth directors in all our parishes. For this reason, the Primate has requested that all parishes appoint a capable and dedicated individual for the position, on a voluntary or salaried basis.

To date, we still have not heard from your parish. We must remind you that this is a matter of utmost urgency for the sustenance of our youth. We ask you to act on this matter at the earliest possible time, make such an appointment and inform us of his or her name, address and telephone number.

Many programs and activities are now being planned for the near future. We ask you for your cooperation on this matter to greatly facilitate the combined efforts of the parishes and the Diocese.

May we have your immediate attention and reply.

Prayerfully,

(Rev.) Neirsese Jebejian
Youth Director