



A GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT Discipleship

THE TROUBLING REALITY

79% One-in-ten American adults are ex-Catholics... 79% of those that have left do so by the age of 23.
-Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project, 'Leaving Catholicism'

33 million 33 million Americans claim "no religious affiliation" and that has increased 25% in just five years. This group of "nones" makes up the fastest growing religious group in the country.
-Pew Research Religion and Public Life Project

PARENTS, HAVE CONFIDENCE

#1 82% of children raised in homes where faith was discussed and practiced continue to practice their faith as young adults in contrast to less than 1% of teens raised in non-religious homes. Parents are the dominating influencer in the faith life of teens.
-National Study on Youth and Religion, 2005

76% Contrary to popular belief, 76% of teens surveyed want their parents to spend more time with them.
-USA Today

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN GRIM STATISTICS AND THE NEXT GENERATION FOLLOWING JESUS MAY BE YOU.

Understanding the irreplaceable role and powerful influence you have in your teen's life, our parish wants to partner with you in fostering the faith of your teen by helping you form a small group with a faithful adult mentor, walking together in following Jesus through the life of the Church.

This is not a program. It's an apprenticeship in the Christian Life.

This is discipleship.



Start a Conversation

Begin with something like, “Some families in our parishes are starting small groups of teens who meet on a regular basis with peers of the same gender and an adult mentor. Groups have about 5-8 people and meet in one another’s homes and coffee shops. You’ll have some food and fun and discuss real stuff about God and everyday life. This is something we really want for you.”

Ask, “If you could have any other guys/girls in your group, who would you want?”

Ask, “If you could ask any adult (same gender) in our parish to lead your group, who would you choose?”

When you have come up with a few names, contact the parents of the other potential group members directly or talk to your parish coordinator to get started on forming your group and inviting your mentor.

TIPS ON HAVING A MORE FRUITFUL CONVERSATION:

- After each moment in your conversation, give yourself a ‘STOP SIGN.’ Let him or her respond.
- Don’t list people for them. You may be surprised who they come up with.
- Don’t ask closed-ended questions (Yes/No). They tend to end your conversation prematurely. If you say, “Do you want to be in a Discipleship group?” They could easily say, “Nope.” And the conversation is over.
- Make sure you give them every opportunity to take ownership of this group.
- You know your own child. Some young people will jump at this opportunity right off the bat. Others need time to think about their responses. Read your child and calibrate accordingly. But if they need time, make sure you bring it back up and give them a “deadline.” Say something like, “I see you want to think about this some more. How about we revisit this idea after dinner tomorrow? Maybe you can think of some people you’d like to include between now and then.”
- Conspiracy might be your friend. Talk with YOUR friends and see if they want to work together in getting a group together for their teens and yours. When you approach your own child you’ll have the advantage of being able to say, “Johnny’s is probably going to do it.”
- If you can’t come up with a complete list of potential group members or are at a loss for a mentor, don’t worry! Your parish coordinator can help match you with other interested young people, families and potential mentors.

HOW DOES DISCIPLESHIP PARTNER WITH PARENTS?

- Parents, teens, and the parish work together to form your group.
- Parents host small group meetings in their homes giving them a chance to get to know the other teens and the mentor.
- After every meeting, parents receive the same information via video and follow-up questions to continue discussing the topic with your teen. Content comes from YDisciple, an outreach of NET Ministries.
- Parents know their teen and his/her friends, schedules and needs more than anyone else. Parents also have access to their schools, teams and other spheres of influence in ways that no single youth minister ever could.

