

# Youth Ministry and Catholic Scouting

## How They Complement One Another



*Christus Vivit*, the 2019 apostolic exhortation from Pope Francis inspired by the Synod of Bishops on young people, provides inspiration to Catholic Scouting and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and helps animate our work together.

“Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!” (*Christus Vivit*, #1).

The mission of NFCYM is to support and strengthen those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ. Likewise, the mission of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) is to utilize and ensure the constructive use of the program of the BSA as a viable form of youth ministry with Catholic youth of our nation. Catholic Scouting exists to provide a Catholic foundation to Scouting programs that prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by helping them grow in the Catholic faith and instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The NCCS seeks to sustain and strengthen the relationship between the BSA and the Catholic Church and to work cooperatively with NFCYM and other groups involved in Catholic youth ministry in the United States.

### Alignment and Complementary Nature of our Vision

Youth Ministry	Catholic Scouting
<p>NFCYM looks to a future when young people see themselves as children of God who live as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ; when the gifts, struggles and diverse realities of young people are welcomed in Catholic faith communities; when ministry leaders have embraced the joy of the Gospel, and when families are living as the domestic Church.</p> <p>NFCYM commits to advancing the field of pastoral ministry to young people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forming, equipping, and supporting ministry leaders in their service to young people and their families;</li> <li>• modeling and fostering a ministry of acompañamiento among young people of all cultures, languages, socioeconomic and geographic realities;</li> <li>• and, partnering with parents and equipping families of young people as they witness to Jesus Christ in their daily lives.</li> </ul>	<p>Catholic Scouting’s vision is to provide an opportunity for all Catholic children and young people to engage in Scouting programs that are integrated into the faith formation and youth ministry programs of parishes across the United States.</p> <p>The Scouting program prepares young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scout Oath: On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.</li> <li>• The Scout Law: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, Catholic Scouting encourages the dreaming, planning, doing and optimism embodied in the Pope’s message, “Young people are not meant to become discouraged; they are meant to dream great things, to seek vast horizons, to aim higher, to take on the world, to accept challenges and to offer the best of themselves to the building of something better.” (<i>Christus Vivit</i>, #15).</p>

In their pastoral framework on youth ministry entitled *Renewing the Vision*, the U.S. Bishops state that “Youth Ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.” The bishops outline three essential goals of youth ministry in their framework, which they are now in the process of revising in light of *Christus Vivit*.

**The three goals of youth ministry according to *Renewing the Vision* are:**

1. **Empowerment** - Empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today
2. **Participation** - Draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community
3. **Growth** - Foster the personal and spiritual growth of each young person

**The aims of Scouting are character development, citizenship training, personal fitness and leadership development.**

**Below, we show how the aims of Catholic Scouting align with the three goals of Catholic Youth Ministry.**

Youth Ministry	Catholic Scouting
<p><b>EMPOWERMENT</b></p> <p>The first goal of youth ministry is <b>to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.</b></p> <p>As described in <i>Renewing the Vision</i>, young people are “searching for a noble adventure,” a compelling and challenging vision of life, and a cause worth their commitment. They hunger to hear the Good News that finds response in discipleship. As their companions on this spiritual journey, some of the ways the Church fulfills this first goal of youth ministry is by ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus through witness and word to young people.</li> <li>● Enabling young people to live as disciples through their involvement in service, ministry, and leadership opportunities.</li> <li>● Providing young people the faith skills for discipleship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p>Scouting’s values, combined with the teachings of the Catholic Church, are the foundation for developing young people whose good character is based on the Gospel. Youth leadership positions in Catholic Scouting offer opportunities for young people to put good Christian leadership into practice. Catholic Scouting provides a strong foundation that empowers Scouts to live as disciples of Christ through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Religious activities that are tailored by age group</li> <li>● Service projects and leadership opportunities in their parish, school and civic communities</li> <li>● Learning from the examples of holy men and women of the Church</li> <li>● The ideals embodied in the <u>Scout Oath and the Scout Law</u>, which set Scouts apart in a way that Pope Francis calls all young people to consider “... dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world ...” (<i>Christus Vivit</i>, #36)</li> </ul>
<p><b>PARTICIPATION</b></p> <p>The second goal of youth ministry is <b>to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community.</b></p> <p><i>Renewing the Vision</i> states that young people have a hunger for connection, to be in relationships, and to belong. Family, peers, school, youth serving organizations, and Church are primary connections for young people. Some of the ways the Church fulfills this second goal of youth ministry is by ...</p>	<p><b>CITIZENSHIP TRAINING</b></p> <p>Catholic Scouting provides many opportunities for healthy connections, relationships and belonging to different types of communities. The Scout unit is one type of community. The home, parish and civic communities are others to which a Scout belongs. In Scouting programs and activities, young people learn how to participate as responsible members of their various communities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational activities and service projects that are age appropriate</li> <li>● Activities that engage a Scout’s entire family</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a 'youth friendly' community that welcomes young people, values their participation, and calls forth their gifts.</li> <li>• Integrating young people into the liturgical, pastoral, and ministerial life of the parish community.</li> <li>• Creating opportunities for young people to enter into healthy relationships of trust and respect with their peers and with adults.</li> <li>• Promoting Catholic identity and religious literacy through programs of adolescent catechesis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belonging and engaging with others in their Catholic Scouting unit</li> <li>• Connecting them with their parish and the larger community so they see themselves as part of something bigger than themselves and develop a strong sense of the responsibilities of citizenship</li> <li>• Citizenship includes not only belonging to our country but also world citizenship, through which we all play a role in caring for God's Creation. As Pope Francis says, "Nature holds a special attraction for many adolescents and young people who recognize our need to care for the environment. Such is the case with the scouting movement and other groups that encourage closeness to nature, camping trips, hiking, expeditions and campaigns to improve the environment. In the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, these experiences can be a real initiation into the school of universal fraternity and contemplative prayer." (<i>Christus Vivit</i>, #228)</li> </ul>
<p><b>GROWTH</b></p> <p>The third goal of youth ministry is <b>to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.</b></p> <p><i>Renewing the Vision</i> reinforces the fact that adolescence is an important time for mental, spiritual, social, and physical growth. Young people's experiences and relationships greatly influence their healthy and positive development. The Church strives to surround young people with the best possible external scaffolds—networks of caring relationships of family, school, peers, and other adults—while young people are developing their internal psychological and spiritual backbone—their values, life skills, commitments, and moral compass. The Church fulfills this third goal of youth ministry by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling young people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.</li> <li>• Actively supporting positive youth development and fostering healthy values and life skills.</li> <li>• Supporting families of young people by providing resources, programs, and services.</li> <li>• Providing opportunities to experience and express caring, service, and compassion for others.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERSONAL FITNESS</b></p> <p>Scouting promotes holistic fitness. The Scout Oath includes a commitment to keep oneself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. Some activities and programs are designed to develop healthful habits of diet and exercise. Other activities such as exploring careers and hobbies through the merit badge program or high adventure activities stimulate intellectual capabilities. The spiritual values imparted through religious emblems and activities programs, Scout retreats and the ideals of Scouting contribute to sound spiritual growth. Scouts cultivate personal fitness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character building activities</li> <li>• Development of healthy habits</li> <li>• Leadership opportunities</li> <li>• As Pope Francis says, "it is impossible for us to grow unless we have strong roots to support us and to keep us firmly grounded." (<i>Christus Vivit</i>, #179) Catholic Scouting, along with the sacraments, the support of a Scout's family, and participation in his or her parish community, offer the rootedness young people need to grow from a strong foundation.</li> </ul>

Both Catholic youth ministry and Catholic Scouting value and promote **leadership development** of youth and adults.

Youth Ministry	Catholic Scouting
<p>According to <i>Renewing the Vision</i>, “The ministry of Leadership Development <i>calls forth, affirms, and empowers</i> the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities for comprehensive ministry with adolescents. ... Leaders must be trained and encouraged. This approach involves a wide diversity of adult <u>and</u> youth leaders in a variety of roles.”</p>	<p>Leadership Development is an aim of Scouting woven throughout all aspects of Scouting. Catholic Scouting recognizes that learning how to lead is critically important not only for the Scout personally, but for his or her parish, community and country—not just in the future but now.</p> <p>Through service projects that give back to their communities and through coming together for activities that teach young people more about themselves, their faith and the world around them, Catholic Scouting encourages young people to engage in leadership NOW. This is a message emphasized by Pope Francis.</p> <p>Catholic Scouting sees young people themselves as playing a lead role in the Scouting experience. The skills of teambuilding and leadership developed through Scouting are skills needed by young people engaged in a successful youth ministry program, as well.</p>

Pope Francis’s exhortation *Christus Vivit* further encourages leadership development and the engagement of youth in active leadership roles.

- “Young friends, don’t wait until tomorrow to contribute your energy, your audacity and your creativity to changing our world. Your youth is not an “in-between time”. You are the *now* of God, ... For “it is in giving that we receive”. The best way to prepare a bright future is to experience the present as best we can, with commitment and generosity.” (*Christus Vivit*, #178)
- “... young people themselves are agents of youth ministry.” (*Christus Vivit*, #203) At the same time, we understand the key role that trusted adults play in mentoring and accompaniment on the journey. Pope Francis says, “If we journey together, young and old, we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future. To revisit the past in order to learn from history and heal old wounds that at times still trouble us. To look to the future in order to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge, awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom. Together, we can learn from one another, warm hearts, inspire minds with the light of the Gospel, and lend new strength to our hands.” (*Christus Vivit*, #199)

### About this Alignment Document

This high-level alignment of Youth Ministry Goals and Scouting Aims provides a basic structure for integrating Catholic Scouting and youth ministry programming in your parish. Catholic Scouting and NFCYM will continue to work together, finding opportunities for collaboration in our program development and updating this alignment document as the USCCB completes its new youth ministry framework in response to *Christus Vivit*.

Catholic Scouting’s three pillars of Faith, Family and Adventure offer an engaging and accessible way to draw more families and young people into worship, faith formation and other ministry at your parish. Scouting can be a way to engage young families in parish programs and form strong ties to the parish community that can grow as their children grow. Catholic Scouting can be a way to involve older children in parish activities—even if they don’t initially see themselves as being interested in youth ministry. In short: Catholic Scouting can be an accessible way to engage more of your young community members in parish life in general and faith formation opportunities in particular.

Want to learn more? Contact (214) 714-6950 or [info@catholicscouting.com](mailto:info@catholicscouting.com)

Want to start the Catholic Scouting journey at your parish? Talk with your pastor to get started today!

### Resources:

- [Christus Vivit](#)
- [Catholic Youth Ministry resources from the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry](#)
- [Renewing the Vision from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
- [Information for Catholic Leaders on CatholicScouting.com](#)
- [Guide to Catholic Scouting from the National Catholic Committee on Scouting](#)
- [Step-by-Step Guide to Starting a Catholic Scouting Unit in Your Parish](#)