

# A Reflection Guide for Leaders and Families

## for the USCCB *Listen, Teach, Send* Pastoral Framework



This reflection guide is intended to guide families and ministry leaders who accompany youth and/or young adults to explore where they are in developing a faithful and fruitful outreach with young people in light of the new USCCB document, *Listen, Teach, Send: A Framework for Ministries with Youth and with Young Adults*.

The following questions can help you reflect on the development and impact of your approach to ministering with young people. You are invited to pause amid your daily routine and pray with this reflection guide, so that you can discern how you accompany youth and/or young adults in your family, parish, school/campus, ministry, diocese/eparchy, movement, apostolate, and/or organization. The flow of this guide is based on the three-fold outline of *Listen, Teach, Send*. As you read through it, insert your particular audience for “young people,” whether that be students, scouts, teenagers, collegians, young adults, singles, young couples, or jóvenes.

### Listening

#### Encountering Young People

- How do we invite young people into our lives and our spaces with a desire to authentically know and listen to them?
- In what ways do we go beyond our physical community to be where young people are and how can we enter their spaces with them?

#### Being Fully Present

- In what ways do we accompany youth and young adults through their life transitions and developmental moments?
- What are the challenges facing the young people in our community and/or family? How are we accompanying them through those challenges?
- Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of young people in our community and/or family?

#### Understanding Across Generations

- What opportunities do we provide for individuals from different generations to come together and listen to one another?
- How do we mentor young people in our community and/or family?
- How can we better see each youth and young adult as a unique son or daughter of God and better listen to their individual stories?

#### Healing Brokenness

- How can our approach to youth, collegians, and young adults be more pastoral and compassionate rather than programmatic?
- What worries or concerns do young people have within our community and/or family?
- How do we provide opportunities for healing and addressing brokenness in our community and/or family, in particular with the youth and/or young adults?
- In what ways do we build trust with the young people in our community?

## Teaching

### Proclaiming Jesus Christ

- How do we place Jesus at the center of our ministries with young people and in the home?
- In what ways do we invite young people into a deeper relationship with Christ through the Church, the sacraments, and the witness of our lives?
- Where do we provide loving environments for young people to ask questions without judgment and to wrestle with difficult issues?
- What experiences of faith formation have families and those who minister with young people in our community received?

### An Evangelizing Catechesis

- In what ways does our ministry of formation with young people foster a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to model their lives after his?
- How does our teaching and catechesis respond to the lived realities of young people as heard and seen in the “listening” moments of the accompaniment process?
- What does “an evangelizing catechesis” look like in all the places we encounter young people: in homes with families, in religious education, in classrooms, in ministries with youth and with young adults, in parish life, in sports and social activities, in scouting, in connection with their workplaces, in small groups, and in personal and everyday conversations?
- As pastoral leaders, how are we accompanying youth and young adults alongside their families? As families, how are we accompanying young people alongside the men and women who minister with them in our faith communities?

### Sharing the Truth in Love

- In what ways do we address human sexuality through our evangelizing catechesis within our community and/or in our family settings?
- How do we share the Catholic Church’s teachings on human dignity and sexuality, justice and peace, morality, and ethics in discussions on difficult topics?
- How do we charitably address and respond to challenging questions posed by the youth and/or young adults in our home and in our community?
- Who in our community witnesses to the Catholic faith in a way that invites young people into deeper conversations on virtue with charity?

### Renewing Sacramental Life

- How do we invite young people into liturgical and sacramental celebrations that help them understand and receive the true presence of Christ in their lives?
- What opportunities are provided for young people to encounter Christ in the Eucharist in our community and/or our family?
- How are we inviting and encouraging young people to attend Mass, cultivate their life of prayer, and spend time with the Lord in the Eucharist more regularly?
- How are we engaging in sacramental experiences as intentional teaching moments for our young people, their families, and within our larger faith community?

## Sending

### **Bold Evangelizing Witness**

- In what ways are we equipping youth and young adults to proclaim Christ to the world, in particular in their everyday encounters with others?
- What opportunities exist for young people to lead in various roles within our faith community?
- How are we equipping the young people in our community and/or family to go out to their peers who are not actively engaged in the practice of the faith?

### **With Charity and Justice**

- What young people on the margins of society are we being called to serve in our community?
- How do we actively engage the youth and young adults within our faith community and/or family in the regular works of charity and justice?
- How do we connect the young people in our faith community and/or family to the works of mercy and how do we share and encourage them to live out Catholic social teaching in their lives?
- In what ways can we inspire our young people to embrace Christ's invitation to serve those who are oppressed, marginalized, or suffering, especially those in our own communities?

### **Vocational Discernment**

- How do we, as families and as pastoral leaders in the faith community, joyfully witness to and share our own vocation (and vocational story) with young people?
- What opportunities for intentional vocational discernment with young people are present in our faith community and/or family?
- How are we connecting youth and young adults to those who can accompany them in their vocational discernment: lay men and women who are active in their faith lives and in the Church; married couples and families; priests and deacons; and consecrated religious women and men?
- In what ways do we invite young people to live out the universal call to holiness?

### **Faithful Protagonists Today**

- How can we invite and encourage youth and young adults to accept God's call to be "protagonists" of his mission in Church and society, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit?
- Who are the youth or young adults currently serving on our parish leadership teams, pastoral councils, and other decision-making bodies within our faith community? How can we ensure that the voices of young people are seriously impacting the work of the Church, locally and universally?
- How are young people taking a leading role in their families and in the home?
- In what ways are we raising up dedicated youth and young adults who choose to bring hope to those who are weary and heavily burdened?

*These questions can serve as a guide to ensure that **listening, teaching, and sending** are regularly integrated into the Church's accompaniment of youth and young adults. Through all of this, though, prayer and patience, with a firm reliance on the Holy Spirit, should be the foundation upon which any fruitful reflection rests.*