

Youth Ministry Assessment

Calvary, Richmond
September 22-25, 2013

Culture and Scope

Calvary is a loving and family-like community of 287 members. The Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) is 174 and there are around 20 total youth on the rolls. The youth ministry meets weekly for Sunday school and Sunday night EYC and has a weekly average attendance of 12-17 junior and senior high youth. The church's operating budget is \$480,000 in which roughly \$8,000 is dedicated to youth ministry.

Rev. Paul Wehner (Rector, Calvary), Tim Hillis (Volunteer Youth Director), and Catherine Clark (Vestry), reflected on the culture of the congregation. The following reflects the culture of the church.

- Loving community where children feel at home and all members are equally important in raising and nurturing them
- Congregants say they would be more supportive of youth formation if there was more communication about what is going on and how they can help
- The church has had quite a few people in charge of the youth in the past 15 years and is also seeing a dip in the numbers of students in the 6th-12th grade age range to pull from for youth programming

The following reflects the culture of the youth ministry.

- Busy, highly involved kids at their schools and in extra-curricular activities
- Youth group meetings are generally very small and have the sense of being "same-old, same-old"
- A good groundwork has been laid for parents, youth, youth leaders and the congregants to be more involved – an opportunity to grow
- Junior and senior high youth group is centered on Bible studies and lessons

Calvary has had four rectors over the past 30 years. Paul Wehner has been at Calvary for just over 2 years and is seen as supportive of youth formation. Over the past year the youth group has dwindled and struggles to obtain the critical mass after the program graduated a group of around 15 highly active students. Tim Hillis is the champion of youth formation and has a couple of dedicated volunteers, but support is solicited from the same families over and over.

Fr. Paul Wehner and Tim Hillis invited Kim Rogers to conduct a three-day youth ministry assessment, which included an online survey. Kim met with four listening groups including church leadership, youth ministry parents, current youth members, parents of smaller children, and adults not involved in the youth ministry. There were common themes expressed by all four groups. All groups discussed the need for a passionate and "young" youth minister ("young" generally means relatable). All groups talked about the small size of the current youth ministry and the need for outreach events and fun fellowship activities. The emphasis of formation giving them the tools to go off to college and have their faith to rely on also came up in all discussion groups. In an effort to help create a sustainable youth ministry for

Calvary the reoccurring themes that should be addressed are the need for a dedicated youth minister/coordinator, youth leadership, common vision and outreach.

Division of Youth Expectations for Youth Ministry

A group of veteran youth ministers gathered in April 2012 to discuss the necessity of youth formation in the lives of our diocesan youth and churches. Here are a few of the findings that led to the formation of a Youth Development Program.

Formation

As a body of believers through baptism, all are called to be formed into the likeness of Christ, which means all people have an integral role in youth ministry. The formation of our youth and adults is imperative to a successful youth ministry program. This includes teaching congregations the importance and scope of youth ministry.

Leadership

Jesus taught us the way to bring others into the knowledge of him and raise up leaders in the church. As a church we are called to do the same. Youth, sponsors and parents need the tools for effective and Biblical discipleship.

Connection

Youth are living in a time where they yearn to be connected and a part of their communities. The church has in a large part failed to provide this piece of inclusivity of youth in their communities. Now is the time to develop ways to incorporate them into the life of the church.

Sustainability

When we focus on the above points we help grow the current ministry as well as vision for the future.

Diocese of Texas Youth Ministry Norms

1. What is the average ASA of youth ministry in the diocese?
Youth ASA is 13 youth per week (includes Sunday school and other youth programming). Calvary meets this statistic at 12-17 youth per week attending Sunday school and other youth programming.
2. What is the average budget for youth ministry?
A benchmark budget should be \$1,000 per youth on the membership rolls. This number accounts for all money designated for youth ministry (salary, benefits, youth ministry funds). Calvary currently has \$8,000 dedicated for youth ministry. In terms of focusing simply on youth ministry knowing that there are at least 20 youth on the rolls, there is a deficit of \$12,000.
3. Staffing Decisions
A suggested benchmark is hiring a full-time youth minister for every 50 youth on the membership rolls. Calvary currently has a volunteer (Tim Hillis) who coordinates the ministry. The church is in a place where it needs a part-time youth minister to grow. Reaching out to 20 youth on the rolls is a part-time job. This also explains the need for a \$20,000 budget because it would include a part-time salary in addition to youth ministry funds.
4. Sponsors and Volunteers
Discipleship is very important in youth ministries and one youth minister cannot minister effectively to every child. The best ratio is one committed adult sponsor for every 5-6 youth. The church needs to have a sponsor team that is consistently involved in the youth ministry throughout the year. This sponsor team may be made up of parents of youth, parents of young children, or congregants of Calvary who currently have little to no involvement in youth formation. All sponsors should be Safeguarding God's Children certified.
Consider ways to provide childcare if some or all of your sponsor team is made up of parents of young children.

Key Players for Growth

Rector

Youth Minister

Youth Commission and Vestry

Emphasized in the strategic plan is the formation of a Youth Commission that exists to support the Youth Minister in ministry and to follow through with the strategic plan. The commission consists of invested adults, vestry members and youth who meet on a monthly basis to calendar events, empower others for ministry and follow the strategic plan and timeline.

Developer

Root Group Leader / Coaches

The Diocese of Texas is geographically separated into ten convocations. The Diocesan Youth Commission consists of members representing each convocation in the diocese. Each member of the commission is charged with leading convocational "Root Groups". These Root Group Leaders will serve also as coaches for youth ministers who recently underwent a three-day

assessment. The Root Group Leaders will establish monthly meetings, phone calls or video calls with the youth minister to answer questions they have about the plan and timeline.

Youth Ministry Report and Timeline

Positives

Family-Like Community: From the moment that I arrived on Sunday and saw people enjoying each other's company at the Calvary Picnic, I knew that I was sitting in a community that loves each other. Throughout all of the focus groups I heard over and over that Calvary is place where their kids know that they belong and that every member takes part in raising their children.

Inclusive: The youth at Calvary are inclusive when they pray together during communion on Sunday mornings. They seem to know each other well and enjoy spending time together.

Supported: After hearing the four listening groups it was very easy to hear that every person wants to see the youth ministry supported and sustained. There are many people who expressed their interest in helping youth formation more if they knew how.

Strong Diocesan leadership and participation: Calvary sends many youth to participate at Camp Allen. This should be continued.

Challenges

Lack of Paid Youth Leadership: Calvary is a place where there is a passionate, dedicated individual who works hard to coordinate the youth ministry. However, since this person is a volunteer who also has a full-time job elsewhere and is highly involved in other areas of the church, I believe that Calvary should hire a paid, part-time staff member. This would allow for two things: For the youth to have someone relevant they can connect with and have an individual who is empowering others in the church to step into ministry and for those tireless volunteers who have championed the coordination of youth formation can enjoy being a valuable part of the Calvary Youth Commission and a leader on the sponsor team.

Mission and Outreach: The common theme among the listening groups was allowing youth to develop leadership and ownership of the program. Having a missional project that belongs to the youth is one way of developing that.

Lifelong Formation and Vision: The formation department at Calvary is missing a common vision across the board. What do we want to see from infant to college? I believe that it would benefit Calvary to hire a part-time staff member to serve as the Youth Minister so they are able to communicate with the rest of the staff.

Challenge in Obtaining the Critical Mass: People kept saying that the youth group is too small and they would never want to bring their friends. There is a challenge in obtaining the critical mass. This is the

point where it feels like the individual is the “only one in the room.” One solution to this problem is joining with other churches in the area.

Moving from Youth Group to Youth Ministry: Ministry is “missional”. It is about going outside of our church walls and stepping outside of our offices. Youth ministry is about going to lunches, football games, dinners, etc. It is not all about Sunday night youth group. When Calvary creates a core group of volunteers and hires a person dedicated to youth ministry they can ensure that ministry will actually happen. This will also fix the problem of Calvary youth ministry being “invisible” to the congregation.

Tips and Recommendations

- Structure the next year (October 2013 – August 2014) using the outlined plan and timeline.
- Approve the plan by the Vestry and Rector.
- Establish a Youth Commission that meets monthly.
- Youth leadership (Tim – or new YM) communicates (by phone, video call or in person) monthly with Matt Blank to talk through the plan.

Overall Necessities

- Vision
 - Work with the youth commission in the first monthly meeting to look through this plan and vision through the entire year for the youth ministry. Create a vision and scope for the ministry. I always suggest writing one, three and six year goals.
 - Have the Youth Commission help in creating the calendar of events for the entire year. After the calendar is created, publicize it to the youth parents and the entire congregation so that they know how to support the youth ministry (very important for this church). Parish-wide events should always be added to the calendar first.
 - Don’t OVERPLAN! Over planning can be detrimental for a small church.
 - Think with the mindset of “2 things a month” in addition to the weekly Sunday night EYC meeting – stick to it.
 - Include outreach and intergenerational events in the “2 things a month”
 - Include events with other churches
 - Schedule out the volunteers/youth sponsors ahead of time.
 - Have youth lead Bible studies, etc.
- Operations
 - Create the proper forms (release of liability and covenants). For an example form, you can visit the diocesan website at www.epicenter.org/youth.
 - Continuously update contact information.
 - The staff of Calvary should discuss the overall communication plan of the church. Finding out how the congregants receive information best is important. After the staff formulates a plan, it should be communicated to the rest of the church.
 - Create a communication strategy that fits Calvary.
 - Monthly emails
 - Quarterly mail-outs
 - Bulletin inserts
 - Social Media and mass texting

- Utilize the communication avenues already available at the church.
 - Calvary website (Betsy Zanghi)
 - Upcoming events in church bulletin. Send information to Missy Marek (Parish Administrator) before each Tuesday at noon.
 - Email Blasts and Weekly Electronic Bulletin distribution email Missy Marak (Parish Administrator)
 - Upcoming events on electronic sign. Send information to Tina Broussard (Director of Christian Education) before the 1st and 15th of each month.
- Keep attendance for all events. Contact youth who may have not shown up recently and do not worry about bothering them. You are doing your job as the youth minister.
- Create a youth ministry folder (calendar, job descriptions, budget, compliance documents, game plans and attendance records).
- Leadership
 - Youth Commission
 - This is a leadership group for the youth minister to lean on. Set clear expectations from the beginning that they are commissioned to vision and plan the youth ministry.
 - Volunteers and Sponsors
 - Equip and help them succeed. Be sure to set clear expectations from the beginning. Give them reading materials, train and empower them to step into their Baptismal vows and ministry.

Side-notes and Structural Change Suggestions

- **Youth Council and Volunteer/Sponsor Team**
 - **The Youth Commission's responsibilities are listed on page 5.**
 - **The Volunteer/Sponsor team should consist of 7-10 highly invested people. Again, this could be parents of youth, parents of young children, or other congregants. Their responsibilities are to communicate with at least 4 youth on a regular basis and to serve as advisors for the Youth Minister.**
- **Consider combining the group again so that Jr. and Sr. High are there at the same time. This would begin to address the problem of critical mass and 'fill up the room.' An example schedule is below.**

4-4:45pm	All youth arrive. This is a time for hanging out, catching up and for organized games.
4:45-5pm	A lesson is presented in the form of a short talk. Worship music should also be incorporated into this time.
5-5:30pm	Youth discuss the lesson in small groups. I suggest having a Jr. High combined gender group, a Sr. High boys group and a Sr. High girls group. Group leaders (adult volunteers) should be equipped with at least 5 open ended questions to help them lead conversation. Consider utilizing the ORANGE curriculum already being used in Sunday School. These small group meetings can close with prayer requests.
5:30-6pm	Dinner and announcement of upcoming events. Since dinner is at the end of EYC, it's a possibility that pizza and other simple catered items can be ordered in proportion to how many students arrive at 4pm.

This will cut down on food waste and keep the cost of food appropriate to the number of students that are being fed. The youth listening group did express that they missed having dinner, but that snacks would be appreciated as an added bonus!

- Consider empowering youth to lead music. An adult should help head up this effort with administrative help.
- Hire a part-time youth minister.
- Develop and stick to a consistent Communication Schedule. An example is below.
 - Fall, spring and summer Calendars should go out at least two months before the season begins. (Fall calendar would go out no later than June or July, spring no later than November or December and summer no later than April or May). Every effort should be made to stick to the calendar once it has been circulated. This is not to say that special events that come up shouldn't be added. Planning ahead allows families to prioritize youth formation and Calvary events since they can block that time on their calendars.
 - Utilize the communication avenues weekly that are listed on page 5.
 - Vocal announcements made in ALL Sunday services about upcoming youth events each week for a month before the event. Consider assigning a youth to speak. If not, the youth minister can make them. After each event, a quick summary of the event should be shared in church and also posted on the website and for one week in the bulletin. Also look into the possibility of wifi for the youth building.
- Beef up the already beautiful youth space with a TV or projector. Consider purchasing a Wii or game system and keeping it under lock-and-key.

12-Month Checklist

<i>Month</i>	<i>Action</i>
September 2013 – PLANNING!!!	Meet with Youth Commission to vision and calendar
	Send fall 2013 calendar to youth and youth parents before Oct. 1
	Create youth ministry folder
	Create communication strategy that fits Calvary
	Write a job description for part-time Youth Minister – plan to hire in December (contact Matt Blank or Kim Rogers for suggestions if needed)
	Plan a joint event and outreach in March with another area church.
	Hold EYC as usual on Sept. 29
October 2013 – Kick-Off!!!	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month's programming.
	Kick-off for the start of the NEW calendar! First new-style EYC will be October 6 (or a date decided upon by the Youth Commission)
	Arrange youth sponsors for the entire semester
	Hold a youth sponsor meeting to talk about expectations for the semester.
	Hold a parent meeting to talk about the calendar and programming. This is a good opportunity to answer all questions they may have at one time.
	Plan location and time for mission trip. – Start advertising mission trip.

	(Will you participate in Missionpalooza again?)
	Consider a spring break trip...
	Plan spring 2014 Calendar.
November 2013	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.
	Make sure all youth programming is advertised in church’s communication
	Send spring 2014 calendar to youth and youth parents
December 2013	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.
	Continue to advertise summer mission trip
	Hire a part-time Youth minister
	Consider a different series of events for Advent
January 2014	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.
	Plan the mission trip details
February 2014	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.
	Plan the mission trip details
March 2014	Plan summer 2014 calendar as a youth commission
April 2014	Deadline to register for mission trip
	Send summer 2014 calendar to youth and youth parents
	Advertise summer calendar for congregation
	Consider a series of events for Lent
May 2014	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan fall 2014 calendar
	Publicize calendar for church, youth and parents
	Plan out sponsors/drivers/volunteers for the semester
	Remember to consider outreach, intergenerational, and events with other church youth ministries
	Mission trip presentation in church
	May Move-up Party
June 2014	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.
	Summer programs
	Send fall 2014 calendar to youth and youth parents
July 2014	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.

	Mission Trip
	Summer programs
August 2014	Youth Commission Meeting – Plan next month’s programming.
	Hold an event for welcoming NEW 6 th grade youth!
	Mission Trip follow-up presentation in church
	Hold a youth sponsor meeting to talk about expectations for the semester.
	Hold a parent meeting to talk about the calendar and programming. This is a good opportunity to answer all questions they may have at one time.
September 2014	KICK OFF!!