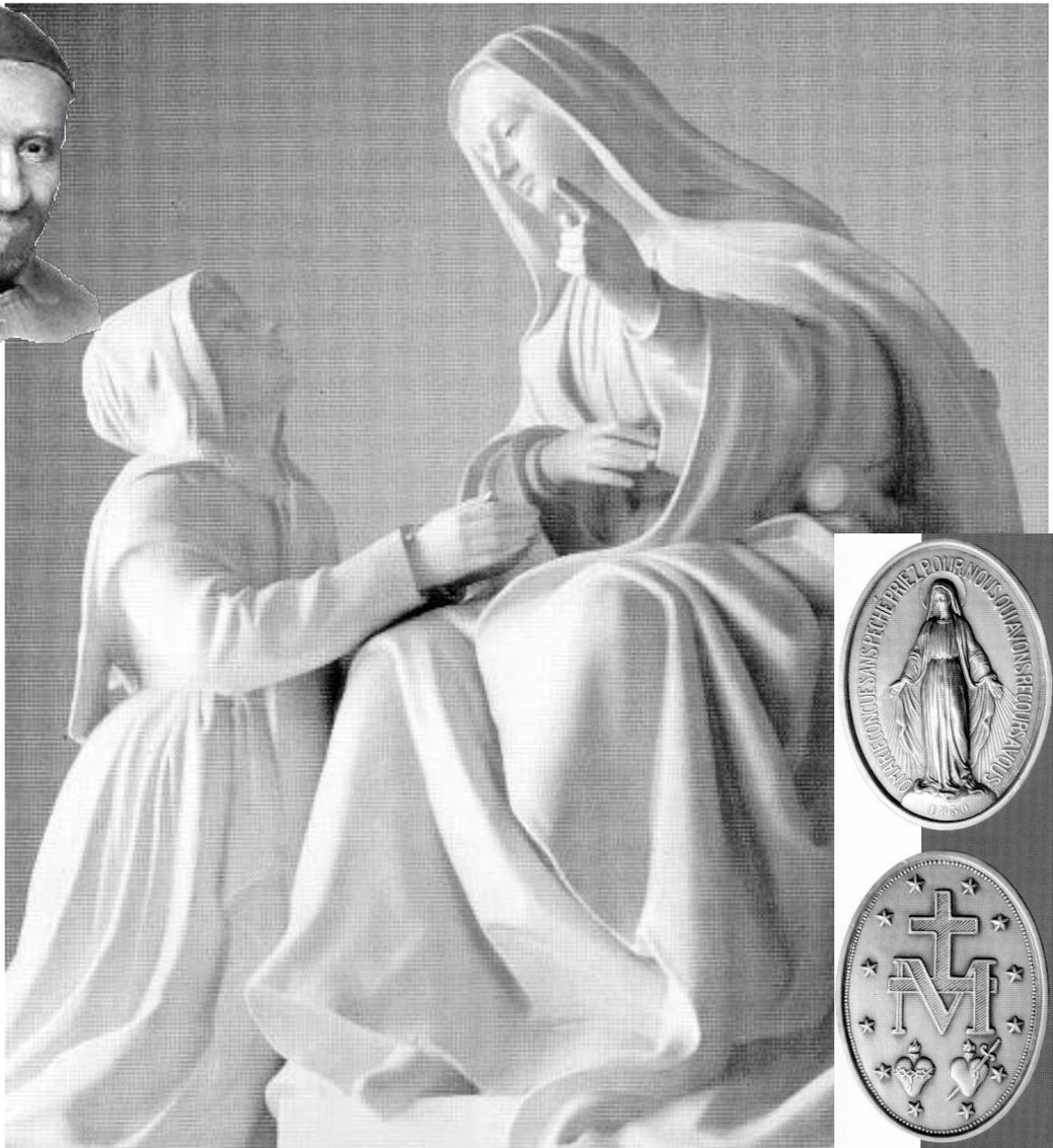


How to initiate a VMY group



A useful guideline



"The Blessed Virgin wants to confide you a Mission..."

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I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Congratulations for being concerned about establishing a VMY group! Thus you begin to be part of the thousands of men and women who consider youth as a motive of hope for the world. As Pope Benedict XVI said to the German bishops at the conclusion of World Youth Day in 2005: *For the Church young people constitute a living appeal to faith ...we want to be a Church open to the future, rich in promises for the new generations ... young in spirit ... young people are for us a healthy provocation* (Benedict XVI, Meeting with the German bishops, August 21, 2005).

As of now you will be part of a chain of love which began in Paris in 1830 when Sister Catherine Labouré, then a novice in the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity, communicated to Father Jean-Marie Aladel, CM, her spiritual director, the express command of the Virgin Mary: *The most holy Virgin wishes to entrust us with a mission ... a confraternity of young people dedicated to Mary*. The fruit of this message is what we know today as the Association of **Vincentian Marian Youth**.

At the beginning it is important that you understand that the birth of a VMY group can arise from very diverse and particular circumstances. A group might begin as the result of an invitation or a calling together of young people to participate in a meeting or gathering of young people or on the occasion of some particular celebration or a retreat or course or some outing or as the result of the celebration of Easter. On other occasions the group comes into existence because of the dedication of a small group of people --- two or three young people -- - who invite others to share their experience of faith and friendship. At other times a group might begin because of some other existing group whose members, methods and objectives need to be renewed.

To initiate a VMY group the following is needed:

- Two or more young people who want and desire to know Jesus Christ.
- These people desire to walk together in light of the gospel and in imitation of the Virgin Mary and Saint Vincent de Paul.
- They desire and commit themselves to maintain a certain unity in the group in order to mature as persons.
- An adult with mature faith experience and a conviction about and a lived experience of the Vincentian charisma.

The present document wishes to propose some *general guidelines* that will help adults --- lay or consecrated --- who are will to accompany a group of young people in the experience of VMY and guide their initiatives in accord with the proposed pedagogy and organization of the Association. Thus we offer some *practical tools* that will help adults in the realization of this task.

2. KEY IDEAS TO INITIATE A VMY GROUP

For VMY the group is a pedagogical option, a privileged environment in which faith and life are shared and the individuals (the young women and men) are accompanied by an adult person of faith. Therefore it is very important to be careful about some key aspects of this experience.

a) To respond to the concerns and interests of the members

The incorporation and perseverance of the members depends in great part on the fact that they will encounter in the group the necessary tools that will provide them with an adequate and valid response to their concerns and interests. Therefore, one must begin by offering them activities and themes that allow them to share in the group their hopes and wishes, their questions and their struggles, their experience in life, their gifts and abilities. In this way the proposed activities, the methodology to be followed in the meetings and the themes that are treated in these meetings ought to be adapted to the particular characteristics of the group: age, level of formation, culture, social context, etc. This effort to begin with the reality of the young women and men is indispensable for the life of the group and is a way to guarantee the continuity of the group. After the style of Jesus and his relations with different women and men of his time (the Samaritan, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the disciples of Emmaus, etc.) one attempts to begin with attentive observation of and loving listening to the personal situation of each person and from this perspective one then accompanies them in their experience of faith.

b) From the perspective of the values of Christian faith, one helps the member in their integral growth

A concern for the life of youth people ought to lead us to facilitate an environment in which we can provide a group experience that helps the members in their integral growth, a growth that takes place in light of the values of Christian faith. In other words, the group ought to help young people grow as persons in every fundamental aspect: human-Christian maturity, community and ecclesial experience, Marian-Vincentian spirituality and social and missionary commitment. Therefore one must be careful about the four basic dimensions of the life of the VMY group: community, prayer, service to those most in need and on-going formation.

** Community*

The group facilitates the creation of profound bonds of friendships among the members and allows the members to recognize the other as brother/sister and share with him/her who they are and what they have. The group will enable the members to confront together the challenges of the life and will teach them to look at and discover together with other the reality in which they live. Finally the group will enable the members to encounter the *friend*, Jesus of Nazareth.

** Prayer*

The groups should provide for the initiation of a life of prayer. They should begin to share with others their journey of faith and attempt to nourish and celebrate this journey together with others. Young people will open themselves to a relationship with God, to a trust in God,

gratitude to God and worship of God. They will learn how to clothe themselves in Jesus Christ.

** Commitment*

In the group, the young people will learn to look at the social reality that surrounds them (family, friends, social classes, the political and economic situation, the present injustices, etc.), but they will learn how to look at this reality from the perspective of those who are disadvantaged and then they will be able to respond in a creative and organized way to the cries of those who suffer. From the hand of Saint Vincent de Paul the young women and men will learn *to see Christ in the poor and the poor in Christ*, and then they commit themselves to the transformation of the reality that surrounds them.

** Formation*

The lived experience of the group in regard to the three aspects that were previously mentioned is a basic formation that will enable the young person to grow as a person and as a believer. Community, prayer and service to those persons who are disadvantaged will enable them to discover the need to rely on new elements and tools, to reflect together with others and to develop themselves even more fully. It is at this time that we can offer them themes and guidance for their human-Christian formation (for example, themes such as affectivity, sexuality, social life, the person of Christ, the Church, etc.)

In the second part of this document, we offer you some content that we consider basic in the formation sessions of a group that is beginning. We also enclose a model for annual planning that will help you discover how to integrate these four dimensions of the life of the group into the organization of activities and into the content for the on-going formation of the members. If you want to deepen your knowledge about this dimension of formation and the methodology of the Association we recommend reading the document *Formative Processes and Endways in VMY*, published in May 2005 by the VMY International Council.

c) To invite the young people to discover the world of the poor and then to evangelize and to serve them

The VMY group arises as an experience that leads the young people to open their eyes to their own reality. The group ought to propose concrete activities that allow them to come to a better understanding of the problems and injustices that surround them. Thus, according to their abilities and possibilities they will be able to offer adequate and effective responses to the reality of those most in need. In this theological place of the encounter with God, young people will learn to be grateful to the Lord for the good things that have given to them in their life and at the same time they will also learn to embrace those who are poor as their sisters and brothers. Service on behalf of those persons who are poor and service that is done as a group will strengthen the bond of friendship and community among the young women and men and will help them to discover the richness of the Vincentian charisma.

3. PROCESS OF INITIATING A VMY GROUP

Being that VMY is an **International Association of the faithful** which is recognized by the Holy See, the birth of a VMY group in the local Church must be in accordance with the established norms by the Codex of Canon Law (C. 285-290). In the majority of the nations,

VMY is established as a Lay Association, with special ties with the Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul and the Congregation of the Mission. That is why the establishment of a group must follow the following process:

a) In a country where VMY already exists:

To create a new group you may proceed in the following manner:

1. The persons interested in establishing a new group, must:
 - Direct themselves to the person responsible of pastoral of the area and place, to explain the purpose and obtain their approval.
 - Once obtained, invite the youth to belong to the group (convocation) and initiate the meetings and activities.
2. After a period, no less of six months, redact a report of all the activities the group has done and send it the National Council asking for their accompaniment.
3. In finishing the first year, present their petition for admission to the National Council, along with the written reference of the one responsible for local pastoral or by the local Superior, if the group is within the house of the Congregation of the mission or the Daughters of Charity.
4. If the National Council is in accordance, the National Advisor (Canon 312.2):
 - Will send the erection act for the new group, if it functions within a house of the Daughters of Charity or the Congregation of the Mission.
 - If the group does not function within the house of the Congregation of the mission or the Daughters of Charity, the National Advisor will solicit from the local Bishop a written approval. After obtaining it, he sends the erection act of the new group.

b) In a country where VMY does not exist:

In order to create a new group you may proceed in the following manner:

1. The persons interested in forming a new group must:
 - Direct themselves to the person in charge of the pastoral labor of the place (Superior of the CM or the Sister servant of the Daughters of Charity, the Superior of a Religious House, the Director of a Formation Center), to explain your purpose and obtain their approval.
 - Once obtained, invite the youth to belong to the group (convocation) and initiate the meetings and activities.
2. After a year, they must redact an report of what has been done and send it to the International Secretariat, along with the written reference from the one responsible for the pastoral labor or from the local Superior, in the case of being a house of the Congregation of the Mission or the Daughters of Charity. The International Secretariat will give them the necessary guidelines to accompany the group taking into account the realities of that country: presence/absence of the Vincentian Family, place of the group establishment, etc.
3. After an agreed time and once reached the appropriate conditions (formation of 2 or 3 groups, a minimum of 100 stable members, adult advisors that share the spirit of VMY and can give formation, recognition form the local hierarchy, sufficient guaranty of continuance), then the process of redacting and approving a national Statutes for that country will commence..
4. Once the National Statutes are approved by the VMY Director General, a National Assembly will be convoked with the idea of forming a VMY National Council that will be the official contact with VMY International Office.

c) Celebrate the creation of the group:

It is suggested to celebrate the life of the group at the end of the year. It could be a simple celebration with the following basic elements: songs, liturgy of the Word, a gift, and food for sharing. As the group advances, it is recommended to mark those important moments in the life of the group with a special celebration.

4. STAGES IN THE LIFE OF A GROUP

All groups have an evolution and a growth period, passing through successive stages, similar to the personal growth of people that go from one's birth to one's death. Even though all of the stages are not given in an automatic and obligatory manner, it is important that the moderator know them, so that they can know what happens in the life of the group.

Birth (initiation): the group is born like the person is born... and in the beginning it is pretty dependent on the moderator, it needs much attention. In the first year the newly born group is surprised by all around it, it will pronounce its first words and make its first steps with some uncertainty, it discovers that it is capable of moving and walking. The members feel good when they are all together; the wish to get to know each other, to support each other, and to have their own identity grows.

Infancy: little by little, the group begins to grow and its members start to discover they can grow to do something in common, their communication deepens, and they start defining objectives and start their sights on where they want to go. This is the time of imagination, of fabulous plans and the imitation of what other groups do. What is sensible plays an important role, easily causing some turmoil, they acquire responsibilities easily that later on can not accomplish, and there is little capacity for evaluation.

Adolescence: this is the moment for an integration crisis, fighting for leadership, for a new search for the sense of the group and concrete ways to realize their identity. In this moment, the group reaffirms or disintegrates itself. It is very important to help all the members to identify the source of crisis, to talk amongst each other, to give importance to the "us" before the "me", to carry out actions that permit them to out into the action their ideals, to look for ways of maturity.

Youth: when the crisis is overcome, the group acquires better stability, it starts having a group personality which is better defined, it acquires more autonomy in respect to its moderator, it deepens its relationships, it takes its commitments more seriously, it is open to the social reality and it starts making important options. Its own maturity makes the group look for a communal and effective feeling, to be more realistic at the hour of outlying objectives and of expecting concrete and firm commitments from their members.

Adulthood: a youth group becomes adult when its members decide to live more intensely the experience of community, with objectives that are clear and defined, with levels of deep communication, with unconditional mutual acceptance and fraternal correction, with a clear service Project that is incarnated in their reality. This is the moment in which the members discover the necessity of being multipliers of this experience and decide to create new groups, with new impulses. This is the moment where they help each other in their own vocational options.

Death – New Life: the group can't last forever, it is not immortal... Once they find their own path and make an election in their lives, its members – since they are no longer young, but adults – they disperse... and commence to give life to other environments, living in a new manner and becoming transforming agents of the realities that surround them. We are not talking about dying and disappearing, because even if the group disintegrates, paradoxically there are new life impulses, new seeds, new realities... there has to be new proposals to other youth and make them experiment what we have lived... that's the way new groups are born, and the process is initiated over again.

5. FUNCTIONS AND BASIC FORMATION OF THE GROUP MODERATOR

The responsibility of accompanying a youth group is fruit of a calling to which we want to respond, a call to share our faith and to make it known to future generations. That requires that we put at the disposal of the youth, all of our gifts and capacity to help the group to consolidate, to grow and to reach the objectives of the Association.

The first question that comes as about is, without a doubt: Who can accompany a VMY group? We will use the word *Moderator* to designate the person who takes the initiative of starting and accompany the group. In this sense, the Moderator can be a young adult, a missionary of the congregation, a Daughter of Charity, a priest, a Religious person, in summary an adult in faith that knows and lives the Spirit of the Association. Their functions are:

- Motivate and fortify the life of the group.
- Help the youth to plan annually the activities of the group.
- Procure the integration of the group in the parish and diocesan life.
- Inform the superior about the life of the group.

To start a group you must know the Association, so that the activities, content and proposals that we do respond the finality of the Association. With this in mind, we would like to suggest a list of documents and contents that could help the Moderator of the group to better know the Association and reach the objectives that are proposed. These documents are at your disposal at the VMY International Secretariat (Madrid, Spain) and you may ask for them through an e-mail:

- VMY International Statutes
- Role and Functions of the Advisors in VMY
- Formation Processes and Endways in VMY
- Final Document of the last General Assembly, Paris 2005.

These documents of international nature have the advantage of offering a global vision of the Association, and can constitute a first initiation for the Moderator. In the future, the Moderator can deepen in some themes or contents where they will need more formation and information.

In the first moments of the life of the group, there is no clear distinction among the leaders. That is why we use the term Moderator to designate the person that is in front of the group when it starts to function. As the group is fortified (stability of its members, clarity of the objectives, concrete actions are defined, own methodology assumed, struggle for

leadership) it is necessary to establish the different roles to take the step to the stage of consolidation and growth of the group. As a general rule, it is recommended that each VMY group be accompanied by a youth **Coordinator, President** and an Advisor. The President is a young member chosen from the group to coordinate its activities, along with the Advisor. The Advisor has the fundamental task to accompany the process of faith education of the members of the group. The Advisor works in close collaboration with the President of the group. It is recommended that he/she be a member of the Congregation of the Mission or a Daughter of Charity. They can also be a Diocesan Priest, a member of religious order, or an adult lay person who knows and lives the Spirit of the Association.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SELF FINANCING OF THE GROUP

From its first moment, it is important to insist that the members of the group must finance their own activities. To achieve living the self financing of the group, the moderator must call to the personal responsibility of each member, inviting them to be generous at the hour of sharing the goods with others, especially with the least favored. To stimulate the youth in this sense, you may start with a small analysis of the situation of the group you accompany, answering along with them to the following questions:

1. What is the social economic situation of the members? How much can each one give to economically sustain the group?
2. In the immediate environment, what persons could in the first instance, support through financial means the life of the group? For how long?
3. What factors in the social environment will make more difficult or facilitate the search for economic resources?
4. What concrete activities can the youth carry out to reach these funds for their activities and their projects in the service to the poor?

If you desire to further deepen in this aspect, we invite you to read two documents published by the International Team about the economic subjects of the Association:

- Guidelines for the financial management of the Association (2006)
- A Project Approach (2007).

From these documents, the ideal points you must maintain in your mind are the following:

- The members of the VMY are responsible of contributing of the financial support of the Association, at a local, national and international level.
- The necessary funds for the activities of the Association and those hended to attend to the poor must be procured by the same youth with creativity and perseverance.
- No one is so poor that they can't give something for the life and the activities of the group.

Suggestions of concrete activities

1. Simple activities and in a short term

- Selling articles of interest at significant feasts: postcards, handmade gifts, cakes or candies made by the youth or their family members, in a flea market at the parish or at the center, etc.
- Raffles

2. Activities that require some initial inversion and more organization:

- Make a play or have a group of clowns.
- Organize a flea market, a concert, sports competitions, etc.
- Elaborate a project and submit it to a benefactor or institution interested working with youth or with the poor.
- Create a small and permanent business that will guaranty some continuous Money for the group: a small garden, a public transportation mean (motor taxi, bus, etc), a small store, a cyber café, etc.

A recommendation: whatever activity for the self financing must be in compliance with the proper legislation of your country or city. It is importance to previously get information, to get these funds within the limits established by the law. Don't forget that VMY is a **non-Profitable Association**

7. EXTERNAL INSTANCES THAT CAN HELP THE MODERATOR TO CARRY OUT THEIR SERVICE

At the start of the VMY group, the Moderator can count on some valuable help:

a) The VMY National Council:

It is the coordinating team of the VMY activities in a determined country. Having contact with this team, you can get some guidelines and help in the formation of the Moderator and its members, the plan and development of the activities of the group, and its official recognition. The International Secretariat can offer more information as how to contact the VMY National Council in your country.

b) The VMY International Secretariat

Created in 1999, it is an executive organ of VMY International, whose mission consists in being at the service of animation and coordination of the whole Association, trying to create exchanges and information between the members countries, offering means of human and Christian formation for the youth and supporting its projects of evangelization and service in favor of the most needy.

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Webpage: www.secretariadojmv.org

c) The Vincentian Family

In the countries where there is a branch of the Vincentian Family, this can be a great help to deepen the Vincentian charisma, to realize joint activities and projects in service for the most in need. The Webpage for the International Family is: www.famvin.org

8. CONCLUSION

We hope that these reflections can help you have a global vision of the being and doings of VMY. They're guidelines that can help you to easily carry out your role as Moderator of a group that starts its journey in the Association. Any questions needed to be answered, don't doubt in consulting with the International Secretariat. We will respond to your calls or messages with great pleasure.

It is important that you have imprinted in your mind and heart the words of Saint Catherine Labouré to Fr. Aladel, with which we introduced this document: ***"The Blessed Virgin wants to confide you a mission... a confraternity of Marian youth"***. This means, by love to the Virgin, in creating a youth group that have Mary as Mother and Teacher, in knowing how to discover Jesus in the poor and serve them in the Church and in the society. As you commence this experience as Moderator, we invite you to remember the attentive and compassionate look of Jesus towards the people who followed him, ***"they were as sheep without a pastor"*** (Mt 9, 36). Dare to respond to the call of Mary made through the Association; receive the youth with love that come to look through you for He that is ***"the Way, the Truth and the Life"*** (Jn 14, 6). As important as the projects and the organization, is letting your heart be inflamed in contact with the Word of God so that you may be able to calm that small portion of the Church that God has confided to you. Jesus today tells you, ***"Row into the deep sea"*** (Lk 5, 4), and you will discover that ***"with the youth, you never reach all you want but you never lose what you do"***. Continue, because ***"the one who chose you will never leave you"*** (Dt 31, 8). He will accompany you in this beautiful and passionate mission ***"all of days till the end of the world"***. (Mt. 28, 20).

II. PRACTICAL TOOLS

1. PLANNING LIFE WITH THE GROUP

- **Criteria**

Under this ambitious title, we provide some guidelines for organizing the life of the group. We should remember that this planning process must be in tune with the situation of the group. The models presented below may not fit your group exactly, but they will allow you to better understand the path to be followed. The main criteria to be considered in planning with the young people are:

- Develop activities promoting mutual understanding, unity and affection between the members of the group, so that they may value all the things that bring them together and accept the differences as a source of great value.
- Offer content, keeping in mind the objective of the Association while considering the needs and interests of the youth.
- Take into account the life of the Church – specifically, the parish – and society: feasts, significant events, etc.; helping young people to discover their true meaning.
- Monitor the progress of the group and the youth from the basic dimensions previously mentioned: brotherhood, prayer, service and formation.
- Establish clear and assessable objectives with the group, taking into account planning of the Youth Ministry/Pastoral in the Diocese where the group resides.

- **Strong experiences during the initiation of the group**

The life of the group is developed through meetings, catechesis and other activities carried out by the youth together with their Moderator. Throughout this course of action, the youth should be offered strong and far-reaching experiences that will help them to provide cohesion to the group and to consolidate their encounter with Jesus Christ and with the Poor. These experiences will increase in depth and intensity as the youth advance in the process of maturing as persons and as believers.

At the conclusion of the development phase of the group, its members should have undergone the following strong experiences: the experience of friendship, the experience of being close to God through Jesus Christ, the experience of a festive and healthy celebration as a group, and the experience of solidarity toward the most needy.

- **Thematic proposal for a year**

The thematic proposal serves as a link for the contents of meetings and activities to be developed throughout the year.

Example:

Theme for the year 2006-2007: “Let us share the joy of live in Jesus”			
<i>Period</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>General Objective</i>	<i>Contents</i>
Sept. – Dec. 2006	“Love one another with brotherly love” (Rom 2, 10; Jn 13, 34)	Develop an experience of friendship in the group	Know oneself and others Express and understand your own feelings.
Jan – Mar	“Jesus summoned	Discover Jesus’ call to	Initiation of the group as a

2007	the men he himself had decided on, who came and joined him” (Mk 3, 14)	follow Him, with other brothers in the faith.	community of faith. Following Jesus Christ: calling to a new life
April – June 2007	“Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4, 4)	Accept the Word of God as the good news for our lives.	Initiation of a personal and community reading of the Word of God The Magnificat, a song of joy Aids for adequately channeling negative feelings.
July – August 2007	“He has sent me to bring Good News to the poor” (Lk 4, 18)	To be living signs of the love of God in serving the needy.	Experience of serving the Poor To be witness of Christ in word and action A current topic

- **Example of an annual work schedule (chronogram)**

The annual or quarterly programming should be a flexible practice according to the needs and progress of the group. It is prepared according to the annual theme, as well as the liturgical periods and activities anticipated at the parochial and association level.

The group should ensure that planning include activities which break up the routine of periodical meetings and strengthen it. These are actions that are planned in such a manner so as not to hinder yearly progress, but will serve as an incentive: a party at the beginning of the course and/or a camping at the end; an invitation to other young people at least once during each course. The following project is intended to be both integral and integrating.

Example:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Slogan</i>	<i>Events /Activities</i>
Sept.- Dec. 06	“Love one another with brotherly love” (Rom 2, 10; Jn 13, 34)	Weekly meetings* Picnic or sports activity (beginning) Preparation of the manger (or Bethlehem) by the group Parish Christmas Party
Jan. – Mar. 07	“Jesus summoned the men he himself had decided on, who came and joined him. (Mk 3, 14)	Weekly meetings* Prepare and celebrate the Eucharist as a group Visit to an orphanage (or a soup kitchen)
Apr.- Jun. 07	“Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4, 4)	Weekly meetings* Excursion - Games Party at the end of the course
Jul.-Aug. 2007	“He has sent me to bring Good News to the poor” (Lk 4, 18)	Celebration at the end of the course Personal commitments of group members

*Catechesis is a part of the weekly meetings. Its contents are not provided in detail. Each quarter, the number of meetings will be determined in accordance with other anticipated activities.

- **Basic suggestions for a meeting**

Proper preparation of the meeting is very important. Contents and development depend greatly on the moment, objectives of the ministry, and many other factors. However, it may be stated that all group meetings should include the following elements:

- An objective and the contents, often related to the chronogram and the annual theme.
- Time to share everyday living (happy events, problems, concerns).
- Specific activities (recommend that you specify duration, a brief description and necessary human, material or economic resources).
- Time for an encounter with God (brief prayer, reading of the Scriptures, a song or hymn for meditation, etc.). Prayer should be established as an item in the meeting, at the beginning as part of the motivation or at the end as a summary.
- A very brief moment for an evaluation, with a specific commitment that the young people will experience until the next meeting.

Additionally, it is important that we not confuse the meeting of the group with a *catechesis*. A catechesis is a space or period of formation intended to delve into the evangelical message for the purpose of teaching the faith or for developing some aspect of group life. It consists of four periods: starting with a life experience, enlightening it through the Gospel, drawing applications and establish practical commitments. To this effect, the catechesis can be a part of the group meeting.

In order to have a good group meeting, the following rules should apply:

- Develop a family environment; monitor the site, the beginning of the meeting, etc. (especially in the first phases).
- Establish the duration of the meeting and adhere to it, unless the young people themselves decide to extend it.
- Support listening and participation of all and encourage shy members.
- Remember the contents of the previous meeting in order to help the young people to perceive the continuity of proposed activities.
- When possible, initiate joint responsibility in planning and preparation of the meeting as well as its evaluation.

It is essential that the beginning of the course be well developed:

- Begin with an activity (a party, a camp...) as motivation for the first year.
- Begin by becoming acquainted and getting to know the situation of each young person: Dynamics for our own self awareness which help with interiorizing values, dynamics for getting to know members of the group, activities fostering the encounter, friendship and group-sharing.
- Determine the pace of the meetings according to members of the group. Recommended minimum is one meeting a month, but it might be more convenient to organize a *weekly meeting* to maintain group cohesion, especially when the group begins its activities. Work could be done thereafter and more emphasis could be placed on the four dimensions of the life of the group: community, prayer, formation and service to the poor.

2. FOUR EXAMPLES OF GROUP MEETINGS

The following are examples of group meetings. These are patterned after previous indications and offer a catechesis on the various aspects of group life: community, prayer, formation and service to the poor:

- To know myself and my colleagues;
- To know Jesus of Nazareth
- To discover VMY
- An encounter with the poor.

Each catechesis is developed according to the following outline:

- Life experience;
- Enlightenment through the Word of God;
- Applications
- Practical commitment

Meeting I		<i>To get to know myself and my colleagues</i>
<u>Prayer</u>		Hail Mary, full of grace; Psalm 70 You, O Lord, were my hope from my youth; Hymn
Objective		Promote awareness of ourselves and develop self-esteem. Promote a sense of belonging to the group and of brotherhood between each member and his/her colleagues.
Development of the activity	Life Experience	Members draw or write in the form of a story (if certain discomfort in using decorative art is noted) whatever represents themselves (suggest that they identify themselves with an element of nature, with an object used in school, with an article, or that they describe a fantastic character or a characteristic of their personality...). Work individually or alone for 10 minutes. Each person turns in his sheet to the Moderator without writing down his name. The Moderator will mix them up regardless of when they were turned in. Each anonymous work will be commented on in the group and the characteristics of the unknown author will be analyzed. Finally, the names of the authors will be revealed and the group will give their true opinion of the colleague in question. The activity helps to strengthen group relationships and to develop each member's confidence.
	Enlighten through the Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Do not call anyone on earth your father. Only one is your father, the One in heaven... and you are all brothers”</i> (Mt 23, 8 .9). Let us learn to love each other as brothers, since He does not consider one son of God to be more or less important than another. • <i>“I have come to call, not the self-righteous, but sinners”</i> (Mt 9, 9-13) Jesus invites his disciples to follow him. Each day he sends his invitation to us, his friends. He accepts us as we are, with all our flaws. Like Matthew, do we know how to respond to Jesus' call? Are we aware of our originality and that the Lord sees each one of us as his children?
	In practice...	What is your day like? Describe your workday and comment on your personal tastes: food, television programs, music, fashion... Are we all alike? Are there better or worst likes? Describe several lifestyles and the diversity of each brother, starting with the everyday experience of the members. Despite the differences in our lifestyles, we are all sons of God and we are all called on to follow Him. Reflection: by attending this

		meeting you have already responded to his first call...
	Commitment	Fill out a simple personal questionnaire that will be kept in the meeting room (important personal data, pastimes, qualities, etc.)
Closing prayer		Prayer: Psalm 145 <i>The Happiness of those who hope in God</i> ; Hymn to the Virgin

Meeting II		<i>Getting to Know Jesus of Nazareth</i>
Prayer		A song; Prayer to the Virgin; Psalm 141
Summary of the previous meeting		What topics have we discussed? What was the objective? What have we learned?
Objective		To promote a strengthening of the faith in each member. After discovering that we are all brothers, children of God (topic discussed at the previous meeting), now let us get to know Jesus.
Development of the activity	Life Experience	What does Jesus mean to you? Describe a time in your life when you felt that you had found Jesus.
	Enlighten through the Gospel	Examine the two Gospels 1. <i>«One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he had finished, one of his disciples asked him: “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your Name, your Kingdom come.”</i> (Lk 11, 1-4). Watching Jesus pray, the disciples ask Him to teach them how to pray. They were used to the formal and pompous “formulas” of the rabbis and Pharisees. The simple prayer that He taught them condenses the entire experience of the true Christian faith. 2. <i>Rising early the next morning, Jesus went off to a lonely place in the desert; there he was absorbed in prayer.</i> (Mk 1, 35-39) Jesus rises early to pray. He puts prayer ahead of everything else. a) Describe Jesus’ attitude toward his disciples, people, and prayer. b) Focus on three important aspects of Jesus’ life (For example, do they coincide with prayer, the miracles and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God?). c) With your colleagues, dramatize a parable or an event in the Gospel that has drawn your attention. What message does it convey?
	In practice...	Reflect on one of your priorities; does prayer fit in? - How does Jesus contribute something to your everyday life? Do you find time during the day to seek, pray and listen to God?
	Commitment	Begin Reading the Gospel according to Saint Mark.
Closing prayer		Our Father; final hymn.

Meeting III		<i>Discovering the VMY</i>
Prayer		Hail Mary, full of grace, Psalm 132
Summary of the previous meeting		Try to summarize the two previous meetings in two phases: - first, brotherhood; secondly, faith
Objective		Promote interest in learning more about the VMY, who are their members, their promoters and their objectives.

Development of the activity	Life experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorming: without reflecting too much, participants will state terms implying signs related to the reason why they are participating as members of the Association (for example: a call, invitation, friends, project of the Virgin, diversion...). A colleague will write on the blackboard the words stated by other participants. At the end, the moderator will ask participants to classify each word into categories: Faith/spirituality, friendship/diversion. Any classification with the least number of elements will require an in-depth review. Examine the name of our Association: “Vincentian Marian Youth.” What does it mean? Present the four characteristics of the VMY: Ecclesial, Lay, Marian and Vincentian. What tasks are members of the Association required to perform? Formation, Service, Catechesis, Mission.
	Enlighten through the Gospel (and Vincentian writings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “(Jesus) summoned the men he himself had decided on, who came and joined him (Mk 3, 13) “In turn he said to the disciple: “There is your mother.” (Jn 19, 27) “The Virgin Mary wants you to establish an association where you will be the founder and director; it will be an association of Mary’s Youth, to which the Holy Mother will grant many graces.” (Cf. LAURENTIN Rene, Catherine Labouré et la Medaille Miraculeuse. 1, 357.
	In practice...	Reflection: In your opinion, what is the most important task that a VMY must accomplish?
	Commitment	Read a brief account of the life of St. Catherine, or visit the VMY international web site
Closing prayer	Hail Mary, full of grace; Psalm 125, God, joy and our hope	

Meeting IV		<i>Encounter with the Poor</i>
Prayer		Opening hymn; Prayer to the Virgin; Jn 13, 34-35.
Summary of the previous meeting		Up to this point, we have worked to get to know each other better, to build a “family” where brothers can live together; we have discovered the simplicity of Jesus’ prayer, as well as St. Vincent’s devotion to the poor. Having covered an important part of the journey of a VMY, let us discuss SERVICE.
Objective		Discover, through contact with the Poor, the most enriching part of every Christian’s experience.
Development of	Life experience	What does <i>to serve</i> mean? In your opinion, who are the “poor”?
		If it is true, as St. Vincent De Paul said, that “love is inventive to the infinity,” try to be creative and find an alternate idea for helping the poor in your neighborhood, town or city.

the activity	Enlighten through the Gospel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I give you a new commandment: Love one another. Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other. This is how all will know you for my disciples: Your love for one another...” (Jn 13, 34-35).</i> • <i>“I was ill and in prison and you did not come to comfort me..” (Mt 25)</i> • <i>“The harvest is rich, but the workers are few...” (Lk, 10)</i> • <i>“In serving the Poor we serve Jesus Christ” C. IX, 252</i>
	In practice ...	Have you ever participated in a service Project or as a volunteer? Share an experience of service rendered, either in a school project, or in an association to which you are a member, or in your everyday life.
	Commitment	Participate in the activity of group service.
Closing prayer		(Prayer to St. Vincent in the language of the country of reference)

3. SOME GROUP TECHNIQUES

The term “group techniques” or “games” plays a very important role in our work with young people in various aspects.

- They help to create an entertaining environment encouraging young people to attend the proposed activities.
- They help them to become acquainted and to break down interpersonal barriers.
- They may be used to create an environment where young people learn by becoming involved and from personal experience itself. For example, many of these games may be used to help them to understand the importance of working together, to listen attentively, or to allow others to help them, etc...

We propose some simple techniques that may be helpful in creating a good environment in the group and for growing. You may find many more examples on the Internet or in books on group techniques.

In order to form work or play groups:

1. ANIMALS

Objective: To form random groups.

Development: Each participant is given a paper with the name of an animal (the number of animals will depend on the number of groups you wish to form), when all participants have their animal, they begin to imitate the sound of the animal, seeking their peers.

2. THE SHIPWRECK

Objective: For large meetings or groups where it is more convenient to form mixed and heterogeneous groups. Form small groups, but make certain that the people are mixed.

Development:

- The moderator will determine prior conditions to be established: men and/or women, as well as adults and/or young people, some wearing eyeglasses, etc., but not from the same group or city.
- He tells them that this is the case or the history of a shipwreck and lifeboats must be formed under the above conditions (No. 1), and that in the boats they should:

- Learn the names of the shipwrecked.

- Where they were born.
 - To what group or institution they belong.
 - Give a name to the boat, etc.
3. Simulate a choppy sea and give the order to form the boats. (10')
 4. Form the boats and work on learning names. (20')
 5. Presentation of the boats, if necessary, at the plenary session.

Ice-breaking technique

JUMBLED BASKET

Materials: an open or closed site, individual chairs, a group of young people who are anxious to have fun.

Development:

The games director will give the instructions.

1. When a person is given the word *apple*, he/she will answer by calling the name of the person seated to his/her left, and when given the word *pear*, he/she will answer by calling the name of the person to his/her right.

2. When the director calls *jumbled basket*, everyone will change places.

A person who is slow in saying the name, or makes a mistake, or does not change places, will lose. That person will then direct the game.

Conclusion:

This game will allow us to know most of the names of the participants in an amusing manner, aside from the fact that every time a person changes place, he/she will necessarily start up a quick conversation to learn the name of his two immediate neighbors.

Learning to work as a team:

Two or three teams are formed, with a maximum of 10 persons; a team can also be made up of men or women. Each team is given a list of 10 things to find in the room they are in, either nearby or far from the place (for example: 1 glass, 1 earring, 1 dried leaf, 1 ant, etc.).

Afterwards, the leader must give instructions to begin and they agree on and read what they are asked to look for and run to find it.

The team that gathers all the objects first is the winner. Prior to this, two or three chairs should be arranged, depending on the number of teams, so that each team may set the objects it collects on that chair.

It is lots of fun to watch everyone running all over the place to collect the objects as quickly as possible, and since they usually do not agree on what each team member should look for, it turns out that most times all the team members look for the same object at the same time.

You will see that the young people will have a good time and will get along well.

Techniques on the Bible

WHO AM I

In order to do this dynamic, the group must have at least five members.

The first person thinks of a biblical character, for example: Abraham. He/she looks at the person beside him/her and gives him/her a clue or a characteristic of this person. In the

case of Abraham, he/she might say: “He had a strong faith” and waits to see if the other person can guess who the character is. Otherwise, he can provide another clue.

Once they have guessed who the character is, the winner does the same thing to the next participant.

To promote confidence and a more profound exchange

COMPUTER

Objective: Begin the consolidation of the group by sharing information with the players. The objectives of this type of techniques are:

- Promote an extended environment and participation.
- Support communication and exchange.
- Obtain a higher degree of confidence and awareness of oneself, of others and of the group itself.

Participants: This technique is carried out with groups of all ages.

Time: Depends on the moderator, who proposes similarities between the participants; the approximate duration is between 10 – 15 minutes.

Materials: No materials are necessary.

Place: You should have a large space, a room, outdoors, etc... so that “THE COMPUTERS” may meet with their peers.

Process: The entire group becomes involved in the role of an arranger, and as such they will transmit messages. They will walk around the room, transmitting the message: “BIT, BIT...” while walking around they converse with their colleagues and look for the similarities suggested by the moderator. For example, astrological signs, favorite color, favorite food, etc. This helps us to form groups.

Comments: All group participants will comment on the dynamics, will ask questions to see if the participants liked it, how they felt, if they thought it was fun; if the reaction was not a positive one, we will listen to the reason for this.

THE CONFIDENT PARACHUTIST

Objectives:

- Create an environment of expansion, harmony and confidence within the group.
- Place each participant in a situation of having to trust colleagues.

Participants: This type of activity may be carried out with all types of groups, from children to teenagers and even adults.

Time: The duration of the activity is relative, although it may take approximately from 10 to 15 minutes.

Materials: Material resources are not required for this activity.

Place: The activity may be carried out in open as well as closed spaces, and does not require a very large space.

Procedure: Group participants form two lines standing up (one in front of the other) with extended arms. There should be enough space so that the person falling on the arms of the components of the lines does not hit the ground.

Another participant, from a higher position where the lines are formed, will throw himself into the arms of the group members. These will grab the participant who threw himself so that he will not fall on the ground. This participant should be fully confident of his colleagues, knowing that they will prevent him from falling.

Comments: All group members will comment on the activity, will think about how we felt, if we liked it, if we thought it was fun, etc.

For conflict resolution:

CAT AND MOUSE

Objectives: - To experience feelings of empathy toward others.

- Place yourself in the other person's position.
- It may serve to talk about values.

Participants: The number of participants has not been determined. This activity may be carried out with all types of groups, from adolescents on, adapting it to their needs (adolescents, youths, adults).

Time: Approximately 20 minutes.

Materials: No materials are necessary.

Place: This technique may be carried out in either open or closed spaces; it should be a spacious and quiet place.

Procedure: The moderator asks group members to close their eyes and to concentrate. He/she then tells a story about the "cat and mouse." The story goes like this: "We enter a house, it is very large, huge; then we become a mouse and everything surrounding us seems to be immense. What are our feelings? When we run into a cat and it wants to eat us, just as it is about to take the first bite, we become the cat, and the cat turns into a mouse. What are my thoughts and feelings as a cat when I run into the mouse?" Once the activity is over, we will all reflect on the experience: How to experience empathy? What should be our attitude in situations of conflict?

Comments: This is a psychodrama with a mediator to focus on the problems. It is important that the mechanics of the technique serve for practicing social skills and conflict resolution.

To evaluate the group

THE ROUNDELAY

Objectives:

- Conduct an evaluation of the group.
- Determine which anecdotes have drawn the most attention.

Participants: Children and young people in groups where the number of participants is not excessive.

Time: An approximate time has not been determined.

Materials: A sheet of paper and a ballpoint pen for writing down the song.

Place: Spacious so that all group members will be comfortable.

Procedure: Make up a song with the most significant anecdotes that have occurred throughout the year and then sing about them like a "national parody."

Comments: All group members will comment on the activity, will reflect on how we felt, if we liked it, if it was fun; if it was not, we will try to find out why.

WHAT EMOTION OR MOOD DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF WITH NOW?

Objectives:

- Determine the mental state of the group at a given time.
- Evaluate how the group is doing.

Participants: The number of participants has not been determined. This activity can be carried out with all types of groups, especially adolescents.

Time: Approximate duration is 15 minutes.

Materials: A folio with different faces, representing the different moods.

Place: It may take place in open or closed spaces.

Procedure: The moderator hands out a page with different faces matching different moods. Subsequently, he/she will ask, one by one, who in the group identifies himself/herself with the different moods to which the moderator is pointing.

Comments: It is good to comment about what occurs since it may be helpful in regard to the different types of feelings: How have we felt? Brainstorming...



4. 100 IDEAS FOR THE MODERATOR OF THE YOUTH GROUP

1. Do not forget to take pictures of the group activities. Show them in the meeting place or in the Parish. Allow them to decorate and make attractive things with the pictures.
2. Build the self-esteem of the young, cheering them up when they are alone as well as when they are with friends. Try to say something positive to each of them.
3. Use the post. Send birthday cards; write encouraging words to each member of your group. Send postcards and announcements from time to time.
4. Carry out surveys among the young. In doing so, you will be able to know their interests and to offer them attractive activities.
5. Meet other youth leaders from your zone. If this kind of meeting does not exist, organize it yourself regularly to share ideas and problems. These people may be so supportive for you.
6. Never ignore the interruptions during the youth meeting, When it occurs, recognize it; it is the best way to resume the group's attention.

7. Avoid making promises you can not achieve to parents. Only promise to do your best.
8. Share with the young out of the group's environment –leisure, walks, trips, etc. This will help you to update yourself about the current culture of the youth.
9. At the end of each meeting, give the young the chance to reflect and to express their opinion about the lived experience. Ask them to write down or to share in small teams, beginning with the phrase: "I learnt..."
10. Avoid carrying out the meeting in too big places. This helps to create an informal a comfortable atmosphere during the meeting.
11. Make a bulletin at the end of the year. It should include pictures and articles about the activities done during the year. It will be a positive souvenir of the moments shared in the group.
12. Prepare carefully the content and material of each meeting.
13. If your group is small, join other groups in some events. This will help to strengthen the sense of membership in the group.
14. Always solve the problems when they are arising. Do not wait for them to disappear by themselves.
15. Organize a "Telephone Chain" to announce the events of the group. If you count on 10 young people who can call other ten people, you will be able to contact 100 young in one night. The personal contact is always the more effective.
16. If the group (or the Parish) does not have a good library with books for the young, start up one and make sure it grows regularly with the support of other collaborators (moderators of other youth groups, parents, friends, etc)
17. Allow the young to select some adults who develop the role of sponsors or advisors. It is easier to work with adult people who know they were selected by the young.
18. Offer yourself to collaborate in events and activities organized in the Parish or in the area. Most schools need help in the cafeteria, in balls, in assemblies, in picnics, or in sports events.
19. Often meet with volunteer people who collaborate in the motivation of the group, to pray, to get formation and to share leisure moments.
20. During the week, take a moment to check the meeting and the activities you carry out with the group.
21. Arrive at the meetings earlier than young and their parents, in order to welcome them as soon as they arrive. Stay later for the same reason.

22. Develop programs that reflect the needs, the interests and the levels of energy of the members of the group, the meetings are not addressed to the adults that work with them.
23. Take a two-day break out of the office to prepare yourself for the busiest periods you may have during the year.
24. Organize a dinner with foreign students. They may share how they live their teenage years or their youth in their own countries and how it is different from yours.
25. Plan activities to be carried out in the most appropriate moments for the young.
26. Develop realistic goals and expectations –the harvest is at the end of time, not at the end of your meeting with the young. Avoid depending on immediate results to determine the success or the failure. Lasting results arrive later, often much later.
27. Create friendship ties within the Christian community. Invite somebody to go out, but not for talking about the young.
28. Fix the meeting's schedule according to the availability of the group members, in order to make their participation easier.
29. Prepare everything previously. Never use a video you have not watched before; never invite a speaker you have not listened. This will avoid unpleasant experiences.
30. Meet the parents of the members of your group. Learn their names by heart.
31. Take time to read new books every year. Try to read a book about Youth Pastoral, another about how to administrate your time, another about theology, a classical one and a couple of popular romances.
32. Avoid turning the group into an Isle. Encourage the young to get involved with the Parish life, not only with the group. They may participate in some committees with children or old people, and collaborate in liturgical celebrations as well as attend other events and meetings.
33. Do not be afraid of smiling and laughing so much.
34. Visit each member of the group at home. You can make a good discernment on their daily life.
35. Print leaflets or pamphlets, describing your group and its activities. Forward them to the parents, to the members of the group and to the young who are not familiarized with the group. Include pictures, brief descriptions, schedules and places.
36. Organize at least two retreats per year. They are golden occasions to initiate and deepen in personal meditative Prayer.
37. Relax and let children be children. The young are not adults, so do not expect them to act as such.

38. Never cancel an event or a meeting just because there are few young people. It will be necessary to adapt your plans, but never send anybody home. Enable the people who attended to feel as important as those who did not.
39. Get familiar with the music the young listen. Some weekly TV and radio programs will help you to update. Regularly discuss about this music with them in a positive way.
40. Take a first aids course and invite the young to do the same.
41. Keep in handy a reference file for advisory. If you think you are not qualified, do not hesitate to channel the young to professional experienced people.
42. Work as a volunteer in a local hospital, primarily in the teenagers' section or in a program of addicted to drugs or alcoholic rehabilitation and take one of the members of the group with you regularly.
43. Look for information and practical Youth Pastoral material. You will never use all those ideas, but next time you need some, you will have a wide number of them.
44. Create a "theatre warehouse" full of costumes, old clothes and props for the production of plays and dramas, or illustration of last minute. Ask the faithful to donate the clothes and complements they are no longer wear. A second hand store is a good method too.
45. Inform about your available time. Do not seem as being too busy for the young.
46. When the young help you with a game in front of the group, do not mock them. Use activities to edify them, make them feel as heroes not as idiots.
47. Have a hobby or a special interest out of the youth group. Learn to play a musical instrument, practice a new sport or start a collection of something.
48. Do not do everything by yourself, although you thing you can make it better. Learn to delegate and to work as a team.
49. Always prepare a spare program or activity to be use in case of emergency. It will be so useful when your invited speaker does not appear or when the video you plan does not work.
50. Ask adults of the Parish to "adopt a young" and to pray for him/her regularly.
51. Cut out healthy good comic strips from the newspapers and make enlarged copies of them in transparencies to present them during an announcing space within the meeting, in the opening or to start any of your messages.
52. Be careful with the shyest people. Give them your time and attention as you do with the smartest.
53. Occasionally invite the Parish Priest to a group's activity, for him to observe and know the program. This enables the young to meet the Priest as a real person, and it is a good opportunity for the Priest to understand even more your work.

54. Teach the young to be leaders through your example.
55. Keep the parents well informed. Publish a Bulletin for parents and organize meetings for questions and feedback. The lack of communication with parents may affect negatively your pastoral activity.
56. Develop a good description of the activities the voluntary leaders are going to carry out. Make sure they know exactly what it is expected from them. Provide them with good resources for their tasks.
57. Make sure each meeting or activity is previously well organized. This makes the young feel important and a reduce discipline problems.
58. Foster creativity in your members, having sessions of sudden ideas. Allow the ideas to flow without criticize them, evaluate only after the ideas have stopped.
59. Avoid using religious vocabulary and well-worn phrases. Say what you think in words the young may understand.
60. If it is possible get an answer phone for the group. Use it to give information. People will be able to call you at any time and to listen to the details of the events and activities that will take place. Parents will especially love this.
61. When some young of your group have obvious defects, e.g. in their figure, weight or personality, do not assume somebody is already helping them.
62. Use personal examples when sharing with young people. Abstract ideas need concrete examples to maintain the message living.
63. Never use a formation program without adapting it to your group's needs. People who write these programs do not know the members of your group, you do.
64. Do not worry about the numerical growth. Size is not the same as success. Health leads into success, not vice versa.
65. If you do not have an appropriate space, hang a bulletin board with pictures of your friends, of the members of the group, classical postcards and other crazy things you like to collect. Young people would like to watch this and it will help to know you better.
66. Do not take your circumstances or yourself so seriously. Not all the things are as good or bad as you think.
67. Be able to say "I don't know". Young people will listen to you better than when you really know everything.
68. Always double-check any booking for the group the day before the event (especially when it is a means of transport).

69. Avoid the double regulations, that is to say, a regulation for leaders and other for the young. The rules that apply for the young people should apply for the leaders and for you.
70. Solve the problems by the roots, and not with the signs. Instead of discussing about the bad behavior of somebody, find out the cause and deal with it.
71. Attend a leaders' formation event at least once per year, or a seminary for people who work with young people, never think you have learnt everything.
72. Do not make threat or promises you can not fulfill or supervise later.
73. Keep in a safe place useful items you may suddenly need: first-aid box, sewing material, toys, etc.
74. Make sure you count on at least another person that occasionally works with your group.
75. Offer some soft drinks in some meetings or activities. It is something relatively easy to make and the young will love it. This also makes them to stay longer to know each other.
76. Make the most of any film or video the local public library offers.
77. Do not worry about the small groups' problem. It is better to give the young a series of chances to interact and to know each other. Trying to break the small groups is an unfruitful, negative exercise.
78. Keep a file of each of your young. Get personal and familiar information as birthdays, pictures, interviews notes or personal advisory, comments and any other information. Keep it confidential. It will benefit your service and it will be a good gift for your successor.
79. When trying to improve the parochial life, begin with yourself.
80. Avoid to advice somebody of the opposite gender in a private place. The best way to prevent rumors and the unfortunate misunderstandings is to talk with the person in a public place as a cafeteria or a park full of people.
81. Maintain a journal of your youth Pastoral activity. Write and asses the group activities every week. Describe the interaction you had with the young and meditate about each of them. You will be able to organize your thoughts and to document important events.
82. Join adult people who may advice you. You need to be supported and supervised by somebody.
83. Fix a planning meeting with the leaders or the young who help you with the group. Fight for working as a team.
84. Transmit the "big game" of the young's favourite sport and give them the chance of inviting their schoolmates to watch it. This is a good way to bring non-Christian young people near to the Church and show them we are normal people.

85. If there are young people who play a musical instrument allow them to play at a prayer or celebration moment. This will build their confidence, their leadership and it possibly will improve the way you sing.
86. Visit the schools of your young. If it is possible, introduce yourself with the principal, the teachers and the coach. Let them know who you are.
87. Learning the names of the members of the group must be a priority. You will never be a pastoral agent for them until you know them and remember their names.
88. Avoid disciplining the young in front of their friends. It is better to deal with discipline problems in private and one by one.
89. Always visit the places you want to book for a group's activity. Inform yourself about the flexibility, extra costs and the capacity of the "extras".
90. When they discuss something in the meeting, refrain to make very positive or negative comments when they are expressing their opinions. Keep yourself as neutral as possible to encourage their opening and honesty.
91. Learn to say "no". Spend time with your family, friends, and hobbies out of the group and in your personal growth.
92. Occasionally organize meetings with other pastoral agents and with parochial leaders for them to know the progress of the group and to be more cooperative.
93. Make the most of the television, record and discuss good programs. Discuss and evaluate the most popular programs with the young.
94. Get a calendar where you can write and erase the words, in order to plan the group's activities with a year of anticipation. If you do not know where you go, the most probable thing is that you do not reach anywhere.
95. Learn how to listen. Learn to keep quiet from time to time. Listen and you will see sometimes you are more supportive in this way.
96. Involve the youth group in at least a service Project per year. These projects not only give the young the opportunity to positively contribute to life, but also to make them aware of the world's reality and to motivate themselves with the Association's charisma.
97. Stage a play every year. This gives young people the chance to use their talents.
98. Begin a service in a minors' re-adaptation center. If it is possible, involve the young. Offer yourself to help the Priest with some advisory or with some meetings or services.
99. Be an example for your young people. When it is possible, take one of them with you. It is good he/she to be a witness of your life when you are fixing your car, when you go shopping or when you interact with other people, let them know you as a real person.

100. Do not try to be “one of the young”. If you are an adult, be an adult. Just be an adult who loves young people and who knows how to get fun.

