



Be a **Champion of Youth**

Standing With, By, and For Young People

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Author Acknowledgments

Because the young people at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish in Fulton, Maryland, and all the young people with whom we've ministered nationally and internationally, remind us that young people are gifts to be shared . . .

And because our adult colleagues continually work to ensure that the voice of the young Church is heard . . .

And because our ministry journey has been filled with companions who encouraged our voices . . . it was important to write this book.

To each of you, we say, thank you!

Contents

Introduction	6
1 What Is Advocacy?	9
2 Advocacy: Youth Participation	28
3 Forging Collaborative Partnerships	46
4 A Process for Advocacy.	53
5 Advocacy: Practical Strategies	66
6 Training for Advocacy	81
Appendix	91
Acknowledgments.	101

Introduction

We all know that the majority of young people today are leading healthy lives—studying, worshiping, working, volunteering, and playing positive roles in their communities. All too often though, they are portrayed in a negative light. Media headlines emphasize drug and alcohol abuse among youth, teen pregnancy, the rise in youth gangs, or school dropout rates—and often leave it at that. Even when the media’s message about youth is positive, it often conveys the idea that youth are “the leaders of tomorrow.” Such thinking obscures the fact that young people are already making solid contributions to others—tutoring younger children, protecting the environment, starting their own businesses, and leading new initiatives to improve their communities.

Advocacy helps to generate a respect for youth and their issues among parishioners, business owners, Church leaders, elected officials, policy makers, and key community leaders. Advocacy is a mind-set. It is about being a champion for young people. Advocacy is about speaking on behalf of young people, standing beside them in support of their causes, and helping them make a difference in the lives of others. Advocacy for youth means making a commitment to stand with, by, and for young people.

Yet the component of advocacy is the least understood and most overlooked aspect of ministry with young people. Certainly, advocacy is the component of youth ministry for which the fewest resources have been created. In fact, this is the first book of its kind that fully explores and unpacks the idea of youth advocacy as a ministry.

How This Book Came to Be

This book has been a long time in the making. What started out as a two-hour workshop for local parish youth ministers later expanded to a full-day training session for parish teams as part of a series of trainings on the components of youth ministry. The workshop then led to a chapter on advocacy in the book *The Vision of Catholic Youth Ministry: Fundamentals, Theory, and Practice*, published by Saint Mary's Press in 2005. And finally, Saint Mary's Press invited us to put our thoughts about and experience with advocacy into a book to help others understand the component more fully. The task has proved to be quite a challenge. Being an advocate for young people—and sharing this philosophy in a workshop—is one thing. Breaking down the aspects of advocacy to explain it to others in written form took a great deal of time and careful reflection and research. The result is a book intended to better educate ministry leaders so that they may be motivated to implement stronger and more effective advocacy efforts within their parishes and within the larger communities. *Be a Champion of Youth: Standing With, By, and For Young People* explores advocacy as an essential component of a comprehensive and life-changing Catholic youth ministry. This book can serve as a primer for individual coordinators of youth ministry to gauge their own advocacy efforts, or it may form the basis for empowering an entire youth ministry team or parish. The book can also serve as a valuable tool for independent or group study with parish staffs, ministry volunteers, parish leaders, and young people themselves. Here is what you will find:

Chapter 1 defines advocacy and provides the various contexts for the component. The chapter also includes a discussion on advocacy as an intentional and infused ministry to, by, for, and with young people, and provides some basic guiding principles for effective advocacy.

Chapter 2 describes the various levels of participation available to young people and offers some thoughts about adults' attitudes regarding youth involvement. The chapter also discusses the value and benefits of youth participation.

Chapter 3 includes a discussion on collaborating with individuals, groups, organizations, and community leaders, and others who are committed to the same causes.

Chapter 4 describes a process for assessing the needs of youth and determining the message, audience, and method for effective advocacy.

Chapter 5 offers ideas for the involvement of young people in the parish and within the community at large. The chapter also identifies both the legally permissible and the legally prohibited lobbying and influencing activities with which nonprofit organizations are confronted.

Chapter 6 provides a fully developed two-hour training session on the component of advocacy. The training can be utilized in various settings and with a variety of people.

Finally, the *Appendix* includes additional material for advocacy work within the political arena, including helpful hints for attending public meetings; details on how to contact local, state, and national legislators; and tools for political advocacy.

Each of us knows that when the voice of youth is engaged in churches, communities, schools, and organizations, young people grow more capable. The ultimate impact of advocacy is both simple and profound: it engages a large number of young people to lead successful efforts for positive community and systemic change. We hope this book will help you clarify your own beliefs about young people so that you too can become a champion of youth.

1

What Is Advocacy?

Have you ever found yourself speaking up for a young person who has been misunderstood by others? Have you found yourself speaking on behalf of young people to parents or to parish leadership? Perhaps you have written a letter to civic leaders or attended community meetings in support of young people. Have you organized young people to speak at a town council or a board of education meeting on behalf of an issue that concerns them? If you answered yes to any of the preceding questions, then you can call yourself an advocate for youth.

Advocates develop their vision and ideas and put their words into action to create positive change that improves young people's lives. Sometimes advocates speak on behalf of youth. At other times, advocates seek allies within leadership structures who will champion youth causes. Or advocates may seek opportunities for youth to speak out for themselves. Anyone can be an advocate—the only requirement is to actively support a cause that benefits youth. Advocates for youth can include nonprofit organizations, businesses, government officials, researchers, teachers, parents, young people, churches, and the community at large. We advocate for youth when we speak for them and when we give them opportunities to speak for themselves. We advocate for young people when we

- respect and value their opinions
- appreciate their energy and insights
- work with them, and sometimes for them
- let go of the role of leader in order to share power and responsibilities with them

- assess personally held stereotypes, judgments, and preconceptions of them
- provide them with the information, training, and support they need to succeed
- refrain from blaming all young people for the actions of one or a few
- schedule meetings to be held at times when they can participate
- plan for interactive activities that break through tensions and age barriers
- plan meaningful and challenging opportunities for them to serve in the community
- offer moral support and encouragement to them
- support community organizations that involve young people in meaningful roles
- listen to them express their concerns and perspectives about community issues, and help them take action
- make sure they're at the table when a group of adults is holding a discussion about them
- connect with other adult allies
- talk with others about the importance of having a community vision for community youth development
- ask the question, "How does this affect young people?"

An advocate ensures that all members of society, including those in the Church, respect the dignity and rights of teenagers and their families.

Advocacy as a Ministry

In 1997, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* as a foundation for a holistic approach to the field of Catholic youth ministry. *Renewing the Vision* challenges parishes to be comprehensive in their approach to meet the needs of adolescents.

Renewing the Vision sets forth eight components of a comprehensive ministry with youth including advocacy, catechesis, community life, evan-

gelization, justice and service, leadership development, pastoral care, and prayer and worship.

The ministry of advocacy challenges the communities of faith and society to consider how well the needs of young people are being met and how well young people are being integrated into the community. Advocacy happens when we help the parish as a whole and the community at large become more youth friendly, enlisting the community's commitment to welcome and value youth.

In addition to the eight components, *Renewing the Vision* provides Catholic youth ministry with three goals:

- *To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today* (p. 9). This emphasis on discipleship is also reflected in the Vatican's *General Directory for Catechesis* (1998) and in the U.S. Catholic Bishops' *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005). These are the definitive reference books for the formation of catechists and for the preparation of catechetical materials. An important dimension of advocacy includes creating opportunities for the call to discipleship to be heard, the skills of discipleship to be learned, and the chance for discipleship to be lived.

- *To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community* (p. 11).

One of the major shifts in Catholic youth ministry over the years has been the emphasis on integrating young people more fully into the life of the faith community, rather than ministering to them as an age-segregated entity attached to the faith community. Of the three goals, this one provides a fertile environment for intentional advocacy.

- *To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person* (p. 15).

Catholic youth ministry is holistic, providing for the emotional, relational, psychological, and faith growth of young people. Advocacy creates opportunities that foster this holistic development. Advocacy not only creates avenues for young people to access personal and spiritual growth, it also identifies avenues in which young people can find their voice.

Advocacy for youth means looking at all the leadership and decision-making groups in the parish, schools, community, organizations, and government agencies to see who can speak for youth among those leaders. Sometimes the youth ministry coordinator or ministry leaders and volunteers will be the advocate. In other cases, youth can be included in leadership groups and can speak on their own behalf.

Compared to other components of youth ministry in which youth are often gathered, most advocacy happens behind the scenes as leaders build relationships and promote collaboration. Advocacy for youth and their families demonstrates a commitment to stand with those who are most in need in our neighborhoods and in society. In *Renewing the Vision*, parishes are challenged to examine their policies, programs, and ministry initiatives to make sure youth are considered and included:

The ministry of advocacy engages the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission, and work of the Catholic community. (P. 27)

Therefore, the ministry of advocacy includes these practices:

- standing with and speaking on behalf of young people and their families on public issues that affect their lives, such as support for education, quality housing, employment opportunities, access to health care, safe neighborhoods, and the availability of meaningful community activities and services
- empowering young people by giving them a voice and calling them to responsibility and accountability around the issues that affect them and their future (This involves education, leadership training, skills building, and organization to mobilize young people for action.)
- developing partnerships and initiatives with leaders and concerned citizens from all sectors of the community to develop a shared vision and practical strategies for building a healthy community

(*Renewing the Vision*, pp. 27–28)

The ministry of advocacy looks at Church structures and practices to more fully integrate youth into the life of the Church, and also looks to the community at large to address societal ills that threaten the physical and emotional well-being of adolescents and families. The ministry of advocacy calls all people to stand with and for youth in the public arena (in favor of life, education, housing, employment, and other issues). It calls all to empower young people to speak for themselves on issues that affect them, and it calls ministry leaders to develop partnerships with others who will work for community-wide solutions that help put children and families first.

Dimensions of Advocacy—Intentional and Infused

The ministry of advocacy is not a single function. It cannot be defined with just one activity. Rather, the ministry of advocacy is a posture or a mind-set that calls all ministry leaders (and the entire community) to be “for” young people. The ministry of advocacy has two distinct dimensions. Advocacy can be either intentional (using proactive strategies) or infused (integrating a pro-youth stance into other activities).

Advocacy is intentional when individuals become the voice for youth or for youth ministry, and when the community speaks on behalf of all the young people. Advocacy is also an intentional activity when we enable young people to speak for themselves. Oftentimes young people are concerned about an issue and don’t know what to do about it. As advocates we can enable young people to find their voice and help them use it to effect change. Simple examples include helping young people prepare remarks for a meeting, write a letter, or even get a ride to a meeting. Doing whatever it takes to help young people speak for themselves is a way to exercise an intentional form of advocacy.

Advocacy can also be infused or integrated into programs by speaking positively about today’s youth and educating others about young people. The ministry of advocacy should be integrated into existing programs,

such as leadership training for adults and youth, volunteer recruitment, and parent education.

Advocacy serves as a reminder to the community that young people are a gift to be shared, not a problem to be solved. This fundamental attitude is critical because it impacts how we “see” young people. If young people are a problem to be solved, then our education, social services, and juvenile justice systems respond to young people as a dilemma that needs a solution. However, if they are viewed as a gift to be shared, then these same systems embrace and foster young people’s uniqueness and honor their contributions.

Ministry For, By, and With Young People

All those involved in ministry have the opportunity to be champions *for* young people by taking on their causes and positioning themselves to speak on behalf of, and in solidarity with, today’s youth. Advocacy for young people is characterized by those times when adults speak up for the issues and concerns of young people, both in the faith community and in society. Such opportunities include speaking positively about young people at parish council meetings, school board meetings, and community meetings; writing letters on behalf of youth for the diocesan and secular press; and advocating for youth’s concerns with Church and community officials.

The ministry of advocacy is *by* youth when young people speak for themselves and interact with structures that affect their lives. Examples of this type of advocacy include youth membership on parish councils and local school boards; youth testifying to the city, county, and state councils on issues that affect them; and letter-writing campaigns initiated by young people.

Advocacy *with* youth includes those initiatives where young people and adults partner together to speak on behalf of young people’s concerns. In many parish, school, and community structures, adults have the opportunity to involve young people so that the young people’s voices

are heard and their issues are addressed, while adults provide them with support. We advocate with youth when we stand in solidarity with young people on issues. For example, when we organize rides for young people and accompany them when they speak to church or civic leaders, we are being advocates with youth. When we help youth prepare testimony or letters, or offer to speak alongside them on issues that affect their lives, we are being advocates with youth.

Developing a Context for Advocacy

The Scriptures

Catholics believe that through the Scriptures and Tradition, God is revealed to us. Advocacy has a long history in both Jewish and Christian traditions. Beginning with the Old Testament and continuing through to the New Testament, the Scriptures not only contain the history of a faithful people's evolving relationship with God, they also explain a developing moral code based in justice. Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh was proclaimed as just—the just person preserves the peace and the wholeness of the community.

The Book of Proverbs is clear that we should be advocates for others:

Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.
Speak out, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

(31: 8–9)

Throughout the Old Testament and into the New Testament, there are many guidelines on how, and on whose behalf, one should advocate. The Scriptures not only call for us to take on the individual responsibility of advocating for those who have no voice but also give us the communal challenge to care for the voiceless and the powerless in our midst. In biblical times, the powerless were widows, orphans, and the oppressed. The communal call to act is the scriptural basis for the Church's teachings

on social justice, and it is in this way that the components of advocacy and justice and service often become linked. There is a dimension of advocacy in all justice work, as justice is often an action resulting from advocacy.

Old Testament examples of God’s call to be advocates for others abound. The following table gives just a few examples:

Exodus 22:20–24 and Deuteronomy 24:17–22	justice and mercy toward stranger, orphan, and widow
Exodus 22:25–27	mercy and kindness toward neighbor
Exodus 23:6–8 and Deuteronomy 1:16–17	judge fairly
Leviticus 19:9–18	love your neighbor as yourself
Psalms 9:7–12, 18	God rules the world with justice.
Psalms 41:1–3	regard for the lowly and the poor
Psalms 68:5–6	God’s care for the helpless and homeless
Proverbs 31:8–9	advocate for the voiceless
Micah 6:8	act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God
Isaiah 61:1	bring Good News

The New Testament calls all followers of Jesus to love God and to serve one another. The Scriptures tell us that the early Christians became known as a caring, sharing, and open community that was sensitive to the poor and the outcasts. Their love for God, for one another, and for

the oppressed was central to their reputation, and became a matter of public knowledge. From the beginning, Christian advocacy was expressed in terms of charity and compassion. The New Testament Scriptures are filled with teachings that equip us to be better people. The second chapter of Timothy tells us this:

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. (3:16–17)

The following New Testament examples illustrate the integral relationship between our Christian beliefs and our need to advocate on behalf of others:

Matthew 6:25–34	to be first before God, serve others
Matthew 12:15–21	Do God’s will.
Matthew 23:23–24	compassion and a sense of responsibility
Mark 9:33–37	do not neglect justice and mercy
Luke 6:20–26	the Beatitudes
Luke 15:1–7	Jesus associated with the outcasts of society.
Luke 24:49	Christ empowers us to continue his work.
Acts 2:32–34	true Christian community; possessions shared
Romans 12:10–18	make hospitality your special care, make friends with the poor
Galatians 3:28	radical equality

We can see, from just the few examples noted, that throughout the New Testament, Jesus instructs all his followers to reach out to the poor and the marginalized. In fact, he says the Reign of God depends on it. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus defines the Reign of God with these words:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

(4:18–20)

Jesus promised his followers that he would send his Spirit (which was referred to in the Scriptures as *Advocatus*, or an Advocate). His Spirit would remain with them and help them lead the life to which he was calling them. Advocates for and with youth, at their best, are spirit-filled. They speak on behalf of youth, they proclaim the good news about young people in the world today, and they help youth find their voice to speak to the issues that affect them and work for change.

Advocates ask themselves, Who are the poor among us? Who is captive? (the addicted or those trapped in destructive relationships) Who among us is blind? (the unaware; those who do not know God) Who are the oppressed? (the ignored or forgotten in our midst) Advocates look for opportunities to bring Good News to the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed, and to work for justice for all.

Tradition

The Tradition of the Catholic Church consists of the beliefs and practices that have been handed down by the Apostles to the successors since the time of Jesus. Advocacy not only finds its roots in the Scriptures, it is at the very core of Church teachings, especially Catholic social teaching. The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building

a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. . . . Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. . . . The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. . . . The Church teaches that we are one human family, and that our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic, and ideological lines. All of Christ's followers are called to advocate on behalf of those less fortunate than ourselves. As advocates, we should have a strong connection to the following seven key principles of Catholic social teaching:

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person.** The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
- **Call to Family, Community, and Participation.** The person is not only sacred but is also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The family is the central social institution; it must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.
- **Rights and Responsibilities.** The Catholic Tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.** A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31–46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
- **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.** The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.
- **Solidarity.** We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that “loving our neighbor” has global dimensions in an interdependent world.
- **Care for God’s Creation.** We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan; it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

(The seven principles are from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, pages 4–6.)

Modern Catholic social teaching combines social analysis with Gospel judgment, and can serve as a blueprint for advocacy. When we see that people are not being treated with dignity, when people do not have the basics of life such as food and shelter, when people are denied education, or when resources are hoarded by some and not shared with others—we are called to action.

“The ministry of advocacy supports policies and programs that support and empower adolescents and their families and works to overcome poverty, provide decent jobs, and promote equal opportunity. In all advocacy efforts ministry leader must remember to focus on adolescents and families with the greatest need. This is the ‘option for the poor’ in action” (*Putting Children and Families First*, in *Renewing the Vision*, p. 27). Poor, vulnerable, and at-risk adolescents should have the first claim on common efforts.

Guiding Principles of Youth Advocacy

Invest in Youth

Ministry leaders must advocate for young people from all walks of life, from gang members to honor students, fostering recognition of the important role each young person plays in the faith community and in the community at large. The call to invest in youth is predicated on two beliefs. First, that young people are leaders of today, not just tomorrow. Second, that healthy young people cannot exist disconnected from their community and a healthy community cannot exist without meaningful contributions from its youth members. All young people should play a direct role in their own development, ensuring that the policies and institutions that impact young people and their communities are accountable to all members of society.

Respect Youth

Ministry leaders must meet young people where they are by respecting youth culture, life experiences, and community relationships. Advocates also demonstrate their respect for young people by creating an open and safe environment for young people to share personal frustrations and life experiences. Advocates often spend time walking the halls of local high schools and detention centers, meeting with guidance counselors, teach-

ers, or probation officers. Advocates get to know young people's parents and extended family. Relationships with young people extend beyond weekly ministry meetings, trainings, or rallies and into neighborhoods where advocates can develop a strong knowledge of the community—the values, traditions, and daily struggles that shape young people's lives.

Include Education

Political education along with teaching the history of political and social movements are powerful tools for mobilizing, educating, and inspiring young people. Advocacy includes the study and discussion of race, class, gender, and sexual identity as a way to connect with young people. In an effort to better understand the conditions young people face, advocates encourage them to discuss their experiences and to recognize the individual and collective impact of systemic discrimination—racism, sexism, homophobia, nationalism (anti-immigrant sentiments), and so on.

Promote Youth-Adult Partnerships

Advocates work with young people, not for them. Respecting youth leadership is a precursor to providing young people with the skills to navigate their lives and engage in collective action. In the ministry of advocacy, adults encourage young people in the development and exercise of their own leadership. In addition, adults provide support, access to resources, and mechanisms for accountability. With adult guidance, young people assume control of and responsibility for their own individual and organizational decisions, both good and bad. In all instances, youth are able to express ideas, receive feedback, and reflect on and refine their ideas with peers and supportive adults.

The ministry of advocacy helps place young people behind the microphone at city council meetings, on parish commissions, and in door-to-door conversations with their neighbors as they work toward community change. Being present and active within the faith community and the

community at large, youth demonstrate their capacity to function as community assets and achieve real improvements in the life of the community. As young people assume a more prominent role in parish ministry, there is potential for cascading influence; as young people assert their voices in public discourse, the needs of young people get incorporated into a broader community agenda. Advocacy helps to generate a respect for youth and their issues among parishioners, business owners, Church leaders, elected officials, policy makers, and key community leaders. The ultimate impact of advocacy is both simple and profound: the engagement of larger numbers of young people in leading successful efforts for positive community and systemic change.

Evaluating Your Advocacy Efforts

In all probability, you engage in many forms of advocacy in your ministerial setting. The following worksheets will give you an opportunity to reflect on the community's advocacy efforts.

Youth Ministry Inventory

Items A through H below list various roles in and aspects of youth ministry. After you have read through items A through H, move through the scoring grid on page 2. The grid pairs each item with every other one. Start with the first row of pairings. Look at each pairing and ask yourself this question: If this was the only choice and I had to choose between the two, which aspect of youth ministry would I choose as my ministry? Circle one letter in each pair.

- A.** *Advocacy:* youth commission, youth speaking opportunities, young people as representatives on the parish council, youth on community boards, public relations and communications about youth
- B.** *Catechesis:* faith development, religious education, Bible study, faith sharing groups, retreats, and sacramental preparation
- C.** *Community Life:* recreation, social events, coaching, hospitality, outdoor experiences, scouting, discussion leaders, chaperones, and activity planners
- D.** *Evangelization:* public witness, outreach strategies, proclamation, faith sharing groups, invitation, missions, and revivals
- E.** *Justice and Service:* service projects, nursing home and institution visitation, soup kitchens, hotlines, justice issues, peace education study groups, clown ministry, work camps
- F.** *Leadership Development:* activities that call forth, affirm, and empower adults and youth in youth ministry, training programs, support systems
- G.** *Pastoral Care:* asset building, compassionate presence during grief or loss, crisis intervention, parent education, education on risk issues, support groups, referrals, networks with other agencies
- H.** *Prayer and Worship:* youth liturgies, developing prayer experiences, music ministry, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, youth choirs or band

Scoring Grid:

A or B A or C A or D A or E A or F A or G A or H
B or C B or D B or E B or F B or G B or H
C or D C or E C or F C or G C or H
D or E D or F D or G D or H
E or F E or G E or H
F or G F or H
G or H

Count the number of times each letter is circled. The letters you circled the most indicate your priority interests in youth ministry. Record the number below:

A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E _____
F _____ G _____ H _____

For Reflection and Discussion

These scorings may affirm youth ministry programming when the team has energy and interest in a variety of ministry components. It may challenge the current youth ministry programming if the team finds that gifts and interests are narrowly focused. This exercise reminds us that advocacy must be an intentional activity if youth ministry is to be comprehensive. Finish these sentence starters:

I tend to emphasize _____

The youth ministry team tends to emphasize _____

The components that need strengthening are _____

Practical implications include _____

Two Dimensions of Advocacy

Advocacy is both an intentional activity and an infused activity. Spend some time assessing the parish’s strategies, in terms of intentional and infused activities on behalf of youth. List examples from your parish or ministry setting.

Advocacy is an intentional activity.	
We speak for young people and/or for youth ministry.	
We enable youth to speak for themselves.	
The community speaks on behalf of all our young people.	
Advocacy is an infused activity.	
Leadership training for adults	
Leadership training for youth	
Recruiting volunteers	
Parent education	
Pastoral care	
Fostering positive youth development	
Other?	

For Reflection and Discussion

What do the results of this worksheet tell you about the parish's practice of intentional and infused advocacy efforts?

What places (programs) are well balanced?

What places (programs) need improvement?

Acknowledgments

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The seven principles of Catholic social teaching on pages 19–20 are from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, Reflections of the U.S. Catholic Bishops*, by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1999), pages 4–6. Copyright © 1999 by the USCCB. All rights reserved.

The material in the bullet list on pages 30–31 is from “Youth Involvement in Prevention Programming,” found on the Advocates for Youth Web site, www.advocatesforyouth.org, accessed August 15, 2006.

The three styles on pages 33–34 and resource 2–A are adapted from “The Spectrum of Attitudes: Building a Theory of Youth Development,” by Bill Lofquist, in *New Designs for Youth Development*, 5(3), 3–6, Fall 1989. Used with permission.

The youth ladder of participation information on pages 35–39 is from *Innocenti Essays*, number 4, *Children’s Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*, by Roger A. Hart (Florence, Italy: UNICEF Innocenti: Research Centre, 1992), page 8. Copyright © 1992 by UNICEF International Child Development Centre. Used with permission.

The inventory material on resource 2–A is adapted from *Making It Work: A Guide to Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships*, produced through a joint partnership of the Texas Network of Youth Services and the Prevention and Early Intervention/Community Youth Development Division of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, pages 17–18, and found at www.tnoys.org/TNOYSServices/PromptingYouthDev/Youth%20Adult%20Partnership%20Guide.pdf; accessed January 18, 2007. Copyright © 2002. Used with permission

The material on resource 2–B is adapted from the paper “Adults as Allies,” by Barry Checkoway (Dearborn, MI: School of Social Work, University of Michigan, 2004).

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“*Be a Champion of Youth: Standing With, By, and For Young People* is a must for anyone working with young people! It is an easy read that helps to sift through the many ways of ministering through advocacy. Getting young people involved in advocacy is made more accessible through the plain language and real-world examples used in this book. Worksheets and resources give youth workers practical tools to identify the need for advocacy and determine the best way to plan a successful campaign. Kudos to the McCartys for producing a valuable and much-needed resource!”

—Becki Kaman, coordinator of youth ministry
Saint Francis of Assisi, Fulton, MD

“Advocating with and for youth is an integral component of comprehensive youth ministry. Defining the term *advocacy* and acting on the concept is one of the greater challenges of working with young people. How do we integrate advocacy into ministry? What do we need to understand about structures and systems to empower teens to speak out? How do we focus our attentions on those issues that impact teens and communities?”

“*Be a Champion of Youth: Standing With, By, and For Young People* defines advocacy in concrete terms. In addition, advocacy is examined in light of the Scriptures and Catholic Tradition. Instruments for assessing and evaluating mind-sets and efforts provide insights into current advocacy work. Inspiring examples of successful actions, ideas for helping youth find their own voices, a plan for building collaborative relationships with community organizations, and a vision for infusing advocacy into our parish and civic communities make this book a valuable resource for youth leaders, parish communities, and anyone who cares for and works with the young Church.”

—Mary Kelly Mueller, coordinator of youth ministry
Good Shepherd Parish, Shawnee, KS