

The Chair's Report

Well, friends, with the New Year well under way and plans moving ahead for a wonderful adult conference, I would like to personally invite all of you who work with youth in Girl Scouts and Camp Fire to join us at the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry (NCCYM) in Las Vegas. See www.nfcym.org for more details on the conference and its theme, *And the Desert Shall Bloom*.

As we finalize plans for the luncheon and workshops, we have not forgotten how important it is to have time set aside for us to gather to support each other in our ministry. We know that we can all benefit by sharing our stories with each other. This is also a wonderful time to showcase what is happening in your area. So please bring pictures or any information you would like to share.

Plan to visit the NCCGSCF Hospitality Room during the conference. Bring your lunch! Drop by when you need a break between sessions. Use the Hospitality Room to make new friends and renew the old. It is your 'home away from home' during the conference.

One important piece of business which happened at the membership meeting in January in Portland is that the NCCGSCF drafted a statement reaffirming our belief that parents have the ultimate responsibility in determining the activities in which their children participate. You can read this statement in its entirety on the NFCYM website (<http://www.nfcym.org/gscf/PositionPaperandStatementJuly2005.pdf>).

Each of the religious recognition programs is routinely evaluated for relevance and integration of the content

of the Christian message with the liturgical, moral, and prayer life of the church. We are embarking on the evaluation of the *I Live My Faith* program. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this program, please send them to me (kcottom@pacbell.net) or to your regional representative. We value the evaluations which you and the youth complete as each book is finished. Your responses are taken into consideration when evaluating the program.

We have many exciting plans on the drawing board, so check back on the website occasionally. We look forward to sharing some of these things with you in Las Vegas and hearing any suggestions you may have.

Have a wonderful spring and summer, and I hope to see you all at the NCCYM in Las Vegas this coming November/December.

Kathleen Cottom
Chair, NCCGSCF
Region 11 Representative



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CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

Regional Reports

Region 1

In October I was nominated to serve as the Region 1 representative to the National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire. I am the Catholic Scouting coordinator for the Office of Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Hartford. I am truly blessed to work with such a caring, supportive, and passionate group of people. I wear many hats at our office including managing the video library, publishing our monthly Catholic Girl and Boy Scout newsletter, helping out with CYO cheerleading, and facilitating VIRTUS Protecting God's Children sessions. Of course, my favorite hat is Catholic Scouting!

The *Diocese of Springfield* hosted the Region 1 Conference in October 2005 with 39 youth in attendance. The theme of the day was *Vision the Future*. Rev. Mr. William Toller, Mark Dupont, Donald Boucher, Rev. Henry Dorsch, Lois Davis, Rev. Wayne Biernat, and Bishop Joseph Maguire gave presentations during the day.

The Guardian Angel Program was presented by the *Diocese of Norwich* for youth in scouting programs. The program is geared for children in kindergarten through first grade in the scouting programs including Daisy, Starlight, Tiger Scouts, and Brownies.

The *Diocese of Manchester* presented distance training for religious emblems counselors, moderators, and facilitators in disc format that they developed for their diocese. The disc contains a PowerPoint presentation of their cardinal and bishop, as well as information about Catholic Boy Scout religious emblems and Catholic Girl Scout medals. Also on the disc are the application forms for all youth and adult awards, as well as a test that each adult counselor must print and submit to the diocese.

The *Archdiocese of Hartford* presented their annual report including information on the annual Spiritual Activities Day, information on counselors' training, details of the 79 youth and adults receiving awards at the annual Recognition Sunday, and total numbers of attendance at events. The updated Religious Emblems Handbook was distributed which includes applications, fliers for events, policies, and procedures as well as contacts for the Archdiocese of Hartford Office of Religious Education including the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

I look forward to serving the youth and leaders in Girl Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Camp Fire in Region 1. If I can be of any assistance to you, contact me at: 860-243-9465, x18 or by email at sperszan@adh-ore.org.

Shannon Perzan, Regional Representative

Region 2

The Catholic Girl Scout Committee for the Diocese of Rockville Centre has nominated a Bishop's Troop yearly. This consists of a maximum of 20 Cadette and Senior Girl Scout volunteers from various troops in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The girls pick a theme for our annual day of recollection held at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Island. They lead the day using the Girl Scout game example. Last year's theme was Mary's Apparitions, and they used Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, and Our Lady of Knock.

The younger girls are divided into groups and the Bishop's Troop tells the stories with skits. The girls then do various crafts. After lunch, the girls are taken on the rosary walk and the Stations of the Cross, finishing with Mass. The activities of the day fulfill various requirements for the religious awards on which the girls may be working.

On Girl Scout Sunday, the Brownie-level medals are presented. The older girls receive their recognitions at St. Agnes Cathedral in May, with the Bishop's Troop assisting with the seating and the readings. The Bishop's Troop also helps out at their parishes during the year.

Joyce Caggiano, Regional Representative

Region 3

Region 3 is already preparing for their 2006 Regional Meeting/Conference in September. This year's speaker, Sister Marie Michele Donnelly, RSM, will address the theme, *Thankful for the Empowerment of the Spirit*. Sister Marie is both a motivational and entertaining speaker and will help the participants to be thankful for the Spirit empowerment in their lives and work.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is preparing for their Religious Recognition Mass to be held at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul where more than 450 youth will be recognized for their work on religious recognition programs. The archdiocese held its annual Encounter Day at St. Charles Seminary for Junior Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Adventurers'. Sixty youth came together to complete requirements on their religious

recognition programs. During the day they learned how to plan and lead a prayer service.

The Diocese of Camden sponsored its Annual Retreat/Faith Days through February and March. Scouts came together for a day of fun, fellowship, and personal and spiritual development. They will also sponsor a Ten Commandment Hike and Retreat Center Service Day in the spring.

Pat Antonacci, Regional Representative

Region 4

Youth in Camp Fire USA programs have been doing some unique service projects within the diocese. The impact that they have on our community is an important part of our mission as a Catholic youth ministry community. Read on to see what they are doing.

Anastasia Wroblewski, a member of the Teens in Action Group in Bowie, Maryland, decided that she wanted to make an impact on the community during National Youth Service Day 2005. Along with a group of her friends, she wrote a grant to State Farm Insurance proposing a service project that would provide service to younger children in local schools. She helped engage more than 250 teens in service projects during the 72-hour weekend of service. Anastasia earned a Gold Presidential Service Award for the service that she provided to her church, her school, and her community. She attends Bishop McNamara High School and is an altar server at Holy Family Parish in Mitchellville.

Youth from elementary schools where Camp Fire Self-Reliance programs prepare young people to be successful and caring individuals responded to the needs of children who lost everything in the hurricanes that hit the Gulf Coast. Youth at St. Mark School in Hyattsville, Maryland, assisted Camp Fire USA in helping their new friends in the Gulf Coast adjust to their new lives. Each child prepared a Friendship Bag that included books, school supplies, and a message. They were sent to young people in Camp Fire USA and school programs in the areas affected by the hurricanes. The letters that came back to the children from the folks who received the packages reinforced the importance of community service to those in need.

Students from the Teens in Action Club at Bishop McNamara High School in Forestville, Maryland, promote literacy for children in local schools. This Camp Fire service program supports their Christian Service requirements for graduation. Using puppets, Daniel Barroga and Guli Nazirova, a student in the U.S. from Tajikistan, encourage

literacy among children. They commit time to read to children and encourage them to learn from books. They were joined by Catholic youth from DeMatha High School, Seton High School, St Ambrose Parish, and Holy Family Parish.

Joan Treacy, Regional Representative

Region 7

The Diocese of Madison Catholic Committee on Scouting has elected new officers: co-chairs, Michael Kleckner and Kathy Soukup; secretary, Karen Camilleri; treasurer, Jerry Duhn; chair of Religious Emblems/Awards, Robert Chiesa; chair of Religious Activities, Greg Bergenske; chair of Training, Mabel Gotstein; chair of Membership, Stephen Rudolph; executive secretary, Ben Weisse; diocesan chaplain and vocations, Father Eric Nielsen. This working committee meets quarterly at the Bishop O'Connor Center. We have one event that is in its third year: Catholic Celebrations held on the first Saturday in March. We offer workshops to show all levels of Scouting and how to earn religious awards. A family Mass followed by supper and social time is held at the Bishop O'Connor Center. Interested scouts learn about the awards, and at Mass we present the medals to those who have successfully completed the programs. The diocesan committee is fairly new, but we are growing.

Karen Camilleri, DMCC Secretary

Region 14

Dorothy Cogswell, lifetime Girl Scout liaison for the Diocese of Richmond, her Girl Scout daughter, Elizabeth Lowe (resource coordinator for the diocese), and Dorothy's granddaughter, Senior Girl Scout Heather Lowe, attended the 2005 National Girl Scout Convention in Atlanta. Heather also serves as a youth member on the Colonial Coast Girl Scout Council Board of Directors. All three are trained religious recognition mentors and provide spiritual formation within the religious recognition programs.

Dorothy Cogswell, Regional Representative



From the Camp Fire Corner

The Gift of Giving—Camp Fire Youth Give Service

The motto of Camp Fire USA is Give Service and that is just what young people in Camp Fire have been doing for over 95 years. In all areas of the country, teens in Camp Fire USA Discovery, Horizon, and Teens in Action Programs perform acts of service that make a difference in their communities.

Across the country, young people in Camp Fire USA programs integrate community service into the activities in which they participate. From Little Stars who are planting flowers at their school to make it more beautiful to Teens in Action who are helping the homeless and the hungry and looking for ways to reduce violence in their communities, Camp Fire USA youth and adults commit daily to service.

The Camp Fire USA Curriculums on Service learning are available for use in religious education, youth ministry, camp and school settings. The programs teach youth the stages of service and teach the lifelong skills of giving service. All of the service learning programs are outcome measurable and are based on specific learning criteria. The components include community needs assessment, where students learn and use a method of community assessment to determine unmet local needs.

- *Choosing a Project*
Youth choose a project that meets one of the needs that they have identified.
- *Planning a Project*
Students learn the process of planning a project and ways to work with each other to reach specific outcomes they have identified. This area can also include budgeting for the project and planning for fundraising events.
- *Conduct Service Project*
The students conduct the project using the skills and guidelines that they have learned in the previous stages of the process.
- *Reflection*
Reflection is integrated into the project at a variety of levels and includes self-reflection, reflection on the impact that they are having on their communities, as well as reflections on the lessons learned.
- *Evaluation*
Students evaluate the outcomes of their project and determine whether or not it met their goals.

National Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

Kelly Penniston, Camp Fire USA Central New York Council, Syracuse, New York, and Jeremy Wroblewski, Camp Fire USA, Patuxent Area Council Bowie, Maryland, were elected to the National Youth Advisory Council (YAC) for Camp Fire USA.



Kelly serves as a youth member on the National Board of Directors. She is a member of St. Stephen Parish in Phoenix, New York. Kelly has received the Gold Presidential Award for Community Service (500+ hours). Her leadership experiences include drum major of the marching band, president of the chorus, president of the drama club, school student leadership team, and service on the local CFUSA board. In addition to her Camp Fire volunteering, Kelly has volunteered supporting many activities at school—dances, colorguard shows, drumline shows, state fair clean team, mentoring younger children, shopping with senior citizens, team building activities with school groups that visit camp—the list is huge! Kelly is planning to attend Hobart and William Smith College where she has received a significant leadership scholarship.

Jeremy received the Gold Presidential Service Award for 750+ hours of community service. His service project included working with the homeless, helping with children's programs in local schools, participating in Camp Fire camp programs as a counselor, and volunteering wherever his skills are needed. Jeremy is a 2005 graduate of Bishop McNamara High School in Forestville, Maryland, where he participated in sports, technical theater, and Teens in Action. Jeremy is a member of Holy Family Parish in Mitchellville, Maryland. He is a member of the Teens in Action College Club in the Patuxent Area Council, where he continues his volunteering and working with children in Camp Fire USA self-reliance programs.

Both of these young people provide a youth voice to the national leadership of Camp Fire USA. Their participation in this youth development program has assisted them in developing skills which will make them leaders in our church.

Rosemary Pezzuto, Camp Fire USA

From the Girl Scouts USA

2005 Girl Scout National Council Session/ 50th Convention

The 2005 Girl Scout National Council Session/50th Convention was held in Atlanta, October 7-10 at the Georgia World Congress Center. This historic event celebrated 93 years of Girl Scouting and transacted the business of the Girl Scouts. This National Council Session was not business as usual, but pointed the way to a brighter future—a real transformation of the Girl Scout program. Below are some highlights:

- Over the course of the four days 13,305 people attended the convention including 1,755 full-time delegates, 3,050 official visitors, 576 Day Passes, 3,535 Hall of Exhibit Only Passes, 1,307 local council volunteers and 951 exhibitors.
- 1,436 council representatives attended Open Space on Friday, October 7
- 1,270 girls and adults attended the Girl Congress on Friday, October 7
- There were 206 booths in the Hall of Exhibitors
- 1,601 attended the Adult Special Event; 686 attended the Girl Event

Thanks to everybody who was there or pitched in from afar!

The New Normal? What Girls Say About Healthy Living

On January 25, the Girl Scout Research Institute released a new original research report titled *The New Normal? What Girls Say about Healthy Living* that combined focus group research with online surveys of more than two thousand 8- to 17-year-old girls.



Girl Scouts®

The New Normal? What Girls Say about Healthy Living sheds light on the childhood obesity crisis by asking girls directly how they define health and what motivates them to lead a healthier lifestyle. Findings suggest that today's girls are defining "health" on their own terms, placing the same value on emotional well-being and self-esteem as they do on diet and exercise. For girls, being healthy is more than just eating right and exercising; it is also about feeling good and being supported by family and peers. The study also highlights the important role that adults, and in particular mothers, play in shaping the healthy habits and self-perception of girls. This report has also been translated into Spanish. For information, call 866-830-8700, or visit www.girlscouts.org/espanol.

The New Normal? What Girls Say about Healthy Living by Judy Schoenberg, Kimberlee Salmond, and Paula Fleshman. New York: Girl Scouts of the USA, 2006. 116 pp. For more information, visit http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/original/healthy_living.asp.

Question and Answer Corner

Q. Can I make electronic or paper copies/versions of any of the religious recognition programs?

A. No. The four religious recognition programs are protected by the copyright laws of the United States of America. They may not be copied in any form whatsoever without prior written permission from the staff of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

If you have any questions you would like answered, or information you would like to share, please email: hmobrien@sbcglobal.net.



Reach Your Teens, Guaranteed

What do Eminem, Kanye West, Coldplay, Reliant K, Bon Jovi, Carrie Underwood, and Black Eyed Peas all have in common? They are talking to our young people. Are you a part of this dialogue? I sure hope so.

You and I are blessed to have the opportunity to journey with our wonderful young people as they grow spiritually. Your dedication to helping young people build character and gain skills to be successful in the real world is a big task. As you nurture your young people to be caring and confident, you are also modeling this for them. Way to go!

There is always room for growth on our part and our young people. What will help you be more effective? Here is a suggestion, and I personally know it works. Don't you want to spend quality time with your favorite people on things that work?

This a proven formula to reach young people, used not just by the most successful teachers and youth workers today, but by Jesus, and also by centuries of successful missionaries to other cultures!

The Formula

Here it is: Speak with the young people you want to reach in language they understand. Think of language as a system of images. I do not mean English. And I do not mean profanity. But use stories, examples, and images they already understand. Then you are talking within their culture about things they are already talking about. And a great place that has all of that is their music. I did not say you had to agree with everything in their culture. But this is a great



place to hold a conversation. And if you are not having conversations, you will not be in a position to help them much.

This formula is easier than you think, and you do not have to be the expert on teen music. But you do need to be open to the possibilities.

As you are well aware, today's teens are very busy people. They are committed to extracurricular activities, they have their school work, they are preoccupied with their relationships, they want to be successful now and in the future, and the list goes on.

In the midst of their busy lives and major distractions, what is it going to take for a young person to hear you, Jesus, and a personal invitation of the Gospel? What will it take for them to stand for what your organization is about? What will it take for a teen to believe Jesus' firm invitation to God's unconditional love? And even more importantly, what will it take to make the Gospel message relevant and meaningful?

I suggest using their music. Keep in mind—this is not just another gimmick to trick young people into getting involved in the full life of God, your organization, or the church. As you will discover, this approach is identical to the way Jesus reached out to others in his public ministry. And, it is the way Jesus still works today.

In the Gospels, Jesus had an uncanny way of knowing what people needed. He was able to get to the root of their lives and respond to them in a meaningful way. He did not waste time. He responded with compassion and a sense of urgency. Do we do the same when we try to reach out to our young people? Do they sense you really know them so that what you have to offer will be life-giving? Or are they telling you that you do not understand? Get their attention before you give them a gift they can really use.

Let's work together on this. If we plan to establish deeper connections with young people, we cannot ignore their emotional commitment to their music. Music has always played a very important role in the lives of young people. Back in 1950s, Bill Haley and the Comets shot to the top of the music charts with the song, *Rock Around the Clock*, signaling the arrival of rock and roll as the music for a new generation. Then, nineteen-year-old Elvis Presley caught the enthusiasm of millions of teenagers, though other artists certainly participated in the

generation of this new musical sound. At the same time, this music became the target of an older generation who could not comprehend an even greater social development: adolescence was no longer a subculture. Youth culture could now stand on its own, and it had a soundtrack! This music became the way young people talked about themselves, and shared values, issues, and images used in their conversations.

Along with the arrival of their wheels, their independent income, and required education, adolescence has become a culture with its own social structure, dress code, and language, all spread by its music. And whether adults liked it or not, rock and roll was here to stay. It would mutate over the decades right along with youth culture, but it would not go away. This is why popular music is the soundtrack of youth culture. Actually, music is the soundtrack of any culture! So, how can we effectively and wisely incorporate this tool into our ministry and our outreach to today's young people?

The Key to Youth Culture

Young people listen to music four to six hours a day. Compare that to one hour a week of their involvement in your programs, if even that much. These modern songs contain messages and feelings. They communicate images used in youth culture. These songs are blurting out the issues and concerns of young people. Why can we not pay attention to all these items, and use them as a point of contact with young people? Let's consider doing what good teachers and parents have done for centuries. Let's use music to decode the culture, and also encode the Gospel message. It is all there: the good, the bad, the ugly. They are already talking about this. Why not join them in their conversation about stuff that matters?

There are options for dealing with current music. One, we can deny its importance and value to our teens, and in the process, put it down for some of its gross behavior, messages, and images. Those who try this avoidance strategy will eventually find themselves frustrated, angry, and even more isolated from the teens they are trying to reach.

Or, two, let's accept why music is so important, and use it as a connecting point with young people. Keep in mind, we do not even need to like these songs! In fact, you can even disagree with the negative content, but like any resource that is used wisely, use it to connect, and put the subject on the table for discussion. I do this all the time with young people.

All right, let's get back to the foolproof strategy I am offering you. To evangelize and connect with young people, plant this principle firmly your minds and hearts.



Address *their* concerns, the things they are most intense about, both good and bad. All too often young people experience an evangelizer as an adult telling them to stop thinking about their own issues, and concentrate on what the adult has decided to talk about.

Jesus did the exact opposite. He started with *people's* needs, their agenda, and worries. He spoke about fish to fishermen, weeds and wheat to farmers, and sheep and goats to shepherds. And he used their images to preach the Good News: "The kingdom of heaven is like a..." Finish that line, and you are joining Jesus in reaching a lot of people. After listening to a song with young people say, "The kingdom of heaven is like the man in this song who is looking for love, and..." Have your young people finish that sentence.

Is this what your young people are experiencing from God's people? Are they invited to hear and accept the Gospel in their language? How else are they to understand?

One great miracle of Pentecost (there were several) was that Peter and some of the Apostles, in their first proclamation of the Good News after the Holy Spirit visited them, were heard by each person in the street in his or her own language. "...the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them in the native language of each" (Acts 2:6). Was this a one-time miracle, or an ongoing model for evangelization?

Young People Are Looking for Meaning

Part of being a good teacher is being a good listener. Otherwise, how can the messenger know what the audience is ready to hear? Young people are ready to hear the Gospel, because of its good news. They need good news. Just like adults, they are tired of things that bring pleasure and pain, but no happiness.

Just as popular songs are constantly speaking to teens, Jesus is also speaking to teens in many ways, including inspired popular songs. Would you know which ones those are? Ask your young people. Then check with me. I do an annual show on the best inspired songs of the year.

Are you involved in this dialogue? When you start to use their music, you will have great dialogues on the positive and negative events in their lives. You will even help them pray better privately, while joining them in praying publicly.

A great way to get young people more involved in prayer is to ask them to choose certain songs that can help them express their current prayer. Ask these questions: What song would you use to talk to God? What song would be God's response to you? If you are not familiar with these songs, ask them to write down the words so you can understand the song. What a great way to have a conversation about prayer. Can you imagine what will happen the next time your kids hear that song? It could spark another prayer conversation with God!

The Incarnation of Jesus is God becoming human. It is a current event, and will remain a current event into the future. Jesus still goes where we go, stays where we are, and uses our images to tell us that we are loved unconditionally by God. Have you spotted Jesus working the other six days of the week (besides Sunday)?

Are we doing the same? Are we inviting real dialogue? If we do, we will be loving people the way God does, unconditionally, in their language, where they are. By doing this, you will respect them and their culture. First, point out what is good. You cannot fix what is bad until you have something good to fix it with. At least God thinks so. And we are allowed to copy God's tactics whenever we can, right?

Jesus met people where they were, and loving them as they were, though not always accepting their behavior. In the light of this genuine care, people wanted to follow him, behave better, try harder, and do the right thing. His respect empowered them, and it will do the same for us and our teens. Imagine your young people fully loved—and how radically they could grow in spirit if they experienced this kind of love from us this year! What an exciting time for all of us to be a part of their lives!

Picture the possibilities: adults connecting with young people; teens having a positive influence on their peers; families talking about what really matters; religion, not just a subject, but a way of life; and a church that makes sense to everyone in this world. It is not just your dream. It is God's.

It is also God's dream to see church people once again shoot out of their gathering space, making sure that God's unconditional love is both proclaimed and experienced by today's young people, just as at Pentecost, "in their own language."

Resources?

The teens you work with! They will help you understand what songs are saying. With your guidance they will choose songs for gatherings, prayer, retreats, camp outs. You do not have to be the expert. Tell them what I just told you, but use their own words in telling it. Let them show you about their music! Once they know you are open, "The kingdom of heaven can be like the adult who..." Will it not be fun to hear you finish that sentence? Send me your story when you do.

Anna Scally, Cornerstone Media

Cornerstone Media, Inc.

Cornerstone Media is a collaborating member organization of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. Anna Scally and her team create audio, print, and electronic resources about popular songs. They can be reached at www.cornerstonemedia.org
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National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry (NCCYM)

Numerous opportunities exist for those involved in Girl Scouts and Camp Fire programs to gather, learn, and network together during the NCCYM.

A Gathering for Girl Scout and Camp Fire Attendees

Thursday, November 30, 2:30 P.M.-3:30 P.M.
This gathering of Girl Scout, Camp Fire, and interested youth ministry leaders is an opportunity to renew friendships and acquaintances, welcome new attendees, and share happenings and information among dioceses regarding Girl Scouts and Camp Fire.

NCCGSCF Luncheon

Saturday, December 2, 12:45 P.M.-2:15 P.M.
Additional fee of \$25. To participate, check the appropriate box on the registration form.

NCCGSCF Workshop Track

In each round, a workshop has been highlighted for its specific emphasis to those who work with Girl Scouts and Camp Fire programs.

Round A - Friday 11:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

A-13: Girls and Self-Esteem: What Girls Say

Leanne Gluck—project manager for Girl Scouts USA's Uniquely ME! Initiative

Join Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. for a fascinating dialogue about girls 8 to 17, and issues of self-esteem. Topics will include the latest research on what girls say about their emotional health, as well as some real programmatic responses to important issues such as body image, feelings, and emotions, and being unique.

Round C - Saturday 11:00 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

C-13: Bullies, Peers, Power, and Pressure:

What's a Girl to Do?

Camille Massing—veteran youth minister, singer, song writer, and presenter residing in Littleton, Colorado.

Self-esteem, mass media, body image and power plays. Girlhood is under attack today by many forces in our modern society. Learn to help girls build positive self-worth, discover their real beauty, become women of character and integrity and be transformed by Christ's vision of them.

Round E - Saturday 4:15 P.M.-5:45 P.M.

E-13: Soul Tending the Young

Sr. Mary Greenan—A Salesian sister who teaches at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

After a brief overview of the stages of faith journeying of the young, emphasis will be placed on the role and importance of those adults who companion that journey in its phases. Key elements necessary to the process of accompaniment of the young today will be delineated in the form of a model of spiritual accompaniment of the young.

For further information visit

<http://www.nfcym.org/nccym/index.htm>



National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry
November 30 - December 3, 2006
Las Vegas, Nevada

Collateral Strength

In these days when “collateral damage” is a euphemism for what gets wrecked and who perishes in war’s unintended outcomes, I propose to talk about “collateral strengthening.” Collateral strengthening is an appropriate term for the extra, perhaps unintended, good that comes as a byproduct of an excellent ministry effort carried out by followers of Christ.

As one of the few diocesan directors of an office that combines youth and family ministries, I have been impressed with the way the NCCGSCF religious recognition programs strengthen both ministries.

Because of the popularity of *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (USCCB, 1997), most Girl Scout and Camp Fire leaders on the parish scene understand the goals of youth ministry as empowering discipleship, drawing young people into the life, work, and mission of the church, and fostering their total personal and spiritual growth. The four religious recognition programs (*I Live My Faith*, *Family of God*, *Mary, the First Disciple*, and *The Spirit Alive*) have been revised to reflect these goals.

Many in the Girl Scout and Camp Fire world who work with religious recognitions could go on to elaborate how each of the four programs integrate the eight components of comprehensive youth ministry into the projects offered. One example is *Mary, the First Disciple*. This program focuses on community building, not only by forming the tight-knit community of girls or boys working on the program, but also sends the young people out into the larger community to interview an elder. This program also offers experiences of evangelization, justice and service, and prayer and worship in the witness, service, and celebration projects and activities in chapters three and four. The entire program is rich in catechesis and develops leadership in youth. Advocacy and pastoral care are inherent in the very process of walking with girls or boys on this journey with Mary, the first disciple. We have achieved great collateral strengthening of youth ministry outcomes by walking with young people through these four programs. These outcomes were not entirely unintended, however, as NCCGSCF has been fully invested in the vision of youth ministry from its beginning.

On the other hand, how many of us have thought about the **family**-building potential of our recognition programs? Can we even articulate the role of the Christian family, as set forth in John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio* (1981) and echoed in our U.S. bishops’ *Follow the Way of Love* (1993)? In Part Three of *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II urges, “family, become what you are,” by laying out four general tasks for the Christian family:

- forming a community of persons,
- serving life,
- participating in the development of society,
- sharing in the life and mission of the Church. (17)

Anyone familiar with the text of our *Family of God* children’s workbook can attest to the fulfillment, in those activities, of John Paul’s words, “All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building day by day the communion of persons, making the family ‘a school of deeper humanity.’” While *Family of God* provides an obvious parallel, I would like to suggest that *I Live My Faith*, which was written explicitly with a family perspective, affirms that Christian faith is not just an individual matter, but intimately involves family, friends, and community. The activities, especially those focused on serving others, identifying good and strong people, making a pilgrimage, and bringing Christ to others, explicitly serve the tasks the church assigns to the family.

In the same fashion, and to the credit of the many authors of all of our program booklets, *The Spirit Alive* and *Mary, the First Disciple* systematically lead youth to family and community for models of faith. They also offer projects which animate Catholic Social Teaching for the good of society and participation in the mission of the church. The collateral strengthening of family in its role and particular tasks is rather amazing, and I have learned from families themselves how each of these programs has strengthened their family relationships and afforded families opportunities to focus on family identity, service to the community, and serving the mission of the church.

When those who work with the religious recognition programs are looking for partners and support, I encourage you to talk not only to

the diocesan and parish leaders working in youth ministry, but also with those who work in family ministry and family-centered faith formation efforts. Tell them you have heard recent reports of collateral strengthening!

Alma Richard
Director, Office of Youth and Family Life
Diocese of Winona
Board Liaison to NCCGSCF

Notes:

1. The family perspective is drawn from *A Family Perspective in Church and Society: A Manual for All Pastoral Leaders* (USCCB, 1988). The family perspective presents tools for developing, testing, and evaluating programs, policies, and procedures for attention to four elements: 1) A Christian Vision of Family, 2) The Family as a Developing System, 3) Family Diversity, and 4) The Partnership between Families and Institutions.

2. Resources cited in this article include: *Family of God, I Live My Faith, Mary, the First Disciple*, and *The Spirit Alive* religious recognition program booklets (available through NFCYM); *Familiaris Consortio (On the Family)*, John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation of 1981 (available from USCCB); *Families at the Center* (1990) (available from USCCB); and *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997) (available from both NFCYM and USCCB).



Teens from Teens in Action hosted a party for evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita with the American Red Cross. The teens helped host the event by helping with entertainment for children, registration, food, and by listening to the evacuees stories.



Youth go to the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area to deliver funds that were collected in response to the hurricanes.

NFCYM Membership Meeting—Portland, Oregon

The NFCYM Membership Meeting was held January 2006 in Portland, Oregon. It is at this meeting that the NCCGSCF regional representatives and the management committee get to do their business.

Ten regional representatives, two NFCYM board liaisons, and the Camp Fire USA and GSUSA representatives were able to attend the meeting. We welcomed the new representative for Region 1, Shannon Perzan, from the Archdiocese of Hartford.

Our agenda included the following:

- Position statement from the NCCGSCF on the Planned Parenthood connection to Girl Scouts
- New parent pins for the four national religious recognitions

- Securing and designing a display board that will be able to travel where and when needed to highlight our work
- Articles for the next newsletter
- Approved wallet certificates for the national religious recognitions.

The committee left exhausted but with a feeling that a lot had been accomplished and with new ideas and projects to check on when back home. Special thanks to Kathleen Cottom, NCCGSCF committee chair, for keeping us focused and on track with everything!

Pat Antonacci, NCCGSCF Secretary

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Check the list below for contact information. If you have any questions, please contact your regional representative; they want to hear from you!

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