



EMPLOYING A PARISH PARTNERSHIP YOUTH CO-ORDINATOR

– some considerations to guide discussion
and reflection during 2019 and beyond



“It is our belief that a full time, paid, trained and well-supported person in the role of Youth Co-ordinator in each parish partnership is the best way to provide the resources and relationships required to sustain youth ministry in the rapidly changing landscape faced by our young people.”

– Bishop Alan

Diocesan Vision Document, “Shaping our future”
(Advent 2018)

CONSIDERATIONS AND STEPS TO EMPLOYING A PARISH PARTNERSHIP YOUTH CO-ORDINATOR

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CHRISTUS VIVIT!

- “CHRIST IS ALIVE!”

Pope Francis speaks to young people of the world, and those who journey with them as Priests, Teachers, Catechists, Parents, Grandparents and friends

There has been a great providence in the timing of the Synod on Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment, which the whole Church prepared for during 2017-18, and which took place in Rome in October 2018; precisely the same period as we were developing this vital step in Diocesan strategy, the employment of Parish Partnership Youth Co-ordinators. On March 25th 2019, the Feast of the Annunciation, Pope Francis released his reflection on the Synod, the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit!* – “Christ is Alive!” – and this, together with the entire Synod process, offers great insights for us.

Above all, Pope Francis focuses the direction for all our Youth Ministry on the person of Jesus Christ. He quotes Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est* (“God is love”): **“Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”** (CV129). The early part of the document offers vigorous and vibrant language to encourage young people in their gifts, talents, dreams and aspirations: he names young people as the “Now” of God (CV Chapter 3), who reflect an “ever youthful” Christ. Pope Francis writes powerfully of the need both to empower young people within the Church, and to consistently encourage them to deepen a relationship with Christ which is a true and profound friendship – there is a whole section on “Friendship with Christ” in chapter 5.

Pope Francis also regularly affirms those who accompany the young: **“Particular gratitude is due for the generous commitment of countless lay persons, priests, consecrated men and women, and bishops, who daily devote themselves with integrity and dedication to the service of the young. Their efforts are like a great forest that quietly grows.”** (CV99). Within Brentwood Diocese, these words resonate deeply; there are many, many quiet heroes who work alongside our young people as volunteer youth leaders and catechists, supported by priests and religious, and transforming the lives and faith journeys of thousands of young people every year.

Christus Vivit calls us to look with fresh eyes at the nature of our Youth Ministry. Pope Francis is very direct when he says, **“I want to state clearly that young people themselves are agents of youth ministry. Certainly they need to be helped and guided, but at the same time left free to develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity.”** (CV203). Within the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service we try to encourage, support and form young leaders in every part of our ministry, whether the Walsingham House at Abbotswick Team, young musicians at the monthly Youth Mass, or the 70+ youth leaders who lead in Lourdes each summer. This undoubtedly brings its own challenges, but when young people are empowered in leadership they both shine and surprise us – and they constantly find new ways of bringing faith alive.

At the same time, Pope Francis writes, **“Helping the young to discover the living richness of the past, to treasure its memory and to make use of it for their choices and opportunities is a genuine act of love towards them.”** (CV187). He speaks strongly about the particular joy and

***“Be who God created you to be,
and you will set the world on fire.”***

– St Catherine of Siena



importance of intergenerational encounters: **"We [the older generations] can remind young people, who have their own blend of heroic ambitions and insecurities, that a life without love is an arid life... We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome... We can teach those young people, sometimes so focused on themselves, that there is more joy in giving than receiving, and that love is not only shown in words but also in actions."** (CV197).

Pastoral care for the young, and the evangelisation of the young, is a task for the whole community (CV202) and the most important thing that we can do is to "accompany and encourage" the young (CV230) in ways that show them that they are utterly beloved by God: "At every moment, you are infinitely loved" (CV112).

This accompaniment should "try to avoid imposing obstacles, rules, controls and obligatory structures on these young believers who are natural leaders" (CV230), making sure that we are a "Church with wide open doors" (CV234), open to the freshness of the young and not constrained and stifled by "the attempt to develop a pure and perfect Youth Ministry" (CV232). Where there are young people, there is 'noise' and 'mess,' and we must give space for that.

Therefore those who accompany the young must, at times, also give them the space to walk in the "wrong direction" – the story of the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) is a thread which runs through the Synod reflections, and suggests that the guiding qualities for our Youth Ministry should be that it is "gradual, respectful, patient, hopeful, tireless and compassionate" (CV236). These qualities should be lived together with the joyful transmission of the *kerygma* – the essential truths of our faith, summarised by Pope Francis as **"Jesus Christ loves you. He gave his life to save you. And now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you."** Taken together, all of this surely gives us an excellent understanding of what we are looking for in the Parish Partnership Youth Co-ordinators.

Christus Vivit! shines with insight for us, and this brief introduction can only give a small taste of its richness and joy; it would be well worth those who are most closely involved in the appointment of the Parish Partnership Youth Co-ordinator having a look at the whole document, in particular Chapter Four, "A great message for all young people," and Chapter Seven, "Youth Ministry."

Above all, it is the person of Jesus Christ which infuses *Christus Vivit*, and Pope Francis quotes St Oscar Romero: **"Christianity is not a collection of truths to be believed, rules to be followed, or prohibitions. Seen that way, it puts us off. Christianity is a person who loved me immensely, who demands and asks for my love. Christianity is Christ"** (CV156). The encounter with Christ is our dream for the young, and gives us the key focus for our employment of Parish Partnership Youth Co-ordinators, who can provide a greater range and depth of opportunities for our young people, precisely to enable such an encounter. In this way Youth Ministry – and the whole of parish life – in our Diocese of Brentwood can be ever more enlivened by the opening words of *Christus Vivit*: **"Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world... Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!"**

WHY HAVE A YOUTH CO-ORDINATOR?

CAN'T EXISTING VOLUNTEERS DO IT?

Our young people are amazing; they have a generosity of heart and spirit that loves to express itself in care of others; they have the capacity to grapple with deep questions of life and faith, and find loving answers; they are searching for the most profound truths. And some of our young people are suffering; issues of stress, poverty and mental health, and the comparison to others 'virtual lives' where status and friendship are evaluated by the number of "likes" on Social Media – all of this is causing trauma in some young lives.

For every young person, we have a truth to offer that is utterly precious, and life-transforming: they are beloved by God, who knows every hair of their head (Luke 12:17), knit them together in their mother's womb (Psalm 139), and sees them as a masterpiece, a work of art (Ephesians 2:10). But to know and recognise this truth they need to build a sense of belonging, to have sustained and meaningful opportunities and activities. This is more than a Sacramental programme, or a chance to serve on the altar, and it takes far greater resources than we are currently devoting to it.

We face a stark reality; typically the statistics for a parish will be that if there are 100 Baptisms in a year there will be about 80 children receiving First Holy Communions, and about 35-40 young people celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation. Of these, about 15, at most, will continue to practice the faith beyond Confirmation. These statistics scale up or down; if there are 40 Baptisms a year there will be about 30 First Holy Communions and 10-15 Confirmandi, of whom about 4-5 will continue to practice. Have a look at your own parish statistics, over the last five to ten years, and in almost every parish you will see the same pattern: we are Confirming just 30-40% of those who we baptise. Overall, Diocesan statistics show that the total number of Mass-going Catholics, of all ages, has fallen by about 10% in the last three years.

At a time when Parish Partnerships are asking vital questions, our key consideration cannot be "How do we maintain what we have been doing?" but "How can we use all the resources we have in the Partnership – people, buildings, finance – to best spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in Essex and East London." **For young people, this means investment in the years between and beyond Sacramental programmes, in ways which both deepen their Catholic faith and enhance their sense of belonging to parish communities where they know they are seen as precious and cherished, where they are listened to and have a voice into the activities and opportunities offered for them.** Nurturing future leaders from as young as 15 or 16 is essential. In Basildon, when a Youth Co-ordinator was employed, the size of the Confirmation group rose from 8 to 29 over four years; a summer holiday project developed that involved 100 young people and 30 young adult leaders; and the social life of the parish was enhanced by the fundraising events led by the youth. The weekly offertory collection went up.

To employ a Youth Co-ordinator for your Parish Partnership matters very deeply; it will, God willing, help in the renewal of parish life, and the development of the next generation, in ways that are precious and lasting. This – it should be emphasised – in no way diminishes the vital role of parish volunteers. Rather, it recognises the fact that any volunteer is likely to also be juggling work and family responsibilities, and is unlikely to be able to commit 35 hours a week. It is also an enormous encouragement to volunteers leading Sacramental programmes to see a pathway for their young people; no First Holy Communion or Confirmation catechist wants to see young people dropping away at the end of the programme. A Partnership Youth Co-ordinator will arrive with some Youth Ministry experience, and perhaps even a specialist qualification. They will have the time and

Why have a youth co-ordinator?

expertise to ensure ongoing opportunities for young people, including nurturing young leaders within the parish.

There can be no “one size fits all” as the partnerships are so different: some are very urban, and some rural; some contain Primary and Secondary schools, some do not; some include parishes with active and well developed Youth Ministry. There are vastly varying numbers of Confirmandi – from 70+ in one of our East London Parishes, to single figures in some of the village parishes in rural Essex. In any case, this indicator alone is clearly inadequate to measure the engagement of young people, the programmes and pathways available for them, and the way that the parish nourishes and sustains their journey in faith, includes them in parish leadership, develops them as young leaders, involves them in Diocesan and National opportunities, sustains them as they discover a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and responds to their questions and challenges.

Therefore the first sections of these notes are intended as discussion starters to help each partnership in deepening and developing your vision for young people, so as to write this into your partnership plan in Advent 2019; the second part will guide you in the more detailed process of recruiting and appointing a Youth Co-ordinator, in 2020 and beyond.

The Vicariate for Pastoral Formation will help you in all parts of the process. Initially this will be my work; when a number of Partnerships have Youth Co-ordinators we will, hopefully, appoint someone with professional expertise who can help resource and mentor them in the years ahead, supported by the VPF and making full use of the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service and Walsingham House at Abbotswick.

– Fr Dominic Howarth, May 2019



REFLECTING AND DISCERNING



WRAP IT ALL IN PRAYER

Before beginning anything – any discussions, any practicalities – wrap it all in prayer. The passage which proved to be the guiding hand for the Synod on Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment is the story of the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

It is a very good story to read together, and to picture Jesus walking alongside young people, especially if they are confused or stressed – young people who are walking the wrong way, away from Jerusalem. He listens to them, walks with them – and then offers them shining truths of faith, culminating in the “breaking of the bread” – truths that set their hearts ablaze, and change their direction for ever.

You may also find this prayer helpful; it was the Brentwood Diocesan prayer for National Youth Sunday 2018, composed of words spoken by Pope Francis to young people:

Dear Lord,

***Inspire our young people to be revolutionaries,
to swim against the tide of a culture that sees everything as temporary.***

***Walk with them as they discover your eternal truths of
love, hope, joy, forgiveness and mercy.***

***Affirm them in their great gifts;
Encourage them to dare to dream of great things.***

***Show them the beauty of encountering you in prayer,
and in reading the Bible.***

***Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus
may they know the wonder of your voice igniting their hearts.***

***Support them as they meet you in the faces
of their sisters and brothers,
especially those who are most forgotten,
those at the margins and the edges.***

Amen



FORMING A CORE GROUP, INCLUDING YOUNG ADULTS

As Stewards of the Gospel, and Clergy, you are considering the whole Parish Partnership plan, and there is much for you to do. To get to the point where you can make some proposals about the employment of a Partnership Youth Co-ordinator, you will need a team focused on this area of the plan alone. It should include, of course, a Steward in the Partnership, and one Priest or Deacon. Beyond that, you will already know the people in your parishes with a heart for Youth Ministry, and involving some of them right at the start will be a great way to help this element of your parish partnership plan to take root, and to flourish.

It would be ideal for this group to include some young adults; perhaps those in their early to mid-twenties, who are close to the teenage years, but now working professionally. At that age they won't be fazed by a formal meeting, but will also be able to offer a different perspective into the conversation. You could also consider involving one or two young parents. The key will be to "talent spot" those who are happy with the idea of "partnership" and have a broad vision. Take time to pray and discern who can walk this journey with you, and build a core group of 8-10 people. Have an eye to the fact that these people, together with Stewards and Clergy, will ultimately be the ones who will present the plans to the partnership, and to the Parish Councils that currently exist.



CONSIDER THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS MISSING AT THE MOMENT? AND WHAT IS FLOURISHING?"

As a Core Group, have a fearless conversation about the nature of your provision for young people in the partnership. This can include Sacramental programmes, of course, but it should not be limited to this. In considering strengths and weaknesses it may help to specifically consider:

- How do we provide for young people between Holy Communion and Confirmation? What do we do to help them sustain and deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ? If there are activities for this age group, what is the balance of spiritual and social activities?
- How do we provide for young people post-Confirmation? How do we help them into an adult understanding of their faith, and involve them in serving the parish and local community?
- Is there a space in any of our parishes that is dedicated for young people? Could there be?
- How do we reach young people within our community who are not Catholic?
- How do we relate to our local schools?
- How do we use opportunities beyond the partnership such as the BCYS or national events?
- How do we develop young leaders in our parishes?



CONSIDER THE QUESTION, “WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?”

This question is critical. It is asking how you will evaluate the role six months in, one year in, and beyond. It matters because it must be at the heart of what guides your partnership during the process of recruitment and employment, giving you focus and direction. Why? Because one Youth Co-ordinator will not be able to do everything, with every age group, and so you will need to prioritise.

Different partnerships will have different emphases, and that is fine. Within a partnership, different parishes may have different emphases, and that will probably need some careful conversation to ensure that anyone employed has a clear Job Description and focus for their role. If you do not know what you would like them to do, then it will be hard for them to do it!

The answer to the question, “What does success look like?” could be some or all of:

- Reaching teenagers who have lapsed, in social or spiritual activities, or through opportunities for service
- A programme of devotional prayer, including Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, led and attended by young adults.
- Working with the wider community – young people who are not Catholic, but live in the partnership area
- Increased Mass attendance by young people
- A youth-led partnership Caritas project, focussed on a local need, or needs abroad
- Building leaders for the future
- Partnerships with local schools
- A thriving Confirmation programme
- Involvement by young people in one or more Sunday Masses within the partnership
- A pathway for young people between First Holy Communion and Confirmation, and post-Confirmation
- Ecumenical links, with provision across local churches for the widest possible range of social and service opportunities for young people

If you are employing one person, across the partnership, there will need to be some choices about your priorities for their role. You may already have some of the elements named above, and

committed volunteers who deliver them, in which case the new role could focus on those things that do not yet exist. Perhaps there are things that one parish can deliver on behalf of the whole partnership? Perhaps one parish in the partnership is well placed to be a “youth hub.”

Just to repeat: establishing your criteria for success will affect every other question raised here.

Care about the timeline for success

One further thought – what is the timeline for success? Perhaps there are some “quick wins” but generally it takes months and even years to build relationships with young people, and to sensitively listen to them so that new ideas are introduced in ways that are right for them. In general, whatever criteria you adopt, it will probably take a year to see any fruit, and 2-3 years before any programmes, opportunities and ideas are really embedded. It is vitally important to name this – for yourselves, for the person taking on the role, and for parishioners in the partnership.



WHAT AGE RANGE WILL THE YOUTH CO-ORDINATOR FOCUS ON?

This matters very significantly in terms of the skills in the person you employ, and in your vision for the role. Care is needed not to design an “impossible job”! Teachers, for example, are generally only asked to work within a 5 or 7 year age range.

Possible answers to this question could be:

- 14-18 year olds
- 8-14 year olds
- 10-19 year olds.

Your answer will reflect the emphasis in your partnership. It will be vital to consider what the partnership is offering for those above and below whichever age range you ask the Youth Co-ordinator to focus on. Liaison with local schools could be significant here; if your Primary or Secondary school has a Lay Chaplain, it may be that some collaborative working helps in covering parts of the age range?

#6

THE EMPHASIS IN THE ROLE

As your conversations deepen, this is just a thought to further focus the Job Description. Again, different partnerships will have different emphases here, depending on your situation and existing provision, but the emphasis in terms of the new role could be some (but is unlikely to be all) of:

- Social
- Spiritual
- Service Opportunities
- Sacramental

#7

INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PARISH

Before going any further, it will be good to “road test” your ideas with young people in the parish partnership. Make this a social event for young people – offer them some good food, served with care, and chat to them. However – to stretch this a bit – also consider what “type” of young people you are inviting? Those who actively participate in parish life have much to offer – the senior Altar Servers, and those who are already very committed; it will be an important challenge to also consider how this can be expanded to include the voice of the lapsed, and non-Catholics. There is, in fact, a great opportunity here for committed young people to ask their peers in schools, colleges and clubs what they would look for in Youth Ministry in your parish. Especially if the last time their friends came was when they were 8 years old. There is also an opportunity to ask parents to network; what would they like for their children?

These answers will be partial; there is a sense in which we cannot know what we want until we have seen it in action. But asking the questions while you are deciding on the Job Description may offer you some unexpected insight and wisdom, and will involve young people in the process who might then anticipate the new person starting with excitement, and be warm and supportive of them when they arrive.

Finally, as you design the recruitment, mentoring and management process for the new role, it would be good to think about how and when young people can be involved in that, too. Certainly to ensure that a wide range of young people are part of the interview/selection process. There is more about this later in these notes.

Once you have spent time with the points above, the “practical questions” which follow may well find some very natural answers. In other words, you have dealt with the “why” and begun to think about the “who”: the next section moves to the “how.”



ACTION BY ADVENT 2019

**Writing the fruits of your discussions
into your parish partnership plan.**

It may be that this is as far as you get during 2019; the months fly by, and to get further into the practicalities is simply not possible. Indeed it may be that resources for a parish partnership youth co-ordinator depend on other parts of the overall partnership plan.

However, to get this far is vital, so that you can write into your parish plan your desire to employ a Partnership Youth Co-ordinator, and the essential elements of your vision for their role.

This is absolutely the task for 2019; the details in the rest of this document can then be worked out during the weeks and months of 2020 and even 2021, and the Vicariate for Pastoral Formation will support you each step of the way.



“NUTS AND BOLTS”

(PRACTICAL QUESTIONS)



SALARY

The salary range for such roles nationally varies from approximately £23,000 to £30,000. The range indicates different expectations about experience, the ability to self-manage, the desire for the person to build a team within the parish, and the level of prior qualifications. There will also be variance – in our Diocese – according to London weighting.

Please see the **appendix** to this document for two potential Job Descriptions. One is with a lower salary and has the title **Parish Youth Co-ordinator**, reflecting the rest of the document. A £21,000 - £23,000 salary is roughly the equivalent of a newly qualified teacher. For this you might therefore expect a recent Graduate, or someone with 2-3 years' experience in voluntary Youth Ministry (Walsingham House or equivalent, probably with some element of leadership in the third year). Such a person will be keen and motivated, but yours may well be their first professional role so you would need to pay attention to structure, mentoring and management. You would need to be realistic about expectations; such a person will be learning while they "grow into" the role. They may or may not be able to drive – how essential is a driver for the geography of your parish partnership?

The second suggestion is for a **Parish Youth Leadership Co-ordinator**. A £28,000 - £30,000 salary is indicative of 3-5 years post-Graduate experience in the voluntary sector, or in Education. It may also attract someone who is looking to change career or start a new career later in life. You would be likely to get someone who has experience of work, perhaps in a role where they have had to self-manage, and organise their time. They may or may not have a degree; they are likely to have some sort of professional qualification and/or extensive professional experience. The higher salary should mean such a person would need less mentoring and management – though since yours is a new role, this will remain highly important, especially in the first six months to a year. The emphasis in this role would be that such a person could *build a team* across the partnership – by training, forming and working with others, the range and possibilities for events and opportunities would be greatly amplified. But you need a person with experience to be able to achieve this.

The **Person Specification** for the role is also included with the appendix; you will see a variance depending on the salary level, and the type and range of leadership that you expect from them. Ask yourself:

- How much do we expect this person to "self-manage"? (their time, their budget)
- What level of Theology do we expect? What level of Youth Ministry experience? Leadership?
- Do we expect them to have a level of Safeguarding / Health and Safety knowledge? Do we expect this to be enough to be able to train young leaders?
- Does our parish include sizeable ethnic groups; would it be an advantage, for instance, for a Youth Co-ordinator to be a Polish speaker, or to have knowledge of Keralan or Nigerian culture?

Finally, note that the salary figures quoted above do not include National Insurance, pension contribution, etc., which are typically an additional 12%. The post holder would be employed on a Diocesan contract and the Diocesan Finance Office can advise about specific costs.



#2

BUDGET FOR THE ROLE

The Youth Co-ordinator will need a budget! They will need to buy resources and equipment, they will need a laptop, and a mileage allowance. In time, trips and activities may generate income, but this cannot be relied on – certainly not in the first year. Be generous with the initial budget; by the second year it will be possible to have a much more realistic idea of costs.

#3

FUNDING

Having established the salary you will offer, and the budget, you will need to ensure that it is securely funded before you can advertise the role. The most sustainable funding will come from within the partnership, and the success of this role requires a commitment from each parish in the partnership, probably for a percentage of the salary, and probably (as this is a new role) for a fixed term. There is more about this later on, but it is wise to consider this as a three year fixed term contract, with each parish making this commitment.

Parishioners may well be very generous here; the consultations around the Diocesan Vision suggested that “youth” was a matter of priority for many parishioners, and the employment of a

Youth Co-ordinator in each partnership is a direct and practical response. If there is a very specific request to fund the salary of a Youth Co-ordinator, it is very likely that parents and grandparents will want to give, to support local provision for their young children and teenagers. This could also be the focus for a parish partnership offertory campaign, building links between the parishes.

To supplement parish funding, there are sources of finance which it is well worth looking into. The Jack Petchey Foundation and the Sisters of the Holy Cross are two useful contacts – the Sisters may even part fund a salary, especially if you are in a more deprived area. The Catenians may offer support; it is a stated aim of the Catenian Association nationally that they wish to develop opportunities for young people, so ask your local Catenians about this.

Finally, it may be that fundraising for youth projects is part of the co-ordinator's role, and that is fine – fundraising events can help young people in leadership, enrich the life of the partnership, and develop relationships across the generations and between parishes (a youth-led parish partnership quiz night, for example). However, as a matter of principle, no-one should ever be asked to fundraise for their own salary; grant funding approaches to fund the Youth Co-ordinator should happen before the job is advertised.



WHERE WILL THE PERSON BE BASED?

Perhaps this will be a contentious issue for you, or perhaps natural solutions will emerge as you consider the buildings in your partnership. The Youth Co-ordinator will need a place to see people, a place to store resources, access to a laptop and wi-fi, access to a photocopier. Wherever they are based will, almost certainly, become a base for their activity. Parishes will need to consider all of this with a generous heart; a single Youth Co-ordinator cannot effectively work in five different locations, especially when there is only one Sunday in a week!

This is a particularly helpful point in which to involve young people; where would they see as a natural "hub" in the partnership? Where are the easiest transport links? The hall that can be best used by young people? Is there a space they can make their own?

It might be that there is a natural base for spiritual input – a more intimate church or chapel – and a different base for social or service activities?

In more rural areas, as already happens in at least one Deanery, the provision of a mini-bus within the partnership could be essential, with "pick-ups" in different places. This will add to the cost of the project, but could make all the difference in terms of young people accessing opportunities. Dialogue with a local school could help – the school minibus may well not be needed precisely at the times it is needed in the Parish Partnership.

All in all, some very careful consideration about the expectations about where the Youth Coordinator is based, and how they divide their time between parishes, is absolutely essential prior to any advertisement or recruitment; it will also need great care once the person takes up their post.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS



AGREEING THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND “PERSON SPECIFICATION”

By now you know what you want the person to do, how much you will offer in salary, and where the person will be based. The next step is to create the Job Description (JD) and “Person Specification” (PS). The Vicariate for Pastoral Formation will continue to guide you here, and there will also be support from the Diocesan Finance and HR teams.

The JD should be comprehensive but not overwhelming; seven or eight clear tasks. It is best if they also include an element of timing (“every week...” “every month...”) and other elements which give something against which success can be measured. It is quite acceptable for a JD to finish with the line “And any other task which can be reasonably expected, as the role evolves.” The JD could be revisited after 6 months, and a year; if it is amended, this should be in discussion with the person doing the job.

The JD should be worded in a positive and exciting way, with phrases such as “Leading young people in...” “Developing the skills of young people...” “Accompanying young people in faith...” That said, where there are more mundane tasks, these should be specified “Ensuring the hall is clean and tidy at the end of a session.” “Maintaining accurate records, including parental permissions, of those who attend activities.”

The PS is about the skills, qualities and characteristics of the person you wish to employ. These can be measured by academic record (“Education to A-level / degree level”) by employers reference and the person’s CV (“At least two years’ experience in Youth Ministry in a parish or school context”) or by interview task (“Able to engage young people effectively in a discussion about faith” “Able to create and lead a time of prayer with young people.”) You should specify that the role is for a “committed and practising Catholic” and add a note that this is a “Genuine occupational requirement.” You should also note that the post is subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

Within the notes above the Person Specification, you should ask the candidate to give you as much evidence as possible in their application that they meet the criteria you are setting out. This will help you in shortlisting and interview.

In the Appendix to this document you will find an example Job Description and Person Specification.



A FIXED TERM CONTRACT

This is a new role, and there will be an element of “trial and error” for yourselves, and for the post holder. To offer a one year contract gives insufficient security for the person, and insufficient time to build the relationships on which the job will rely. A two year contract is possible, but experience suggests that it is only during the second year that the work

really becomes most vibrant. It takes time for the post holder to “learn” the parishes, and time for the young people to build relationships with a new youth leader. Some things will be tried and fail. All of this takes time. So our recommendation is for a three year contract. This gives a clear “break point” for the parishes involved to assess the success of the role, in principle, rather than the performance of the particular post holder (which would be regularly assessed – see below, under “Mentoring and performance management”). The contract can, of course, be revised at any point with the agreement of the post holder, but a “break point” at three years recognises the newness and fluidity of the parish partnership as it grows and evolves, and time limits the initial funding.

#3

PLACING AN ADVERT

The Vicariate for Pastoral Formation can help you with circulating an advert around the parishes of the Diocese, and the various “Youth Ministry networks” that exist nationally. You should normally allow 3-4 weeks between placing the advert and the closing date for applications.

Placing an advert will be a moment to highlight and celebrate with all the parishioners in the partnership; firstly to ask for their prayers, at this vital stage; and secondly because they will be your greatest advocates in terms of “word of mouth” advertising.

#4

WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION

If your partnership is five or six parishes, it may be rather overwhelming to have Stewards, existing youth leaders, young people and clergy involved at interview. Most certainly, though, a wide range of voices can be involved in shortlisting, and in deciding the selection process.

Ultimately, however, you will need to decide on four or five key people – including at least one young adult – in whom everyone in the partnership will place their trust. The Vicariate for Pastoral Formation will also serve as an advisor for you, throughout the recruitment and selection process, though the final decisions will always be with the parish partnership.

#5

THE SELECTION PROCESS

The process will include:

- Shortlisting of applications. This must be against the criteria in the person specification, with evidence to support the judgements made. It is usual to shortlist at most 3 or 4 people.

- A selection process with a mix of formal interview and tasks. One of these, importantly, should be a direct presentation to or session for young people that reflects the work the co-ordinator will do; this type of task can be prepared by candidates in the week or two between shortlisting and interview. It is also good to have a task that they only see at the time of selection, to see how they “think on their feet.” The Vicariate for Pastoral Formation can offer you some ideas for such tasks. The interview should also include a Safeguarding question – again, the VPF will guide you with this.
- At the end of the interview a clear process of assessment with reference to the JD and PS, and with appropriate notes for use if an unsuccessful candidate asks for feedback.
- References, including (usually) a reference from a parish priest. The references can be taken up for shortlisted candidates prior to the interviews, if time allows.



RE-ADVERTISING

It is possible that – either at shortlisting or interview – the selection panel deem that there are no suitable candidates. It may be that the salary level needs consideration, or aspects of the Job Description, or it may be a matter of timing. After some tweaks, it will be necessary to re-advertise.



APPOINTMENT

There are some formal processes with the successful candidate in terms of an offer letter and contract, agreeing a start date, and completing some Diocesan paperwork. The candidate will be – as for everyone working in parishes in the Diocese – an employee of the Diocese, with one of the local Parish Priests signing the contract on behalf of the Diocese.

This will also be a moment to celebrate across the partnership, perhaps with a formal welcome at every Mass across two or three weekends, and further encouragement for parishioners to hold the new Youth Co-ordinator in their prayers.



INDUCTION

Prior to the start date, or in the first 2-3 days in role, there should be an induction including meeting key people (a lunch with the local clergy, existing youth leaders and Sacramental programme leaders, school headteachers and Stewards, for example) as well as practicalities such as keys, alarm codes, wifi passwords, etc.



MENTORING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

From within the partnership, we would suggest a single individual is named as the Line Manager; they would meet with them probably fortnightly for the first six months, then monthly to quarterly. The Line Manager should be someone with some relevant expertise – a senior teacher, or someone from a youth work background. The conversations would include input from the employee, and from the manager, loosely structured as:

- Personal wellbeing
- Things that are going well
- Challenges/difficulties
- Targets for the next month/quarter

Praise and affirmation should be freely and generously given; concerns should be raised carefully and appropriately. The Line Manager would report back to others within the Partnership – and if there are any concerns it is vital that they are raised with the Line Manager and not directly with the employee. This must be made clear to everyone involved in the selection and recruitment process; their role is different once the employee has started. This should also be made clear to parishioners, and existing volunteers.

From within the Vicariate for Pastoral Formation, a “mentor” will be allocated. This will be someone with extensive Youth Ministry experience, who the employee can talk with for advice, help, and encouragement, in a context that is more “objective” and, if necessary, confidential. Such meetings would probably be monthly at the start of the job; gradually reducing to every two months.

These supports – good Line Management and good Mentoring – are especially important in a new role, covering several parishes, and time and care should be given to considering who will have these roles.

We also recommend a 3 day personal retreat is provided for, in addition to annual leave, so that the postholder is spiritually nourished. Finally, the Vicariate for Pastoral Formation will arrange a day per term for the Youth Co-ordinators to come together to share good practice, and to receive training and resources. Initially this is likely to be part of the existing days for School Lay Chaplains; as more partnerships employ Youth Co-ordinators, the days will be bespoke for them. We suggest that attendance at these days is written into their contract, as an integral part of their continuing professional development.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION A

Parish Partnership Youth Co-ordinator - Salary Range £21,000 - £23,000

Job Description

Job Purpose

To deepen and strengthen the relationship of each young person with Jesus Christ, and to enhance their lived experience of the Catholic faith. Working with young people aged 11 – 18 in the parishes of the [INSERT NAME] Partnership to provide a wide range of spiritual, service and social opportunities; working with school staff and interested adults within the partnership; linking with the extensive opportunities provided by the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service.

Salary £21,000 - £23,000 p.a., depending on prior experience.

Contract A fixed term three year contract with option to renew.

Hours of work 35 hours per week, to include evening and weekend work.

Line Management will come from [INSERT MANAGER'S NAME], on behalf of the Parish Partnership.

Mentoring and Professional Development will come from the Diocesan Vicariate for Pastoral Formation, including termly days of resourcing and sharing good practice.

Main tasks

Local opportunities for young people

In discussion with interested adults and with young people, the Youth Co-ordinator will identify and provide/arrange a variety of opportunities for those aged 10 – 19 in the parish partnership. These opportunities will be aimed at deepening and strengthening the relationship of each young person with Jesus Christ, and enhancing the lived experience of their Catholic faith, and will include spiritual, service and social opportunities.

Such opportunities could include, but are not limited to:

- Provision for a regular Mass animated by young people
- A structured programme for those who are post-Communion and pre-Confirmation

- Service to the local community
- Regular prayer groups, which include a variety of prayer styles, and where young people are trained to lead prayer
- Social opportunities
- Holiday time opportunities, where older young people are formed and trained as leaders, providing opportunities for children within the parish
- Participation in BCYS events, retreats and pilgrimages

After a year, the expectation would be that for young people of each age, there would be at least one significant opportunity each month.

Liaising with those who look after Parish and Hall diaries, the Youth Co-ordinator will be responsible for booking the spaces needed, and ensuring the areas are left clean at the end of a session/event.

Together with their Line Manager, the Youth Co-ordinator will ensure all opportunities and activities fully conform to all Diocesan and Statutory Guidelines in terms of Safeguarding (Child Protection) and Health and Safety.

Nurturing youth leadership

The Youth Co-ordinator will identify and develop young people with the ability to lead their peers.

The Youth Co-ordinator will work with interested volunteer adults, to provide training and development for youth leaders within the parish. In this area, training and support is also available from the BCYS.

Supporting Diocesan opportunities for young people

To actively promote the opportunities offered by the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service, to arrange transport and parental consent as required, and to support young people in fundraising for the events and pilgrimages when necessary.

Finance and budgets

The Youth Co-ordinator will be responsible for administering a budget for resources, and responsible for working with the Parish Administrator to ensure all money for events and trips is collected and accounted for. Except with the prior permission of the Parish Team, the expectation would be that youth activities are self-financing.

Other duties

The postholder will fulfil any other duties reasonably requested by the Line Manager, on behalf of the partnership.

Personal Qualities and Experience

Quality / Experience	Essential/ Desirable	Assessed by
Practising and committed Catholic	Essential	CV & References
Ability to communicate the Catholic faith effectively to young people aged 10 - 19	Essential	CV, Interview and references
Ability to deliver training to young adults and volunteers, including catechesis and apologetics	Essential	CV, Interview and references
At least three years full time or five years part time experience in working with young people in a Catholic context (school, retreat centre or parish)	Essential	CV & references
Strong written and oral communication skills	Essential	CV & Interview
Experience in leading young people in worship - liturgies and Masses	Essential	CV & Interview
Ability to lead a team	Essential	CV & Interview
Familiarity with IT including ability to help others to use Social Media effectively	Essential	CV & Interview
Strong understanding of Safeguarding and Health & Safety	Essential	CV & Interview
Full, clean driving licence (<i>depending on partnership</i>)	Essential	CV
Degree or equivalent level qualification in a relevant subject (Youth Ministry, Theology)	Essential	CV & Certificates
Creative skills in music, drama or dance	Desirable	CV & Interview
Creative use of multimedia, video editing, etc.	Desirable	CV & Interview

An enhanced DBS check provided through the Catholic Safeguarding Agency is naturally an essential requirement for this role. If the successful candidate does not already have one, this can be arranged by the Diocese of Brentwood.

There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for this role to be held by a practising Catholic.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION B

Parish Partnership Youth Leadership Co-ordinator - Salary Range £28,000 - £30,000

Job Description

Job Purpose

To build and develop a parish partnership youth leadership team, helping to deepen and strengthen the relationship of each young person with Jesus Christ, and to enhance their lived experience of the Catholic faith. Working with young adults and older volunteers in the parishes of the [INSERT NAME] Partnership the post holder will develop a team to lead activities across the partnership. Working with young people aged 11-18, this team will provide a wide range of spiritual, service and social opportunities; the team will also link with the extensive opportunities provided by the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service.

Salary £28,000 - £30,000 p.a., depending on prior experience.

Contract A fixed term three year contract with option to renew.

Hours of work 35 hours per week, to include evening and weekend work.

Line Management will come from [INSERT MANAGER'S NAME], on behalf of the Parish Partnership.

Mentoring and Professional Development will come from the Diocesan Vicariate for Pastoral Formation, including termly days of resourcing and sharing good practice.

Main tasks

Building a parish youth leadership team

The Youth Leadership Co-ordinator will spend the early months of their role identifying and working with interested young adults and older volunteers to build a team capable of delivering a wide range of activities within the partnership. Young people will also be involved in the discussions about the types of activity to be offered, the venue and timing. These activities and opportunities will be aimed at deepening and strengthening the relationship of each young person with Jesus Christ, and enhancing the lived experience of their Catholic faith, and will include spiritual, service and social opportunities.

Such opportunities could include, but are not limited to:

- Provision for a regular Mass animated by young people
- A regular discussion group, grappling with the “tough questions” of faith, and building young people in confidence in evangelisation and apologetics.
- Help to nurture, train and develop young leaders within the parish – both existing volunteers, and emerging talent from amongst the teenagers in the parish.
- A structured programme for those who are post-Communion and pre-Confirmation
- Service to the local community
- Regular prayer groups, which include a variety of prayer styles, and where young people are trained to lead prayer
- Social opportunities, reaching out to non-Catholic young people
- Holiday time opportunities, where older young people are formed and trained as leaders, providing opportunities for children within the parish
- Participation in BCYS events, retreats and pilgrimages
- Involving young people in the development of parish Social Media

After a year, the expectation would be that for young people of each age, there would be at least one significant opportunity each month.

Liaising with those who look after Parish and Hall diaries, the Youth Leadership Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring the team book the spaces needed, and leave areas clean at the end of a session/event.

The Youth Leadership Co-ordinator will ensure all opportunities fully conform to all Diocesan and Statutory Guidelines in terms of Safeguarding (Child Protection) and Health and Safety.

Supporting Diocesan opportunities for young people

To actively promote the opportunities offered by the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service, to arrange transport and parental consent as required, and to support young people in fundraising for the events and pilgrimages when necessary.

Finance and budgets

The Youth Leadership Co-ordinator will be responsible for administering a budget for resources, and responsible for working with the Parish Administrator to ensure all money for events and trips is

collected and accounted for. Except with the prior permission of the Parish Partnership, the expectation would be that youth activities are self-financing.

Other duties

The postholder will fulfil any other duties reasonably requested by the Line Manager, on behalf of the partnership.

Personal Qualities and Experience

Quality / Experience	Essential/ Desirable	Assessed by
Practising and committed Catholic	Essential	CV & References
Ability to communicate the Catholic faith effectively to young people aged 10 - 19	Essential	CV, Interview and references
Ability to deliver training to young adults and volunteers, including catechesis and apologetics	Essential	CV, Interview and references
At least three years full time or five years part time experience in working with young people in a Catholic context (school, retreat centre or parish)	Essential	CV & references
Strong written and oral communication skills	Essential	CV & Interview
Experience in leading young people in worship – liturgies and Masses	Essential	CV & Interview
Ability to lead a team	Essential	CV & Interview
Familiarity with IT including ability to help others to use Social Media effectively	Essential	CV & Interview
Strong understanding of Safeguarding and Health & Safety	Essential	CV & Interview
Full, clean driving licence (<i>depending on partnership</i>)	Essential	CV
Degree or equivalent level qualification in a relevant subject (Youth Ministry, Theology)	Essential	CV & Certificates
Creative skills in music, drama or dance	Desirable	CV & Interview
Creative use of multimedia, video editing, etc.	Desirable	CV & Interview

An enhanced DBS check provided through the Catholic Safeguarding Agency is naturally an essential requirement for this role. If the successful candidate does not already have one, this can be arranged by the Diocese of Brentwood.

There is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for this role to be held by a practising Catholic.

“Young people need ‘role models in the faith’ to accompany them. They need people who are close by, credible and consistent.”

– Pope Francis

Synod for Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment (October 2018)



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