



## “Pastoral Creativity in the Community”

(Hosted by Megan Shepherd and Scott Boyle. Panelists include: Maura Lee, Ua Tom, and Haley Wooton for Called & Co-Responsible: Summer Seminars for Church Life Renewal, July 14, 2020)

### **Pastoral Creativity Worksheet** *Identify, Listen, Ponder, Respond, Reflect*

*Build the bonds of communion as you see and respond with creativity to the needs of your community, grounded in a disposition of gratitude and humility before God.*

Use this worksheet to guide your pastoral creativity, attending to each movement in turn. The questions for each section are designed to prompt your reflection and planning at each stage, some may be more applicable to your community than others.

- **Preparatory Reflection**
- **Identify** Community
- **Listen** to Community
- **Ponder** Community
- **Respond** to Community
- **Reflect** on the process

### **Resources for the Entire Process**

*Resources for each Movement are listed at the end of the document.*

[Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit](#) by Pope Francis

[Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts: A Toolkit for Faith Formation](#)

[A God Who Questions](#) by Leonard DeLorenzo, Ph.D.

[Reflection Guide for A God Who Questions](#) (utilized each week for small groups)  
Scriptural Pilgrimage to Christ Through Lent: A Guide for Bible Study and Faith Sharing

[Witness: Learning to Tell the Stories of Grace That Illumine Our Lives](#) by Leonard DeLorenzo

## Preparatory Reflection

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A vocation, while a gift, will undoubtedly also be demanding. **God's gifts are interactive; to enjoy them we have to be ready to take risks.** Yet the demands they make are **not an obligation imposed from without**, but an incentive to **let that gift grow and develop, and then become a gift for others.** When the Lord awakens a vocation, he thinks not only of what you already are, but of what you will one day be, in his company and in that of others (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 289).

- What did you learn about yourself through the Gift Discernment exercise?
- Which Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy draw your attention?
- What are you excited about as you begin this process?
- As you reflect on the place of prayer and reflection in your own life, what practices draw your attention? What will you need to make prayer and reflection a priority?
- How do you understand the gift and task of communion? How do you plan to grow in your understanding of each this summer?

## Identify Community

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These questions should be centered **less on ourselves and our own inclinations, but on others, so that our discernment leads us to see our life in relation to their lives.** That is why I would remind you of the most important question of all. “So often in life, we waste time asking ourselves: ‘Who am I?’ You can keep asking, ‘Who am I?’ for the rest of your lives. **But the real question is: ‘For whom am I?’**” [159] Of course, **you are for God. But he has decided that you should also be for others, and he has given you many qualities, inclinations, gifts and charisms that are not for you, but to share with those around you.** (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 286.)

- What community do you feel drawn to serve?
- Who are members of this community? How do you define this community?
- What makes you curious about this community?
- How do you plan to approach this community? What is your disposition towards them?
- What information do you need to know about your community to inform or help you develop and shape your response?

## Listen to Community

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*When an encounter with God is called an “ecstasy”, it is because it takes us out of ourselves, lifts us up and overwhelms us with God’s love and beauty. **Yet we can also experience ecstasy when we recognize in others their hidden beauty, their dignity and their grandeur as images of God and children of the Father. The Holy Spirit wants to make us come out of ourselves, to embrace others with love and to seek their good.** That is why it is always better to live the faith together and to show our love by living in community and sharing with other young people our affection, our time, our faith and our troubles. **The Church offers many different possibilities for living our faith in community**, for everything is easier when we do it together (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 164.)*

- How do you plan to listen to this community? What methods will you use?
- How will you open yourself up to receive the members of this community?
- What questions will you ask?
  - What are the challenges facing the members of your community?
  - What fears do they have? What are the stressors?
  - What hopes do they have?
  - What gifts does this community have?
  - What opportunities are there for this community?
- What resources and assets (programs, materials, people, etc.) exist in the community that you can utilize in your process?
- How do you listen without judgment? How can you cultivate openness and empathy?

## Ponder Community

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*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.** So I will not attempt here to propose a kind of manual of youth ministry or a practical pastoral guide. I am more concerned with helping young people to **use their insight, ingenuity and knowledge to address the issues and concerns of other young people in their own language** (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 203.)*

- What did you hear? What resonates with you?
- What are the greatest needs present? Which might be most appropriate, feasible, and reasonable for you to address?
- What themes of the Catholic Imagination speak to this community? Address the needs of this community?
- Based on what you learned about resources available to you, are there any that stand out as important to utilize?
- How will you pray for this community?

- What might God want for them?
- How can you help your community through the lens of the Catholic Imagination?
  - Examples:
    - Practice hope, develop resilience and perseverance
    - Deepen awareness of the Church as a community of believers who live out the love of Christ
    - Continue to develop their faith and recognize our deep need for God
    - Develop habits and practices of prayer within the current conditions
    - Recognize and articulate grace at work in their lives

## Respond to Community

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### Areas for possible pastoral development from Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*, 224-9

Many young people have come to appreciate **silence and closeness to God**. Groups that gather to adore the Blessed Sacrament or to pray with the word of God have also increased. We should never underestimate the ability of young people to be open to contemplative prayer. We need only find the right ways and means to help them embark on this precious experience. When it comes to worship and prayer, “in many settings, young Catholics are asking for prayer opportunities and sacramental celebrations capable of speaking to their daily lives through a fresh, authentic and joyful liturgy”.<sup>[118]</sup> It is important to make the most of the great moments of the liturgical year, particularly Holy Week, Pentecost and Christmas. But other festive occasions can provide a welcome break in their routine and help them experience the joy of faith.

**Christian service** represents a unique opportunity for growth and openness to God’s gifts of faith and charity. Many young people are attracted by the possibility of helping others, especially children and the poor. Often this service is the first step to a discovery or rediscovery of life in Christ and the Church. Many young people grow weary of our programmes of doctrinal and spiritual formation, and at times demand a chance to be active participants in activities that benefit others.

Nor can we overlook the importance of the **arts**, like theatre, painting, and others. “Music is particularly important, representing as it does a real environment in which the young are constantly immersed, as well as a culture and a language capable of arousing emotion and shaping identity. The language of music also represents a pastoral resource with a particular bearing on the liturgy and its renewal”.<sup>[119]</sup> Singing can be a great incentive to young people as they make their way through life. As Saint Augustine says: “Sing, but continue on your journey. Do not grow lazy, but sing to make the way more enjoyable. Sing, but keep going... If you make progress, you will continue your journey, but be sure that your progress is in virtue, true faith and right living. Sing then, and keep walking”.<sup>[120]</sup>

“Equally significant is the emphasis that young people place on **sports**; the Church should not underestimate the potential of sports for education and formation, but instead maintain a strong presence there. The world of sport needs to be helped to overcome some of its problematic aspects, such as the idolization of champions, subservience to commercial interests and the ideology of success at any cost”.<sup>[121]</sup> At the heart of the experience of sport is “joy: the joy of exercising, of being together, of being alive and rejoicing in the gifts the Creator gives us each day”.<sup>[122]</sup> Some Fathers of the

Church used the example of the training of athletes to encourage the young to develop their strength and to overcome idleness and boredom. Saint Basil the Great, writing to young people, used the effort demanded by athletics to illustrate the value of self-sacrifice as a means of growth in virtue: “These men endure sufferings beyond number, they use many means to build their strength, they sweat constantly as they train... in a word, they so discipline themselves that their whole life prior to the contest is but a preparation for it... How then can we, who have been promised rewards so wondrous in number and in splendour that no tongue can recount them, even think of winning them if we do nothing other than spend our lives in leisure and make but half-hearted efforts?”[123]

**Nature** holds a special attraction for many adolescents and young people who recognize our need to care for the environment. Such is the case with the scouting movement and other groups that encourage closeness to nature, camping trips, hiking, expeditions and campaigns to improve the environment. In the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, these experiences can be a real initiation into the school of universal fraternity and contemplative prayer.

These and various other opportunities for evangelizing the young should not make us forget that, despite the changing times and sensibilities of young people, there are gifts of God that never grow old, for they contain a **power transcending all times and places. There is the word of the Lord, ever living and effective, the nourishing presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Reconciliation, which brings us freedom and strength. We can also mention the inexhaustible spiritual riches preserved by the Church in the witness of her saints and the teaching of the great spiritual masters.** Although we have to respect different stages of growth, and at times need to wait patiently for the right moment, we cannot fail to invite young people to drink from these **wellsprings of new life.** We have no right to deprive them of this great good.

- What do you hope to create? What need(s) are you hoping it will address?
- What are your goals for addressing the needs of the community?
- What is your primary audience? What additional audiences might you include as well?
- What resources would you need to complete it? Which do you already have?
- How will you use your knowledge, skills and talents in your response?
- What is your timeline? What major tasks or activities will need to be completed? When will these need to occur?
- How might your proposed action impact the community?
- What more do you need to learn to successfully shape or implement your response?
- What are signs that this is a fruitful response? Attentive to needs?

## Reflect on the Process

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When seeking to **discern our own vocation, there are certain questions** we ought to ask. We should not start with wondering where we could make more money, or achieve greater recognition and social status. Nor even by asking what kind of work would be most pleasing to us. If we are not to go astray, we need a different starting point. **We need to ask: Do I know myself, quite apart from my illusions and emotions? Do I know what brings joy or sorrow to my heart? What are my strengths and weaknesses?** These questions immediately give rise to others: **How can I serve people better and prove most helpful to our world and to the Church? What is my real place in this world? What can I offer to society?** Even more realistic questions then follow: **Do I have the abilities needed to offer this kind of service? Could I develop those abilities?** (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 285).

- What did you learn in the process of creating this project?
  - about yourself?
  - about listening?
  - about your community?
  - the Catholic Imagination?
- What did you create? How did it address the needs you identified?
- How well did it meet your goals?
- How did you use your knowledge, skills and talents in your response?
- Where have you seen grace at work in this process?
- What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about God?
- If you could go back and tell yourself one thing at the beginning of this process, what would it be? What would you do differently?

# Resources & Links for Each Movement

## Preliminary Preparations

[“Praying the Angelus”](#) by Camilla MacKenzie

[“Integrating Prayer and Action, the Works of Mercy”](#) by Stephen Barany

[“Praying the Liturgy of the Hours”](#) by Colleen Halpin

Liturgy of the Hours available online through [iBreviary](#) or the [Shorter Christian Prayer book](#)

## Identify Community

[“Simple Prayers for Complicated Times”](#) by Carolyn Pirtle

[“The Future of Today When Tomorrow is Uncertain”](#) by David Cloutier

[The Catholic Catalogue: A Field Guide to the Daily Acts That Make Up a Catholic Life](#) by Anna Keating & Melissa Musick

[Searching for and Maintaining Peace: A Small Treatise on Peace of Heart](#) by Fr. Jacques Philippe.

## Listen to Community

[“Why Community is Needed Now More Than Ever”](#) by Leonard DeLorenzo

[“Evangelization Through Questions”](#) by Alex Wallace

[“The Virtue of Waiting for God”](#) by Theresa Smart

[Ave Explores: a multi-dimensional exploration of different themes within the Catholic Faith](#)

## Ponder Community

[Praying the Rosary Together: A Guide for Home and Classroom](#) by Carolyn Pirtle

[“The Works of Mercy in a Marian Spirituality”](#) by Theresa Rice

[“Missionary Creativity in Easter”](#) by Prof. Leonard DeLorenzo



## Examples of Pastoral Creativity from the Internet:

[Senior HS Class Art Projects/Reflections on Chronicles of Narnia](#) - (Eric Buell was a Vision Mentor & Echo Apprentice and speaks in the summer conferences)

[Drawn into Friendship](#): Interactive art retreat based on the creation story in Genesis includes a series of scripture passages, drawing exercises, and meditations.

[Chicago Catholics Tend Parish Gardens, Supply Pantries During the Pandemic](#)

“[Getting into the Rosary](#)” by Andrew Fritz, C.S.C (past Vision Mentor) - note the role of images in his experience

## Racism Resources (this was the week that protests began around the country)

[Ave Explores: Live with Chika Anyanwu and Ike Ndolo](#): Chika Anyanwu and Ike Ndolo candidly share their experiences as black Catholics in America, how they've felt about the events of the weeks since the death of George Floyd, and ways that every Catholic should respond to inequality and racial injustice.

[Webinar: How to talk about Racism from the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry \(NFCYM\)](#) (recorded 6/17/2020)

[Four Courageous Conversations about Racism and Violence in America](#)

[Anti Racism Resources from NFCYM](#)

## Respond to Community (two weeks of resources)

“[Surrender Amid Social Distancing](#)” by Scott Boyle

“[Formation for Mature Discipleship](#)” by Megan Shepherd

“[Face to Face with Love](#)” by Therese Benz (Current Echo Apprentice)

[Direction for Your Life in Uncertain Times](#) (Catholics on Call Online Retreat)

“[A Prayer: Stand Firm with an Open Heart](#)” by Becky Eldredge

“[Stability for Lay Christians](#)” by Tim Pisacich

“[Paschal Joy in Isolation](#)” by Francesca Patti

“[Facing Anxiety with the Holy Spirit's Help](#)” by Alex Wallace

“[The Contemporary Path to Holiness](#)” news about a young man about to be beatified: Carlo Acutis (1991-2006)



The website he created <http://www.miracolieucaistici.org/en/Liste/list.html>

[A Resource for Families Mourning Without Funerals](#) from the Diocese of Bridgeport

## **Reflect on the Process**

“[Tiles in the Divine Mosaic](#)” by Clare Kilbane

“[Rooting Daily Decisions in Faith by Practicing Observance](#)” by Teresa Coda

“[A Former Hermit's Thoughts on Solitude](#)” by Fr. Herbert Yost, CSC

“[Opening Doors & Crossing Thresholds](#)” by Colleen Moore (Program Director of Echo)

“[The Church: Imitating Her Saints](#)” by Catherine Cavadini