PARTNER CONFERENCE 2013
WORKING GROUP RESULTS

What practices can we offer young people that help them discern their calling?

EVENTS:

- Come & See Weekend - for new visitors and others who are familiar with our community
- discernment retreat by invitation only
- once a year, whole federation brings young people in
- combined men’s and women’s discernment retreat - positive to both genders
- immersion trips → follow up reflection for deepening Ignatian Spirituality
  - exercises → “Meeting Christ in Prayer” (Loyola Press)
  - Charis Ministries and retreat
- wine & cheese party for young adults - but struggle with getting them to commit
- ACTS retreats
- Come & See Weekend - charism & community
- Catholics on Call conference
- provide stage-appropriate discernment experiences
  - Nun Run, Come & See, service opportunities
- “Pie and Prayer”
  - ½ hour Scripture sharing, then pie
  - end with Franciscan Adoration (a simpler set-up)
- follow up event, like Catholics on Call retreat
- Spring Break 3 ½ day retreat for college students
- Discernment retreats for 5 full days for mature discerners
- Come and See weekend
- especially with Hispanic, young adults, “Culture of Vocation” afternoon talks
- small group gathering of peer discerners
- Come and See, Live-in Experience, Busy Person’s Retreat
- discernment book study group for men
- Discernment retreats
- discernment groups
• Monthly Discernment Gatherings
• Vocation Day
• Nun Run or: CSI - Come, See, Investigate
• Vocation Summer Camp (college)
• Vocation Ministry Weekend
• Come and See Experience
• busy student/person retreats
• Caritas/Veritas (2-4 students + faculty)
  o monthly conversations from freshmen year to senior/4th year at Dominican University (College of St. Benedict prog. curriculum)

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:**

• volunteer program
• sponsor mission trip to Jamaica - seeing mission in another country
• Internships/paid internships in ministry
• weekly reflection on service including vocation and discernment (post-college volunteer community)
• Life Planning Residential Internship at monastery
  o “Finding and Following Your Call” for college-aged/20-somethings
• Service as a way of discovery of ourselves, our strengths, and community (public)
• immersion experience to ministry
• Service & Formation
• invitation to service - e.g. flooding in Biloxi
• reflecting on need in the community and action
• service - part-time/full-time, domestic/abroad, social justice ministries, being with people, ecological awareness, expanded horizons

**PRAYER:**

• structuring solitude/silence, time
• Holy Hour - for teens, young adults, families, praise worship
• prayer groups
• open invitation to prayer (all times)
• prayer partners
● Lord, Grant Me a Discerning Heart
● Prayer as foundational to discernment and process

SOCIAL MEDIA:

● ministry of presence - in person or online to see potential candidates before they visit
  ○ develop relationship via Facebook
● daily reflection websites, blogging on charism or ministry-related topics
● monthly conversations via webex with members on vocation, discernment, etc.
● WebEx (Skype) conversations with discerners

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION/COMPANIONSHIP:

● individualize the discernment journey
● meet with potential candidates at restaurants and visit our convent
● spiritual direction/companionship, group discernment
● offer relationship to journey with
  ○ give them the permission to take time to discern
  ○ when appropriate encourage to take steps
● Creating a space for conversation (20-40, 1x week, 1.5 hours)
  ○ convenient for young urban professionals
  ○ avoid calling it a “group”
  ○ they set the agenda
● link to spiritual director
● personal 1-to-1 accompaniment
● inductive method of accompanying discerners
  ○ discovery
  ○ asking questions together
● values clarification exercise
  ○ what person am I becoming?
  ○ who do I want to be?
  ○ money, time, relationships
● Are you serious? program for couples who are seriously dating
  ○ money
  ○ role expectations
• human, psychological development
  o help integrating mystical experiences with the truth of my human self
• Companions of the Holy Cross Formation Program – Based on Crosier Tradition, Spiritual Exercises
• Companion Sister – prayer partner, share with...
• Teach discernment skills on individual basis and suggest next steps
• Recommend finding a trained spiritual director
• Importance of having others enable us (beyond ourselves; spiritual direction) to listen and encourage us to go deeper or listen for options
• act as spiritual guides to students
• Spiritual Direction
• One on One Time
• sharing one’s own vocation story
  o driver’s ed instructor, tandem
• a sister companion and community companionship
• We have to continue becoming ourselves through ongoing-intentional-regular conversation so that we see God is still working in us now and not only the people we are ministering with.
• theological reflection

LIVE-IN EXPERIENCE:

• establish a house of discernment:
  o to live in for a year and give yourself a chance to contemplate how you can be a priest or brother or single or father or husband
  o be supported by others
• “live-in” discernment opportunity/experiential knowledge
• college women’s discernment house

OTHER TOOLS AND STRATEGIES:

• writing notes
• correspondence with history of the congregation
• study Gospel with them
• family visits
• anti-racism committees
• Listening, listening, listening!
• understanding cultural diversity (what other cultures are about)
• dialogue
• trial and error
• surrender and trust
• engaging the mind and the heart
• have aspirant community identify their call within context of community need
• bring people in discernment from different communities together to support one another
• sisters present on visible campus regularly ~ “Mercy Care”
  o calls for embrace, give-and-take
• personal relationships focus on individual
• Who do you say that I am? How does this contribute to undoing our socialized racism (as white, North American sisters)?
• Invitation - to recognize God’s love for me and accept it fully
• Diocesan Pastoral Plan to develop and invite lay ministry for now and the future
  o empower youth to participate in discernment on a parish/diocesan level
• Intentional efforts/visible at presenting charism (whatever charism - Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian, etc.)
• personal invitation to community events
• recommending good literature
• learning and valuing the wisdom of others
• our joyful witness
• use a discernment journal as a tool to discern and develop a relationship with God
• What do you friends identify as your gifts?
• new membership committee about what may work with each other and dioceses
• partnership in ministry = sharing leadership with members and laity together and better