

Everything and Nothing



7 Modules for Forming and Training YCS Adult Assistants

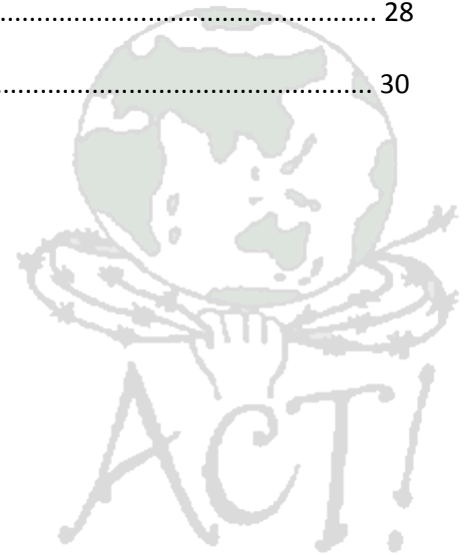


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Letter from the National Chairperson

To all the students, Adult Assistants and Chaplains of the movement,

I am very proud to present to you the Adult Assistant formation resource, *Everything and Nothing: 7 Modules for Forming and Training Adult Assistants* as a follow on from the AYCS *Guide to Recruiting and Forming Adult Assistants*.

A recent need was recognized by the National Executive in forming our Adult Assistants in a way that is true to the values of the movement. It was realised that we often throw our Adult Assistants into the deep-end when starting groups, and expect them to simply understand and know what is expected from them because they are, shall we put it, adults. We put such emphasis on forming new members to be taking action in their local groups, and the same emphasis should also be placed on forming and training adults. We realise that Adult Assistants are an instrumental part of what we do, and we need to ensure they feel supported in their wonderful and important role.

Therefore, AYCS staff and the National Adult Assistant Representative have created this resource to give all dioceses a standardized formation Adult Assistant programme. It comes in the form of seven modules that use the Review of Life to look at all the different parts of being an Adult Assistant for high school students.

We hope that you find this resource valuable in your endeavours with the Young Christian Students, and I stress the value of Adult Assistants in everything we do. They have a lot to offer all students, and we have great gratitude for the time they give in helping to empower us to be students that are actively changing the world around us. We hope this helps in ongoing Adult Assistant formation, so they can further support us in being great student leaders.

Yours in the spirit of Cardijn,

Elise Ganley
National Chairperson
Australian Young Christian Students

judge...





How to Use this Resource

Joseph Cardijn, the founder of Young Christian Workers and inspiration of YCS, described the role of the Adult Assistant as both 'everything and nothing.' This brief phrase sums up the achievements of the adults who support YCS, as well as the challenges they face.

Being part of YCS calls on adults to be both proactive and humble. It's a deeply rewarding job, but also a tough one at times, and one that we grow into over time.

This resource, *Everything and Nothing: 7 Modules for Forming and Training YCS Adult Assistants*, aims to facilitate this growth. It provides a series of formation and training modules that Adult Assistants can use to learn more about the movement and their place within it, and to come up with practical ideas for improvement.

Everything and Nothing is a response to requests from AYCS Adult Assistants for consistent national training for adults. It contains 7 modules that can form the basis of Adult Assistant training in your diocese or area. It is designed to be flexible. You can run this training in a number of formats, for example as a weekend retreat or a series of regular meetings on a monthly or term basis. These meetings could be focused on formation alone, or they could be combined with reviews or other business.

The modules in this resource are designed to be undertaken in groups of two or more. Meeting in a group gives adults a chance to learn in community and to support each other. Where distances are a challenge, sessions could be run via phone conference as meetings are mostly discussion-based.

Each module should take between 45 minutes and hour. It contains a series of activities and questions which break open an important dimension of being an Adult Assistant. These activities, arranged according the 'see, judge, act' process, provide chances to reflect on experiences of YCS, to explore case studies, passages from the Gospel and the words of influential people, and to set actions. The YCS prayer is also suggested as a way to conclude meetings and connect to our spirituality and identity as a movement.

Before each meeting the person leading the session should read through all the content to make sure they understand it. They should also note any preparation that needs to be done, which may include copying handouts or researching policies (Module 5: Adult Responsibilities). Experienced Adult Assistants should feel free to adapt aspects of the modules as they see fit, while retaining their essential message and aims.



Module 1: The Real Lives of High School Students

Aim

- To help Adult Assistants to better understand the lives and realities of the students that they are in contact with, so that they can relate to students and help them to review more effectively.

Introduction: Reflection

1. Invite Adult Assistants to become still and close their eyes.
2. Ask them to reflect on the following questions:
 - When you were a high school student, what was life like?
 - What did you really enjoy doing? What did you love about your life?
 - What really worried you? What made you angry?
3. After giving them a few minutes to reflect, invite them to share their responses with the group.

See

4. Explain that today, some high school experiences are similar to our own, but some are very different. As Adult Assistants, it is important that we listen to the students own experiences. Ask: what kind of situations and issues do you see the students in your YCS group facing? What are they bringing up in the Review of Life?
5. Together, read the handout *Stats and facts about high school students* on page 6. What strikes you from this handout? Does it relate to the students you're in contact with?

Judge

6. Ask whether anyone remembers the 'Three Truths' of YCS. If so, ask them to explain what they are to the group. If no one is familiar with the three truths, explain them using the summary on page 7.
What do the 'Three Truths' tell you about the role of young people's everyday lives in YCS?
7. In your local YCS group, how aware are students of their own 'truth of experience'? Are they reviewing their own situations and taking action on them?
8. Share the following quote from Joseph Cardijn. It comes from a speech he made to YCW chaplains:
"You must have this simple, affectionate, constant, intimate contact with your leaders. If you are a stranger, how can you talk to them of their personal lives? You have no right to, and if you try to they will answer, 'That has nothing to do with you.' For surely unless you are father and mother to them, unless you love them you have no right to know at all."
Does this quote challenge you in any way? If so, how?

Act

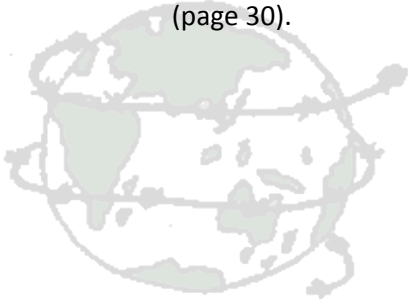
9. What can you do to encourage students to share their own life experiences and review them?
10. What can you do to better understand the reality of high school students today?



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Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



see...



judge...





Stats and facts about high school students

Warning: the following are generalizations. They indicate trends amongst young people as a whole, but they don't pick up the differences caused by geography, gender, socio-economic background, personality... This information can help us understand but not to totally sum up young people. Students are more than statistics!

The Real Life Survey was conducted by the Australian YCS and YCW in the lead up to World Youth Day 2008. Over 2800 young people from 46 countries answered questions about the good things in life and the struggles they face. 1935 of these were high school students from almost every state in Australia. These students were aged 15 – 18 years old and most students attend Catholic schools.

The top five themes emerging from these students' responses were:

1. Relationships with family and friends
2. Identity, belonging and acceptance
3. School and education
4. Prejudice, tolerance and violence
5. Spirituality, God and faith community

International responses in this age group were very similar; however prejudice, tolerance and violence appeared noticeably higher on the list in Australia than elsewhere. Post-school Australian young people were less interested in identity, belonging and acceptance, and education, and more concerned with work and money.

Each year Mission Australia conducts a **National Survey of Young Australians**. In 2008 they surveyed more than 45 000 young people aged 11 – 24 years old. The survey asked young people what they value, what they are concerned about, where they go for advice and support and who they admire.

According to the survey, young people value family relationships (about 75%) and friendships (62%) most of all. About a third of respondents also highly valued physical and mental health and being independent.

The top issues that young people were concerned about vary slightly according to age.

<i>Ages 11 – 14</i>	<i>Ages 15 - 19</i>
1. Drugs (31.2)	Body Image (28.1)
2. Family Conflict (26.4)	Family Conflict (26.2)
3. Suicide (25.3)	Suicide (24.3)
4. Bullying / emotional abuse (23.7)	Stress (23.7)
5. Body Image (23.6)	Personal Safety (22.9)

The top five sources of advice for young people were friends (important for 85% of young people), parents (75%) and relatives or family friends (60%).

When asked who they admire, young people said family (30%) and friends (17%). About 6% said sports people or entertainers, followed by aid agencies and community organizations. 2.1% of young people said they admired religious figures.

In addition, 21.4 % of 15 – 19 year olds surveyed worked part time, and 29.2 were in casual or temporary work.



The Three Truths

The Three Truths is something that was used by Joseph Cardijn to explain the mission and spirituality of the YCS Movement. Understanding *The Three Truths* gives an integral understanding of what YCS aims to achieve.

1. Truth of Faith

We believe that every single human being has a dignity and worth beyond measure. As Cardijn said, we believe that everyone is worth “more than all the Gold in the world.”

The reason that we believe this is because every person was created by God and created in God’s image. And because everyone is created by God, we all have a part to play in creating the Kingdom of God here on earth. When you believe someone is created by God and has a unique role to play in the world, then they are definitely worth more than any amount of money. This is what our faith is truly about. Because everyone has this dignity and worth, each person has the right to be able to live in peace and justice, the right to be free from exploitation and war and hate, and the right to be treated with respect by every other person.

2. Truth of Experience

The truth of faith (above) is what we believe. But when we look around us we experience so many situations where people aren’t treated with that dignity and worth. We see poverty, wars, lies, huge gaps between the rich and the poor, racism, unjust treatment of refugees, consumerism, people who only care about material things, and generally a world where money is worth more than people.

In the student world we can see discrimination against young people pressure for exams, boredom, bullying, unacceptable student/teacher ratios, and schools where students have no “say” in how things are done. In each of these situations we see or feel a contradiction between our faith and our experience. And every time we see a contradiction, our faith calls us to do something about it, to play our part in building the Kingdom of God.

3. Truth of Method

In order to really change the contradictions we as students need a Method and a Movement. The Movement must be organised and committed to its mission. The YCS is that movement, our mission is to take actions that can overcome these contradictions so that what we experience is equal to what we believe should be happening. If we take actions on our own we can fix part of the problem, but by working in a Movement that is for all students across the world, we can work on fixing the causes of these problems. We also need to have a “method” which is used by this Movement. And that method is the Review of Life. This method was developed by Cardijn based on the Three Truths as a way to overcome these contradictions in our everyday lives. The best YCS actions come from the Review of Life because they are based in our real experience as well as what we truly believe through our faith and our values!



Module 2: The Role of Adult Assistants in the Review of Life

Aim

- To train Adult Assistants to become more effective in assisting students to review their lives and actions in the Review of Life.
- To help Adult Assistants to evaluate the quality of Review of Life happening among students they are in contact with, and plan practical strategies to improve this.

See

1. Describe the experience of the Review of Life in your local group.
2. What have been the most positive things about these experiences? What impact have they had?
3. What are the challenges that your group faces when it comes to the Review of Life?
4. Have you had any other personal experiences of the Review of Life?

Judge

5. Distribute the handout on page 9 and ask someone to read aloud the passage from Cardijn, the founder of YCW and inspiration of YCS. Ask them also to look at the diagram below, which was drawn by an Adult Assistant from Perth.
6. Ask:
 - What strikes you about this passage or the image?
 - How can the Review of Life make these changes happen?
7. Now read the second passage, from Fran Peavey, a well-known community activist writing about 'strategic questioning'.
 - What stands out to you from this passage?
 - What might this mean for how we approach the Review of Life?

Act

8. Read the section of the handout entitled *Tips for Adults Assisting Students with the Review of Life*.
9. Taking all of this into account, what can you do to better empower students to review their lives?

Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



The Review of Life

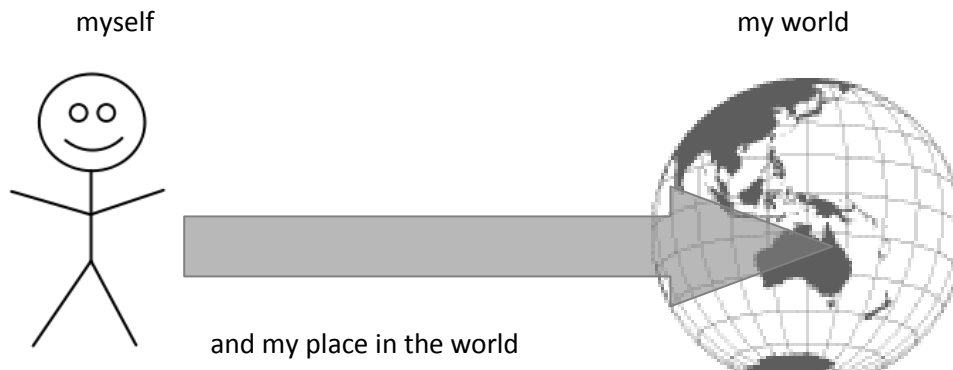
A word from Joseph Cardijn

Every Chaplain must always have this attitude and aim: I must bring about a double transformation. I must transform my boys and my girls so that they see the problems, judge and act, and become apostles, but also I must help them to transform the environment wherever they are. There is the double transformation, an interior transformation of boys, and an exterior transformation of the bus, the workshops and the factories, and the mines; and we must discover and help the boys and girls to discover that.

Cardijn Speaks to Chaplains published by Australian Young Christian Workers

A diagram from an Adult Assistant

Through the Review of Life I come to understand



A word from a community activist

An important task of strategic questioning is to create the environment where people can see the solutions that are within themselves. You listen deep into the heart of the person opposite you and this creates an atmosphere conducive to generative searching for "new" truth.

We all know of many people who are perfectly content to tell you what you should do. They are people who love to dispense "solutions"... Change that happens as a result of the "this is what I think you should do" school of consultancy are often too shallow and too fast to have long lasting effects. It is not empowering for the people who are trapped within the issues at stake. The people involved might look as if they have changed but, because the change strategy has not come from them, they don't own it, they have not invested themselves in the change.

A strategic questioner listens for the latent solutions that are hidden within every problem. And this involves a special type of listening. You are not merely passively listening. You are creating an action path with your attention. An attitude of expectancy helps fresh ideas emerge. This dynamic listening is in itself a special type of communication...Your attention is focused on the reality of now and also paying attention to the clues of what could be.

It is this dynamic listening that opens doorways within the issues being discussed. Your attention creates space around the speaker - space within which they can explore their own options.

Fran Peavey, *The Strategic Questioning Manual*



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Tips for adults assisting students with the Review of Life

It is the role of the Adult Assistant is to train and support students to run the Review of Life. This role is very important and involves actively empowering others to be leaders.

It is **not** the role of the Adult Assistant to run the Review of Life themselves. Of course, this would be easier, but it would not be true to the nature of YCS, which is about students being **apostles to each other**.

Some tips for empowering students to lead the Review of Life

- Make sure that each time your group reviews there is an allocated student running the review, and prepare with them beforehand. There could be three allocated students, one to run each section.
- Give students the nine 'See, Judge, Act' questions, which you can find on page 12. It's a good idea to make cards with the questions on them, and hand them out to all the students in your group to keep. The questions will help students get used to the process, and carrying around the cards will give them the sense that the Review of Life is a tool they can use any time and anywhere!
- Encourage students who are running review to briefly introduce and explain each section, particularly when a group is new or when there are new members.
- Encourage the leaders to invite students to ask other questions.
- Be discerning about speaking up yourself. Choose when you think it will be most helpful to say something and make it concise.
If possible, frame your comment as a question. For example, instead of saying 'Your action is too vague,' say 'Will this action be specific enough for you to keep track of?'
- After the review, reflect with the leaders about how they went, affirm them and share areas where you think they could improve. You could also affirm other students students who have asked good questions or reviewed themselves openly.

Tips for the 'see' section

- Encourage students to:
 - approach this section as objectively as they can
 - notice common experiences
 - try to get to the root of the problem
 - put the situations discussed in the bigger picture of what's going on in society and the world
- At the end of the see section, suggest that leaders ask something like the following: 'Is there anything else we need to ask so we can get the full picture?'

Tips for the 'judge' section

- Understanding the values and faith level of students in your group will really help you in this section.



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- Some other good questions for this section are:
 - What would Jesus do in this situation?
 - Can you think of any similar situations from the Gospels? Are there any other stories or teaching from your faith that are relevant?
 - What would the kingdom of God look like in this situation?
 - What has this taught you about yourself? What has it taught you about God?
- Complementary formation that familiarizes students with their faith can help them to judge better. This formation could include gospel and other reflections, prayer, catechesis and other faith community activities.

Tips for the 'act' section

- Make sure that students know the WACSS criteria for a good action, and encourage them to check their actions against it.
 - **Worthwhile** – the action can change what's happening
 - **Achievable** – the action is not so difficult that it's unrealistic
 - **Challenging** – the action requires some courage
 - **Step Forward** – the action works towards a bigger goal
 - **Specific** - the action needs to be clear and well planned
- Encourage leaders to give space in meetings to follow up and review previous actions.

Reviewing your own life

In reality, we can only learn the Review of Life by doing it. This is true not just for students but for adults themselves. To be most effective as Assistants, it's important that adults regularly review their own lives, so that they understand the process from the inside out, and really witness to the transformation it can bring.

We can't expect from others what we won't do ourselves!

So why don't you:

- review with other Adult Assistants on a regular basis OR
- join the YCW or another review group





The Nine Questions

See

1. What exactly is happening?
2. What is this doing to people? (the consequences)
3. Why is this happening? (the causes)

Judge

4. What do you think about this?
5. What does your faith say? What would Jesus do?
6. What should be happening?

Act

7. What is it that you want to change? (long term aim)
8. What action are you going to take now? (short term goal)
9. Who can you involve in your action?





Module 3: YCS Spirituality

Aim

- To enable Adult Assistants to reflect on the role and importance of spirituality in YCS.
- To equip Adult Assistants to support the spiritual development of YCS students.

Introduction: What is Spirituality ?

1. Share the following definition of spirituality from former International YCS Chaplain Mike Deeb OP:

'By spirituality we mean the spirit with which we do things, because we believe that it is the way that most enables us to encounter God... A way of awakening and encountering God's Spirit that is already within each one of us, so that it nourishes our faith and the way we live.'

Discovering God through Action and Reflection: A Spirituality of IYCS

2. Ask adults to reflect quietly on the following questions:
 - What values am I unwilling to surrender?
 - What am I willing to give myself and my energies for?
3. Explain that all this has to do with our spirituality.

See

4. What is your own experience of spirituality? How do you get in touch with your deepest values? How do you relate to God?
5. Compare this to the students you are in contact with in YCS. Are they aware of the spiritual dimension of YCS? What do they currently do to connect with and deepen their spirituality?

Judge

6. Read the following passage from *The Young Worker Faces Life*, by Joseph Cardijn:

...there is a religious enquiry, but one based on their own life. You do not speak about God, merely for the sake of speaking about God. That might serve seminary students, but not young workers. They need a formation based on life and designed for life.

When I began the YCW and came to speak about prayer to the first leader, I did not ask them for a definition of prayer. I said to them: "I am going to pray with you and in front of you". I knelt down and said: "Lord Jesus, we have spoken about so-and-so; such a thing is not going well; there are difficulties; You must help us." They were surprised....

... leaders should have retreats and days of recollection. Based as they must be on real life, these retreats and days of recollection supernaturalise the lives of the leaders. Through them they discover Our Lord and learn to love our Lord.



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[The one...] who conducts the retreat must understand the leaders thoroughly and must adapt himself to them. He must use his insight and judge what must be said, and how it should be said. He must treat them with respect as persons, with due regard for their personality....

7. Now read the following story about a student in the Australian YCS.

Tahila is 14 years old and has been in YCS for one year. In that year, she says, her spirituality has grown a lot. Through YCS, she says she has come to feel much 'more in touch with God'. YCS spirituality, Tahila says, is about becoming connected to God 'in that you are trying to be a leader like God was' – to live the ways that Jesus lived. Tahila becomes most aware of this when she is helping friends by giving them advice.

Tahila says that it's first and foremost the Review of Life that develops this spirituality for her as student. 'If someone has a problem you say "What does your faith say?" Talking about her beliefs makes Tahila more aware of them and challenges her to act in accordance with them.

Praying with her YCS group has also made a difference to Tahila. Students in Tahila's group take turn in leading different types of prayer. She remembers one particularly powerful candlelit prayer that took place in their church at night. 'We were in dark and holding hands and some people started crying. I felt heaps connected. Don't get that in other places. At YCS you're in a group where you're connected to each other because you're all there for YCS.'

Tahila acknowledges the important role that her group's Adult Assistant has played in helping her to deepen her spirituality. He often asks the students to consider what God would do in the situations they discuss. He's also available to answer questions about faith. 'He's really good at God talk,' Tahila says.

Tahila says her Adult Assistant is different from a religion teacher. 'Our religion teacher would read out of a book. But with [our AA] it feels like just a normal conversation. It's not complicated and it's more comfortable.'

Since joining YCS Tahila has begun to go to Church more and has joined other Christian social justice groups, and recently she represented YCS at a big Christian youth festival. While it was definitely something she wouldn't have attended before YCS, she really got a lot out of attending and hearing the personal stories that other Christians shared.

'I feel more connected with God now because I pray more and talk about him more. I went to a Catholic school but I never felt like that.'

8. Ask each Adult Assistant to come up with 4 words to describe YCS spirituality, based on what they have read and on their own experience. Ask them to share their words.
9. What do you think the role of spirituality should be in YCS?
10. Do you think the Adult Assistants' own spirituality needs to play a part in this? If so, how?

Act

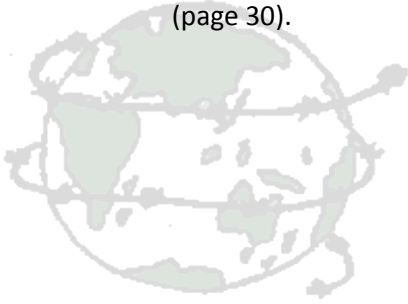
11. What can you do to better equip yourself to be a spiritual support for your YCS group?
What can your diocese to support AAs to do this?
12. How can you support and challenge students to deepen their spirituality through YCS?



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Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



see...



judge...





Module 4: Being an Adult in a Student-Run Movement

Aim

- To assist Adult Assistants to better understand and appreciate what it means for YCS to be a student-run movement.
- To help Adult Assistants to understand their role in this context.

See

1. Remind people that the role of the Adult Assistant is to support, empower and positively challenge student leaders.
Brainstorm the practical tasks that Adult Assistants do to achieve this.
2. Distribute the handout on page 16 and get the Adult Assistants to read through the section entitled 'The Role of Adult Assistants' to see if they had missed any areas.
3. Ask:
 - What do you find most challenging about being an adult in a student run-movement?
4. If you have a lot of Adult Assistants who are teachers, ask:
 - What is the difference between the role of an Adult Assistant and that of a teacher?

Judge

5. Explain that Joseph Cardijn described the Adult Assistants' role as both 'everything and nothing.'
Ask:
 - What do you think this means? How are adults 'everything'? How are they 'nothing'?
 - How do you feel about the 'student-run' dimension of YCS?
 - What is significant about high school students running YCS?
6. Read the excerpt from *Never Underestimate the Students*. Was there anything new here?

Act

7. How could the YCS group or team you work with be more student-run?
8. What actions can you take towards this?
9. Who can support your actions?

Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



YCS is a student-run movement

The Role of Adult Assistants

The role of the Adult Assistant is to support, empower and positively challenge student leaders. There are two parts to this role:

Outside YCS group meetings

The main work of an Adult Assistant is behind the scenes and therefore outside the group meeting. The Assistant is actually vital to the formation of leaders and members. They actively form students by:

- Meeting with the key leader/s before the group meeting in order to plan how they will run the meeting. This should include putting together the agenda and should be particularly focused on how they will lead the Review of Life and reflections. If other students were assigned actions for this meeting, ask the leaders to follow them up beforehand.
- Following up with the leader afterwards to review how the group meeting went and how they could improve things. Encourage leaders to reflect on how different students participated as well as on their own efforts as chair.
- Building friendship with the group leaders and members through activities outside the meeting.
- Watching out for who attends YCS meetings. Invite committed members to follow up others and encourage them to come along more regularly.
- Looking out for emerging leaders – students who are willing to take responsibility. Encourage them, and point them out to existing leaders so they can too.
- Keeping parents informed about what is happening with the group.
- Reflecting with leaders more generally about the direction of the group, the impact it is having and what they want to see happen.

In meetings

The Assistant also has a role in the meeting, but it's more of a "backseat role." They need to:

- Attend YCS meetings
- Respect the leaders by allowing them to chair without speaking up too much or interrupting.
- Ask well-placed questions that positively challenge students. Invite them to look deeper and take the next step.
- Supervise
- Assist the leader when and where they need it

Key points

There are a few key points to remember:

- Adult Assistants should **never** make decisions for the group.
- They should **never** be referred to as the leaders.
- Assistants do have an **active role** to play, but it happens behind the scenes.
- **The students are the leaders and the experts.** This is difficult to get used to because it reverses the roles we normally play, but it is essential to the movement.



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We're all human and we're all learning. We can't expect Adult Assistants to be perfect at this role. We just ask that they do their best in the spirit of supporting the students to develop as people, as leaders and as Christians.

An Excerpt from *Never Underestimate the Students*

*YCS is a Movement that is run **for, by, and among** secondary school students. This is a crucial part of what the YCS aims to do. We believe that students are capable of reflecting on their faith and living it out in a way that actively builds the Kingdom of God. In order to do this effectively they not only need to be able to reflect, pray and understand the world around them; they also need to be equipped with the skills necessary to engage with and transform that world in response to the challenge of the Gospel. They therefore need to develop a range of leadership and organisational skills. One of the key ways that YCS develops this is through being a student run Movement. Students take ownership and responsibility for the Movement and this allows them to develop the skills needed to lead an organisation (such as how to run meetings, take minutes, handle finances, etc) as well as those needed to play an active leadership role in their own community and among their peers (such as setting a positive example, being prepared to go against the trends, etc). Any organisation or Movement that aims to develop the spirituality of humans, especially young people, needs to make sure that in doing so they don't discount or disempower their abilities as a person. To simply run something FOR young people can never have the full impact of developing committed and capable Christian leaders. In the local group situation this means that the leaders of the group are students and that Adults involved are there to support and empower students, rather than to run the group or the Movement. This is why adults in YCS are known as Adult Assistants.*

judge...





Module 5: Adult Responsibilities

Aim

- To better equip Adult Assistants to meet their legal and ethical responsibilities as adults working with under 18s.

Before running this session

It is very important that this session includes good, reliable information about the legal and other responsibilities of Adult Assistants. The best way to ensure this is to invite your diocesan Child Protection officer or someone from the Catholic Commission for Employment Relations to help run this session. Though not absolutely necessary, their involvement means that Adult Assistants can ask questions during the session and get reliable answers straight away.

Before running this session, the facilitator must identify and become familiar with the Child Protection policy that applies to YCS in their area. Make copies of this policy for each Adult Assistant. If this policy is long (more than 3 or 4 pages) you may need to circulate it before the meeting for reading.

Ideally your diocesan YCS should have a Child Protection policy. However where none exists, local groups will be covered by the policies of the diocesan church or school. If your diocesan YCS movement does not have a Child Protection policy now is a good time to create one, either in preparation for or as an action from this session. See AYCS' *Guide to Recruiting and Forming Adult Assistants* for more info.

Introduction: Case Studies

1. Read the following two case studies from the *Guide to Recruiting and Forming Adult Assistants*:

Case Study 1:

Greg was an Adult Assistant for a local YCS group. He was 19 and had a great relationship with a many of the students. Because he was a kind person, they were comfortable sharing with him about their lives.

After a few months, Greg came along to a social event for YCS students. The party was organised by students, with the support of a YCS worker. Twelve students came and Greg was the only other adult present besides the worker. The party was held in a parish hall.

At one point during the party, the worker went outside with a few students. A few minutes later she heard a crash from inside. Some students were throwing a ball inside the hall and they broke a window. After this, YCS wasn't allowed to use the parish hall anymore.

There were a couple of reasons why this situation happened. Greg was a great friend to students but he wasn't confident speaking up when students were doing something that might lead to trouble, and he hadn't been given a chance to get better at this through training and formation. Also, no one explained to Greg his role at that party. He was getting used to being an Adult Assistant for a group, but because the worker was there, and had just invited him to come along like the students, he didn't realise that he was responsible for supervising students. We can't expect Adult Assistants to do something they don't know about!

Case Study 2:

Maureen had been an Adult Assistant for a year and a half when she went on a YCS picnic. During the picnic Robbie, one of the boys from YCS, came up to Maureen appearing very worried. Robbie was friends with Anna, who was also in YCS but was not at the picnic. He told Maureen that he had



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just spoken to Anna, and that she was at home with her dad. Robbie said that Anna's dad had been hitting her, and that they were both really scared that he would hit her that night.

Maureen was really concerned by what Robbie said. She remembered the training she had received about child protection and she explained to Robbie that she couldn't keep this information to herself but had to take action to make sure Anna would be okay. Maureen then spoke to the YCS worker, who called the government hotline for reporting child abuse, and the police because the situation was urgent.

2. Ask:

- What are some of the responsibilities of adults that these stories highlight?
- What might be some other legal and ethical responsibilities that Adult Assistants have?

See...

3. Distribute the Child Protection policy that covers YCS in your area. Allocate the policy's different sections to each Adult Assistant and ask them to summarise in point form. Invite them to share their summaries with the group.

Make sure your overall summary explains what the policy says about:

- Supervision of students
- Boundaries with students
- Protecting students from harm

4. Is this policy lived out in practice? Why / why not?

Judge

5. Read the following quote:

Our aim is the ensure that all communities and organizations within the church are safe and enriching environments for people of all ages, with special concern for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We believe that a commitment to follow the example of Jesus by respecting the dignity of each person will assist us to work together for the protection of all...

From *Our Church: a safe community, a shared commitment*, an awareness raising program of the Australian Catholic Church, 2007.

6. Why do you think we need to have 'special concern' for children and young people?
7. What does 'follow[ing] the example of Jesus' have to do with this?

Act

8. What steps can you take to better fulfill the adult responsibilities discussed in this session?
9. As a group, how can you better support adults to fulfill these responsibilities? For example is there need for further training, awareness raising or to create or refine your policy?



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10. At the end of this session do you have any lingering questions? How can you address these?

Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



see...



judge...





Module 6: Recruiting Adult Assistants

Aim

- To encourage Adult Assistants to recruit other adults to the YCS in order to ensure the long term sustainability of the movement.

Introduction: Group Activity

1. Give everyone a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write their answers to these questions:
 - Who invited you to become an Adult Assistant?
 - Why did you decide to become an Adult Assistant?
2. Ask each person to share their answer with the group.
3. Explain that people become Adult Assistants in many ways and for many reasons. Once part of YCS these adults play a very important role in the movement, by supporting students and their action to develop the movement. We must always be looking for new Adult Assistants to support YCS.
4. Distribute the handout, *Finding new Adult Assistants*, on page 23 and read it together.

See

1. Does every YCS group or service in our area have two Adult Assistants?
2. Are there any groups or services that need new Adult Assistants?
3. Are there any other ways in which more adult support could help YCS in our area?

Judge

4. Read the passage below:

'After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

(Luke 10:1 – 2)
5. Now read the following quote from Joseph Cardijn:

The task of the Assistant is a magnificent one. It is a difficult, slow task, which demands patience and perseverance in facing disappointment and failure and a readiness to give up a good deal. The Assistant must be the youngest in faith, hope and charity, the youngest in enthusiasm and optimism. All true Assistants will agree that they have been tremendously enriched by the movement; many will admit that it has completely transformed their apostolate and their life.
6. What strikes you from these passages?
7. How do these passages speak to you about involving more Adults in YCS?
8. What should we look for in potential Adult Assistants?

Act

9. Brainstorm the names of potential Adult Assistants or places you might find them. These could include: personal contacts of existing Adult Assistants, students and workers; ex-members; parish, school and university communities.



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10. How can we invite these people to be involved? Who will do this?

Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



see...



judge...





Finding new Adult Assistants

What calls a person to be an Adult Assistant?

People involved in YCS have commented on their desire to help, to be active, to work with young people and to make things right.

These people may have experience working with students or with youth or social justice groups in the past. There is also a chance they may have friends or family who are involved in similar activities.

Where do we find these people?

People interested in these areas can be found in a variety of places, for example:

- *The community of the school where YCS meets.* This includes teachers and campus ministers, but also other staff, like the school drama Assistant, as well as parents and ex-students.
- *Among past YCS members.* Often they are keen to be involved with YCS after they finish school but aren't sure how. Becoming an Adult Assistant is one way they can do this.
- *Universities, TAFEs and colleges.* These often have social justice or religious groups whose members may have some interest in supporting YCS. Campus Ministers or Student Associations may be able to help you in contacting people who might be interested or who could help you.
- *Family members or friends of current YCS members.* Be aware though that many students are uncomfortable doing the Review of Life with their parents. In a larger group you can get around this by having two Adult Assistants and breaking up into two groups to review, with the parent and child in separate groups.
- You might also find people interested in YCS through parish communities, religious orders, or community youth services.

Inviting adults to get involved

There are many ways to invite people. Often you will need to try a combination of things. The important thing is to be persistent – don't be put off if your first invitations aren't successful. Personal invitations work best. Ask current Adult Assistants, workers, students or other contacts whether they know someone who they could personally invite. If they are enjoying being part of YCS, who could they share this experience with? You can also place notices or advertisements in parish or school bulletins, diocesan newsletters and on university email lists. In advertisements, keep the information brief and make sure you clearly state a name and contact details.

YCS brochures like *What is YCS?* may be a good starting point for people considering becoming involved. You can also invite them to a diocesan meeting, information night or social gathering.

Your first meeting with a potential Adult Assistant

When you make contact with a potential Adult Assistant, invite them to meet up for a meal or coffee with the worker and /or experienced Adult Assistant, and if possible a student leader too. Being an Adult Assistant is an important responsibility, and a new Assistant should *never* start without first meeting to discuss what this involves and to fulfil child protection requirements.

The first meeting is a chance to find out whether a potential Adult Assistant is suitable for YCS and vice versa. Give them a copy of *AYCS Adult and Chaplain Pack* and go through it with them to make sure they understand the role and what would be expected from them. In particular, look at these sections:

- Introduction to YCS
- YCS Principles
- The Three Truths
- The Review of Life
- The Role of an Adult Assistant
- Examples of past actions



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If the Adult Assistant is joining an existing group, share with them any relevant information about that group. If the Adult Assistant is interested in forming a new group, discuss how they can go about this, in particular using the YCS program *Never Underestimate the Students (NUTS)*.

Give Adult Assistants an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Also ask the Adult Assistant why they want to get involved, and what kind of commitment they could make, as this may give you some clues as to whether they will be suitable. At your first meeting you may also need to take action to screen potential adult assistance in accordance with the child protection policy that applies to you.

What sort of person does a particular group need?

Each person has skills and talents that allow them to do things others can't. For students and Assistants to gain the most from YCS, it's important that the various skills of Adult Assistants are being used to their full potential.

Consider the needs of a particular group. If it is a parish group, it may be good for the Adult Assistant to be a parishioner. If it is a project or campaign group, can you find an Adult Assistant with skills that would help support students in these actions? If it is a school group, is there someone in the school community who would be suitable?

Remember that it sometimes works best if an Adult Assistant comes from the same community as the group itself, because it makes easier for the adult to understand where the students are coming from, to communicate with them between meetings, to invite other students from the community and to give advice about the parish or school where the students might be trying to take action. This is not essential but it often helps!

We should also be aware of gender. There are many great Adult Assistants who support and relate well to students from both sexes. However, being a solo female Assistant for an all male group, or vice versa, can be challenging. Sometimes sensitive topics (for example sexuality) come up during the Review of Life, and this can be uncomfortable for Assistant and students of different genders. Boys and girls may also communicate differently, and it is good for them to have role models from their own gender. In an ideal situation, where there are two Adult Assistant there would be one man and one woman. An all boy group should try to have at least one male adult, and likewise a group of girls should aim for at least one woman Assistant.

judge...





Module 7: Building Adult Support Teams

Aim

- To assist dioceses to establish new Adult Support Teams or to review the effectiveness of their current structure.

Introduction: Group Discussion

1. Distribute *Effective Adult Support Teams* on page – and ask the group to read the case study.
Ask:
 - What are the strengths of this model?
 - Are there any weaknesses?

See

2. What structures currently exist for adults in your diocese?
3. How does this structure or the lack of structure affect YCS?
4. What are the areas for improvement?

Judge

5. Read the section on the handout that refers to Starting an Adult Support Team.
Do you think that this structure is possible in your diocese?
6. Read the following passage from scripture:
There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”
1 Corinthians 12:4-13
7. Ask: What does this passage say to you about establishing an Adult Support Team?
Teamwork is a vital part of life in the body of Christ. God’s work involves many different individuals with a variety of gifts, talents and abilities. Establishing an Adult Support is very important to help work together to express the fullness of Christ working in the YCS.

Act

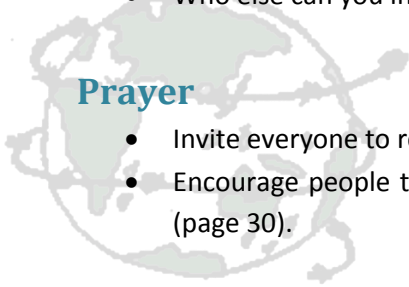
8. What is your long term goal for structures for Adult Assistants in the diocese?
9. What actions need to occur for this to happen?
10. Plan your actions, considering the following:



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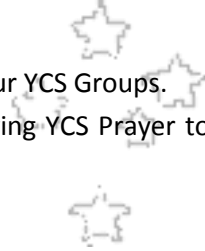


- Who will do it?
- When will it be done? Set a timeframe
- How will it be done?
- Who else can you involve?



Prayer

- Invite everyone to reflect silently on what was discussed today and on our YCS Groups.
- Encourage people to offer their own prayers and intentions before saying YCS Prayer together (page 30).



see...



judge...





Effective Adult Support Teams

A case study

In Melbourne Adult Assistants meet regularly at a gathering organised by an experienced chaplain and a former worker for YCS. These gatherings happen every 2 months and are open to all the adults who support YCS in Melbourne Archdiocese. This includes current Adult Assistants to local groups, former YCS leaders and workers and adults who are interested in getting involved.

Each meeting takes place over a meal. It includes a formation session that an experienced adult runs to help Assistants deepen their own understanding of YCS, and then an update and review of how things are going in the groups.

Having a coordinated approach to adult support has made a big difference to Melbourne YCS. When the gatherings began, for a while it looked like a meeting of Adult Assistants without any groups, but putting time into forming and strengthening this team turned out to be really worthwhile in the long-run. It has provided a forum for new ideas about how to move YCS forward. It was out of these meetings that adults came up with the idea of applying to the Archdiocesan Church for funding for a YCS worker, an initiative that has helped the movement to grow a lot. It has also provided valuable support to the young national and diocesan workers that have worked in Melbourne for YCS.

Starting an Adult Support Team

An Adult Support Team (AST) is a group of Adults who work to support the YCS in the diocese and consist of a combination of local group Adult Assistants and other Adults.

The AST aims to:

1. Be a support network for the adults (both Adult Assistants and Chaplains) in local groups.
2. Provide formation opportunities for these adults.
3. Assist with medium-long term co-ordination tasks if a student Co-ordination Team is not set up and encourage a student Coordination team to take place.
4. Once a student Coordination Team is established the Diocesan Adult Assistant needs to attend meetings and be a link to the Adult Support Team.

In setting up the team it is important to identify adults who could fill the positions necessary for the running of this team – ie Chairperson, Treasurer, Diocesan Adult Assistant. This team can be a good opportunity to involve past members in if they are available, particularly those that have particular skills, but who may not be available for a local group.

A representative from the Diocesan Catholic Youth Ministry agency and the Catholic Education Office of the diocese should be invited to sit on the team. They may not want to play an active role (although if they do this is good) however it is positive to have them there during meetings to ensure that the direction of YCS in the diocese is cohesively planned in the context of the general diocesan direction. In some diocese it may be appropriate to ask a Bishop to also be part of the team.

As a guide the team should meet every 6 weeks. In starting the team YCS and the diocese will need to identify and invite people to fill the key roles on the team. They will need to meet to work out how to get the team started, some suggestions include:

- Identifying possible members.
- Providing a team role description and invitation to potential members.
- Holding an information night.
- Then they can begin meeting as a team.



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Each team meeting should include:

- A chance for discussion of how things are going in local groups, particularly to support each others struggles, and to celebrate their successes.
- Looking at a particular element of YCS formation that will assist the adults in their roles.
- Planning for the YCS in the diocese – this could be anything from how to support an upcoming event, through to how to secure funding for a paid worker.

In some rural and regional diocese it may be necessary to have two or more regionally based Adult Support Teams. For example in Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese there is a 'Coastal AST' and a 'Central and Western AST'. These teams meet individually every 6 weeks and then gather together once a term.

Some other initiatives that could possibly be built into an AST structure, depending on the diocesan situation are:

- Holding an overnight retreat for the team once a term or once a semester. This would help develop relationships and
- Having an "Events Team" connected to the AST. This would help the Diocese when planning camps, gatherings, stalls, etc

In between meetings you can encourage contact between Adult Assistants via email, phone calls, etc. Student and worker groups have been using monthly „contact days“. These allow regular contact to be maintained without much pressure.

Adult Assistants may also want the chance to meet in a social or casual way without it being a formal meeting. This will give them the chance to simply relax and get to know other people from YCS. Be sure this is in balance with how many meetings you are holding, for example, consider holding two meetings and a casual gathering each term.

judge...





YCS Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Please fill us with your spirit of love.

Help us to SEE the world as you do,

To JUDGE with your heart, and to ACT with

The strength and courage you have shown us

As we work to transform our world

Amen



judge...



ACT!