

Come A Little Closer Campaign Components

- Connection to content in Bishop's Pastoral Statement. Make the spiritual component and the Catholic Church's outstanding witness a central part of the outreach.
Mention that this is the 30th anniversary year, and that there will be a full year of engagement.
- *Use everything* to make sure your plan is known to all. Use your email tag line, your phone message, and your website. Mention the call of this anniversary year in all that you do. Market idea to all stakeholders, especially clergy, lay leaders, press and related organizations. Make the work visible, via website, newsletter, school newspaper, church bulletin, Catholic press, etc.
- Include a formation process or going forward plan for each event; the event is then seen as a first step, as a way to build and grow a community.
- Targeted request for help: Find a few more volunteers...and ask for help just for this year.
- Organic, consultative leadership begins with "deep listening." Invite the community to create their own unique response to the Bishop's statement.
- Make it fun, whatever fun may mean to you...food, music, a great activity...

So, how do we get young people to "come a little closer"? Begin by using your natural and logical allies within your parish or diocese.

(All items marked with a (T) are in the NCPD Disabilities Toolkit, at www.ncpd.org)

Educational settings: Contact your Catholic Schools Office, Religious Education department and/or your youth ministry office to offer to speak about the Bishop's Pastoral Statement to middle or high school religion classes. Be sure to mention in your request that this is **an anniversary year**, to get their attention and to make clear you are asking for a timely response.

This would also be an opportunity to introduce **Catholic Social Teaching**, especially the foundational tenant, Life and Dignity of the Human Person. More on Catholic Social Teaching can be found on the USCCB website, found at www.usccb.org.

During Pope Benedict XVI's visit, he reminded us that "No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation." (Address to Catholic Educators, April 17, 2008) So we will continue to work with Catholic Schools Office, Offices of Religious Education, parish schools, DRE's and catechists to make sure our all educational settings are welcoming, informed and inclusive.

Then do the formation or follow up piece, by asking for a meeting on campus with interested students to come up with a project or effort. Use their energy and interest to leverage your own. Consider having a young person on your advisory board, or instituting an associate advisory board made up of teenagers and young adults.

And, this is important, make sure your own outreach plan has a marketing piece that really can and does get implemented. So, for example, put the notice of your presentation in the school paper; make sure the parent's group knows about your work, as well as the school's chaplain. If the school has a Best Buddies or service group, contact them as well about the follow up meeting.

Find out if colleges in your area have Newman Centers, and do the same kind of outreach. The Portland, Oregon diocese works with what they call Rex Communities where college students and those with a disability share friendship, faith and a meal once a month. More information about this model is at <http://www.archdpx.org/opd/faithcommunities.htm> and on the Youth Outreach page of the toolkit.

You might later invite all the Newman center chaplains to a meeting with you and your team, to talk about other ways to work together.

And now, what can teenagers and young adults do to translate the Bishop's Statement to their generation, what can they do to "come a little closer"? Here are some ideas:

Host a film screening: There are a number of great films and documentaries about persons with disabilities. A list of these films and links about how to obtain them are in the Media Guide in the toolkit. Following the viewing, select a panel of young persons to lead a dialogue about the film as it relates to one part of the Bishop's Statement. (T)

Have a sign language demonstration. The Archdioceses of Washington and Baltimore have co-produced a DVD called "Liturgical Signs and Prayers" that demonstrates how to sign a Mass, a baptism, wedding, etc. Information on purchasing this NCCL award winning DVD is on the toolkit. (T) You could also have a sign language spelling bee, judged by persons from your diocese who are deaf.

There is a great *youtube* video students will love, by a deaf performing arts group. They sign along to the rock ballad, "Waiting for the World to Change."

We have shown this *youtube* video during Catholic Schools Week, with success... so make the request now to have an event or connection to Catholic

Schools Week which occurs in late January 2009. .Again, you can use the 30th anniversary as a “hook’ to engage your local Catholic Schools, so plan now to come up with a short presentation for students, parents and/or faculty. And it’s not really enough just to present to one group; make sure all get a piece of the *Pastoral*.

Voices/Faces of Faith Campaign: Record Catholics, some who have a disability, reading parts of the Bishop’s Statement; then make an audio, video production. Make sure you come up with an appropriate permission and consent form; your schools office should be able to supply a template consent form, and there are others on the web.

Hold a Teen Social Event: Teens with and without disabilities need and want more social experiences. Partner with a youth minister, special educators and other professionals in the field to have a *3-M Event*: Mass, Meal and Mission. Because we are church, we begin with a Mass. Follow that with a meal, and the mission part can be purely social, or a combination of a social event coupled with a service project.

At the parish or diocese level, we might engage new leaders using the *Pastoral Statement* as the first text. Here are some other *Come a Little Closer* ideas for parishes:

- Start a Life Issues group to discuss the intersection of abortion and genetic screening. Reading groups/focus groups: Select a book, such as Jean Vanier’s Community and Growth, and read it over the course of a year. Or find a topic that cries out for some “deep listening” and begin that process with your group.
- Bookstore events ---feature a book or DVD as a way to discuss the *Pastoral*. Use the Media Guide in the Toolkit for suggestions.
- And you **could** plan liturgy...but in this Partnership Year...**do it with more partners**. The diocese of Richmond has provided a great model called *Inclusion Sunday*. Last June 15, many of the over 150 parishes in the Richmond, Virginia diocese came up with a plan to welcome and include Catholics who have disabilities at Masses that day. Their head start is your windfall. It’s all there in your toolkit, thanks to the work of the Richmond Diocesan director Nita Grignol...from a great visual planning tool called PATH to suggestions for inserts in church bulletins and liturgy selections.

For more information about the “Come a Little Closer Campaign,” contact the Archdiocese of Washington, Office of Ministry for Persons with Disabilities, Department for Social Concerns, at 301-853-4560,