NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
MINISTRY WITH
YOUNG ADULTS

TOOLS

Parish Readiness Checklist

A self-assessment to help pastors, staff, and parish leaders see where they are with young adults and choose a next step

Assess

Forty indicators across six areas of parish life

Discern

Three stages of readiness and a team conversation guide

Act

A 90-day plan for one or two focused next steps

A free resource from the National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults · ministrywithyoungadults.org

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

An honest look at where you are

Many parishes want to reach young adults but aren't sure where to start. This checklist helps your team see what is already in place, what is missing, and what one step would make the biggest difference.

It is not a grade. Every parish has strengths and gaps, and a small parish with a welcoming pastor and three committed young adults may be more ready than a large parish with a full calendar. The point is to start a conversation and choose a next step together.

HOW TO USE IT

1 Gather a small team

Include your pastor or a staff member who can act on what you learn, and at least two or three young adults. If you can, include a young adult who is not already involved.

2 Fill it out separately first

Each person checks only the statements that are clearly true today, not hoped for or planned. When in doubt, leave it blank. This takes about 20 minutes.

3 Compare and talk

Meet for an hour to compare results. The places where you disagree are often the most useful to discuss. Use the conversation guide near the end.

4 Choose one or two next steps

Use the 90-day plan to commit to one or two focused actions. Then revisit the checklist in six months.

A GOOD FIRST STEP

If you're not sure how young adults experience your parish, start by asking them. NIMYA's **Young Adult Listening Session Guide** walks you through a 90-minute session from invitation to follow-up.

THE CHECKLIST

Six areas of parish life

1 · WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY

- [ ] Young adults who visit for the first time are greeted personally and invited back.
- [ ] Our website and social media are current and show how a young adult can get involved.
- [ ] We have a way to learn the names and contact information of young adults who come to Mass.
- [ ] Young adults see people their age in visible roles at Mass, such as lector, cantor, usher, or minister of hospitality.
- [ ] Registering in the parish is simple and doesn't assume a family, a home, or a long-term address.
- [ ] Our parish welcomes young adults of every culture and language in our area.
- [ ] Young parents feel welcome at Mass with their children.

AREA 1 TOTAL _____ OF 7

2 · PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT

- [ ] Our pastor has said publicly that young adults are a priority.
- [ ] A specific staff member or volunteer is responsible for ministry with young adults.
- [ ] Young adult ministry has a line in the parish budget, even a small one.
- [ ] Young adults can reserve parish space without unusual difficulty.
- [ ] Leaders working with young adults have completed safe environment training.
- [ ] The parish council or staff has discussed young adults in the past year.
- [ ] We connect with our diocesan office or neighboring parishes about young adults.

AREA 2 TOTAL _____ OF 7

THE CHECKLIST

3 · YOUNG ADULT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

- [ ] We have asked young adults what they need in the past year and acted on what we heard.
- [ ] At least one young adult serves on a parish council, committee, or planning team.
- [ ] Young adults plan and lead their own gatherings, not only attend events planned for them.
- [ ] We regularly invite young adults into specific roles, not only through general announcements.
- [ ] We name and affirm the gifts we see in young adults.
- [ ] Young adult leaders have someone who mentors or supports them.
- [ ] Young adults help shape decisions that affect the whole parish.

AREA 3 TOTAL _____ **OF 7**

4 · PRAYER, SACRAMENTS, AND FORMATION

- [ ] At least one Mass a weekend is at a time that works for young adults.
- [ ] Confession and adoration are available at times young adults can attend.
- [ ] There is a regular place where young adults can talk honestly about faith and life.
- [ ] Preaching connects the Gospel to the real situations young adults face.
- [ ] Engaged couples and new parents are welcomed warmly and invited to stay connected.
- [ ] Young adults who are exploring faith or preparing for sacraments are accompanied personally.
- [ ] Young adults can find a mentor or spiritual director if they want one.

AREA 4 TOTAL _____ **OF 7**

THE CHECKLIST

5 · CONNECTION AND COMMUNICATION

- [ ] We communicate with young adults where they already are, such as text, group chats, or social media.
- [ ] There is a simple way for a young adult to find out what's happening this month.
- [ ] We follow up personally with young adults we meet, within a week.
- [ ] We know which young adults have recently moved into our area.
- [ ] We reach out to young adults who have stepped away, without pressure.
- [ ] We stay in touch with young adults who move away, including students and recent graduates.

AREA 5 TOTAL _____ **OF 6**

6 · SERVICE, JUSTICE, AND MISSION

- [ ] Young adults have regular ways to serve people in need through the parish.
- [ ] Service is connected to prayer and to Catholic social teaching, not only to tasks.
- [ ] Young adults help with parish-wide events and serve the whole community, not only their own group.
- [ ] We support young adults in living their faith at work, at school, and at home.
- [ ] We talk with young adults about vocation in the broad sense: marriage, single life, priesthood, religious life, and work.
- [ ] Young adults are sent out to invite their friends, not only asked to attend.

AREA 6 TOTAL _____ **OF 6**

READING YOUR RESULTS

Three stages of readiness

Add your area totals. Then look at the stage that fits, and at your lowest-scoring areas. Those are usually where a small step will matter most.

1 · Welcome	____ of 7	**4 · Prayer and formation**	____ of 7
2 · Leadership	____ of 7	**5 · Connection**	____ of 6
3 · Young adult voice	____ of 7	**6 · Mission**	____ of 6
Total	**____ of 40**		

0 TO 15

Starting

Young adults may be present but mostly unseen. Focus on welcome and on listening. Find one or two young adults who care and one staff ally, and ask before you plan.

16 TO 30

Building

Something is happening, but it may depend on a few people. Focus on shared leadership, a steady rhythm, and connecting young adults to the life of the whole parish.

31 TO 40

Sending

Young adults are part of the parish's life. Focus on forming leaders, reaching people who aren't yet connected, and sharing what you've learned with other parishes.

TEAM CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. What surprised you about your own results? About the team's?
2. Where did we disagree most? What does that tell us?
3. Which of our strengths could we build on right away?
4. If a young adult walked into our parish for the first time this Sunday, what would they experience?
5. Which one gap, if we closed it, would make the biggest difference?
6. Who isn't in this conversation who should be?

NEXT STEPS

Your 90-day plan

Choose one or two steps. Small and done beats big and planned. Write each one so you'll know when it's finished.

STEP ONE

WHAT WE WILL DO _____

WHY IT MATTERS _____

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE _____ BY WHEN _____

YOUNG ADULTS INVOLVED _____

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT WORKED _____

STEP TWO

WHAT WE WILL DO _____

WHY IT MATTERS _____

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE _____ BY WHEN _____

YOUNG ADULTS INVOLVED _____

HOW WE'LL KNOW IT WORKED _____

IDEAS FOR A FIRST STEP

- Host a listening session with young adults.
- Train greeters to welcome and follow up with newcomers.
- Invite three young adults into liturgical roles.
- Start one small group for six weeks.
- Name a staff ally and add a small budget line.
- Pair two young adult leaders with mentors.

DATE TO REVISIT THIS CHECKLIST _____

Keep going

Wherever you landed, these resources can help with your next step.

FROM NIMYA

Young Adult Listening Session Guide

The best first step for most parishes: ask young adults about their lives, faith, and experience of the parish.

FROM NIMYA

Small Group Starter Kit

A simple way to give young adults a regular place to belong, pray, and talk honestly.

FROM NIMYA

Mentoring Young Adults

Help adults in your parish walk with emerging young adult leaders.

U.S. BISHOPS

Listen, Teach, Send

The national pastoral framework for ministries with youth and young adults, with an implementation guidebook for parishes and dioceses.

YOUR DIOCESE

Diocesan young adult office

Most dioceses have an office or contact for young adult ministry who can connect you with training, networks, and nearby parishes.

CONSULTING

Work with NIMYA

NIMYA offers consulting, strategic planning, and cohort accompaniment for parishes and dioceses. Contact us through ministrywithyoungadults.org.

Free for your ministry

NIMYA resources are free for everyone who ministers with young adults. Copy them, adapt them for your community, and share them widely. No strings attached.

The National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults forms and accompanies pastoral leaders who minister with young adults in their late teens, twenties, and thirties, through pastoral formation, leader accompaniment, research, and advocacy. Learn more at ministrywithyoungadults.org.