Sustainable Youth Ministry

Mark DeVries wrote this book a couple of years ago, however I was just able to lay my hands on it after Eddie Volts, the youth minister at Sacred Heart in Troy, strongly encouraged me to read it. Honestly, it's been about a month since I sat down and read the book, and it has already changed youth ministry at St. Joe's drastically.

This book is not about making sure you have a good prayer life in order to be a good youth minister. For that I recommend the sacraments, a bible, and a good spiritual director. This book is about building a structure for sustained growth of ministry. It is not about the treasure its about the clay pots that hold it. This book is great for the over spiritual youth minister that has his head in a cloud of theology (me) because it grabs him by the throat begging the question, what are you doing about the bodies walking in and out of the doors every week?

Yes, we give great talks, have small groups, and the goal is to build Christ centered relationships, which is of utmost importance. This book emphasizes that is the treasure of ministry. DeVries asks, what is holding the treasure? For me it is a cardboard box that will last 3 to 5 years if I am lucky. Then, after a couple of years the box has a little more wear, and by year five the bottom all-together falls out, the treasure is gone, left to be picked up and used, guided in the right direction... hopefully, by someone else who has a cardboard box to hold the treasure.

We have a church culture that doesn’t know how to do youth ministry. A lot of times churches don’t even know what good youth ministry looks like. Then we are shocked when yet another youth minister resigns. Sustainable Youth Ministry brings to the table a responsible picture of youth ministry. DeVries makes clear that effective youth ministry is not a guessing game, and in fact there are similar steps every church or youth minister should follow in doing responsible youth ministry. DeVries goes over a wide range of issues, some highlights are; importance of proper investment, systems approach to ministry, necessity of playing church politics, sustainable leadership, and a lot more. What... you don’t expect me to re-write the whole book or something... If you are new to youth ministry, have been doing ministry for a while and need a boost, on a hiring committee, or even a priest thinking about hiring a youth minister this book is a must read. Seriously take the time read it... This book will change the way you see youth ministry.

Peace in Christ,

Tim McMillin
St. Joseph Cottleville Catholic Church
Director of Youth Ministry
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