



## **First Biblical Mission for Young People in the Americas**

# **GOD'S WORD IS ALIVE IN YOUNG PEOPLE**

## **1. WHAT IS THE MISSION**

### **What is the Biblical Mission for Young People in the Americas?**

This Biblical Mission is a missionary action of the Catholic Church, associated with an effort of evangelization and training of young leaders. It is carried out in the spirit of Jesus, who had the mission of announcing the good news of the coming of the Reign of God to humanity. This mission was taken over by his disciples and, with the same strength as yesterday, today and for ever, Jesus invites all baptized to bring him and his word of life to the end of the earth.

This Mission is carried out in Spanish and English throughout the Americas. Thus, young people who speak either one of these languages can participate.

### **What are the Mission's goals?**

1. Bring the Word of God to the young people, with new ardor, expressions, and methods.
2. Promote the evangelizing vocation of Catholic young leaders.
3. Create a sense of universal Church in Catholic youth and young adults.

### **Why this Mission is so important?**

There are five main reasons to carry out this evangelizing project with confidence and hope:

1. Many young people haven't had the chance to come close to the Word of God to know Jesus, receive his liberating love and strengthen their faith, hope, and charity.
2. There are enough Catholic young people in the Americas that, with their apostolic zeal and enthusiasm for life and pastoral action, can be agents of the New Evangelization as requested by Pope John Paul II.
3. Respond to the "Synod on the Word of God in the Life and the Mission of the Church," convoked by Pope Benedict XVI, with the goal of finding the Word of God in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in the Eucharist.

4. Participate in the effort launched by the Latin American bishops in their last meeting in Aparecida, Brazil, to put the Church in Latin America in a state of mission.
5. Activate the spirit of the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America* by creating a missionary bridge among the young people in the Americas.

## 2. HOW IS THE MISSION ORGANIZED

### Who organizes the Mission?

A Mission can be organized at the local, a parish youth and/or young adult group, a class in a Catholic school, campus ministry in a university, or a young community in a small town. They can be also organized in larger institutions, such as an arch/diocese or an apostolic movement.

### How is the team that carries out the Mission organized?

There are two types of teams working with a shared leadership approach:

- **A core team** made of: (a) one or two **organizing leaders** who coordinate the Mission, (b) **trainers or catechists** who train the young missionaries, and (c) **advisers** that support the young missionary team in the place of the Mission, especially if they are teenagers.
- **Missionary teams** made of young **evangelizers and hosts**, who are the main agents of the pastoral action in each Mission site.

### What are the profile and the mission of the evangelizers and hosts?

The evangelizers and hosts are Catholic young people, formed in their faith. They can be young adults, or teenagers, if they have a sufficient level of training and maturity. The age limit follows the guidelines of youth and young adult ministry in each country.

The Mission's sessions are designed to be facilitated by a team of four young missionaries: **two evangelizers**, in charge of the activities of reflection and the prayer time, and **two hosts**, in charge of hospitality, the sites and the materials needed for the mission. This team is in charge of inviting their friends and peers to live the Mission, though the core team also has the responsibility of invitation.

### Who are the participants in the Mission?

Young people in general, teenagers and young adults, who accept the Church's calling through the evangelizers and hosts, to know, pray, share and live the Word of God in their heart.

### Where will the Mission be held?

In all corners of Latin America and the United States, wherever the Mission will be promoted and welcomed as a pastoral project, including other Spanish-speaking and English-speaking countries. Primary centers for the Mission will be parishes, Catholic schools and homes. Other institutions and youth/young adult groups may choose to host a Mission.

## What is the Mission team's commitment?

- To implement the Mission, supported by the material that was designed for this purpose.
- To insert the Mission into the activities planned for the youth/young adult group, parish, school, apostolic movement... as church communities that take on their evangelizing mission in a joint effort with other Catholics in all the Americas.
- To integrate the Mission in the parish, by sending forth the young missionaries in a Sunday Eucharist and by celebrating the closing of the Mission, including all the participants, also within a Sunday Mass.
- To share the experience with the Instituto Fe y Vida and Saint Mary's through the Mission websites, in order to create a virtual community of evangelizers of young people and to help improve the organization of future missions.

## How much does the Mission cost?

- All material and resources for the Mission will be available for free through its website on the Internet.
- Saint Mary's Press will publish the manuals, guidebook and journal of the Mission, in English and Spanish, for those who prefer printed materials, which will have a recovery cost and a permission to make copies.
- Each institution or community that implements the Mission will be in charge of all other expenses incurred.

## The Mission will be implemented only in 2009-10?

God's Word has no time; furthermore, the Biblical Mission is a project that can be implemented any time in 2009-10 as well as in the future. The general process and the training of the young missionaries can be applied as many times as desired. The material will remain available on the Mission website.

Fe y Vida has a plan to offer periodically new contents for other biblical missions in the Americas. The frequency will depend mostly on the results of the first project.



### 3. PROCESS AND CONTENT

#### What is the process to follow and how long does it last?

There are three main stages. The preparation time will depend on the situation in which the Mission is planned; for example, an arch/diocese that needs to organize the Mission by regions will need much more time than a parish group or a high school.

##### 1. Initial preparation

- Decision to offer the Mission
- Formation of the core team with trainers or catechists, and advisers
- Study of the materials and planning of activities
- Invitation to candidates for the teams of young missionaries

##### 2. Training of missionary youth and young adults

- Convocation to create the teams of young missionaries
- Experience of the Mission by the young missionaries
- Training day for evangelizers and hosting youth and young adults
- Preparation of the process and materials for the Mission

##### 3. Mission implementation

- Sending out the teams of young missionaries
- Invitation to participate in the Mission
- Implementation of the Mission
- Celebration of the closing of the Mission

#### What is the Mission focus, and how many sessions does it contain?

To help the young people to identify with Jesus, quotes from the Gospel of John were chosen, in which Jesus presents himself saying “I am”. These quotes are represented on the Mission Cross. There will be four sessions:

- ***Jesus gives us his life and empowers us to bear fruit:*** “I am the vine” (John 15:5) and “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35)
- ***Jesus, the friend who gives life, today and always:*** “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) and “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)
- ***Jesus, the Good Shepherd, love me, call me, and gives me life:*** “I am the gate of the sheepfold” (John 10:7.9) and “I am the Good Shepherd” (John 10:11.14)
- ***Jesus is the light of the world; I want to be light of the world:*** “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12) and “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14.16)

## What fruits will the Mission bear?

- Encounter with Jesus through the Word of God
- Promotion of the evangelizing vocation in young people
- Training of local young pastoral leaders
- Multiplying effectiveness in the adult and young leadership in the Church
- Strengthening of the young Church and its Catholic and missionary identity
- Coordinated pastoral work among Catholic institutions

## And... what comes after the Mission?

The evangelizing commitment of the Church is never-ending; especially the young church cannot stop once this missionary project ends. It is everyone's responsibility: youth, families, priests, religious, schools, dioceses, movements... to continue the New Evangelization among the young.

All the institutions that are working together to make this Mission possible offer different means to support the ongoing evangelization in the young church; each one from its own particular ministry. Below you can find some contributions directly related to the youth/young adult biblical pastoral work, so each day more young people may know, pray, and live the Word of God from their heart:

1. Saint Mary's Press offers a program called *YES!, Youth Encountering Scriptures*, several versions of the Bible for young people of different ages, and a countless number of resources for the biblical pastoral work with the teenagers, in English. Visit [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)
2. Young people who wish to continue reflecting and praying on the Word of God in Spanish, can use the *La Biblia Católica para Jóvenes (BCJ)* and the *Diálogos Semanales con Jesús (DSJ)* series, which offers a *lectio divina* appropriate for young people, based on the Sunday readings. These resources may be used personally or in community. Visit [www.BibliaParaJovenes.org](http://www.BibliaParaJovenes.org)
3. In the U.S., Instituto Fe y Vida, can offer the course, "La Biblia desde la Óptica de los Jóvenes" (The Bible from the Perspective of Young People), in collaboration with dioceses, a group of parishes and/or other Church institutions. Visit [www.Feyvida.org/esp](http://www.Feyvida.org/esp)
4. Editorial Verbo Divino has abundant biblical publications and biblical materials for Catholic schools, in Spanish. Visit [www.verbodivino.es](http://www.verbodivino.es)
5. Dynamis offers a series of biblical CDs named, *Joven, a ti te digo*, which present young biblical characters with messages relevant to the young church, and songs with a biblical content. Visit [www.Dynamis.com.mx](http://www.Dynamis.com.mx)
6. Fe y Vida will periodically organize biblical missions with different focus for youth and young adults, and will produce the necessary resources to carry them out. Keep informed by registering in its the e-newsletter, at [www.BibliaParaJovenes.org](http://www.BibliaParaJovenes.org)
7. Get to know all the resources offered by the different institutions promoting the Mission. Visit their website, listed at [www.BibliaParaJovenes.org](http://www.BibliaParaJovenes.org)

## 4. MISSION SITES AND SCENARIOS

### Who organizes the Mission and where can be done?

The “organizers of the Mission” are people who exert a leadership role in an ecclesial instance which apostolic zeal embraces the evangelization of the young people. It can be organized from the leader institutions, with ministry partners or with the people who they serve in their ministry.

The parishes are a clue piece in the organization of the Mission, due to their function and the place they held in the structure of the Catholic Church, it enables to create a pastoral movement that gives life to the community of faith. The Mission can be organized in larger institutions, such as an arch/diocese, Catholic school, youth and young adult ministry, apostolic movements, religious congregations... and smaller institutions, such as a chapel, a small ecclesial community, a parish youth and/or young adult group... since all they have in common mission the evangelization of the youth and young adults.

### What importance has the parish in this model of Mission?

The parish is the principal organizing institution. As a place of encounter of the community of faith around the table of God, it is invited to open the doors of its temple and facilities to the youth and young adults groups who will be doing the Mission.

It is the parish role to involve the youth groups already established and the adult communities who desire to take the Word of God to the young people through this Mission. The organizer could be the pastor, the priest, the person in charge of youth ministry, or the coordinator of the youth and young adults group.

The parish could be the place where the core team meets, the young people get trained and the Mission takes place, if the facilities are allowed. It is preference the sending out and the closing ceremonies of the Mission to celebrate during the Sunday Eucharistic, so the community of faith can participate in them.

When the parish organizes the Mission, the youth and young adults would find in it a place to share their being and be in contact with God. At the same time, this will rejuvenate the parish and renew its spirit evangelizing and missionary.

The ideal is that the parishes that have favorable rooms and spaces for the youth and young adults to congregate, open its doors to receive as much Mission groups as possible. If the parish facilities are not sufficient, the parish could invite and ask for help to Catholic schools, apostolic groups, retreat houses and parents to open its places and houses as “Mission sites.”

At the same time, there would be Catholic schools, apostolic movements and other ecclesial groups, which may need support from a parish to celebrate the ceremony of sending out the missionary teams and the closing of the Mission, during their Sunday Eucharistic. Therefore, the parishes are invited to accept the Mission and support the efforts that may flourish in it.

The evangelization is incumbent of all the church; as a result, it is contemplated that any ecclesial institution with interest in the youth and young adults, accept the invitation to implement the Mission. At the same time, it is important to seek for support from the parish to celebrate the ceremonies of sending out and closing, converting the parish in a “Mission of

Missions.” If this is not possible, the ceremonies of sending out and closing could take place in schools, retreat houses, convents...

## What are the scenarios and Mission sites?

Every organizing institution could have under the direction of the core team as many missions as the number of missionary youth and young adults they have. There are many scenarios where the Mission can be organized; the most common are: a parish, a school, an arch/diocese, an apostolic movement, a religious congregations and small ecclesial communities. The different models of youth and young adult groups usually fit in one of these six scenarios. The website page for “Materials and Resources” and the Manual for the core team, offer some examples for the organization of the Mission in each of these six scenarios.

The term “Mission sites” is given to the places where the four evangelizations sessions take place. These sites are articulated with the ecclesial organizing institutions and they need to be prepared in a proper way for the implementation of the Mission.

Each Mission site will have a team of four young missionaries, two who will serve as evangelizers and two as hosts. These teams need to be accompanied by an adviser, if their members are adolescents or if they are young adults with limited pastoral experience.

**Each team of young missionaries  
is formed  
by two evangelizers  
and two hosts.**

**An adviser accompanies the team  
if its members are adolescents  
or if they are young adults  
with limited pastoral experience.**

The parish, schools, and movements... could accept as many Missions as teams of young missionaries can create and their facilities and family homes allow. It is recommended to do the calendar, finding the best place and time for the Mission sessions, according to the reality to the young people, taking in consideration where they live, the availability of transportation, their schedule from school and work.

When the sites of the Mission are homes:

- There is a need for one home per each team of young missionaries and it is recommended that one of the two hosts in the team live in the site home.
- The ideal is that the site homes are distributed in different zones in the parish, covering more territory and offering accessibility to more participants. Also, it could be contemplated different options of schedule for the young people that work o study. The *Manual for the core team* offers a visual guide on how to locate the Mission sites in a parish territory.

## 5. MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

## Which is the available material and when will it be accessible?

Some of the materials will be ready by early 2009 in Spanish. All the materials will be ready by towards the end of 2009 in both English and Spanish.

### Materials for the planning of the Mission

- Registration to get the information
- Flyers to invite to the Mission
- PowerPoint presentation
- Video clip for an anticipation campaign
- Template to view the initial planning
- Table of resources, with a content summary

### Materials for the implementation of the Mission

- Registration for the Mission
- Manual for the core team
- Manual for the young missionaries
- Guidebook for evangelizers and hosting youth and young adults
- Journal of the Mission for the participants
- Theme song and music notation
- Video clip of the theme song
- Theme songs for each session
- Tools and designs to promote the Mission

**You will be able to download and freely copy them for your Mission: [www.SMP.org](http://www.SMP.org), in English and [www.BibliaParaJovenes](http://www.BibliaParaJovenes), in Spanish**

## 6. COLLABORATORS, PROMOTERS, AND PLACES

### Which institutions cooperate to make the Mission possible?

***Instituto Fe y Vida.*** Conceptualized and directs the project. Obtained the collaboration of various institutions and coordinates its work. Acquired the funding needed to subsidize the project. Is developing all the resources needed for the Mission. [www.Feyvida.org](http://www.Feyvida.org) and [www.BibliaParaJovenes.org](http://www.BibliaParaJovenes.org)

***Editorial Verbo Divino.*** Donated the development of the materials. Will conduct a biblical campaign to offer *La Biblia Católica para Jóvenes* at a subsidized price in Latin America, through a collaborating institution in each country. Will try to offer the printed materials through the same institutions. [www.verbodivino.es](http://www.verbodivino.es)

***Saint Mary's Press.*** Donated the English translation of the materials. Will distribute the bilingual material and will be responsible for the English website. To buy the material in the USA, click here: [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)

***Producciones Dynamis (Martín Valverde).*** Created the anticipation campaign, the theme song and its video clip, as well as the training video. They are promoting the Mission with their network of collaborators and friends. Their network of musicians donated the theme songs for each session of the Mission. [www.Dynamis.com.mx](http://www.Dynamis.com.mx)

***US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).*** They are promoting the Mission in the United States through their Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and the Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

***Latin American Bishop Conference (CELAM).*** They are promoting the Mission in Latin America through their Office of Youth Ministry and the Pastoral Biblical Center for Latin America (CEBIPAL). Contact the CELAM: [www.celam.org](http://www.celam.org)

***Catholic.net, México.*** They are actively promoting the Mission through the various avenues at their reach. [www.es.catholic.net](http://www.es.catholic.net)

### **Who has provided financial support to the Mission?**

- Anonymous Foundation
- Benefactors of Instituto Fe y Vida
- De La Salle Christian Brothers: Midwest Province, California Province
- Fund for Pilgrims and Prophets, Carmelite Friars
- Fundación Verbo Divino, Spain
- Koch Foundation
- National Youth Foundation
- Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Diocese of Stockton
- Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, Inc
- Saint Anthony's Parish, Diocese of Stockton
- Saint Jude Shrine Parish, Diocese of San Diego
- Saint Mary's Press
- SERTULL, A.C., México
- Sisters of Providence, Washington State
- Sisters of Saint Joseph of Orange