

What is

The Journey to Adulthood?

Six years of spiritual formation that

- ★ provides a liturgical framework for the teenage experience of modern culture
- ★ celebrates young people's individuality and their creative potential
- ★ offers training in some basic life skills needed for adult living and interaction

Based on two key concepts:

- ★ Manhood and Womanhood are free gifts from God
- ★ Adulthood must be earned

Includes in-depth exploration of:

- ★ Self
- ★ Spirituality
- ★ Sexuality
- ★ Society

Follows the imperatives of the Baptismal Covenant

Enables young people to discover and experience the love of God

Provides sacred space for teens to question, wonder and work on their relationships with God and with each other

A place that promises: *"If you are seeking the Christ, together we will find him."*

The Journey to Adulthood

balances Bible study, prayer, and both serious and playful activities to nurture the whole person during the difficult passage from childhood to adulthood. Leaders model living the faith and remind young people of the ever-present love and mercy of God.

How can you become involved?

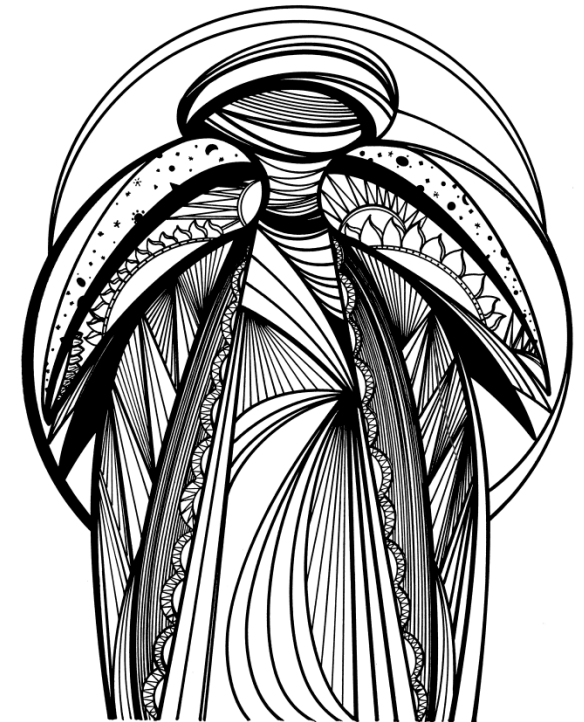
The Journey to Adulthood is based on the principles of relational youth ministry. It assumes that at least two or three adults (of both genders) will be leaders for each of the groups and that these leaders will only serve for two years before taking a "break." This engages many more adults in building relationships with youth and providing positive role models for them. The traditional youth ministry model of a single youth "guru" (paid or volunteer) depends on the personality of that individual -- and when he/she leaves, the youth program often collapses. The Journey to Adulthood is designed to engage lots of adults in nurturing the youth of their congregation and community. It is designed to bring young people into full participation in the life of the congregation so they actually ARE the church of today instead of the church of the future!

The Journey to Adulthood trains adults to appreciate youth. It is a program and rite of passage for junior high and high school students, yet it sometimes has its greatest effect on adult parishioners. When you have supportive clergy, grateful parents and collegial, fun-loving co-leaders, it is a framework for incorporating young people more fully into a parish. The teens become more visible and well-known, more involved and more cherished.

For more information on the SLO Deanery Journey to Adulthood Youth Program, either to enroll a teenager or to be part of the adult leadership team, contact

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The Journey to Adulthood



A Transformational Way
to do Youth Ministry

How does it work?

Christian formation is a lifelong process; this program gives young people a firm foundation on which to build. The program falls into three distinct phases, each of which is two years in length: **Rite 13**, **J2A** (Journey to Adulthood) and **YAC** (Young Adults in the Church).

If you were designing a faith formation program for young Episcopal teens, what would you include?

- ❖ Fun activities
- ❖ Learning experiences
- ❖ Friends
- ❖ Church
- ❖ Games
- ❖ Field Trips

All these and more are included in this program developed by an Episcopal church on the East Coast especially for young teenagers in danger of leaving the church. They have found it successful in maintaining committed enthusiastic young church members.

Rite 13

The first two years of the program is called Rite 13, a name that comes from a liturgical rite of passage we celebrate with the young people around their 13th birthday. This rite is loosely based on the bar/bat mitzvah tradition and is a way for the entire congregation to celebrate the unique gifts and abilities of their young men and women. The Rite 13 program assists young people as they begin to take the first steps of independence from their families into their own lives. During these two years, the community acknowledges the gift of gender, celebrates the amazing creative power and potential of these young people, and creates a safe haven in which to explore new ideas, new interests and new abilities.

J2A

The second two-year segment is **J2A** – an acronym for the **J**ourney to **A**dulthood. It may seem a little confusing for this second phase to have the same name as the entire six-year program, but this section was the first piece developed and many young people find that the bulk of their formational work gets done in these two years. In many ways, the J2A years are the heart of the entire program. During the J2A phase, teens learn and practice six basic skills for adulthood:

- ❖ active listening
- ❖ negotiation
- ❖ assertion
- ❖ research & information management
- ❖ partnership
- ❖ leadership

In addition to the skills listed above, teens learn different methods of Scripture reading, prayer and community-building. After two years, they are acknowledged as being equipped for new levels of responsibility and are given an opportunity to be confirmed. They are also invited to make a holy pilgrimage.



YAC

The last phase, **Young Adults in Church (YAC)**, encourages older youth to take on more adult responsibilities – both in their church and in their community. They are challenged to become good stewards of their time, talent and treasure. They work on identifying their gifts and commit to a specific ministry that uses those gifts. They study some of the church's ancient creeds and then write their own statement of beliefs. They look back on what they have studied, learned and experienced over the last six years and use that as a basis for their own growing spirituality.

The lesson materials are supplied by Leader Resources (www.leaderresources.com). There is plenty of flexibility. Here in San Luis Obispo County we combine teenagers from all the Episcopal churches in the Deanery, meeting once a month for the whole day. We start with the Parish Eucharist and continue with study and activities in the afternoon. So, two of the things that participants learn is that there are other Episcopalians their age and they learn of the similarities and differences among the various congregations.

A key aspect of the program is the formation of community. Participants should look forward to coming. This is not a drop-in group but it is always open to new participants who want to either visit or to become group members. Members are asked to commit to the group, and to work with the leaders to change their experience rather than just dropping out if things are dull/difficult for awhile. Since meetings are only once a month, missing one meeting will have considerable impact. Therefore, parents are asked to strongly support their teenager's commitment to the group.