**Time Management in Youth Ministry**

**Office of Youth Ministry | Diocese of Green Bay, WI**

1. **PRAY**. Nothing will make you more fruitful than prayer. “No time to pray is just as lame as ‘No time to breathe.’”
2. **MISSION**. Stay true to your mission. If something isn’t in line with your mission, it’s ok to say no. Once in a while, it’s ok to do something outside of your job description or original volunteer intentions, but remember that God gave you a gift for a particular mission in the Church. Others are given their particular charisms. Don’t spread yourself too thin. Doing less allows you to do the essentials better.
3. **DELEGATE**. Delegate the nonessentials. Make a list of things that pop up during the day you could give to a parent, teen, or parish volunteer.
4. **SET A SCHEDULE.** Set a schedule and get into habits.
* Wake up and pray your morning prayer before you get out of bed
* Set up a time to get up every morning. The more consistent you are, the better.
* Make your bed. Clean your room. Clean your office at the end of the night. (all habits that will allow you to function better)
* Don’t start the day with your email if it frustrates you. Do a project first, and then use a later time to then answer emails. If there is a part of the day that you usually get tired, use that time to run errands, answer emails, or respond to phone calls. Exit out of your email if you are being distracted from it.
1. **MINIMIZE INTERRUPTIONS.** When you are in the office, expect constant interruptions – “the copier is jammed”, “can you fix my wireless connection”, Father needs you to come to an impromptu parish meeting, a phone call turns into an hour of jabbering. Part of working in a parish is having the opportunity to work alongside many people and being Christ to them. But, simultaneously, you also have to be faithful to your mission.
* Don’t be like the kid who does his “homework in front of the TV.” You can socialize at work, but also set aside time to really get to work. You can watch TV and do homework – just not simultaneously and I’m sure both experiences will be better for it.
* If you have to concentrate, find another part of the parish or office to sit. Go to a coffee shop or stay at home for that day telling the office staff you are working intently on a project. Don’t look at your email. Work and you will be surprised how much you get done being devoted to one thing rather than multitasking.
* You want to prioritize your time so that when the high schoolers are out of school, you are available, your youth group has good questions or lectio divina ready, etc. Remember that closing your door is ok as you are working for Jesus first, and then for the holiness of the teens who expect your full attention during hours the staff is not usually there.
* You need time to recharge between office hours and being with the teens. Do not feel bad if you need to go to the Church and read for your youth group night, pray for your teens, or simply sit in silence. That is a great way to recharge especially when interruptions are driving you nuts!
* Don’t leave pintrest, facebook, twitter, etc. up if they are a distraction. Use them as a break. Set your timer on your desk if you give yourself a 15 minute break to go to the bathroom and clear your mind. During that break, take a loop outside or even go into the Church and pray for a bit.
1. **TO DO LIST**: Make a “Five things that need to be Accomplished Today” list. I personally use a white board in my office and at home, but you can use a sticky note, a notebook, electronic form, or planner. Make sure to cross things off when you are done with them (a pretty epic feeling). Make sure you include something relational with a teen that day – writing a letter, sending a group facebook message or group text, inspirational postcard, planning to attend a sporting game, etc.
2. Stephen Covey, the author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*  gave a time management matrix which is given here.



1. **AFTERNOON CATCUP UP**: Designate one day – possibly on a Friday afternoon to catch up on emails, notes, or any other phone calls or things that you didn’t get to during the week. Don’t schedule anything on that afternoon.
2. **MINIMIZE CONFUSION**: If possible, put forms and details online on your parish webpage. If people call, it minimizes those small and tedious tasks of attaching forms and information in an email or trying to clarify exactly which form they are looking for.