Becoming a Curator of Content in a Digital Age

A summary of selections from

Faith Formation 2020; Designing a Future of Faith Formation

By John Roberto

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry highly recommends reading the full book Faith Formation 2020 by John Roberto, and the sections entitled “Becoming a Curator of Content” on pages 107-109 and “Faith Formation with Digital Media and Web Technologies” on pages 127-133.

Summary:

There is an abundance of “Catholic” content and experiences, especially online, for our young people and parents. Experts say that we will soon reach a point where all of the content on the internet will double every 3 days. Because of this, there is a desperate need for leaders today to take on a new role as “curators of content”. Museums often have a curator, who is a subject-matter expert on the content, and they will choose what to display in a way that makes sense to museum visitors. Similarly, “this dramatic increase in information requires content curators who continually find, group, organize, and share the best and most relevant content and resources available” (pg 107).

John Roberto lays out some key skills to being a good curator, including: being able to locate, organize and evaluate content; create or re-purpose content when necessary; and capitalizing on social media to build connections.

Roberto describes being a curator in three simple steps: 1. Identify content, 2. Organize content, and 3. Share content.

New digital media and web technologies have changed the way we can do youth ministry and faith formation with all generations. Utilizing digital media and the abundance of online resources mentioned above, ministry can now blend physical face-to-face ministry, with virtual face-to-face and other interactive online ministry to provide round-the-clock, ministry and faith formation for all generations, anytime and anywhere. The community, conversation, discussion, and even prayer is no longer confined to the Sunday evening meetings, but can be continued throughout the rest of the week in more personal and interactive platforms than ever before. Roberto explains that “the new digital tools can empower people to connect with each other online, share their stories and faith experiences, give witness to the ways they are living their faith (practices), create faith formation content (print, audio, video) to share with others, and so many other user-generated activities” (pg 127).
Application in Catholic Youth Ministry:

What does this mean for us in Catholic youth ministry? Young people know better than any of us that there is now a world of information available at their fingertips. What they do not always know is how to sort through that information to find what is true and good. We as youth ministry leaders need to help evaluate content on the internet to put the best resources and experiences in the hands of our youth and parents. We also need to teach youth and parents the skills needed to evaluate for themselves content, resources, and experiences that they find on the internet. Finally, there is still a need for creativity in developing some new content for youth ministry and taking existing content, such as pop culture media, and re-purposing it with a Catholic message. When looking to evangelize and catechize young people, we have to reach out to them where they are located. Thanks to the booming growth of smart phones and tablets, young people are located online. When we blend our physical face-to-face ministry with interactive virtual experiences of faith formation, sharing, and prayer, we are fostering young people’s experiences of faith in everyday life, anytime and anywhere, and helping them to understand how faith is relevant all the time, not just on Sundays.
Anyone concerned with the future of the church, faith formation and building authentic intergenerational community should read this! Read more. One person found this helpful. I found FF2020 to be a useful description of the changes we're seeing and some of the underlying reasons for them. However, in the area of what to do about these demographic shifts it was quite thin. Read more.