To reach more kids across Texas, Young Life has been working to introduce Catholic leaders and adults to typical Young Life events and traditions. Recently, a monumental collaboration was established, as both Young Life and the Catholic Church seek to bring kids to the feet of Jesus.

The Catholic Church & Young Life

On April 21st, a mission agreement was signed. The agreement establishes a collaboration between Young Life and the Catholic Church. The collaboration is only natural, as both organizations are committed to sharing the love of Jesus Christ and ultimately saving kids with a local church family.

For some time now, Young Life has been trying to introduce Catholic leaders and adults to typical Young Life events and traditions in order to reach more kids across Texas. The best way to introduce Catholic leaders to the mission of Young Life was clear – camp! Recently, twelve Catholic adult guests from the Diocese of Brownsville in the Rio Grande Valley, trekked north to Camp Buckner to experience a Young Life weekend camp. The experience was transformational. The Catholic leaders were amazed by how purely the love of God was displayed through Young Life.

Hugo da la Rosa, a Catholic teacher and campus minister in the diocese of Brownsville, recounted his experiences:

"I saw staff greeting teens with enthusiasm and genuine care, using music, costumes/personalities & humor to create an engaging and non-threatening environment for the campers. Sack leaders gathering together to plan and pray, intentionally choosing their teenage friends to be parts of activities that would help bolster their self-esteem and bring them closer to God. I saw a definite Young Life culture that leaders and participants share, bridging generations. Cultural, denominational and economic differences." (Read more here)

These leaders were thrilled to find Young Life’s goals consistent with those of the Catholic Church. The organizations decided a collaboration could be life changing for both adults involved in ministry and kids mentored to.

Finally, on April 21st, the Most Reverend Daniel Flores, bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas signed the agreement to join efforts with Michael Havercamp, YL National Liaison to the Catholic Church, and Peter Johnson, Regional Director for YL Lone Star Region. The progress is a first step of Pope Francis’ call to new evangelization. He called Catholics to get messy – something Young Life knows a whole lot about.

"An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances; it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the “wounds of Christ in others.” -Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)

Before they get to know Young Life, some church leaders fear that they’ll take kids away from the local church or parish. Instead, Young Life’s goal is to bring all kids to their church home. The Lone Star Region aims to have their staff to minister effectively to kids of all denominational affiliations, including Catholics. The goal is to involve Catholics as Young Life leaders in order to engage in the lives of all kids, introduce them to Jesus Christ and ultimately bring them to church.

As the collaboration deepens, it is necessary to incorporate Catholic leaders and youth in the community as volunteers and connectors between Young Life and the Church. Michael Havercamp suggests, “If over 90% of kids in a given area are Catholic (like in the Valley), we aim to have Catholics constitute 50% of our leadership team.” Young Life’s ministry should be representative of the faith community. As a united body of Christ, the name of Jesus will continue to reach young people throughout the Lone Star Region. Now, we need Catholic volunteers.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS POSSIBLE. WE’RE THRILLED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL IN THIS COLLABORATION. BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP! KNOW ANY CATHOLICS INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED WITH YOUNG LIFE? CONTACT US!

Get Involved!