

Hispanic Youth

Invite them and they will come



4 Questions

- ▶ Who are Hispanic Youth?
 - Who is our audience? What constitutes a Hispanic young person?



4 Questions

- ▶ Who are Hispanic Youth?
- ▶ What do Hispanic Youth need?
 - What kinds of physical and emotional support can the church offer them?



4 Questions

- ▶ Who are Hispanic Youth?
- ▶ What do Hispanic Youth need?
- ▶ What do Hispanic Youth bring?
 - How can Hispanic youth be more fully incorporated into the life of the parish?



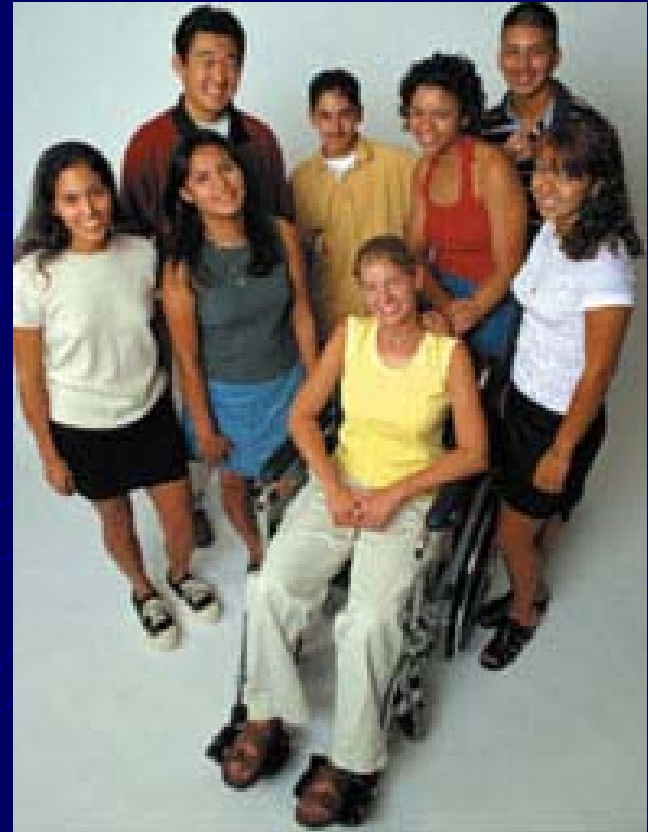
4 Questions

- ▶ Who are Hispanic Youth?
- ▶ What do Hispanic Youth need?
- ▶ What do Hispanic Youth bring?
- ▶ What can we do?
 - What needs to happen in order for them to feel welcomed and involved?

Who are Hispanic Youth?

► Can be classified into four major categories* with very different needs

- Immigrant workers
- Identity seekers
- Mainstream movers
- High risk youth



* Instituto Fe y Vida

Who are Hispanic Youth?

Immigrant Workers

Mostly Spanish-speaking

Little formal education

Mostly of Mexican origin

Have large families

Many are undocumented

Motivated and helpful

About 74% Catholic

Willing to work hard

Many seek moral and spiritual support

Mostly lower end of economic spectrum

Who are Hispanic Youth?

Mainstream Movers

Mostly English-speaking

College education

Mostly born in US

Attend private schools

May leave barrio behind

Motivated and hopeful

May leave Catholic Church

Willing to work hard

May look down on other
Hispanics

Mostly upper-middle on
economic spectrum

Who are Hispanic Youth?

Identity Seekers

Mostly born in US

Mostly bilingual

Children of immigrants

Low self-esteem

Struggle to finish school

Unmotivated/apathetic

May find hope in work
and family

Mostly in lower-middle of
economic spectrum

May seek refuge in alcohol, drugs or promiscuity

Who are Hispanic Youth?

Gang Members and High-Risk Youth

Limited bilingual abilities	Little formal education
Mostly born in US	Anger toward society
Many live in inner cities	Experience despair
Most are unemployed	Many are incarcerated
May become habitual drug users/sellers	Mostly at lower end of economic spectrum

Different Mindsets

► School Systems



Different Mindsets

► School Systems

- Secondary school in Latin America ends at 15 or 16 years old, at which time most youth begin to work
- Hispanic youth in the US often fail to complete high school, opting to leave at age 16
- Ministers should stress to young people the importance of education

Different Mindsets

► Youth Ministry/Pastoral de Jóvenes



Different Mindsets

► Youth Ministry/Pastoral de Jóvenes

- The word *jóvenes* traditionally refers to those between the life stages of puberty and marriage (or about 15-30 years old)
- For Latinos, intergenerational interaction among youth and young adults is common

Different Mindsets

- ▶ Work with parents through a translator to gain their trust and promote the best interests of the youth.



Just the facts...

- ▶ Hispanic population in the US is young.
 - In 2000, 35.7 percent of Hispanics were less than eighteen years old.
 - Hispanics make up 41% of Catholics under 30.
- ▶ In the year 2000, 84% of the US population over age 25 had completed high school.

What do Hispanic Youth need?

► Education

- Better understanding of US education system and opportunities for funding
- Encouragement to finish high school



What do Hispanic Youth need?

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Identification with peers
 - “Many jóvenes come to the church to meet their need for identity and community” *



* Medina-Rivera, 16

What do Hispanic Youth need?

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Identification with peers
- ▶ Pastoral care
 - Be aware of your constituency in order to develop appropriate programs
 - ▶ ESOL, traditional pastoral care in Spanish, etc.

What do Hispanic Youth need?

- ▶ Vibrancy and acceptance in both cultures
 - Often feel “stuck in the middle”
 - Help them take the best of both worlds



What do Hispanic Youth bring?

► Cultural sharing

- Opportunities to explore both cultural and Catholic identity
- Celebrate diversity



What do Hispanic Youth bring?



- ▶ Willingness to lead
 - "Jóvenes occupy a relevant place as agents of cultural transformation because...one of their ideals is to create a better world than the one in which their parents lived." *

What do Hispanic Youth bring?

► Sense of Mission

- They become evangelizers for their peers *
 - Highly successful missionaries



**Vilar, 39*

What can we do?

- ▶ Get to know your community
 - Find an “objective” translator
 - Set up a meeting with family/friends



What can we do?

► Create sacred space

- Culturally specific youth groups should also be integrated into larger youth community
- "Programs for youth from one country or region increase pride in a specific bi-cultural identity."*



**Easter and Refiki, 2*

What can we do?

- ▶ Create sacred space
- ▶ Offer a chance to plan
 - Invite them to attend youth planning meetings



What can we do?



- ▶ Remain involved and supportive
 - "We cannot leave the responsibility for youth ministry in the hands of young leaders. If we want *jóvenes* to mature, and groups to remain intact, we must have pastoral workers who support the *jóvenes* and who foster meaningful, valuable apostolic action." *

What can we do?

- ▶ Create sacred space
- ▶ Offer a chance to plan
- ▶ Remain involved and supportive
- ▶ Celebrate diversity and growing involvement



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Different Youth, Different Needs

	Immigrant Worker	Identity Seekers	Mainstream Movers	High Risk Youth
Spiritual Life	Need faith to face great life challenges	Need faith to develop a sense of hope	Need faith to overcome individualism & consumerism	Need faith to move from anger/hatred to forgiveness
Intellectual Development	Need an accessible alternative system of education	Need encouragement to finish high school or GED	Need financial aid and help understanding U.S. system of high education	Need an accessible alternative system of education
Affective Maturity & Socialization	Need a healthy environment for relationships	Need assistance to develop self-esteem	Need positive role models of social/cultural integration	Need a place to belong, healthy role models
Acquisition of Human Virtues	Need help to avoid pitfalls of vice/addictions	Need guidance and directions in life	Need to learn to value community service	Multiple deep-seated needs
Percent of Young Hispanics	25% to 45%	25% to 45%	15% to 25%	10% to 15%