

# Bridging the USCCB Ministry Frameworks



## **Listen, Teach, Send (2024) and Sons and Daughters of the Light (1996)** *on Catholic pastoral ministry with young adults in their late teens, 20s, and 30s*

In 2024, the U.S. Bishops approved *Listen, Teach, Send: A National Pastoral Framework for Ministries with Youth and Young Adults*, a national response to Pope Francis' 2019 apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit*. It also built upon the insights of prior USCCB frameworks including *Empowered by the Spirit* (1985), *Sons and Daughters of the Light* (1996), and *Renewing the Vision* (1997) on collegians, young adults, and youth, respectively.

This is a brief guide on the particular connections between *Listen, Teach, Send* and *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, and what they have to say about the accompaniment and evangelization of young adults.

**The purpose of *Listen, Teach, Send*** is to provide all Catholics with an overarching and comprehensive framework for accompanying young people in the home, within the family, and through faith communities, while **the aim of *Sons and Daughters of the Light*** is to offer “people in leadership positions in church life” a specific plan for developing a pastoral ministry for young adults, in their late teens, twenties, and thirties, in parish, campus, chaplaincy, diocesan/eparchial, movement, and organizational settings.

Some key distinctions between these two USCCB documents include:

- **The audience** of *Listen, Teach, Send* includes families, pastoral ministers, and active Catholics (including young people), while *Sons and Daughters* is written primarily for ministry leaders.
- **The overarching narrative** of *Listen, Teach, Send* is grounded in the journey to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), which highlights three moments of accompaniment, modeled after Jesus' actions in the biblical story; on the other hand, *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, while inspired by the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:9), is structured to respond to the questions of “who, why, what, where, and how,” respectively.
- **The focus** of *Listen, Teach, Send* is on both youth and young adults, whereas *Sons and Daughters of the Light* is focused specifically on young adults (ages 18 to 39). Another document from the USCCB, *Renewing the Vision*, was developed to address ministry with adolescents (ages 12 to 18).
- **The inspiration for writing** the pastoral plan, *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, was the visit of St. John Paul II to the United States for World Youth Day 1993 in Denver, Colorado. This seminal experience inaugurated a new springtime for ministries with young people in the Catholic Church in this country. *Listen, Teach, Send*, on the other hand, was inspired by the global synod on young people convened by Pope Francis in 2018 and the subsequent release of his apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, in 2019, which renewed the Church's work of accompanying and evangelizing youth and young adults.

## COMPLEMENTING EACH OTHER

Despite the 28-year difference in their release dates, *Sons and Daughters of the Light* (SDL) in 1996 and *Listen, Teach, Send* (LTS) in 2024 share a **rich complementarity**. A pastoral minister could read *Listen, Teach, Send* first to gain a foundational understanding of the breadth of journeying with all young people, and then engage with *Sons and Daughters of the Light* as a guide to develop a particular plan for ministry with young adults.

The “the vision of faith” (part two of SDL) roughly corresponds to the three key movements (or parts) of LTS.

### Listening: “The Call to Community: Nourishing Faith” from *Sons and Daughters*

“The communion of the Church, rooted in God’s love, offers young adults the vision, purpose, and foundation for the healing that they long for in the midst of life’s painful experiences.” (SDL)

“Listening should always lead to a response that is rooted in what was heard and seen, as well as unique, as every young person is distinct. Such response is done within a ‘community of communities...’” (LTS)

- The listening dimensions of “**encountering young people**” and “**being fully present**” (from LTS) can be found in the work of “forming faith communities” and “formatting faith communities of peers” as expressions of *connecting young adults to the Church* and *with a peer community* (from SDL).
- The listening dimensions of “**understanding across generations**” and “**healing brokenness**” (from LTS) can be found in the work of “pastoral care” in *connecting young adults to the Church* (from SDL).

### Teaching: “The Call to Holiness: Growing in Jesus Christ” from *Sons and Daughters*

“Simply put, it is God’s call to be in union with Christ... To be holy is to live according to the Gospel... It is a call to embrace the Beatitudes... It entails listening and meditating on the word of God and actively participating in the Eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church.” (SDL)

“By proclaiming the kerygma, passing on an evangelizing catechesis, sharing the truth in love, and helping people encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, ministries with youth, collegians, and young adults can foster growth in a relationship with the Trinity.” (LTS)

- The teaching dimension of “**proclaiming Jesus Christ**” (from LTS) can be found in the work of “evangelizing outreach” in *connecting young adults to the Church* (from SDL).
- The teaching dimensions of “**an evangelizing catechesis**,” “**sharing the truth in love**,” and “**renewing sacramental life**” (from LTS) can be found in the work of “spiritual formation” and “religious education” in *connecting young adults to Jesus Christ*, as well as in the work of “forming consciences” in *connecting young adults to the mission of the Church in the world* (from SDL).

### Sending: “The Call to Service: Living Faith in the World” from *Sons and Daughters*

“The challenge of faith is to be a credible witness to the power of the Gospel in the world today.” (SDL)

“One of the goals of the Church’s accompaniment of youth and young adults is to guide them toward their mission to transform the world toward the Kingdom of God.” (LTS)

- The sending dimensions of “**bold evangelizing witness**,” “**charity and justice**,” and “**young faithful protagonism**” (from LTS) can be found in the work of “educating for justice” and “developing leaders” in *connecting young adults to the mission of the Church*, and as well as “developing peer leadership” and “identifying a young adult team” in *connecting young adults with a peer community* (from SDL).
- The sending dimension of “**vocational discernment**” (from LTS) can be found in the similarly titled work of “vocation discernment” in *connecting young adults with Jesus Christ* (from SDL).

Additional information about the USCCB documents and other supplemental resources can be found online at <https://www.usccb.org/topics/youth-and-young-adult-ministries>.