

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

DIOCESE OF GARY: LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTRY
FACILITATOR: VICTORIA HATHAWAY

FEB. 24, 2024

HI! I'M VICKY

Serving the Diocese of Gary since 2019.

Consulted for the USCCB by serving on the National Advisory Team on Young Adult Ministry and being on the leadership team for “Journeying Together,” an intercultural, intergenerational synodal initiative.

Worked with the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry on various projects, including a mentor for the National Youth Advisory Council.

Behavior Therapist for 7 and a half years with a background in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

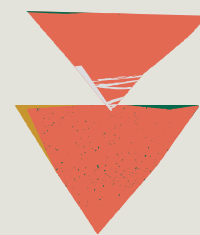
Been engaged in ministry with young Catholics since I was a young Catholic! For about 25 years.





TODAY'S GOAL

To help you understand the lives of the young people in your community, especially their faith experiences and mental health, so you can walk with them.



And walk away with tangible things you can do in your community.

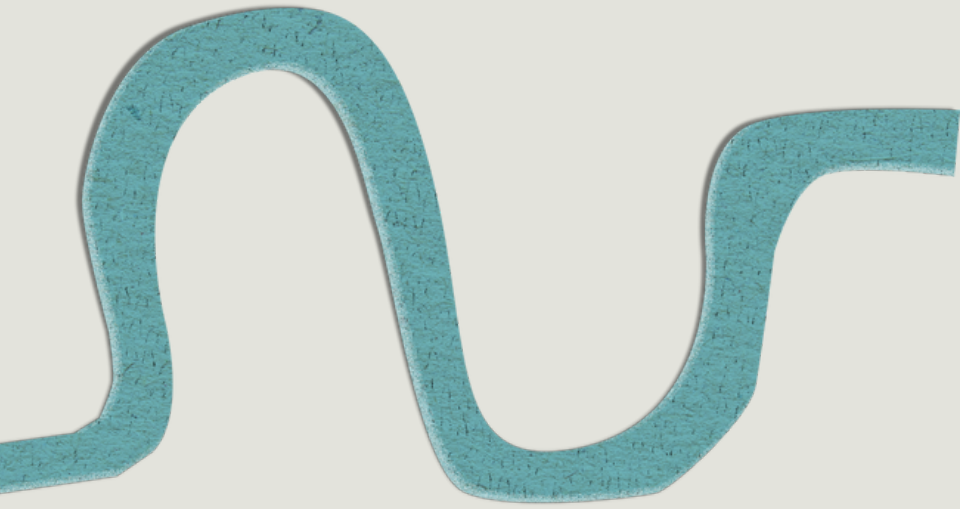




The Road to Emmaus

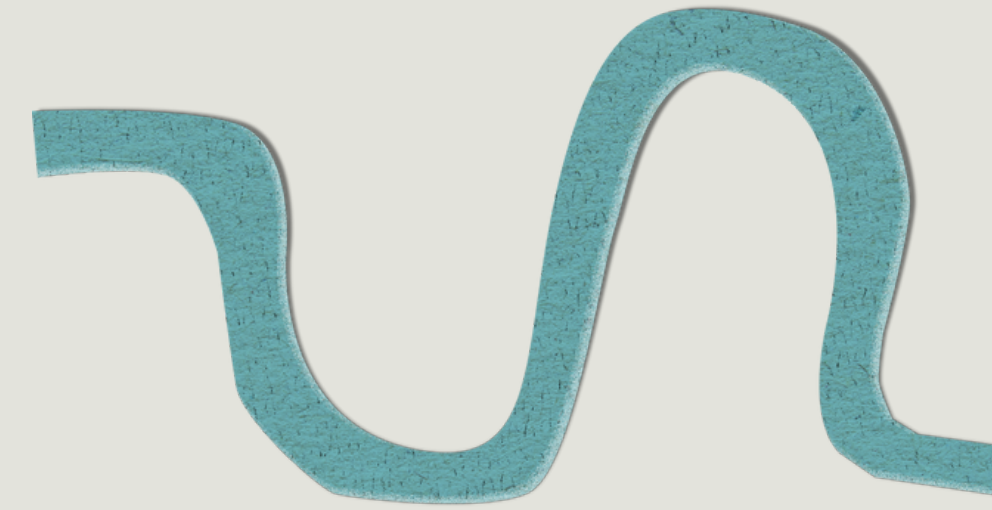
Luke 24:13-35





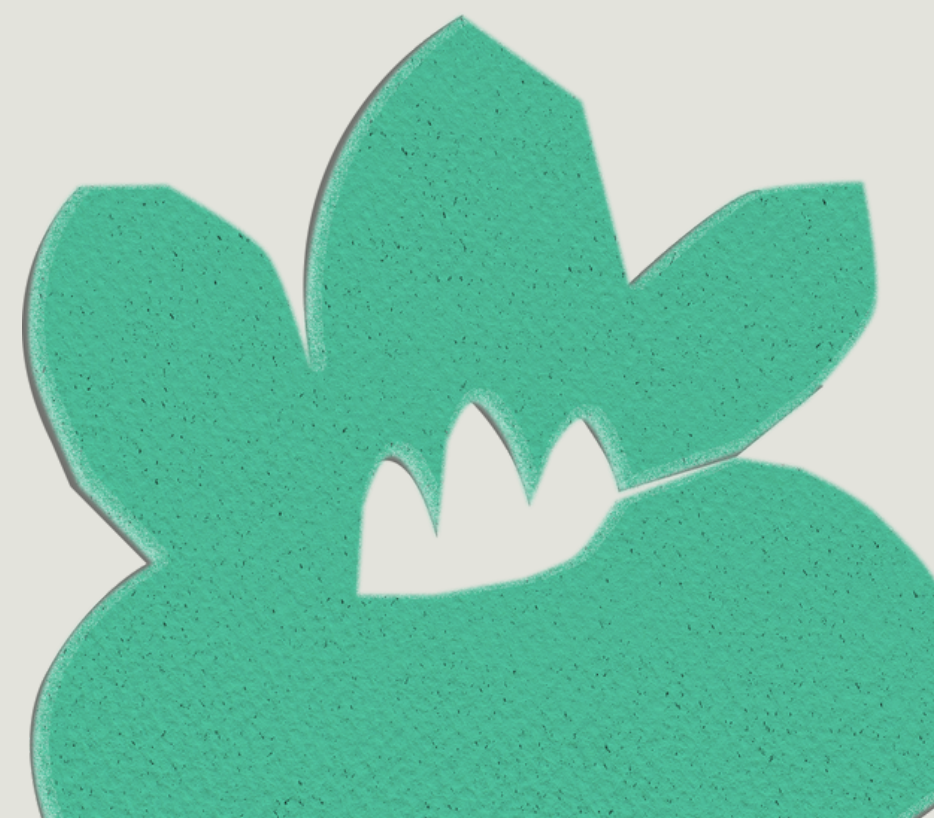
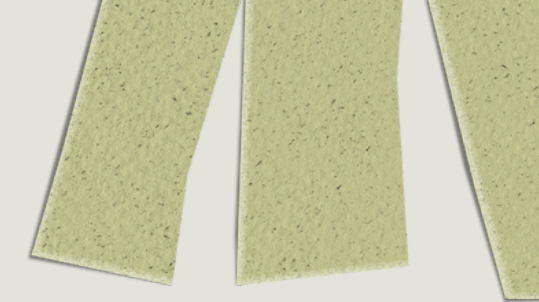
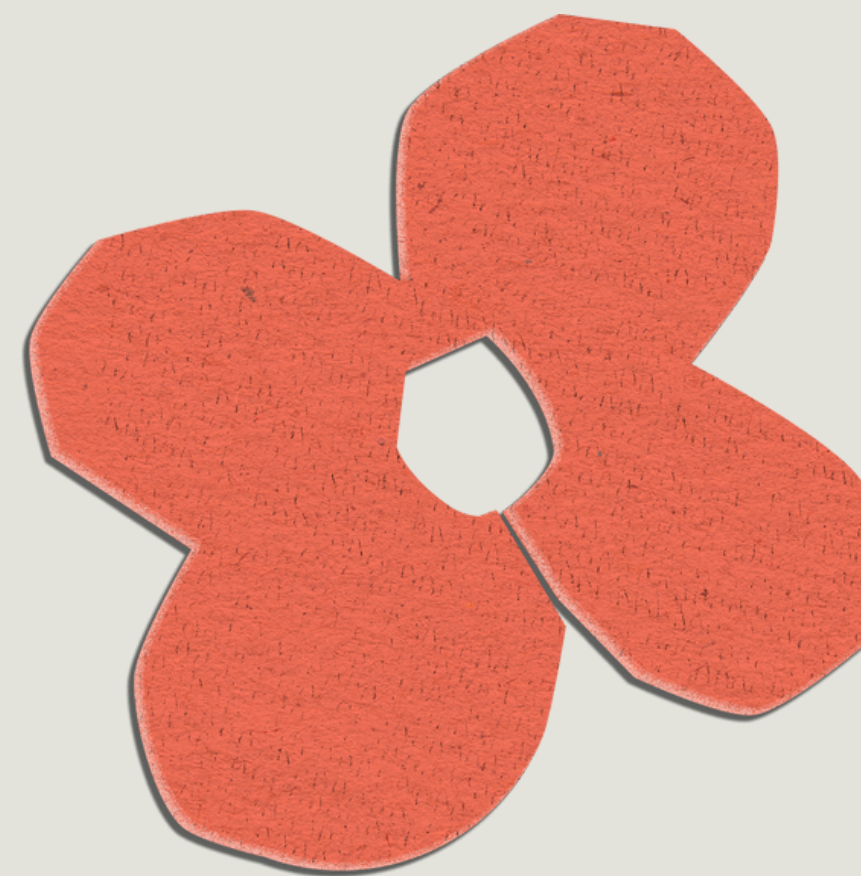
CHECK-IN

Open a browser and go to



[menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

**WHO ARE WE
TALKING ABOUT?**



GENERATIONS AND COMMUNITIES



YOUTH

Generation Z Gen Alpha
Born 1997~2012 Born 2010~2020's

Middle and High School
11-18 years old

Wide range of development.
Still growing as a person, in maturity, and
faith. Most diverse and inclusive age
groups.

YOUNG ADULTS

Millennials Generation Z
Born 1981~1996 Born 1997~2012

Out of High School
18-39 year old

Just out of high school, starting first big life
choices--college/workforce/vocation
Single, married, divorced, discerning
priesthood or religious life, discerning out
of priesthood or religious life, starting new
jobs, ending jobs, moving...
Let's just say when you meet one young
adult, you've met one young adult.

PASTORAL JUVENIL HISPANA

Hispanic and Latino Communities
14-29 years old

Comes from the Latin American cultures.

"The action of the Church that helps youth
discover, assimilate and commit with the
person of Christ and his message, so that
through these young people are
transformed into new men and women,
integrating their faith and their life, so that
they are converted into agents that
contribute to the construction of a
Civilization of Love."

EMBRACING CULTURE

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DIVERSE: WE NEED TO CELEBRATE THAT!

- The average age of a Hispanic Catholic is 29 years old.
- Over 60% of Catholics 18 and younger are Hispanic.
- Catholic leaders need to be culturally competent in their ministry
- Listen to the experiences of young people
 - Many young people do not feel welcomed or engaged in the parish.
- Ecclesial Integration and Inclusion
 - Bring your cultural identity through the door, instead of leaving it there.
- Pastoral de conjunto: Planned and collaborative pastoral activity that reflects a serious commitment to inclusivity, communion, and participation while paying attention to the ministerial and ecclesial reality and context.
- Journeying Together

Diocese of Gary
Overall Population and Catholic Population Estimates
for 2016 and 2021 by Race / Ethnicity

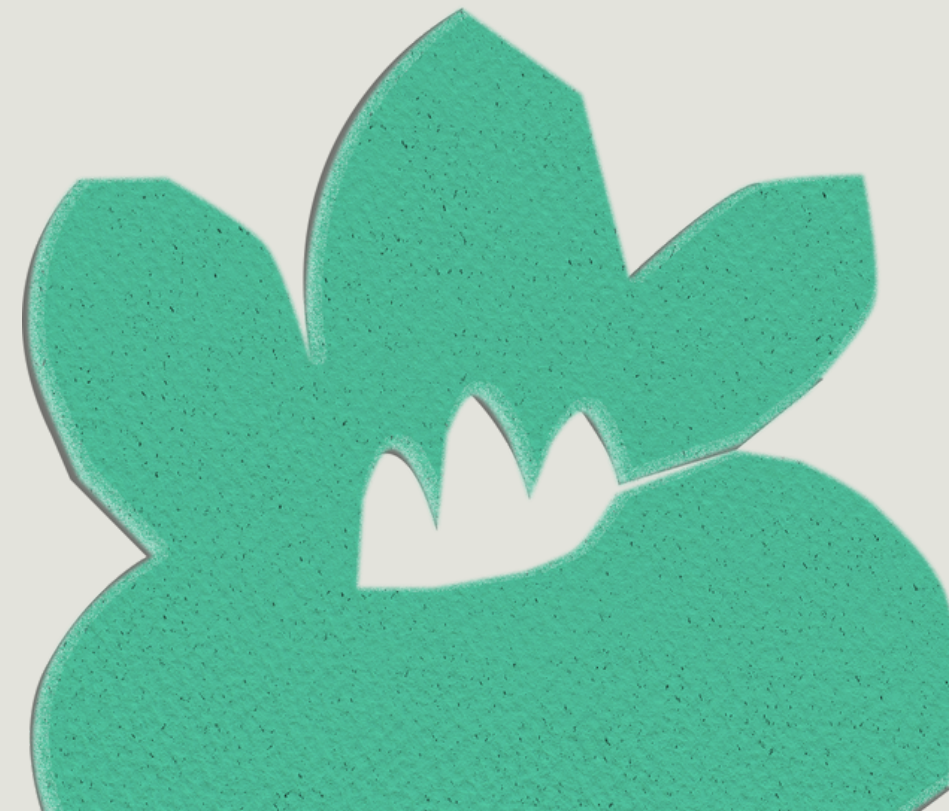
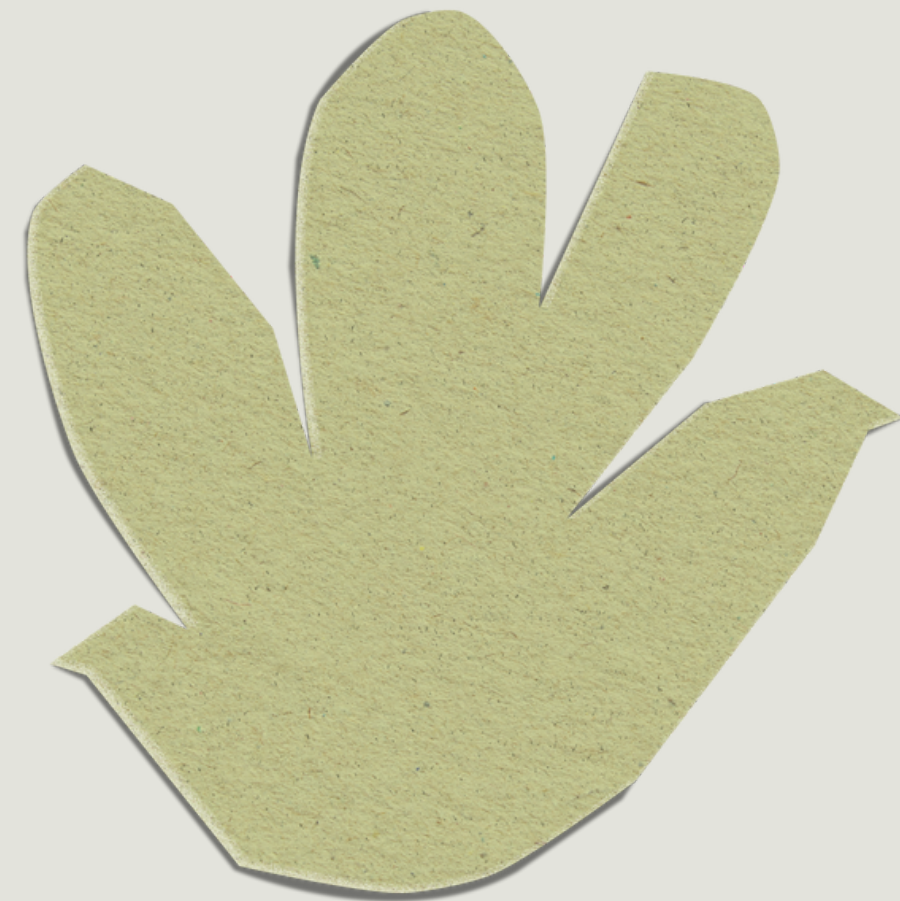
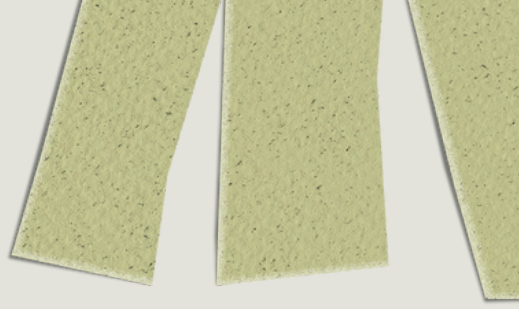
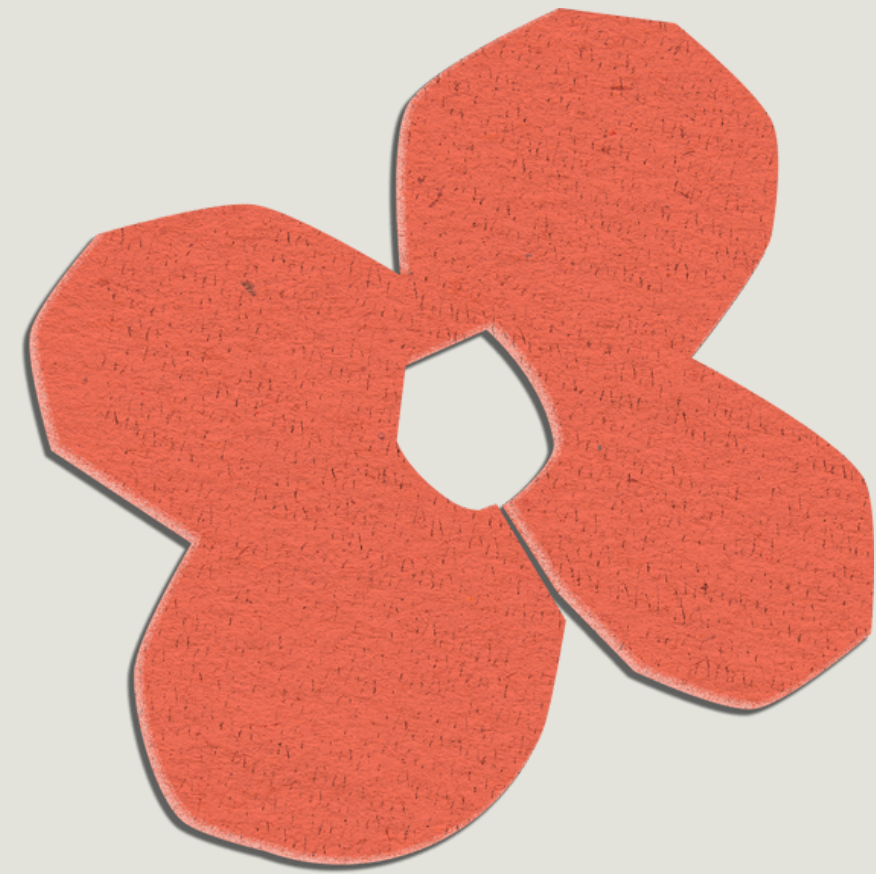
Racial/Ethnic Group	Census Estimated Population in 2016**	Census Estimated Population in 2021	% Change	Estimated Catholics in 2016	Estimated Catholics in 2021	% Change	% Catholic	% of Catholics
White, non-Hispanic	513,282	506,424	-1.3%	87,000	91,000	4.6%	18.0%	55.5%
Hispanic/Latino	115,794	130,284	12.5%	62,000	66,000	6.5%	50.7%	40.2%
Black/African American	141,039	135,863	-3.7%	2,700	2,600	-3.7%	1.9%	1.6%
Asian/Native Am./Other*	17,191	36,209	110.6%	2,000	4,000	100.0%	11.0%	2.4%
Total***	787,306	808,780	2.7%	153,000	164,000	7.2%	20.3%	

* The surveys on which the Catholic population are based were not large enough to generate reliable estimates of the Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and "Other" Catholic populations separately, so they are grouped together here.

** Overall population estimates are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Surveys (ACS) for each corresponding year.

*** The Catholic Totals may not add up exactly due to rounding errors. Round numbers are used because these are statistical estimates, not actual population counts.

**WHAT IS IT LIKE
TO BE A YOUNG
PERSON?**



YOUNG PEOPLE...



**ARE
LONLEY**

**ARE
STRESSED**

**HAVE A LACK OF
TRUST**

**ARE
BUSY**

**ARE FINANCIALLY
UNSTABLE**

**ARE IN
TRANSITION**

**ARE LOOKING FOR
THEIR IDENTITY**

**ARE
ANXIOUS**

**ARE EXPERIENCING
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

**ARE LOOKING FOR
THEIR PURPOSE**

**ARE LOOKING FOR
WHERE THEY BELONG**

YOUNG PEOPLE...



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THEIR PURPOSE

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WHERE THEY BELONG

AND...

YOUNG PEOPLE...



**ARE
RELIGIOUS**

**TRY TO FIND TIME TO
PRACTICE THEIR FAITH**

**WANT TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE**

**ARE CALLED BY GOD
TO CORESPONSIBILITY
IN THE CHURCH**

**ARE
SPIRITUAL**

ARE EMPATHETIC

**HAVE THEIR OWN
COMMUNITIES**

**ARE DIVERSE AND
CELEBRATE CULTURE**

**STILL IDENTIFY AS
CHRISTIAN
(INCLUDING CATHOLICS)**

**HAVE A BETTER
UNDERSTANDING
OF THE GLOBAL
COMMUNITY**

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What surprised you from those lists?
- Based on the young people you know, what would you add ?

GO TO MENTI.COM





DIVING DEEPER



Here are what some
teens had to say about
being a teenager today.

Using 1-3 words, your emotional health right now.

25 responses



What are some things that you and your peers are concerned or interested in?

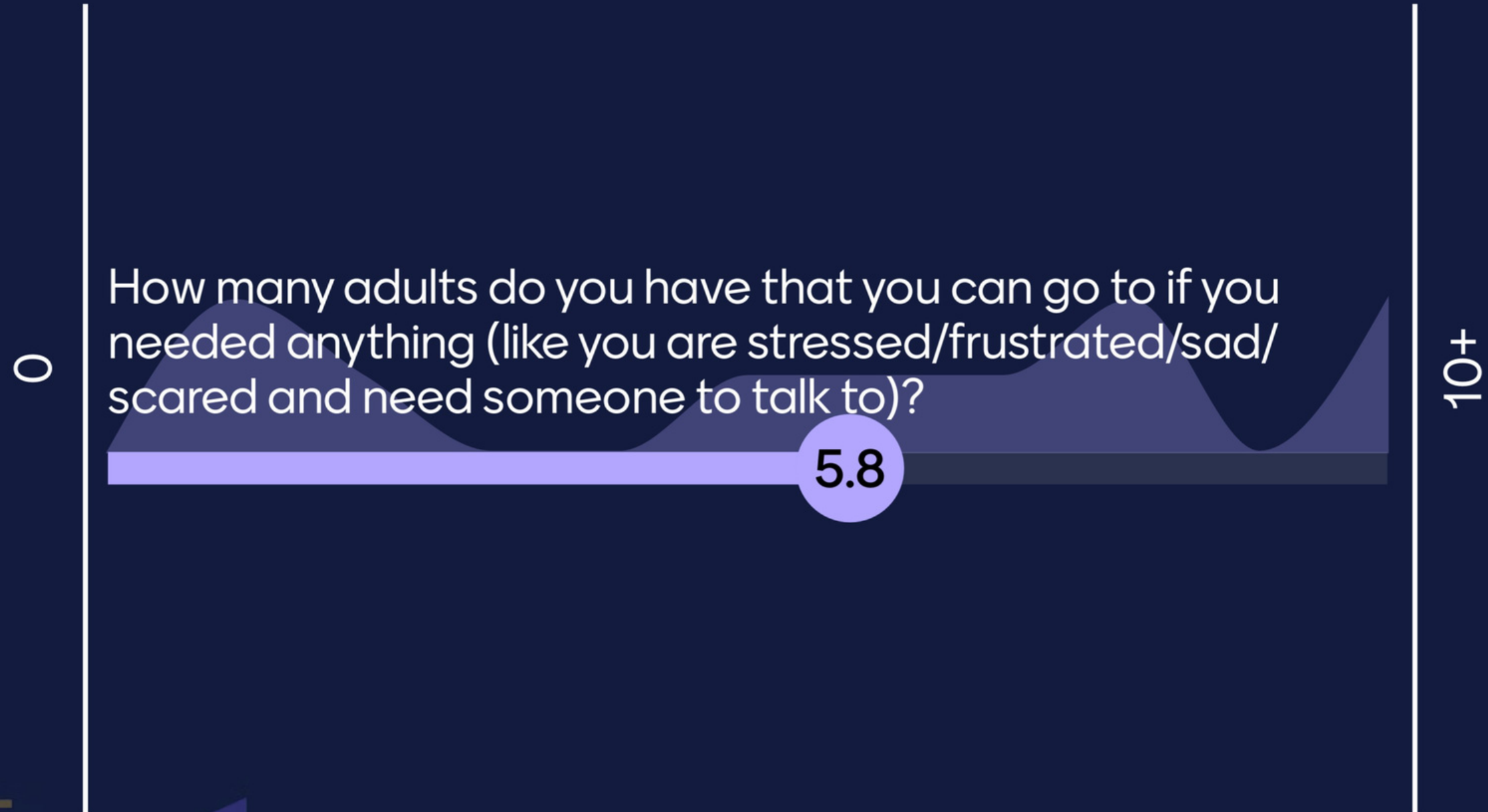
22 responses



10



Adults in your life



What are qualities of adults who help you in your life?

26 responses



What are things that you wish adults knew about what it is like being a teenager?

IT HARD IN TODAYS SOCIETY

Phones actually suck

i have so much more school work than you did

People judge you for being different

Life is hard

There is a lot of pressure to be perfect and do everything.

Just because we're teenagers does not mean we do not have a lot on our backs

Mental help is not just suck it up

What are things that you wish adults knew about what it is like being a teenager?

Its not like the 70's 80's or 90's

Society has specific expectations

Even though our problems arent as big as yours, THEY ARE STILL PROBLEMS!!

That people are more judgemental than what you think

Social Media warps our brain

U are more judgemental than u think

It's hard to be yourself

Just because we dont have it like you did doesn't mean its not just as bad

What are things that you wish adults knew about what it is like being a teenager?

We don't fit into little tidy boxes. We are messy and crazy and all different.

Mental and social anxieties take a toll.

Constant judging from everyone, even people you don't know

All social media isnt bad



**YOUNG PEOPLE
BRING THEIR
OWN GIFTS TO
THE CHURCH**



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What struck you from what the teens said?
- How are you feeling?





OUR RESPONSE AS CHURCH

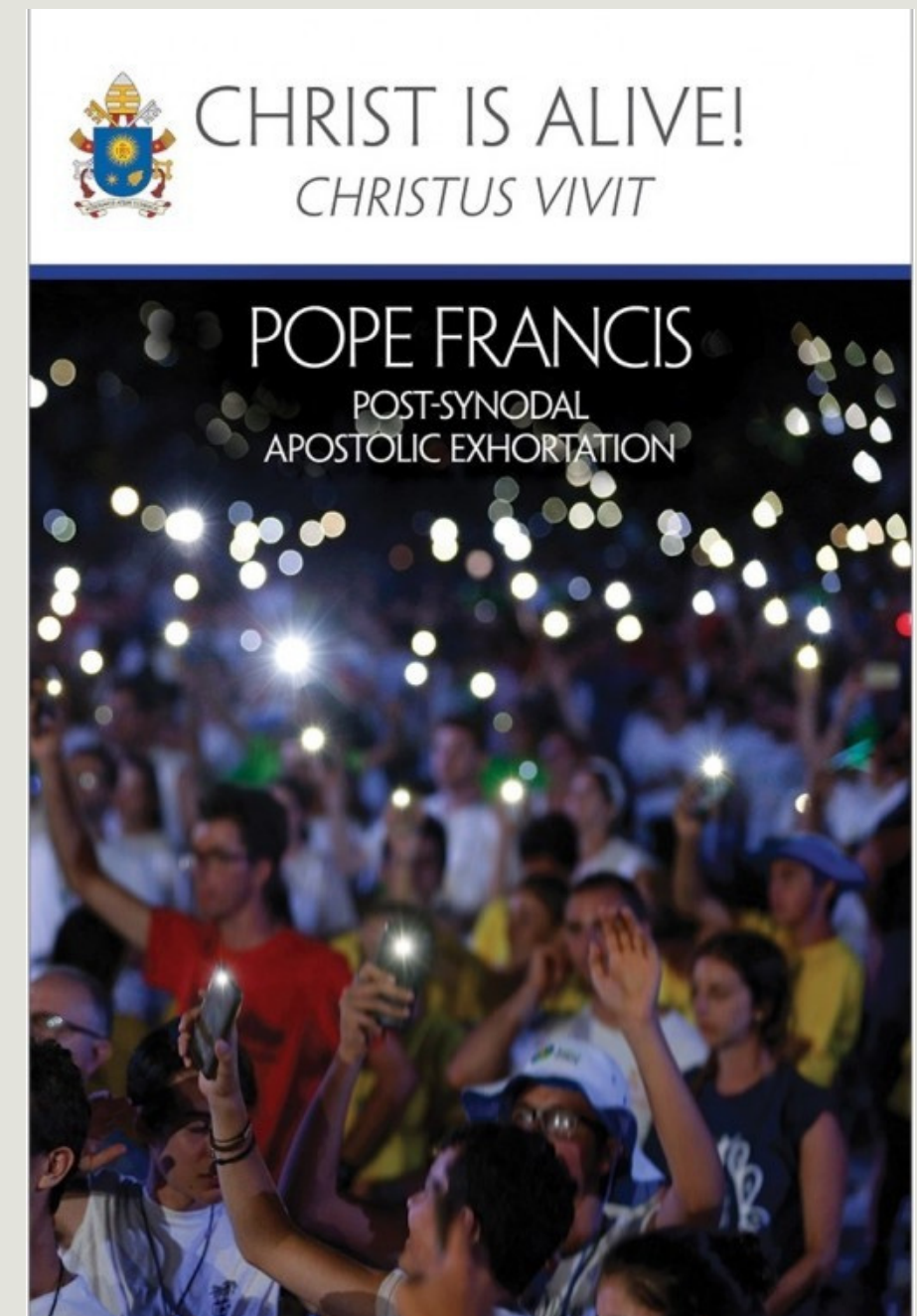
Each young person's heart should thus be considered "holy ground", a bearer of seeds of divine life, before which we must "take off our shoes" in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery."

CHRISTUS VIVIT

In 2018, Pope Francis called for the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment. This was the first time ministry with young people was discussed at this level at the Vatican. Internationally, "youth" refers to young people aged 16 to 29.

During the Synod, Pope Francis entered into dialogue with Bishops and young people from all over the globe. Together they discussed the realities young people face, their experience of faith, how young people answer their vocational call, and how the entire Church is called to walk together with one another. We can learn from each other. The older generations allowing space for young people to step forward into leadership roles. The younger generations listening and learning from the wisdom of older people. This was a unique experience of sodality, where, each step of the way, was intentionally set up to make sure each person was heard.

Pope Francis compiled his thoughts after the Synod into an apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit* (which means, Christ is Alive). Pope Francis was inspired after listening to the stories and experiences of the young people. Pope Francis talks about the holiness of young people, the spirit of synodality, accompaniment, pathways to ministry, the wisdom of generations, the call to leadership, discernment, and more.



CHURCH'S RESPONSE

“Young Catholics are not merely on the receiving end of pastoral activity: **they are living members of the one ecclesial body, baptized persons in whom the Spirit of the Lord is alive and active.** They help to enrich what the Church is and not only what she does. They are her present and not only her future. The young are actively involved in many Church activities in which they offer their services generously, particularly through leading catechesis and liturgy, caring for the weak, voluntary work with the poor. Movements, associations and religious congregations also offer young people opportunities for commitment and co-responsibility. **Sometimes the availability of the young meets with a certain authoritarianism and mistrust from older people and pastors, who do not sufficiently recognize their creativity and who struggle to share responsibility.**”

Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment Final Document, paragraph 54



CHURCH'S RESPONSE

“During the Synod, one of the young auditors from the Samoan Islands spoke of the Church as a canoe, in which the elderly help to keep on course by judging the position of the stars, while the young keep rowing, imagining what waits for them ahead. Let us steer clear of young people who think that adults represent a meaningless past, and those adults who always think they know how young people should act.

Instead, let us all climb aboard the same canoe and together seek a better world, with the constantly renewed momentum of the Holy Spirit.”

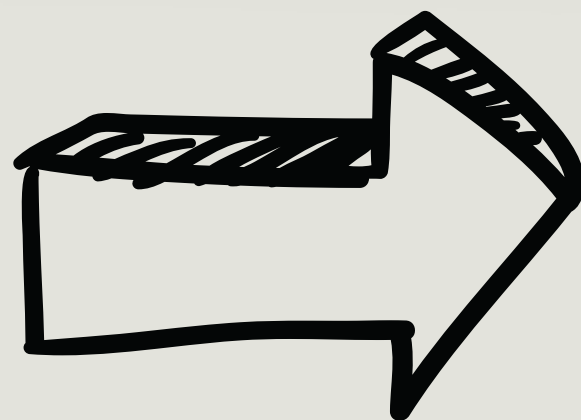
Christus Vivit, 201





WORDS MATTER

- ~~Youth Ministry~~
- ~~Youth Group~~
- ~~Young Adult Ministry~~



- Ministry with Youth
- Ministry with Young Adults

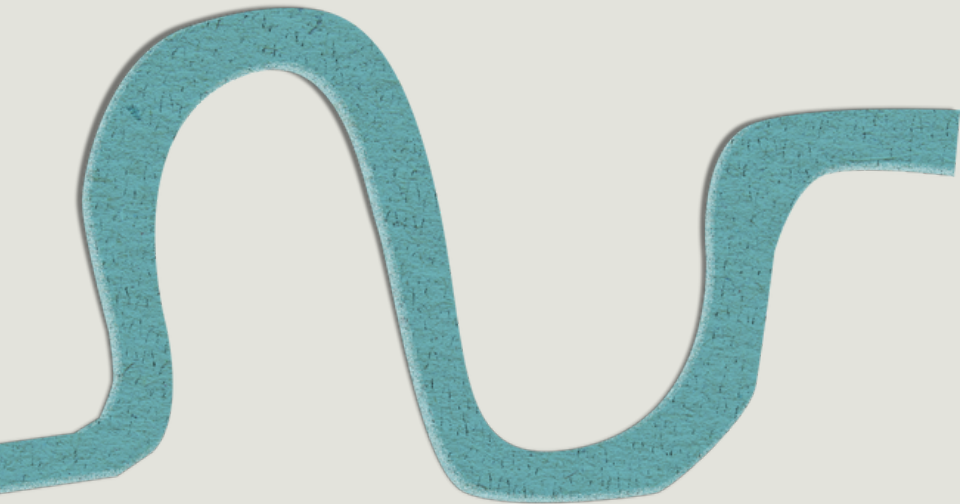
EXCLUSIVE

FOCUSING ON A SMALL GROUP
ADULTS LEAD->TEENS FOLLOW

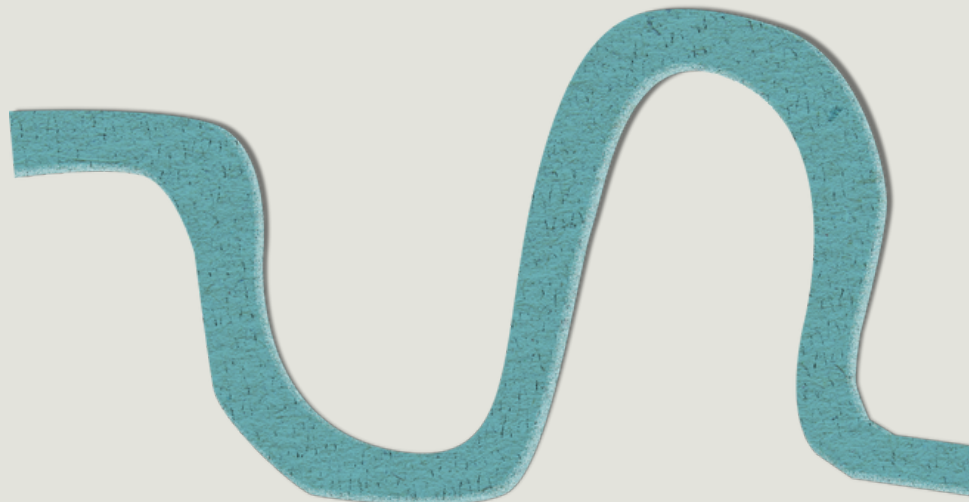
INCLUSIVE

YOUNG PEOPLE AS PROTAGONISTS
JOURNEYING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
CORESPONSIBILITY

"I have never held an office for youth or young adults but I do it every day."
Alejandro Aguilera-Titus
USCCB, Assistant Director, Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church



Ministry with young people is a
process that is gradual,
respectful, patient, hopeful,
tireless, and compassionate.



The Synod proposed the
example of the disciples of
Emmaus as a model of what
happens in ministry

JESUS IS THE EXAMPLE



LISTEN

Jesus himself drew near and walked with them... He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?”
(Luke 24:15, 17)

TEACH

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.
(Luke 24:27)

SEND

“Were not our hearts burning...?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem.
(Luke 24:32, 33)

LISTENING



- **Encountering** youth on the road, wherever they are.
- Being fully **present** for them in time of great transition.
- **Understanding** and taking real interest in their lives and appreciating their uniqueness.
- **Healing** their brokenness by being a “field hospital after battle” and restoring trust.

TEACHING



- **Proclaiming** Jesus Christ and witnessing to the *Kerygma*.
- Offering an **evangelizing catechesis** with formation suited to their lives and age.
- **Sharing the truth in love**, giving them tools to navigate social, moral, and ethical issues.
- Revealing Christ in joyful and communal **sacramental life**.

SENDING



- Equipping youth to be bold, **evangelizing witnesses**.
- Motivating them to engage in **charity and works of justice**.
- Journeying with them through **vocational discernment** as they aspire towards holiness.
- Inspiring and training them to be **faithful protagonists** now, as peer leaders and witnesses.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Based on what you heard so far, what are you called to do within your parish or community?





YOUNG PEOPLE AND MENTAL HEALTH

INSIGHTS

- About 50% of percent of adolescents has had a mental health disorder at some point in their lives
- Over 80% of young people have experienced at least one traumatic event by the time they leave high school.
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teens will experience clinical anxiety or depression
- $\frac{1}{8}$ of those teens will get help
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals between 10-34 behind accidentally death

MOST AT RISK

- Those Experiencing Trauma or Abuse:
- LGBTQ+ Youth
- Teens Facing Academic or Peer Pressure
- Those with Chronic Illness or Disabilities
- Individuals from Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Backgrounds:
- Substance Use or Addiction



WHAT IS OUR ROLE AS MINISTRY LEADERS?

To make sure our kids know Christ's love,
show that the Church supports them,
to keep them safe,
and to let them know they are not alone.

REMEMBER YOUR ROLE AND YOUR BOUNDARIES



- You are a parish ministry leader
 - You teach about the faith
 - Give advice and spiritual guidance
 - Walk with your young people and their parents/guardians as they navigate life
- You are not a therapist
 - Youth nights are not counseling sessions
 - You cannot diagnose your teens and/or their family members
 - If your teen has a therapist, you cannot try to get information about them from their therapist
 - When in doubt, refer out.
 - Talk to the young person and their families about places they can seek mental health support.

REMEMBER YOUR ROLE AND YOUR BOUNDARIES



- **You are a mandated reporter.**
 - If you suspect abuse, neglect, or injury, you must report it to your local authorities.
 - Refer to your state's child protective services and your diocese safe environment policies
- **You are not an investigator.**
 - It is not your job to investigate the situation.
 - You cannot ask leading or probing questions
 - Example: After noticing a bruise, "Did your dad do that?"
 - You can ask clarifying questions...
 - Example: "When did this happen? Who was there?"
 - but you are not to investigate the situation
 - Example: going to the family's house and observing their home life.
 - **You do need to report abuse or neglect.**

**GET
VIRTUS
TRAINED!**

REMEMBER YOUR ROLE AND YOUR BOUNDARIES



- You can be an advocate for mental health wellness.
 - Set expectations for your youth ministry that will promote healthy relationships, positive conflict resolution, and emotional support.
 - Create a list of helpful phone numbers in case you need to seek assistance or refer to a mental health agency
 - If a young person brings up their own mental health wellness, support them in healthy choices, such as saying you are proud that they are seeing a counselor.
- **You are not to make mental health matters entirely spiritual.**
 - God has given us resources to help us in times of emotional distress, such as counselors and therapists.
 - It can be dangerous to say that if someone just “prays more” their symptoms will be reduced.

WHEN A TEEN COMES TO YOU WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS:



If your teen expresses that they are currently experiencing a crisis (suicidal or homicidal ideation, recent victim of sexual/physical assault, abuse, or neglect or exhibits extremely disorganized or bizarre thinking or perceptions) seek immediate help from a mental health and/or child protection professional:

- Call 911
- Call 988: The National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
- Local Department of Child Services
- Local mental health center or crisis center
- Contact their parents or guardians (if safe to do so)
- Inform your supervisor

Note Regarding Suicide Prevention

Start by asking questions

The first step is to find out whether the person is in danger of acting on suicidal feelings. Be sensitive, but ask direct questions, such as:

- How are you coping with what's been happening in your life?
- Do you ever feel like just giving up?
- Are you thinking about dying?
- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Are you thinking about suicide?
- Have you ever thought about suicide before, or tried to harm yourself before?
- Have you thought about how or when you'd do it?
- Do you have access to weapons or things that can be used as weapons to harm yourself?

Asking about suicidal thoughts or feelings won't push someone into doing something self-destructive. In fact, offering an opportunity to talk about feelings may reduce the risk of acting on suicidal feelings.

If someone has attempted suicide:

- Don't leave the person alone.
- Call 911 or your local emergency number right away. Or, if you think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room yourself.
- Try to find out if the person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or may have taken an overdose.
- Tell a family member or friend right away what's going on.

If a friend or loved one talks or behaves in a way that makes you believe the person might attempt suicide, don't try to handle the situation alone:

- Get help from a trained professional as quickly as possible. The person may need to be hospitalized until the suicidal crisis has passed.
- Encourage the person to call a suicide hotline number.
 - **In the U.S., anyone needing help can call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Or use the Lifeline Chat. Services are free and confidential.**
 - U.S. veterans or service members who are in crisis can call 988 and then press "1" for the Veterans Crisis Line. Or text 838255. Or chat online.
 - The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in the U.S. has a Spanish language phone line at 1-888-628-9454 (toll-free).

This information is from the Mayo Clinic website:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/in-depth/suicide/art-20044707>

WAYS TO HELP



It's helpful to have a list of people you can refer a person in crisis to. You might have to do some homework, but it's helpful to see which mental health agencies or healthcare providers are in your area. Finding them now and storing them in an easy to find place will help you respond quickly if a crisis arises. **Some general suggestions for how to help someone with a mental health issue:**

- Stop. Take a deep breath. Remember your own coping skills when helping others.
- Don't say, "Stop being sad," or "just eat more." Instead, say, "how can I help?" or "I'm here with you."
- Don't say, "I know exactly how you feel because I experienced _____." Do ask them to describe what they experienced or what they are feeling.
- Use "I statements." Instead of saying, "You look skinny," or "you sure do cry a lot," say, "I really care about you. I've been noticing that you have been skipping meals a lot. I'm concerned. Is there something wrong?"
- If someone does say that there is something wrong:
 - Thank them for opening up and acknowledge that this might be hard for them to do.
 - Offer to do whatever you can to safely help the person.

WAYS TO HELP



- If they push you away:
 - Do not take it personally. Often feelings of anger, denial, guilt, or rejection are part of the mental health issue.
 - Do not engage in an argument with the other person.
 - Calmly state your concern again and that you are there for that person.
 - It's ok to drop the subject, and bring it up again a few days to a week later.
- **If someone expresses that they are experiencing a crisis (suicidal or homicidal ideation, recent victim of sexual or physical assault, or extremely disorganized or bizarre thinking or perceptions):**
 - Contact a mental health professional or 911.
 - Refer! Refer! Refer! Do not take the situation in your own hands. Refer Parents or Guardians to a Counselor. Contact Parent/Guardians, and meet with them in regard to the conversation, unless it signals abuse in the home.
 - Remember Safe Environment Procedure. If abuse or neglect is suspected, you can contact Child Protective Services.

WHAT HELPS

- RELATIONSHIPS
- Family support, clinical care
- Clinical interventions and support
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care
- Problem solving, conflict resolution and nonviolent ways of handling disputes



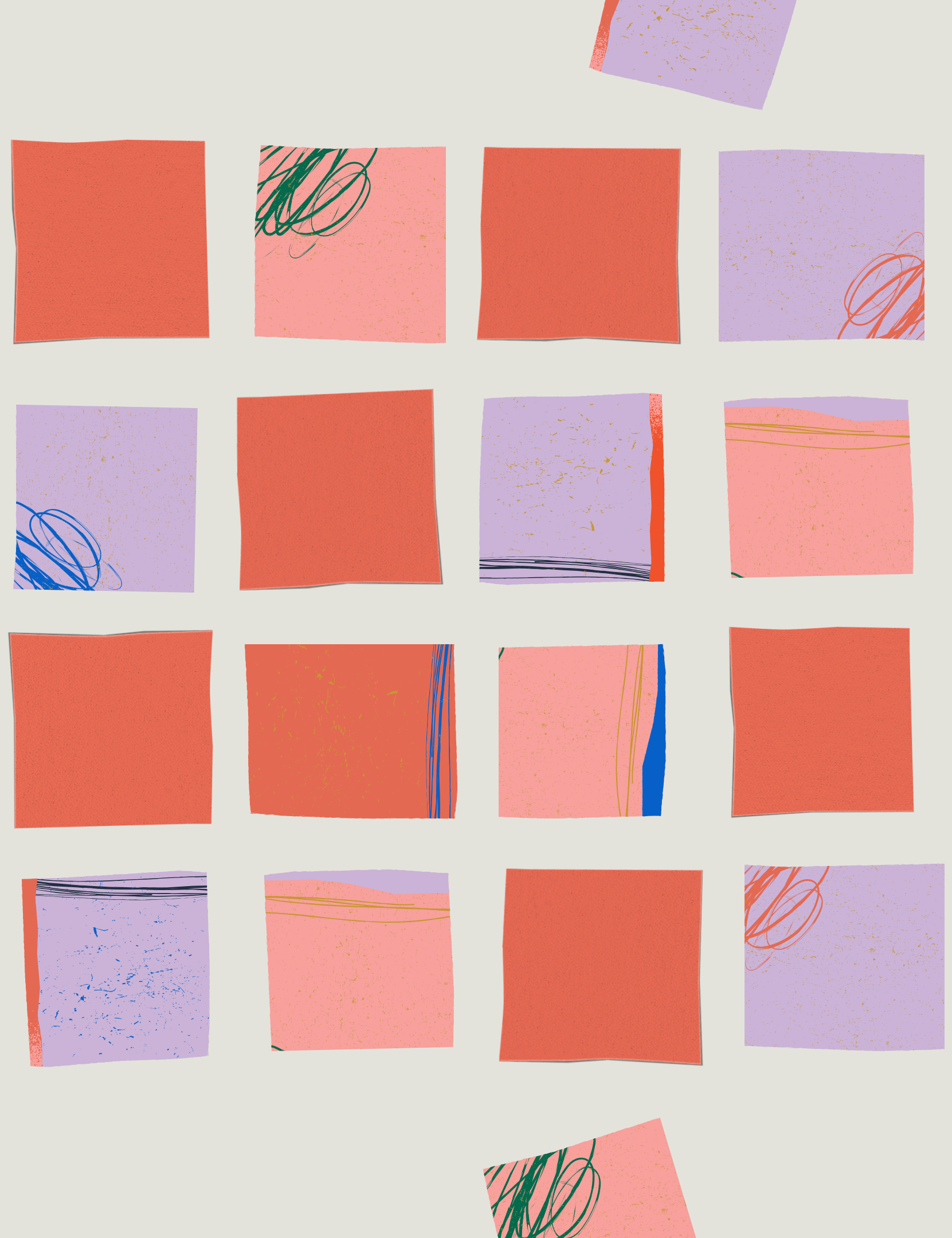
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What struck you from this information?
- How are you feeling?



INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORM

Come up with as many ways you can help young people in your community. Write them all down, even the ones you don't think are great.



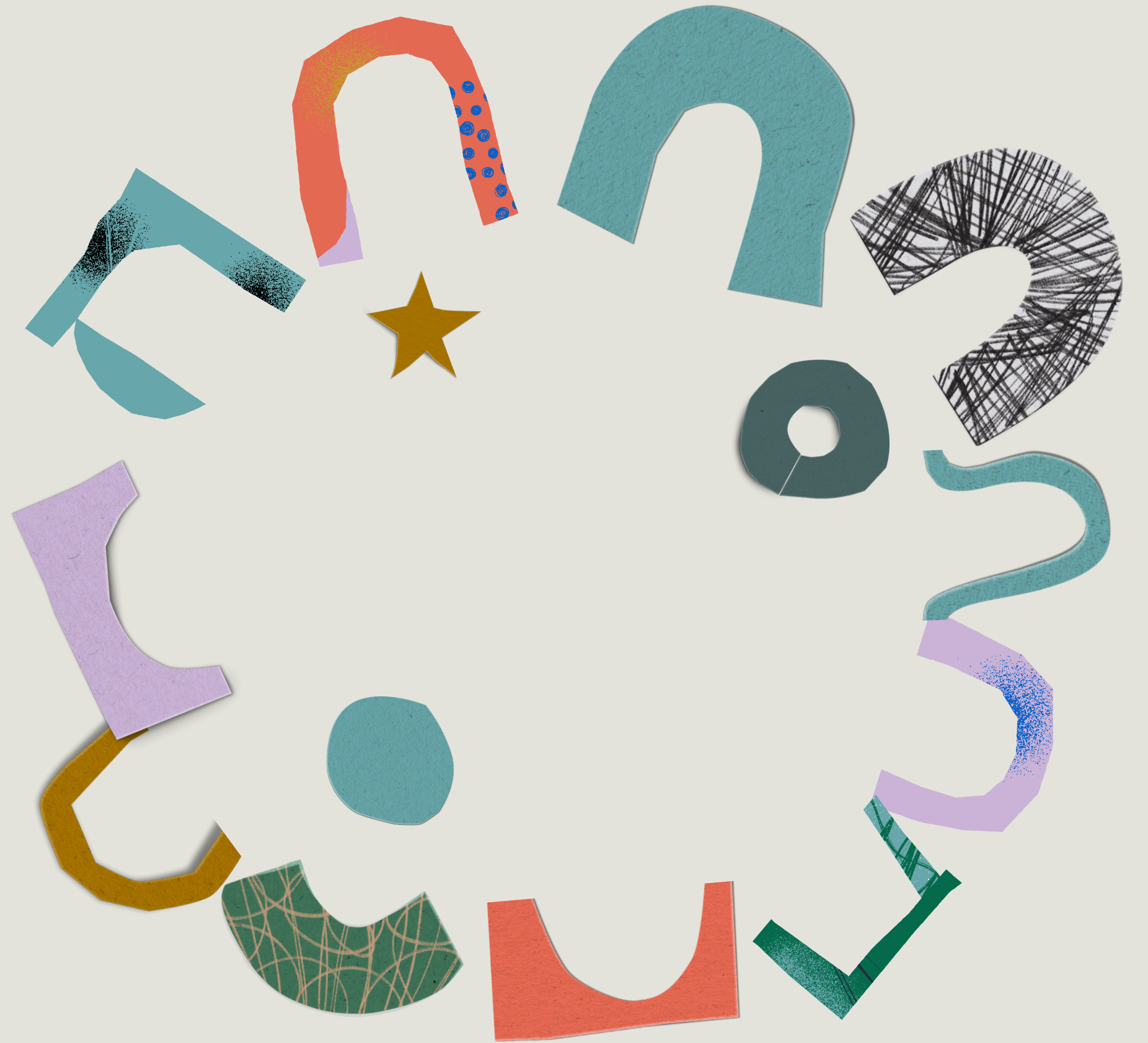
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Find 1-2 people who have similar ideas as you.
- Come up with one practical idea.
- Outline necessary steps to accomplish this idea



BIG GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 minute:
 - One person shares your ideas
- 2 minutes:
 - ask questions
 - advise
 - amplify





THANK YOU!

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