

## Parish carries the Jungschar



As obvious as this statement seems, it is often disregarded in practice. The expectations of the congregation, the youth group and its leaders are often very high (something similar can be said about the other branches of children's and youth work)

## Do not use youth as draught horses

For church work and at every opportunity, we must not use our youth as draught horses

By doing so, we overburden leaders and children. We also cannot expect leaders to be involved in other areas besides time-consuming youth ministry and to be present at all church events. **The congregation carries the Jungschar and not the other way around.**

Now what does this carrying look like in concrete terms?

- The Jungschar and its leaders need prayer support. This requires regular information from the congregation (church newsletter, church service, etc.).
- The congregation is fully behind the Jungschar and its leaders. The congregation knows the leaders of the youth group. Changes of leaders (especially of main leaders) are not made in secret, but in a church service.
- The Jungschar needs the financial support of the congregation (see article: The financing of the Jungschar).
- The congregation also bears the "inconveniences" that any work with children brings, e.g. noise, a broken window, marks on Sunday morning from the preceding Jungschar afternoon
- The carrying of the Jungschar is shown in the sharing of what happens in the Jungschar by parents, the Brethren Council, the preacher and the congregation. The Jungschar is not simply left to its own devices. The leaders are assisted to solve offered questions and problems.
- To carry the Jungschar also means to deal with mistakes and wrong decisions of the Jungschar leaders leniently and mercifully. Those who participate make mistakes from which they can learn.

### **Our young workers need helpful conversation instead of uncharitable criticism.**

Cooperation in the congregation requires mutual sympathy and sharing. When things are going well in the youth group, the whole congregation rejoices with it, and when things are going through lows, the whole congregation suffers and bears with it. We want to keep this biblical principle of the body of Christ in mind and strive for it in our relationships as a youth group and as a whole church.

### **The care of the Jungschar leaders**

In some places, the mentoring of the leadership team is still in disarray. This can leave leaders feeling alone, insecure and frustrated, or it can be exploited and cause tension with church

leadership. The causes of lack of care can be of various kinds:

- The people in charge do not even know what is expected of them in terms of care.
- The idea that the youth workers do not need this care, because it is taken care of by BESJ.
- The excessive demand on the time of the person responsible for the supervision.
- The Jungschar work has too little importance. The Jungschar is seen primarily as "Indian troop" and the spiritual-missionary aspect misjudged.

So it is not ill will that often leads to neglect of the staff, but a certain awkwardness in how the care should be perceived.

## **Clear community structures as a prerequisite for good care**

The youth group is part of the congregation. It is therefore integrated into the structure of the whole congregation. In order to guarantee good care and leadership, clear leadership structures must be in place. Many congregations today have reached a size where the preacher can no longer accompany all the groups and supervise the staff. In some places there are now responsible persons in the brethren, elders or church councils for the individual areas of the congregation's work. Every member of the congregation and especially every co-worker has a congregational organization chart and knows who is responsible for what. The person responsible for the youth group has a job description that outlines his or her tasks, responsibilities and competencies (see the worksheet on the relationship between church leadership and youth group leadership). Now the targeted support can begin

## **Targeted mentoring**

**It includes three areas:**

- Leadership of the youth group leaders
- Training of the youth group leaders
- Spiritual-pastoral care of the youth group leaders

From this it is clear that, as a rule, the supervisory task cannot be carried out by one person, but several people will have to share in the leadership, training and spiritual supervisory tasks.

## **Targeted care**

### **Leadership of the youth group leaders**

In order for the youth group leaders, as well as any other area of the church, to be led, it is necessary for the church to have a strategy and goals that are then binding on all areas of ministry. Without this, leading remains a groping in the dark.

The youth group leader team works out together with the responsible person of the church leadership the medium- and long-term goals in quantitative respect (e.g. foundation of further youth groups, division into age groups), as well as in spiritual respect (coordination of topics with the

other areas of the children and youth work).

The leadership of the youth group includes that the main leader has a list of duties (see sample in the appendix). This will not always avoid conflicts of authority and responsibility, but it will certainly make it easier to clarify and resolve them.

Youth leaders are entitled to a discussion with the overall church leadership at least once a year. This is where upcoming issues and problems are discussed, goals and plans for the future are presented, and staff recruitment issues are addressed. The congregation is also entitled to information about what is going on in the youth group. Once a year the leaders are given the opportunity to give an account of their work at a church meeting

## 1. Training of the youth leaders

Training and development is an absolute must when working with children and young people. Jungschar-specific, professional training for leaders is the responsibility of BESJ. It cannot be offered on a local level, but takes place through the BESJ courses throughout Switzerland. What remains is the continuation in the spiritual life and the training in the spiritual area. Before creating new vessels for this and encouraging the danger of fragmentation of church work, it is important to make better use of existing resources:

**Sermon/Bible Evening** They are not to be directed primarily to the edification needs of congregational passive members. Rather, teaching and preaching are to be so practical as to serve the "equipping of the saints for service" (Eph. 4:12). With this goal in mind, our people will make increased use of this natural continuing education opportunity. This does not preclude specific staff circles and staff training. For certain issues and topics, all church staff can be well grouped together

**Literature** We have many good books today, which can be worked out together in the leadership team and bring as much as a paper.

## 2. Spiritual-pastoral care

It is crucial! The best methodological-didactic training is of little use if the employees are not motivated or there are spiritual deficits in the team, which lead to tensions and employees then leave in frustration. Surely the parish chaplain is happy to provide help in an acute phase or to pass on a spiritual-pastoral word once in a young people's school session.

However, it is important to have ongoing support for the team. It is best provided by a counseling team or a counseling couple.

Prerequisite for the perception of such a task:

- If possible, young adult leadership experience
- pastoral gift
- spiritual attitude

Ideally, the counselor couple or someone from the counseling circle hosts the youth group sessions. This allows for good companionship and sympathy. The staff have a first point of contact without always having to call in the church leadership right away. The young workers benefit from both the professional and spiritual experience of the counsellors

For more information, see: Circle of Advisors.docx.

## Advisory Board

## Duties: Head of department, Head of division

11 Duties and Responsibilities of Chief Executive

Duties of the heads of department

## Source reference:

**Content:** Annual focus 1993 "Community", Peter Blaser, Siegfried Nüesch, Martin Bihr, Hansruedi Tanner, Ueli Obrist, Johannes Wallmeroth, Peter Schulthess

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