

Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry



Director: Chris Rogers

Phone: 608-791-2659

Email: crogers@dioceseoflacrosse.com



Secretary: Diane Thatcher

Phone: 608-791-2652

Email: dthatcher@dioceseoflacrosse.com

Purpose of the Office

The goals of Youth Ministry are to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today, to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community, and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. The purpose of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is to assist the parishes in developing Youth Ministry Programs through appropriate planning, training adults and youth leaders and providing Retreats, Rallies, Pilgrimages, and Mission Trips.

Work of the Office

- Provides leadership training for adults and youth.
- Provides faith formation through various opportunities such as retreats, rallies, camps, and mission trips for middle and high school students.
- Helps parishes be a place where young people are welcomed, grow in Jesus Christ, and minister side by side with the adults of the community.
- Assists parishes in developing parish-based youth ministry.
- Helps parents to understand youth ministry and how it strengthens families.

“As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the Church must become today
the traveling companion of the young people...”
– Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 1995

Adventure Camp



What is the Purpose of Adventure Camp?

Adventure Camp empowers teens to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today through daily Mass, exposure to different types of prayer and catechesis combined with group activities such as canoeing, rappelling, high ropes course, etc. Experiencing deeper conversion to Jesus Christ through developing a deeper spiritual life, the young people are called to greater participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. The young people are also called to be witnesses, allowing their renewed faith to be contagious.

What are the Components of Adventure Camp?

This is a camp that combines friendship, faith and fun through adoration, daily Mass, prayer, catechesis, alongside canoeing, rock climbing, biking, high ropes, and so much more!

Programming is arranged by youth ministry leaders, such as parish youth ministers, diocesan directors, religious, and clergy from the Diocese of La Crosse. Each day begins with a short talk after breakfast to present the theme for the day. In the evening, this teaching is spelled out further. All campers are part of a small group in which they discuss and reflect on these teachings. There is a chapel with Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament which provides campers with a great place for prayer and quiet reflection during the week. It is planned that one priest will always be at the camp. This allows participants to have daily Mass, Confessions throughout the week, and a special time of Adoration on Thursday night. There will also be Morning Prayer, Holy Hour (optional, but highly encouraged & well attended), & Night Prayer.

When is Adventure Camp?

The camp is reserved for three weeks each summer. Choose the week that works best for you!

Who May Attend?

All students who are currently in 6th-12th grade are invited to attend.

“The Church needs your energies, your enthusiasm, your youthful ideals, in order to make the Gospel of life penetrate the fabric of society, transforming people’s hearts and the structure of society in order to create a civilization of true justice and love.”

Immersion Retreat



What is the Purpose of the Immersion Retreat?

The Immersion Retreat is a weekend retreat at the Chula Vista Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. The purpose of this retreat is to give young people the opportunity to understand that their relationship with Jesus Christ is to be center of their life; that growing in their faith is a lifelong process; and to encourage them to be active participants in the life of the parish to which they belong. This formation is needed as one of the biggest challenges we face is that young people tend to stop attending Mass and fall away from prayer after they are confirmed.

What are the Components of the Immersion Retreat?

This retreat combines faith, friendship, and fun through powerful speakers, lively music, adoration, daily Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and spiritual guidance, along with time to enjoy the indoor water park. The immersion environment provides parish youth groups the opportunity to have a great experience with other parish youth groups. Further, the component of small group sharing allows young people to form a deeper bond with one another, therefore creating a stronger community.

When is the Immersion Retreat?

Typically the Immersion Retreat is held once a year in November.

Who May Attend?

All students who are currently in 8th-12th grade are invited to attend.

At this stage of history, the liberating message of the Gospel of life has been put into your hands. And the mission of proclaiming it to the ends of the earth is now passing to your generation, the young Church. We pray with the whole Church that we can meet the challenge of providing
“coming generations with reasons for living and hoping
-*The Joy and the Hope*, Second Vatican Council, no. 31

Leaven2Heaven



What is the Purpose of Leaven2Heaven?

Growing in our relationship with Jesus Christ through ongoing study and prayer is a life-long process. The Purpose of Leaven2Heaven Youth Rally is to stir the hearts of young people to be excited about their faith, to be strengthened to receive the Sacraments and to be committed to daily prayer.

This Rally provides young people the opportunity to kick off the new school year in a positive way in that participants are encouraged to focus on putting Christ first in their life. In reconnecting with like-minded friends that they met at other events, teens can support each other in this goal of remaining close to Jesus Christ.

What are the Components of Leaven2Heaven?

The Leaven2Heaven Youth Rally is a daylong event. This rally provides opportunities for Mass, Confession, music, powerful speakers, and much more. It gives parish youth groups the opportunity to have a great experience through engaging presentations, lively music of praise and worship, meeting other teens desiring to follow Christ, receiving the Sacraments and enjoying good food.

Parish youth groups who participate in the Leaven2Heaven Youth Rally help to strengthen the community of young people in the Diocese of La Crosse.

When is Leaven2Heaven?

Leaven2Heaven is typically held in once a year in August.

Who May Attend?

All students who are currently in 6th-12th grade are invited to attend.

The Church is the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit and His action in the Sacraments, above all the Eucharist, Christ, who once was dead and is now risen, establishes the community of believers as his own Body. In the unity of this Body there is a diversity of members and functions. All members are linked to one another, especially to those who are suffering, to the poor and persecuted

Mission Trips



What is the Purpose of the Mission Trips?

“Our faith calls us to work for justice; to serve those in need; to pursue peace; and to defend the life, dignity and rights of all our sisters and brothers. This is the call of Jesus, the urging of his spirit, the challenge of the prophets, and the living tradition of our Church” (*Renewing the Vision*, p. 37).

Mission Trips are opportunities for young people to put their faith into action by serving those in need. These trips bring young people out of their comfort zone while needing to rely completely on Christ. Young people also have the opportunity to see how Christ speaks to them through those people that are less fortunate.

What are the Components of the Mission Trips?

Mission Trips can take on different components depending on where and when they take place, and the work that is to be done. However, the one, common factor is that they call the young people to truly serve their neighbor, whether that neighbor is in another country, another state, or even someone in their community. Mission trips assist the young people to grow in faith through catechesis while putting their faith in action through serving a neighbor. This challenges the teens to be open to being served by that same neighbor who wishes to return the blessing.

When are the Mission Trips?

There are several opportunities for mission trips each summer. We travel to Peru, as well as various places in the U.S. We also encourage parishes to take on mission work in their own communities.

Who May Attend?

Typically all students in high school and college, but age groups will vary by type of mission trip.

The central message is simple: our faith is profoundly social. We cannot be called truly "Catholic" unless we hear and heed the Church's call to serve those in need and work for justice and peace. We cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus unless we take up his mission of bringing

"good news to the poor, liberty to captives, and new sight to the blind" (cf. Lk 4:18).
Communities of Salt and Light, p. 3

NET Retreats



What is the Purpose of NET Retreats?

The purpose of NET Ministries is to challenge young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church. 90 trained NET volunteers ages 18 to 28 are sent out in vans each year across the United States in teams of 10 to 12. These retreat teams share their faith during retreats and will encounter 60,000 youth. The parish teams focus on building up individual parishes from September to May. Each team invites all they meet to give their lives to the only One who can satisfy their hungry hearts - Jesus Christ.

NET Ministries is an international youth ministry organization, and it fulfills its mission by:

- Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ through a personal witness of faith
- Inviting young people to live for Christ
- Forming young people in Christian character through the study and practice of their faith
- Equipping youth workers and young adults with the ministry skills needed for evangelization.

What are the Components of NET Retreats?

And Though varying in length, format, and theme, the retreats blend a fun, high-energy retreat experience with a straightforward Gospel presentation. Team members proclaim the Gospel through large group talks, small group discussions, music, drama, and relaying personal faith experiences. Each teen on retreat are given the opportunity to respond to Christ in prayer and/or through the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation.

When are the NET Retreats?

Typically the NET Retreats are offered in the fall of each year.

Who May Attend?

All students who are currently in 6th-12th grade are invited to attend, with a parish reservation needed.

Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help people believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have

Pilgrimage for Life



What is the Purpose of the Pilgrimage for Life?

“Pilgrimages, a sign of the condition of the disciples of Christ in this world, have always held an important place in the life of Christians” (*The Shrine and the Pilgrimage*, United State Catholic Conference of Bishops). The purpose of the Pilgrimage for Life is to travel to our nations’ capital and prayerfully join with people gathered from throughout the United States to publicly express the dignity of all human life, especially in standing for the unborn to be protected from the evil of abortion.

What are the Components of the Pilgrimage for Life?

Pilgrimages have been happening since the Old Testament! Those making the journey have always walked to celebrate their Faith in places that indicate a memory of our Lord or in sites representing important moments in the history of the Church.

The Pilgrimage for Life involves a journey to Washington D.C. by bus to participate in the March for Life as well as the Vigil and Mass which precede the March. The central meeting point is the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This is appropriate as “Shrines are like milestones that guide the journey of the children of God on earth. The Shrine reminds us that the Church is born out of the initiative of God; it recalls God’s initiative and makes us understand that such initiative with gratitude. It is a memorial of our origin in the Lord and a sign of the divine presence, and points to where we are going – Heaven! Visits to shrines fill us with hope, are an invitation to joy, and a call to conversion and renewal.”

We invite those attending to allow the pilgrimage to be more than just a fun experience where they will get to see many things in Washington D.C. This is a time to grow in faith and in a greater zeal to pray for the millions of babies whose lives have been taken by abortion, for the conversion of all those who support, administer, and advocate abortion and contraception in all its forms, and for the protection of all life, from conception to natural death. And finally, we desire to return home imbued with a greater knowledge of how each of us can be a light to bring about a “Culture of Life.”

When is the Pilgrimage for Life?

The Pilgrimage for Life is held in each year in January.

Who May Attend?

Anyone is welcome to attend who has reached the age of 13.

Open your mouth in behalf of the [mute], and for the rights of the destitute; Open your mouth,
decree what is just, defend the needy and the poor

-Proverbs 31:8-9

Totus Tuus



What is the Purpose of Totus Tuus?

TOTUS TUUS is a Catholic youth program dedicated to helping young people develop their relationship with Jesus Christ and to understand their faith through catechesis, Christian witness, and Eucharistic worship so that they may live it in today's world. To accomplish this, the Totus Tuus team of four, trained young adults emphasizes devotion and love for our Lord in the Eucharist and for Mary our Mother in such a way that it is fun for both teachers and youth alike.

What are the Components of Totus Tuus?

The Grade School Program provided by TOTUS TUUS is designed for children going into first through sixth grades. The parish program runs Monday through Friday. The students are encouraged to be clear and consistent in their faith, affirming always their identity so they may see God as their loving Father and, in so doing, empowering them to be witnesses for Him in the world. Finally, TOTUS TUUS endeavors to show the children that the humble yet courageous seeking of all believers is to be based upon the Word of God, who cannot deceive or be deceived. A TOTUS TUUS teacher helps to make the faith real to the youth as a way of life and love and not simply a set of rules and obligations.

TOTUS TUUS offers evening instruction for junior high and high school youth (grades 7-12) Sunday through Thursday. Vibrant, faithful college-aged teachers can effectively impact the junior high and high school youth. Two reasons have been noticed: the close proximity of age and the ability to establish mentor relationships (i.e. big brother or big sister). The TOTUS TUUS High School Program includes instruction, small group discussions, quiet meditation, prayer, and fellowship. The team teaches in such a way as to continually offer a dialogue - in which each person feels respected and highlighting his or her dignity.

When is Totus Tuus?

Parishes are invited to reserve one of eight week-long sessions available during the summer.

Who Can Go?

All students who are currently in 1st -12th grade are invited to attend.

TOTUS TUUS is Latin for “Totally Yours” and was the motto of Pope John Paul II. Taken From St. Louis de Montfort’s great work, *True Devotion to Mary*. It represents the desire to give ourselves entirely to Jesus Christ through the hands of His Immaculate Mother.

World Youth Day



What is the Purpose of World Youth Day?

World Youth Day is a gathering of young people literally from around the world who come together for catechesis and prayer and to meet with the Holy Father. It gathers hundreds of thousands of teens to build bridges of friendship and hope between continents, peoples and cultures. Pope John Paul II established World Youth Day as an annual event to reach out to the next generation of Catholics to call them to embrace the truth of Jesus Christ.

What are the Components of World Youth Day?

World Youth Day is an inclusive, international celebration of faith, friendship and hope between peoples and cultures. There is the component of pilgrimage in which young people prayerfully prepare and travel a great distance to the sight of World Youth Day, often times experiencing many difficulties and irritations. There are opportunities to visit some of the major sights of the host country. The young people stay with host homes, which allow the teens and chaperones to be immersed in the culture of the host country.

The week preceding the two-day event with the Holy Father is organized with gatherings of prayer and catechesis by gifted speakers, separated in groups by the various languages. If the Bishop from the Diocese attends World Youth Day, he meets with the young people for celebration of Holy Mass and other events.

The Pope arrives at WYD with a grand welcome by the youth of the world. The excitement is overwhelming as the spiritual Father of the Universal Church speaks and prays with teens, calling them to be committed to the Savior of the world.

When is World Youth Day?

Typically, World Youth Day is held every three years.

Who May Attend?

Any teen ages 16 and up may attend this incredible event.

“All young people should feel cared for by the Church: to do so, the whole Church, in union with the Successor of Peter, must feel increasingly committed at the global level, in favor of youth ... to correspond to their expectations, communicating to them the certainty of Christ, the truth that is Christ, and the love that is Christ through adequate formation,

which is a necessary and updated form of evangelization”
-Pope John Paul II, Address to the College of Cardinals, December 20, 1985

Regional Rallies and Retreats



What is the Purpose of the Regional Rallies and Retreats?

The purpose of Regional Rallies and Retreats is to provide young people the opportunity to understand that growing in their faith is a lifelong process; to encourage them to be active participants in the life of the parish to which they belong; and that their relationship with Jesus Christ is the most important part of their life. These rallies and retreats also continue to provide the young people with a stronger connection as a Catholic community.

What are the Components of the Regional Rallies and Retreats?

The Regional Rallies and Retreats can take on different components depending on the parish or deanery who is planning the event and what objectives they would like to see accomplished. One of the unique qualities of the Diocese of La Crosse is that parishes and deaneries plan large scale events to continue the mission of the Church to serve the youth.

When are the Regional Rallies and Retreats?

The hosting parish or deanery chooses the places, dates, and times for the Regional Rallies and Retreats. However, dates are coordinated with the Diocesan Office so that there is no overlap.

Who Can Go?

Typically all students in middle and high school may attend. However, the details depend on the sponsor of the event.

"Great is the mystery of faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy, so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father. This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer .

-Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2558

Youth Ministry Consultation with the Parishes



What is the Purpose of Youth Ministry Consultation?

There are three essential goals for Youth Ministry. “1) empowering young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; 2) drawing young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community; and 3) fostering the personal and spiritual growth of each young person” (Renewing the Vision, p. 2). The Diocesan Youth Ministry consultation is to help parishes to develop and sustain a consistent youth ministry program with these goals in mind.

What are the Components of Youth Ministry Consultation?

Youth ministry can happen in any size parish, it is just a matter of finding what works for each parish. The consultation explores what the needs of the parish are, as well as, reasonable goals for the youth minister, whether the person is paid or a volunteer. The consultation is simply helping each parish find out how to start and sustain a consistent youth ministry program. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry exists to serve the parishes, therefore there is no cost for this. We encourage parishes to see this office as a consistent support to their youth and young adult ministry efforts.

When is Youth Ministry Consultation?

This consultation is scheduled at the convenience of the parish. This consultation can include the pastor, youth minister, DRE/CRE, adult team, parents and even the young people.

Who May Attend?

Anyone wishing to hear about and/or participate in Youth Ministry is welcome to attend.

As leaders in the field of the youth apostolate, your task will be to help your parishes, dioceses, associations, and movements to be truly open to the personal, social, and spiritual needs of young people. You will have to find ways of involving young people in projects and activities of formation, spirituality, and service, giving them responsibility for themselves and their work, and taking care to avoid isolating them and their apostolate from the rest of the ecclesial community.

Young people need to be able to see the practical relevance of their efforts to meet the real needs of people, especially the poor and neglected. They should also be able to see that their apostolate belongs fully to the Church's mission in the world.
-cf. Pope John Paul II, *Christ Invites, Reveals and Sends*, 1993

Catechetical Conference



What is the Purpose of the Annual Catechetical Conference?

The Conference provides ongoing formation for Catechetical Leaders and catechists, strengthening their own faith, and their ability to hand on the Faith to others. The focus is on Doctrine, Scripture, Methodology and Christian Spirituality (do you want to include spirituality in your office overview?) based upon the 'New Evangelization'. In turn, Catechetical Leaders are better equipped to assist parish catechists to teach the Faith and to lead students intentionally to union with Christ.

What are the Components of the Catechetical Conference?

The Conference is a two-day event. The various components consist of personal faith formation and prayer for the catechetical leader and catechist as well as information on new initiatives and resources. Moreover, time is set aside for deanery networking sessions as well as materials to further develop the parish program. A representative from each parish is required to attend, at a minimum, the Friday afternoon session. The afternoon sessions usually include a teaching by the Bishop or a keynote speaker and workshops.

When is the Catechetical Conference?

The Conference is held during the latter part of the summer.

Who May Attend?

Any confirmed adult may attend the Conference.

“The diocesan catechetical program is the global catechetical project of a particular Church, which integrates, in a structured and coherent way, the diverse catechetical programs addressed by the Diocese to different age groups... Among the diverse forms of catechesis ‘their perfect complementarity must be fostered.’ The *organizing principle*, which gives coherence to the various catechetical programs

offered by a particular Church, is attention to adult catechesis.
This is the axis around which revolves the catechesis of
childhood and adolescence as well as that of old age.”
-General Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy, n. 274, 275