



Diocese of Gary's Youth Council

Thank you so much for an awesome first meeting last month! Once again, I have been blown away by you, the young people in the diocese. You are fun, and energetic, and so faith-filled. Thank you for saying yes to serve on the council!

Schedule Change for October

Due to some unforeseen events, we have to reschedule the October meeting from Sunday, October 16 to Sunday, October 23.

As mentioned at the September meeting, Julia Zerbes (DYC Rep from Queen of All Saints, Michigan City) is also a member of the National Youth Advisory Council for the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). National Youth Advisory Council has been granted a meeting with the Holy Father on October 12, at the conclusion of the general audience in Rome to receive directly from him the papal message for young people in the United States. Julia will be part of the delegation that will be meeting with Pope Francis! We are so excited for her!

I have been asked to accompany them in my role as an adult advisor to the council. Because of that, I will not be back in town in time for our scheduled meeting and so need to reschedule. We have a lot of things to cover this month, so I don't want to cancel the meeting. We will meet on October 23, 1-3:00 PM. Thank you for understanding! Please pray for Julia as she travels for this important event! -Vicky Hathaway

Share your leadership skills!

The DYC has been invited to help with the upcoming "Christ Alive!" retreat for high school students. We will talk more about this at the meeting, but I would like you to start thinking about how you can help. You can sign up at the October meeting or via the Flocknote email sent on 10/5/22.

Give a short testimony about my faith: We are looking for 3-4 DYC reps to share how they discovered some of their gifts and talents and how they use them in a way that God is calling them to.

Help with Hospitality: We are looking for teens to greet people when they arrive, show them around, be a friendly face for teens as they wait for things to start, and just generally help with hospitality.

Small Group Leader: We will have a few times during the retreat for small group discussion. If you would like to help with this, by asking questions, and making sure everyone gets a chance to talk, sign up for this one.

Speaking of Christ Alive...

Christ Alive: An Evening Retreat for High Schoolers

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 3:00 PM-Midnight

St. Michael the Archangel, Schererville

High Schoolers from Northwest Indiana are invited to an evening retreat on Saturday, November 19, 2022 at St. Michael the Archangel parish in Schererville and sponsored by the Diocese of Gary Office for Youth Ministry. Take some time to meet new people, learn a little bit about yourself, and celebrate the gift that is you! There will be Mass, speakers, small group discussions, candlelit Adoration, games, and more. Cost is \$20 and we will be collecting canned food items for a local food bank. We hope to see you there! To register or find more information, go to garyoyya.org/ChristAlive

Notes from last meeting

One exercise we did during our September meeting was to ask a discussion question and see where it took us. The question we asked was: *"If you could tell someone in Church leadership anything about teens today, what would you tell them?"* And then the flood gates were opened. Here are some of your responses:

- "We matter, our opinion matters." We want to be included in discussions. We have ideas to share but tend to be ignored a lot. We aren't invited to the conversation.
- "Society effects us. The culture we are in effects the way we view things." When most teens see a celebrity saying something about current issues, teens tend to follow their thinking.
- Listening to different perspectives can bring different viewpoints and solutions to everyday issues. "If [Church leaders] listen to our perspectives on things, we can get past barriers. We can help people see things in a new way, based on our experiences."
- "People our age are very quick to judge." We often feel like we will be judged by talking about or engaging in faith practices. When someone judges us, they often miss out on an opportunity to learn, grow, and experience new things.
- "We have a lot of influence." We want to make an impact in our communities. We can share our thoughts online and with friends. We want that at our parish, too.
- "Keep more of an open mind." When we think someone is more likely to sympathize with our experiences, we find it easier to share our thoughts and opinions.
- "Our society and culture is different now a days. [Church leaders] didn't have to deal with the same problems." We often feel like adults will quickly judge us and compare their experiences to ours. When we hear, "I had it so much worse than you," we don't think you are open to helping us in the moment.
- "Covid and our mental health factor on faith as well." "I'll be honest, I suffered with mental health." One rep shared that because of stress and anxiety, they turned to destructive coping skills. Their faith helped when they were going through recovery. Adults who helped and took his mental health issues seriously also were a lifesaver.
- Many adults don't think mental health issue are serious or have a "just get over it" mentality. "Stop judging and take care of your child."
- "Parents and teachers who helped [and took mental health issues seriously]: we are soo thankful for them!"

We then talked about what we wanted to do with these insights. The DYC suggested to work with the Diocesan Communication Department to share their insights. So, at the October meeting, we will start talking about how we can share our story with others and how we are called to be influencers with our faith.

"If you could tell someone in Church leadership anything about teens today, what would you tell them?"

One exercise we did during our September Diocesan Youth Council Meeting meeting was to ask a discussion question and see where it took us. The question we asked was: *"If you could tell someone in Church leadership anything about teens today, what would you tell them?"* And then the flood gates were opened. Here are some of your responses:

Their call to participate in the life of the Church

- "We matter, our opinion matters." We want to be included in discussions. We have ideas to share but tend to be ignored a lot. We aren't invited to the conversation.
- Listening to different perspectives can bring different viewpoints and solutions to everyday issues. "If [Church leaders] listen to our perspectives on things, we can get past barriers. We can help people see things in a new way, based on our experiences."
- "We have a lot of influence." We want to make an impact in our communities. We can share our thoughts online and with friends. We want that at our parish, too.

Society Pressures

- "Society effects us. The culture we are in effects the way we view things." When most teens see a celebrity saying something about current issues, teens tend to follow their thinking.

Peer Pressure

- "People our age are very quick to judge." We often feel like we will be judged by talking about or engaging in faith practices. When someone judges us, they often miss out on an opportunity to learn, grow, and experience new things.

Building Relationships Between Youth and Parish Leaders

- "Keep more of an open mind." When we think someone is more likely to sympathize with our experiences, we find it easier to share our thoughts and opinions.
- "Our society and culture is different now a days. [Church leaders] didn't have to deal with the same problems." We often feel like adults will quickly judge us and compare their experiences to ours. When we hear, "I had it so much worse than you," we don't think you are open to helping us in the moment.

Mental Health Concerns

- "Covid and our mental health factor on faith as well." "I'll be honest, I suffered with mental health." One rep shared that because of stress and anxiety, they turned to destructive coping skills. Their faith helped when they were going through recovery. Adults who helped and took his mental health issues seriously also were a lifesaver.
- Many adults don't think mental health issue are serious or have a "just get over it" mentality. "Stop judging and take care of your child."
- "To parents and teachers who helped [and took mental health issues seriously]: we are soo thankful for them!"

Ministry with Youth and Young Adults Insights

Accompaniment: The Gospel asks us: its message of closeness invites us to **encounter** and **exchange**, to **accept** and **love** each other seriously, to **journey together** and to **share without fear.**" (Pope Francis, *Pre-synodal meeting with young people, March, 2018*)

YOUTH

Generation Z
Born 1997-2012
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 group.

YOUNG ADULTS

Millennials Born 1981-1996 & Generation Z
Out of high school
18-39 year olds
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
16-30 years old
This phrase in Spanish connotes Hispanic/Latino youth and young adult ministry, in Spanish or in a bilingual setting. Young adult and adolescents members may be served together or separately with appropriate discernment and consideration of the opportunities and risks.- *Definition from the V Encuentro Proceedings and Conclusions*

"We cannot just say that young people are the future of our world.

They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it."

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 64

"Anyone called to be a parent, pastor or guide to young people must have the farsightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken. The ability to discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognize potential where others see only peril. That is how God the Father see things; he knows how to cherish and nurture the seeds of goodness sown in the hearts of the young. **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.**"

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 67

"As the account of the Emmaus disciples shows us, accompanying requires availability to walk a stretch of road together, establishing a significant relationship. The origin of the term "accompany" points to bread broken and shared (cum pane), with all the symbolic human and sacramental richness to which it refers. **It is therefore the community as a whole that is the prime subject of accompaniment, precisely because in its heart it develops that drama of relationships that can support the person on his journey and furnish him with points of reference and orientation.** Accompaniment in human and Christian growth towards adult life is one of the ways in which the community demonstrates that it is capable of renewal and of renewing the world."

Final Synod Document, 92

Ministry with Youth and Young Adults Insights

A great resource for learning about the religious and spiritual trends of Gen Z is Springtide Research Institute. www.springtideresearch.org

65% of young people agree “a person’s expertise doesn’t matter if they don’t care about me.” Expertise is not enough if there isn’t genuine care, shown by being hospitable, loving, forgiving, nonjudgmental, and gracious. (2020)

Relational Authority

- Listening
 - 82% say they will trust someone who takes the time to hear what they have to say.
 - Before making comments or advice, ask a few questions. “Can you tell me more?”
- Transparency
 - 80% trust those who understand their lived experiences.
 - “Young people want to know you, not just the institution you represent.
- **Integrity**
 - 80% of young people trust someone who admits when they are wrong.
 - 94% of 13-17 year-olds trust people who model and practice integrity through following up, following through, being accountable, and being authentic.
- **Care**
 - 87% of young people say they trust adults who take time to foster relationships.
 - We spend time on the things we care about. Giving of your time to young people says a lot.
- **Expertise**
 - 84% of young people say they trust someone who not only knows a lot, but also uses that knowledge to help them.
 - “Young people do not want you to be their friend.” They want you to be their guide, mentor, coach, and teacher.