Young Disciples Missions

Parish Contact Manual
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Young Disciples Apostolate Overview

Through their joyful witness, the Young Disciples Teams seek to invite the youth of North Dakota to love Jesus Christ and to embrace the life of his family, the Church. Founded in 2001, the Young Disciples Apostolate was created to provide authentically Catholic vacation Bible schools and teen retreats for rural parishes and reservations in the Diocese of Fargo.

Evangelization

The number of people leaving the Church or have no religious upbringing is growing at an alarming rate. Many people simply do not know Jesus and/or his Church. The Young Disciples share the Gospel message and invitation with the children, teens, and families they encounter throughout the summer.

Catechesis

We cannot live what we do not know. Pope St. John Paul II insisted that those who do know the Gospel message need catechesis, which develops and nourishes the Christian life of the faithful, young and old...so that they will continue “to follow Christ and learn more and more within the Church to think like Him, to judge like Him, to act in conformity with His commandments and to hope as He invites us to hope” (Catechesi Tradendae, 20).

Parish Life

After training, each Young Disciples Team is sent out to eight different parishes, most often in rural towns or reservations. During the day, teams host vacation Bible schools for those children who have completed grades K-6th.

Daily Mass and Rosary, as well as the sacrament of Reconciliation are the foundations of every camp. In addition, the Young Disciples Team proclaims the Gospel through catechesis, prayer, music, skits, games, and crafts. During the evenings, parishes may ask teams to conduct teen nights or family nights. These are limited only by the creativity of the hosting parish. The participants will regularly be given the opportunity to respond to Christ and his Church.

YD’s Theme Verses

*But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!”*

- Romans 10:14-15, RSV

Patron Saint:

St. John Bosco

St. John Bosco spent his life caring for and teaching the youth. His creativity, joy, prayerfulness, and radical charity inspire the Young Disciples Missionaries in their work with the youth.
Young Disciples Team Training

The Young Disciples Apostolate is an on-going mission. We spend the year recruiting young adults, ages 18-30 to be a part of the apostolate. These missionaries volunteer 10 weeks of their summer to teach the youth. They come from various backgrounds, from around the country and sometimes from around the world, but all love Jesus and his Church and they have zeal for evangelization of our youth.

The Young Disciples Apostolate begins with a training period of 17 days, which includes:

- 10 hours of Methodology
- 15 hours of Catechesis and Foundations of the Faith.
- 30 hours of Camp Preparation, including overview of all lessons and camp components they will teach over the summer
- 15 hours on Team Life
- 20 hours of Spiritual Life Formation
- 45 hours of on the road training with a full time supervisor

The teams will have on-going supervisor visits and telephone calls, as well as, correspondence with staff at the Pastoral Center throughout the summer. They have additional training halfway through the summer and at the end of summer.

We ask that you pray for the team members during this time as they prepare to come to your parish. They spend months before fundraising and getting ready for the summer. Prayer and financial support are the key ingredients that make this apostolate work.

Commonly, team life will be the greatest blessing and challenge of the summer. Our experience is that team members become not only good evangelizers and catechists, but friends in the truest sense.

Furthermore, their life of service to the Church and one another to bring all to heaven continues after their summer. Many Young Disciples missionaries have joined seminary and religious life. Others have used their skills while raising their own families. Many others have become youth ministers, DREs, volunteer catechists, and long-term missionaries.
A Week with a Young Disciples Team

Before The Arrival

The team leader of the Young Disciples Team will contact you within 7 to 10 days before arriving at your parish. They will set a time and place for their arrival. You should provide/confirm the weekend Mass schedule for your parish and missions. This call also gives you a chance to ask them any questions you might have.

Saturday

The team is expected to arrive on Saturday of the week before your camp. If possible they should have a chance to see the facility they will be using. This will allow them to be more prepared. They may also need to do skit practice, music practice, and/or have team prayer.

If the team should run into unexpected problems which will effect travel and arrival times, they will call to discuss the best course of action.

They are expected to attend all weekend liturgies, so the adults may be made aware of their ministry and keep them in prayer. A team member will ask the priest if they can make a brief announcement of invitation to children, teens to the camps and mission.

Sunday

The team is expected to attend all weekend Masses. If a parish has more than 2 Masses on Sunday, the team may split up the Masses between pairs of missionaries.

Monday – Friday

The teams will conduct a day camp for those who have completed grades K-6th. A typical day camp runs from 8:30am to 3pm or from 9:00am to 3:30pm. See pages 6-7.

Evenings

The teams will host a teen mission for all those who have completed 7th grade and older. The mission goes for two nights, thus allowing time for fellowship, faith, food and fun. See pages 8-9.

- The parish can choose which evenings work best for the parish schedule.

One Night/Potluck

The event allows adults of the parish and community meet the missionaries and see firsthand what happens at the camps throughout the week. See page 10.

- Most parishes have the potluck on Thursday evening.

Saturday

Teams will leave late morning to early afternoon for their next parish
Elementary Day Camp: Vacation Bible School

Monday through Friday

A typical camp runs Monday through Friday and is for those who have completed grades K-6 or are going into grades 1-7. This camp is not designed for younger children. A typical day runs from 8:30am to 3pm or from 9:00am to 3:30pm. Your community may have other needs, e.g. arranging camp around baseball practice, swim lessons, etc. for this reason, we ask that your parish determine what time is best for your community. We are flexible.

Example, if parents work schedules are an issue, a parish might run a camp from 12:30pm to 6:30pm, thus enabling parents to drop children off over the lunch hour and pick them up after work.

The Young Disciples will run the camp with these needs in mind:

- Church
- Large meeting space, needed for games and activities
- Smaller rooms/areas needed for classroom instruction (4-5 rooms is ideal).
- Outside space for activities
- Contact person available at the facility during the camp day.

A typical day will include:

- Daily Mass
- Reconciliation (one day)
- Large group Rosary
- Prayer times
- Classroom Activities
- Large group activities and games
- Outside Activities and games
- Skits
- Music
- Lunch (children bring their own or provide hot lunch)
Foundation of the Camps: Sacraments and Prayer

The elementary camps are a combination of Catechesis, Sacraments, and Prayer. We ask that two events occur at every camp. They are:

1) **Daily Mass.** A priest must be available to have Mass each day of camp. We understand if emergencies arise and it needs to be canceled on a particular day.

2) **Reconciliation** available during the week, which can be worked out between the priest and the team as to which time works best.

One of the pillars of the camp is a segment called “Mass Prep”. Throughout the week the students will take a church tour, learn about the vestments and vessels used for Mass, as well as learn Mass responses. Each lesson will also have a “tie in” connection with the Mass.

The camps also incorporate daily prayer – through class prayers, praise and worship, PAL time (Praise, Ask, Listen) and a daily Rosary.
Teen Mission

One or Two-Night Teen Mission
It is our hope that all parishes that host the Young Disciples would include a one or two night teen mission in their week. The teen mission is no extra cost to the host parish. We want to offer this service because teenagers are in desperate need of examples of vibrant young adult Catholics who love their faith and are on fire about sharing it with others.

Why have a teen mission?
Parish ministry and traveling ministries complement one another by providing multiple opportunities for students to personally encounter Jesus Christ and to help them grow in their faith. Just think, what if one or more of your teens have a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ at the teen mission, which radically changes their lives?

Our communities need teens to be Catholic witnesses, who are not afraid to bring their faith to their peers in school, extra-curricular and social events. The teens in our parishes are called not only to be disciples of Jesus Christ, but also his missionaries in the world.

What is the plan?
Ideally, the teen mission is intended to be a 2-night mission for 2 hours a night, however the teams will adapt the teen mission according to your parish’s needs.

There is a sample teen mission checklist provided on the following page.

“But teens aren’t around in the summer…”
Over the years, the Young Disciples Teams have hosted dozens, if not hundreds, of teen missions. Some missions had dozens of teens and others only had a few. Either way, it was still worth it. Stories from previous missionaries have shown that oftentimes the most moving teen missions were ones that were small. Please don’t let numbers deter you from planning to have a teen mission. Even if just one student is drawn closer to Jesus Christ, it is all worth it.
Teen Mission Checklist

What does the parish need to do prepare for the teen mission?

1. __________ **Pray for the teens** in your parish and their friends, that they would not only say ‘yes’ to coming to teen mission, but that the Holy Spirit would prepare their hearts and minds for the graces he desires for them.

   Ideas:
   - Include your teens, by name, in your morning prayers.
   - Offer up a Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, your personal Mass intentions, etc.
   - Pray a novena for your students.

2. __________ **Advertise the Teen Mission**.

   Ideas:
   - Call the teens individually in addition to online invites, texting, etc.
   - Get the help of a couple of teens to help you promote the mission.
   - Challenge each student to bring a friend.
   - Mailed invitations

3. __________ **Provide the Space**: Put the teen mission on the parish calendar in order to reserve parish hall, the chapel, and whatever other areas could be used for teen mission.

   ______ Do you have an outdoor space for recreation?

   ______ Do you have indoor space that may be used?

   ______ May the team use the chapel?

4. __________ **Provide refreshments**. Ice-cream, pizza, snacks, etc. It doesn’t need to be anything fancy. Any food or snacks will work.

5. __________ **On-Site Contact Person**: Elementary camp contact person, or another adult with a background check, needs to be on site for each night of mission.

6. __________ Let the team know if Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and/or confession will be possible for the teen mission.
Parish Potluck

We would like to encourage parishes to host a family potluck towards the end of the week. Most parishes choose Thursday evening. We have found that a potluck for children, their families, relatives and other parishioners works well.

Why?

First, past summers we have found the parishes really enjoy an event like this.

Second, this time gives the team an opportunity to meet with families and other parishioners.

Third, this is an excellent opportunity for parents and other adults to meet the team and to hear about what their children have been doing at camp all week.

How?

Our suggestion is to begin the potluck around 5:30pm or 6pm and end an 1 ½ later. The team will provide details of this event when the evening starts. Begin with the prayer service, followed by eating, then a program put on by the children.

The team leader will introduce the team and explain briefly about the Young Disciples Apostolate. The team will then share what they have been doing with the kids all week and during the teen mission. They may choose to do music, skits, testimonies, etc. in order to give those present a glimpse of what has been happening during the camp day and the teen mission.
How to Care For Your Team

Each Young Disciples Team consists of 4 to 5 people. The number of men and women will differ each year. We will notify you once training begins when we form the teams who will be coming to your parish. The team members come from all over the United States and sometimes from other countries. We do not know the makeup for the teams until the last week of May.

Host Family Guidelines

We ask that each parish provide food and housing for the team members.

When staying at a host home please consider the following:

- No team member should ever have to be housed alone. If need be, 1 male may be housed with 2 females. Likewise, one female can be housed with 2 males. But, if possible, separate males and females.
- Make sure the host family will be home throughout the week and not on vacation, etc.
- Please have the host family go over any details such as locking doors, time of meals, etc. that apply to the host home.
- Due to safe environment regulations, under no circumstances are missionaries allowed to share bedrooms with minors. Please make housing arrangements accordingly.

Meals

Your parish is responsible for providing meals for the Young Disciples Team members throughout the week. This would include breakfast, lunch, and supper.

- **Breakfast:** Please inform host family that a light breakfast is sufficient.
- **Lunch:** There are different options you can do for lunch. For example, you could arrange families to bring in lunch for the teams or you could provide groceries for the team and they could make their own lunches for the week. (Sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, crackers, etc.)
  - They will arrive on Saturday afternoon/evening and will leave the following Saturday morning/afternoon. Please check with team leader when he/she calls if they are going to be there for lunch on travel days.
- **Supper:** The teams generally prefer to eat together at the evening meal, however, it is NOT a requirement. We do ask that at least one evening during the week they have a meal with a parish family, which can be either at their home or a restaurant. One of the greatest blessings for the missionaries is to meet the families in your parish.
  - There are different options for supper
    - You may have them visit other families (not host families) for the evening meal.
    - You may have people bring meals to the parish hall for them.
    - You may have the team eat at the host homes.

- **Camp Snacks:** Most parishes provide snacks for the campers and team throughout the week.

Please keep in mind that some days they will have evening activities. They will need to be back at the parish at least a half hour before the activity starts.

## Additional Camp Needs and Information

### Parish Priest

The priest is invited to be a part of all the events, as his schedule allows. Minimally, a priest is needed to celebrate daily Mass for the camp during the day and Reconciliation sometime during the week. Ideally, the priest would also participate in the teen mission if possible.

### Parish On-Site Contact Person

There needs to be at least one adult available at the camp during the day and the teen mission during the evening that team members may consult and the diocesan office may contact if the need arises. This duty may be carried out by various adults throughout the week. In case of emergencies, it is the contact person’s responsibility to notify families.

### Camp Attendance

The summer camps are designed for those who have completed grades K-6. The camp is not designed for children who have not completed Kindergarten.

Students who belong to other faiths are welcome, especially in smaller parishes.

Parishes may not have more than 60 students unless previously arranged with the diocesan office. In order to accommodate the additional students, additional help will be sent when available. Parishes will be charged an additional $25/student.
Camp Facility and Supplies

- A room large enough for all of your campers during the day and teens during the night
- Smaller areas or hallways that can be used for smaller group activities and classroom instruction. (4-5 rooms is ideal)
- Outside space for activities.
- A chalkboard or dry erase board if possible
- Outside space for activities.
- A podium or music stand that the team members can use when talking in the large group area.
- Access to the church for Masses, Confession, rosary and church tour.
- Microphone for musician at Mass.
- Bibles, scissors, paper, makers, colors, pencils, glue, masking tape, and scratch paper.
- Copies as requested

Advertising

You will be provided with two Young Disciples posters to inform people about the camps and teen missions. On the posters there will be spaces to write in the time and location. You may also put an announcement in your parish bulletin that the Young Disciples will be at your parish.

Sample bulletin announcement:
The Young Disciples Team will be in our parish the week of <DATE> from <TIMES> to lead vacation Bible school, a teen mission and parish pot luck. The Young Disciples Teams are a traveling apostolate team of Catholic young adults. The week of camp will consist of music, daily Mass, games, lessons, prayer and hours of fun. All children who have completed grades K-6 are welcome to attend including those who belong to other churches. The Young Disciple Teams will also do a teen mission. The teen mission is for grades 7-12 and will be <DATE> from <TIME>. Lastly, the parish pot luck will be <DATE> from <TIME>. Please pray that our parish and community will grow in their faith, hope and love as we participate in these events.

Other Promotional Ideas:

- Get the parish to pray for the upcoming events.
- Call all the families with children and teens
- Send a letter to all the families with children and teens
- Ask teens from each class to get their friends to attend
- Send a copy of the poster to all parishes within a half hour radius
- Send a copy of the posters to those in other churches in your town
- Hang up posters in your town
- Advertise on the radio, television, and/or newspaper
Young Disciples Team Fees

Parishes hosting a Young Disciples Teams will have the team for one week. Minimally, the team is expected to attend weekend Masses (including missions), do a 4 or 5 day camp for elementary children, teen mission, and family potluck. Regardless of how many events are scheduled, parishes are charged according to parish size and location:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Families in Parish</th>
<th>Camp Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 130 families</td>
<td>$1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 131 to 300 families</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 301 to 650 families</td>
<td>$1,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the Diocese of Fargo</td>
<td>$1,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This fee covers only around 1/3 of the actual cost of having a team. The other 2/3 is provided through diocesan funds and private sponsors.

All fees are due as soon as the camp is completed at your parish. Payment should be mailed to:
Young Disciples Teams - Diocese of Fargo, 5201 Bishops Boulevard, Fargo ND, 58104

Why the price difference for different size parishes?
Practically speaking, larger parishes require more craft supplies and other resources, which is more expensive. Also, the primary mission of the Young Disciples Teams is to reach our smaller parishes. In addition to lacking finances, many smaller parishes do not have any young adults. Thus, their witness is largely absent. Younger children and older adults are often inspired by the faith of young adults, especially those who witness to the Faith by serving as missionaries.

What is the cancellation policy?
In general, cancellations should be very rare. You have received your week while other parishes have waited or have made other plans. For this reason, parishes canceling after April 15 will be responsible for the entire camp fee unless you find another parish to take your spot. The canceling parish is responsible for making these arrangements.
Fundraising Ideas

Below are a few suggestions for funding your Young Disciples Camp.

**Charge a small fee for the camp.** For example:

- A. 20 campers x 5 days x $8.00/day = $800
- B. 30 campers x 5 days x $8.00/day = $1200
- C. 40 campers x 5 days x $6.00/day = $1200
- D. 50 campers x 5 days x $5.00/day = $1250
- E. 60 campers x 5 days x $5.00/day = $1500

**Underwriters**

Working with your pastor, see if there are individuals in your parish that you can ask to underwrite the cost of the camp. These contributions become tax deductible if your pastor allows the parish to collect them for you.

**Parish Organizations**

Request money from parish organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, the Altar Society, or the youth group themselves.

**Bake Sale and Fundraisers**

Selling bake goods can always earn some extra money. There are also many fundraising ideas of different items to sell, such as breads and candy.

**Second Collection**

Take a second collection at your parish’s Masses on a given weekend.

**Invite Others to Attend**

Invite children and teens from other faiths and the community to attend the camp. They too could be charged a fee. (The camp will remain Catholic, e.g. will include the Sign of the Cross, Mass, Reconciliation, Sacraments, Commandments, Jesus, Mary, the Saints, etc. Those of other Faiths will be invited to participate as they are able.)
Parish Checklist

This manual is to introduce you more fully to the Young Disciples Apostolate and help with the preparation of the Young Disciples camps. Please read through the entire manual. Check off the below items as completed.

_____  Received a date to host the Young Disciples Team from diocesan office.
_____  Confirm dates with Pastor.
_____  Read through the Parish Contact Manual in its entirety
_____  Pray for the students in your parish and their families. (Ongoing)
_____  Publicize the camp and teen mission – social media, posters, email, mail, telephone
_____  Have teens help with promotion.
_____  Confirm reservations for camp facility.
_____  Obtain necessary keys needed
_____  Secured adequate number of host homes
_____  Obtain any necessary supplies / equipment (if needed)
_____  Verify availability of cooking facility / equipment (if needed)
_____  Confirm any volunteer help if needed
_____  Arrange lunch and supper for the team for the entire week.
_____  Arrange for camp snacks
_____  Have host home addresses and contact information available to the team upon arrival
_____  Made contact with the team leader approximately 1 week before the arrival