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Introduction

Welcome to the youth ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York! One of the greatest dangers for any organization is to assume that "Everyone knows about us!". As people change, or as programs come and go, it becomes very easy to lose touch with what's going on.

In response to that we've created this pamphlet as an easy, thumbnail guide to the various programs and ministries in our diocese. It won't necessarily answer all your questions but you will get a basic understanding of what's available for young people in our church. If you have further questions please get in touch with the Youth Missioner or anyone associated with the individual programs.

The primary goal of the youth ministries of the diocese is to return young people to their home congregations a little deeper in their faith, a little more excited about their church and a little bit better prepared to be an active members of the Body of Christ.

We hope this pamphlet answers your questions and gets you excited about what's available for your youth and for you!

Peace

How Can I Help?

1: Pray for our young people, the people who minister to and with them, and the youth ministries of the diocese. We always need your prayers.

2: Encourage your youth to be involved. Encouragement from their clergy and other adult leaders is a powerful tool for getting them involved in the ministries. Without your support these programs are doomed to dwindle away. That would leave with our youth with fewer chances to strengthen their faith.

3: Financial Support - This can come in a lot of ways. Helping to pay for youth to attend programs, raising funds for specific programs directly, or long term support through the Bishop Harold B. Robinson Society.

4: Get involved! All these programs need adult leaders, chaperons, chaplains, counselors, advisers, and/or helpers. You can get involved as heavily or lightly as you like, one time only or become a regular part of a program. We always need and are looking for adults! We can ease you in or let you dive in head first.

Journey to Adulthood

The Journey to Adulthood is a youth ministry program of spiritual formation for grades 6-12. It uses Bible study, prayer, rites of passage, outreach ministries and both serious and fun activities to teach it's core principles:

1. Manhood and womanhood are free gifts from God.
2. Adulthood must be earned.

There are three two-year segments of the program:

Rite-13: The first two years (6th & 7th or 7th & 8th graders) that focus on celebrating the individuality of each young person and their creative potential. The Rite-13 liturgy (A celebration of Manhood and Womanhood) is the community expression of this.

J2A: The middle portion of the program (8th & 9th or 9th and 10th graders), engages youth with the skills and critical thinking involved in adulthood. The youth plan and embark on a pilgrimage together at the end of this segment.

YAC: A mentor-based program helping older teens (11th and 12th grade) to discern and carry out a ministry within their church or in the larger community. Vocation and development of a personal credo are also emphasized.



The diocese has offered support for those congregations wishing to make use of this program.

Deadlines and Signatures

Deadlines are vital to the ministry's ability to plan and to meet the needs of our facilities providers. Unfortunately deadlines are often treated as optional. Not having sufficient numbers at the times of deadlines has resulted in several event cancellations in recent years. Please stress the importance of not only getting paperwork (applications, health forms etc.) in on time but that early registration is the best way to insure the health and future of all our youth ministries.

We ask for signatures from clergy or lay leaders to assure that young people are receiving appropriate support to be involved in appropriate programs.

Scholarships

A scholarship fund is supported each year in the diocesan budget. Scholarships are intended to assure that no youth is excluded from camp or other youth ministries because of financial reasons. These funds are intended to supplement support from families and congregations. The "standard" formula is for the family to cover a third, the congregation a third and the diocese a third. In some instances the family and congregation can cover the total cost, freeing funds for others in greater need. In some instances the diocesan scholarship fund will provide more than a third when needed.

We are dedicated to the concept that financial reasons should never keep a young person from being part of the youth ministries of the diocese.

Camp Programs

The Diocese of WNY currently supports 4 camping programs. Three are entirely Episcopal in origin and one is a shared ministry with the Upstate NY Synod of ELCA. The Diocese does not maintain its own camp facilities so our camps are held at a variety of locations in WNY. Each camp offers a full schedule of evening fun activities based on age. These may include talent shows, dances, game nights, presentations by outside groups, movies, etc.

Sleep Away Camp - A three day camp for children ages 8-12 held at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Camp(LCLC). This camp is often the first overnight experience away from family and friends. The program involves large doses of "camp" experiences (arts and crafts, music, swimming, games, etc) with a dose of worship and teaching.

Junior High Camp - A week long camp for youth in grades 7-9 held at the Dunkirk Conference Center. Still offering a full slate of "camp" activities and worship Junior High increases the level of teaching. Campers are led to examine their own faith at a little deeper level. Emphasis is shared among faith, fellowship and fun!

Senior High Conference - A week long event for youth in grades 10-12 (including graduates) held at SUNY College at Fredonia. Taking advantage of the university setting Senior High takes the youth into more serious discussions of faith while still retaining a full measure of summer fun. More time is spent in learning situations followed by recreation.

Camps continued

Art, Recreation, Theater and Song (A.R.T.S.)Camp - A week long camp for youth in grades 4-7 and 8-10 done in partnership with the Upstate NY Synod of ELCA, held at Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Camp (LCLC). This camp offers some basic experiential training in the use of art forms to praise, worship and tell the stories of faith. Campers also get the chance to enjoy the camp experience.

The camps form the heart of youth ministry at the diocesan level. Youth camps go back to the early 1930's in our history. This is the longest continuous youth ministry in our diocese.

Camps and conference experiences continue to show up as profound markers along the journey of faith for people of all ages. Unlike many summer "programs" offered to our young people camps are intended as "sabbath" times. Times for relaxation and enjoyment can often be scarce for this highly scheduled generation. Times of relaxation and spiritual examination can offer profound advantages to the young person, their family and congregation.

The Larger Church

We encourage our young people to be involved with the larger church. This happens primarily two ways - through provincial or national church events.

Province II

Our diocese is part of the Province II of the The Episcopal Church. This includes the dioceses of the states of New York and New Jersey plus Haiti, The Virgin Islands and the Convocation of American Churches in Europe. After many years of minimal activity the provincial youth ministry network has become active again. The goal is to develop ways to bring all the young people of the province together on a regular basis.

E.Y.E.

The Episcopal Youth Event (E.Y.E.) is the primary gathering of Episcopal teens. It happens every three years at various locations. E.Y.E. is a five day event, usually held on the campus of a university. It is the largest single gathering of Episcopal youth in the church. A selected delegation of youth and adults are sent to represent our diocese. They will learn more about themselves, their church and their place in the community in faith. During they event they will hear from a wide range of voices (usually including the Presiding Bishop's), in a range of languages and styles.

Happening

Happening-A Christian Experience is a program designed for high school youth in grades 9-12 under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop.

A Happening weekend gives the young person a chance to follow Jesus' words to "come ye apart" for a time of quiet and contemplation. Led by young people the weekend is an immersion into the concepts of "I", "God" and "I and God". The roughly 48 hour event involves prayer, small and large group interactions, daily worship including one celebration of Holy Eucharist, a defined Christian standard of behavior in a cloistered environment led by a prepared staff of youth, adults and clergy. We have used a camp/conference center as the location for the majority of our weekends.

This ministry has had a deep effect on the young people of our diocese. The weekend itself gives them a spiritual experience not quickly forgotten. They can continue in the community taking on a role as a faith leader to people of their own age. That leadership continues on as they return to their lives and home congregations.



Adult "Moms" and "Pops" are vital parts of the community. Their role is to support the young people who are called to lead the weekends. However, adults looking for a renewal weekend for their own personal spiritual development should look to the Cursillo movement

Youth Commission

"We are a community of youth and adults, working as servants of Christ, to spread the truth of God's love by providing the foundation for youth ministry in our diocese".



Youth Commission sets the example for the goals of youth ministry in the diocese. Youth and adults work together as equals to advance and support the programs. It is led by co-chairs - a youth co-chair elected by the Commission and an adult co-chair appointed by the bishop. Youth Commission serves a variety of functions for the youth ministries of the diocese. It does long range planning, short term organization, develops (with input from various persons) budgets for youth ministry, serves as the advisory board for the Youth Missioner, and oversees the operation of the various programs.

Membership on the Youth Commission is open to any youth of high school age and all adults interested in youth ministry. It is also "self selected", meaning if you want to be on the Commission you can! Meetings are held during the program year (September-May).

Resources

EyouthWNY - There is a diocesan youth ministry web page on the internet at www.eyouthwny.org. The site includes a calendar of events, downloadable forms and information, links for youth and adult leaders and much more. Very often answers to questions and resource needs can be found quite easily through this web site.

Newsletters - There are currently two weekly e-mail newsletters available. One is for youth the other for adults. Upcoming events are highlighted plus stories, information and more that may be of use to the reader. You can sign up at the eyouthwny.org

Basic Guide to Youth Ministry - This is an outline of how to create and review your youth ministry. Designed to assist both start up ministries and established ones it is NOT a program but a way of approaching the ministry to determine how you should proceed. It is available to download at eyouthwny.org

Standards and Guidelines - established by Youth Commission they are offered as benchmarks for use at the congregation level. These are the standards established for youth leaders and events in our diocese. It is also available to download at eyouthwny.org

If you need some other resource please contact the Youth Missioner for assistance in locating or creating it for you.

Youth Missioner

A member of the diocesan staff the Youth Missioner is tasked with the support and development of youth ministries. The primary responsibilities of the position are:

- 1: Support of existing ministries with special attention to the camps
- 2: Information distribution to individuals and congregations concerning upcoming activities, events and opportunities.
- 3: Support for congregational youth ministry needs

In simplest terms the Youth Missioner serves as a consultant on youth ministry to the diocese. The person assists in whatever manner is needed. This sometimes includes leading ministries, support positions, paperwork, meetings, speaking, and teaching. New and additional ways of helping and supporting youth ministry are encouraged.

If there are ANY questions concerning youth ministry or how the Youth Missioner may be able to help please get in contact.

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Youth and Convention

There are two ways to introduce our young people into larger leadership roles at convention.

Youth @ Convention

Youth @ Convention ([Y@C](#)) is a program designed for congregational youth ministries (youth groups, Sunday schools, Confirmation classes etc) to be introduced to convention. Groups can attend during the Saturday portion of Convention. They'll be given a short introduction to how the Episcopal church history, diocesan history and how we make decisions. Then they'll get the chance to watch a section of Convention at work. After that time is allotted for further discussion and questions. The goal is to give the youth a feel for the way the church works

Youth Delegates

Youth Commission is permitted to name one young person from each Deanery as a youth delegation to Convention. The young people are given seat and voice to represent the voice of the younger generation in our church. These delegates attend the entire Convention. This usually requires missing some school (which is a permitted absence). The Youth Delegation has been an effective voice on a variety of issues beyond youth ministry at the Convention. This is a great leadership/learning opportunity.

Bishop's Ball

Held just before the start of Lent the Bishop's Ball (Michael's Mardi Gras) is the primary social event of the year in youth ministry. It is a semi-formal event for young people in grades 8-12 and "like minded" adults. This is just a time for everyone involved in our ministries to get together and have some fun. Be warned, the youth get to choose the music (with guidelines) and it tends to be loud!

Mid Year Events

In order to get some more momentum between camps there are mid year events for the Senior High group and Junior High group. These are not "camp reunions" so much as additional opportunities for young people to enter the diocesan youth program. The hope is that a young person who has never been to camp will be encouraged by meeting and having fun in a shorter less intense atmosphere to attend a future youth event. Youth who have attended camp (or other event) get the chance to see friends again and reinforce those bonds.

The Junior High event is a one day while the Senior High event is an overnight.

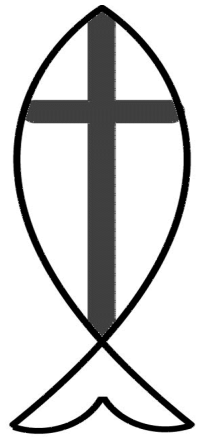
The Bishop Harold B. Robinson Society

Supporting Ministry with and for Youth And Young Adults

This society was formed to create a stable long term funding basis for ministries for and with youth and young adults. The goal was to support strong ministries at both the diocesan and congregation levels. The Robinson society continues to seek for solutions to create that support.

Some of the objectives of the Society include supporting or developing:

- Age specific programs to Engage, Equip and Empower young people to take their place in the life and ministry of the church.
- Congregational ministries to and with youth and young adults in the Diocese of WNY.
- The continued ministry of the diocesan youth missionary
- Ministry to and with students at colleges and universities within the diocese.
- New or expanded Christian Formation opportunities in the diocese and in the congregations
- Identification, training and development of youth leaders
- Participation in ecumenical or wider church events by youth and young adults
- Grants for youth in mission and service work in the community and the world
- Grants for programs that bring the Gospel to young people
- Inter cultural and interfaith dialog and interaction with youth and young adults



The Bishop Harold B.
Robinson Society

Assuring Ministry into the Future

The Bishop Harold B. Robinson Society is a multi-year giving society

Focused on Faith Formation and Renewal in the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York the Society's efforts are specifically centered on developing and deepening a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by youth and young adults ages 8-30.

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUTH MINISTRY *

Created by the Youth Ministries of
the Diocese of WNY
2007



* BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHO TO ASK

Youth Ministries of
The Episcopal Diocese of Western New York

