

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Directives and Protocols



DIOCESE
OF ST. PETERSBURG

Diocese of St. Petersburg
St. Petersburg, Fl

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Purpose

The purpose of the Diocesan Youth Council is to work in conjunction with the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. The Council serves as a communications link between the local parishes, deaneries, and various diocesan offices with the Diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

The members of the Diocesan Youth Council act as spokesmen for their respective parishes, deaneries or offices. They strive to network and communicate with the group they represent regarding diocesan and local events.

The Diocesan Youth Council serves as advisors to the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry regarding local needs and concerns. They assist in the planning, implementation and evaluation of diocesan events.

Individually and collectively the members of the Diocesan Youth Council share their talents with other members in helping each other to further develop all skills necessary to form a collaborative working spirit.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Membership

The Diocesan Youth Council consists of various levels of membership.

- The Deanery level: three teens of high school age and one adult.
- Diocesan Offices (with relevance to youth): two teens of high school age and one adult.
- Apostolates: two teens of high school age and one adult.

The deanery level representation comes from the following deaneries: Lower Pinellas, Upper Pinellas, East Hillsborough, West Hillsborough, Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco.

The following diocesan offices are invited to have representation on the Council: Office of Life Ministries, Office of Evangelization and Life Long Faith Formation, Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, Office of Multicultural Ministry, Catholic Charities, and the Vocation Office.

The apostolate representation is invited from the local Catholic high schools:

Academy of the Holy Names, Bishop McLaughlin Catholic High School, Clearwater Central Catholic High School, Jesuit High School, St. Petersburg Catholic High School and Tampa Catholic High School.

At-Large representation is by appointment of the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. It is the appointment of two young people and one adult.

Terms of Service

Representatives from the deaneries, the various diocesan offices, and the apostolates are selected for a minimum of one year (July 1 through June 30) and may be discerned for another year.

The At Large representatives are selected for one year at a time without any limit on the length of service. The number of years selected for the Council remains at the discretion of the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Responsibilities of Service

The commitment to this position is to be taken seriously. Council members are held accountable for their attendance and responsibilities at regularly scheduled functions. Attendance is taken at all monthly meetings. Three meetings missed without a legitimate excuse and consultation with the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry could be grounds for dismissal from the Council.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Goals and Objectives

The following goals were discerned as a method for achieving the purpose of the Council.

1. To develop youth ministry on the parish and deanery levels.
2. To work towards the recognition and affirmation of youth ministry on the local and diocesan levels.
3. To provide the necessary networking and outreach to facilitate better communication and sharing of resources both on a local and diocesan level.
4. To work in cooperation and collaboration with the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the preparation and implementation of diocesan, provincial, regional and national events.
5. To serve in an advisory capacity to the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and be a liaison to the local parishes regarding youth ministry.

The objectives are avenues for achieving the goals listed above.

1. Assist in the development of strong deanery meetings.
2. Work with the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the planning, preparation and implementation of special events throughout the year.
3. Serve as advisors to the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry in the
 - establishment of goals and objectives for the office for any given year;
 - evaluation of diocesan programs;

- coordination of the calendar; and
 - future direction of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.
4. Serve as deanery representatives who
- Bring concerns, conflicts (dates, challenges, problems), resources and pertinent issues to the attention of the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.
 - Assist in disseminating information to the local level through their respective deanery meetings that meet on a regular basis as determined by the individual deanery.

Council members need to make a regular habit of reporting activities of the Diocesan Youth Council to their parish youth minister or the diocesan office director they represent on the Council, the deanery meetings and their peers.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Support and Training

Peers and youth ministers at monthly Council meetings offer support to one another throughout the Council year. Each member of the Council may meet with the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at each meeting. They also have access to the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry year round through telephone, email or personal meeting times.

There is a formal training weekend for all Council members at the beginning of each school year to introduce the new and returning Diocesan Youth Council members to each other and to methods of working together. The dates of this workshop are determined annually.

Periodic training may take place throughout the year as part of the monthly Council meeting or at a specified time.

The interaction and committee work at monthly Council meetings is also a form of ongoing training.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Benefits

Faithful participation on the Diocesan Youth Council affords several benefits to the members which include:

- Continued leadership training;
- Christian fellowship, prayer and fun;
- Personal support and growth;
- Opportunity of peer ministry in the Church;
- Ownership of youth ministry in the Diocese of St. Petersburg;
- Scholarship opportunities based on individual need and at the discretion of the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry for
 - leadership training on a regional or national level
 - Biannual National Catholic Youth Conference (held in odd numbered years)
 - Local, regional and statewide youth activities; and
 - Annual youth rally.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Adult Representatives

Adult members also serve on the Diocesan Youth Council. Ex Officio adult members are the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and the Diocesan Director of the Vocation Office. Other adults represent their deaneries or a diocesan office or an apostolate.

Adults have several roles and responsibilities on the Council.

- As representative: of their deanery or a particular diocesan office or apostolate. They bring concerns, suggestions, and information to the Council or to the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.
- As advocate: to advocate for youth and adults they represent.
- As support person: they support and affirm the youth they represent through regular communications via telephone, letters, emails and personal contact.
- As coordinator: they arrange and provide transportation for youth to and from designated meeting locations;
- As members of the Council: they attend and actively participate in the monthly meetings; and
- As minister: they assist the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry when and where necessary in planning and implementing diocesan youth ministry sponsored training, activities and events.

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

Membership Discernment Process

As a group (e.g., deanery) gathers to choose its representatives for the Diocesan Youth Council, the following discernment process may prove helpful.

- Welcome and Opening Prayer
- Introduction of all present.
- Review of the purpose of DYC membership (found in this booklet).
- Optional reflection from Jeremiah 1:4-10.
- Introduction of all names of those seeking membership or renewing membership.
- Opportunity for each candidate to present him/herself: strengths, weaknesses, why he/she wants this position, what gifts they bring, etc.
- Questions and answer session with the candidates. Then the candidates are invited to leave the room.
- Those remaining discuss the candidates to discern three qualified candidates.
- After this discussion pause for a brief prayer. Then distribute paper for voting. Each member writes down the name of three candidates of their choice.
- Two individuals are selected from the group to count the votes to see if a clear majority surfaces. The count of votes is not revealed.
- The names of the three top candidates are announced to the group.

- The goal here is to reach consensus. For each candidate at a time, each person present is asked to affirm the candidate chosen. If one cannot affirm or support them they should state their reservation clearly.
- After all have had a chance to speak their affirmation, support or reservations, return to those with reservations to see if they can live with the choice of the particular candidate. If all agree then you have achieved consensus.
- This process is followed for each of the three candidates.
- Once the process is finished maintain a prayerful attitude and invite the candidates back into the meeting.
- Affirm all the candidates. Indicate that those not chosen are encouraged to remain active in leadership roles locally. State that three candidates were chosen to serve for one year on the Diocesan Youth Council. Call forth those names.
- Gather the three chosen candidates in the center of a circle and invite all present to gather around them and extend their hands over the candidates in prayer. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving and for direction and guidance from the Holy Spirit.
- With appreciation conclude the meeting.

This process may be adapted to meet the local deanery needs. This process may not have to be carried out in its entirety if a candidate is seeking a second year of membership on the Council.

There is also to be a process of discernment among the youth ministers and adults of the deanery when selecting the adult member for the Diocesan Youth Council. That process is left to the local deanery to develop and then notify the Diocesan Office in writing.

The completed applications of the candidates are to be sent to the diocesan staff of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry by May 31st.

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