

World Youth Day ✨ Ideas for Parishes

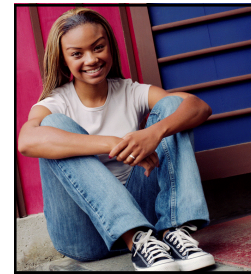
Weekend of October 22-23, 2011

“Planted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith” (Colossians 2:7)

The United States Bishops designated the **30th Sunday of Ordinary Time as World Youth Day**. This year the 30th Sunday is October 23, 2011. However parishes are free to celebrate World Youth Day on a different Sunday if there is a conflict with the parish calendar. Below are some resources and ideas to help your parish celebrate World Youth Day. For further information about any of these ministry strategies or assistance in planning, please contact the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at 716-847-8789 or youth@buffalodiocese.org.

Additional FREE Resources: The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and the Center for Ministry Development (CMD) have teamed up to offer several FREE resources for World Youth Day at www.nfcym.org. Resources include:

- ◆ Suggestions for how to celebrate World Youth Day
- ◆ Liturgical Planning Guide
- ◆ The Readings for that Sunday, with commentary and reflection questions
- ◆ Prayer cards
- ◆ Blessings and prayers for youth and youth ministers
- ◆ Year-long service suggestions



Ministry Strategies:

- [1] **Personally invite young people to the World Youth Day weekend Masses.** Mail a letter or postcard to the teens in your parish to let them know that it's a special weekend for them, and you want to celebrate with them. (A postcard allows mom/dad to see the invitation too!) If postage is cost-prohibitive, then ask your pastor to offer a verbal invitation to the assembly at each Mass during the previous weekend, and include an invitation in the bulletin throughout October.
- [2] **Welcome young people** at all the weekend Masses. Have friendly greeters at the door, and ask the presider to include a special welcome to all young people at the beginning of Mass.
- [3] **Bless the young people** at all the weekend Masses. (You may also choose to bless youth AND their parents!) They may stand at their seats or be called forward. World Youth Day blessings can be obtained from the NFCYM web site (www.nfcym.org).
- [4] Have young people **help plan the Mass(es)** for World Youth Day Weekend or the one Mass that is the World Youth Day Celebration Liturgy. Invite young people to be the liturgical ministers: lectors, greeters, special ministers of Holy Communion, ushers and music ministers.
- [5] **Have youth help your pastor/priest create his homily.** If your pastor is open to the idea, some teens could be asked to reflect on the scripture readings for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time and meet with the pastor to discuss what the readings mean to them as teenagers in the world today.
- [6] **Include intercessions** for young people in the Prayer of the Faithful. For sample intercessions, see the World Youth Day Liturgical Planning Guide at www.nfcym.org.
- [7] **Invite youth to write the Prayer of the Faithful** for the World Youth Day weekend Masses. For a guide on helping youth to prepare the general intercessions, contact the Youth Department.
- [8] **Read Pope Benedict's Messages to the Young People of the World for the 2011 World Youth Day** with the youth group or religious education class. Discuss their reactions and thoughts about what the Pope's message means for their lives. (Find the Pope's message at the Vatican website: www.vatican.va)
- [9] If your pastor permits, **invite young people to witness** at each weekend Mass. They can share with the parish how youth ministry has affected them, and how their faith has been nurtured.
- [10] Create a **prayer card, bookmark or bulletin insert** that can be distributed at the weekend Masses or included in the bulletin. World Youth Day prayers can be obtained from the NFCYM web site: www.nfcym.org.

[11] **Host a reception for youth** (or youth and their families) after the weekend Masses.

Different from the typical “coffee and donuts,” offer teen-friendly refreshments (breakfast pizza, or chips and soda) and create an environment that appeals to youth.

[12] **Plan a special service project** for the youth of the parish to use their time and talents to help others—either parishioners or others in the community.

[13] **Create a video of parish youth.** Include youth introducing themselves and sharing a statement about their faith. You can also include footage from youth ministry activities. Show the video at the reception for youth.

[14] **Hold a Ministry Fair for Youth** after all weekend Masses or during a religious education session. Invite all parish groups or ministries that can involve young people to be present. Young people can learn more about a variety of ministries (liturgical, religious education, service and justice, prayer groups, etc.) and sign up to be involved. (NOTE: Adult leaders in participating ministries must be given an orientation about how to welcome, invite and work with youth.)

[15] Need to find out more about the youth at your parish? **Do a Time and Talents Survey for Youth, or an Interest Survey.** Place surveys in the pews on World Youth Day weekend, distribute at religious education sessions, or mail them to junior and senior high youth. Just be sure to follow up on the surveys so that young people know that they are taken seriously!

[16] Invite some youth (junior and senior high aged) to **create a display that shows the gifts that young people bring to the church.** The display might include photos of youth activities or youth involved in church ministries and symbols or words that illustrate the unique gifts that youth have to offer.

[17] Create a display that **highlights the Good News about youth *outside* of church activities.** Use newspaper or school newsletter clippings of athletic, academic or other successes. Include congratulatory notices about teens who are involved in different activities (football, cheerleading, school play, band, dance, choir, community service etc.). Ask other parishioners to help by watching the newspapers and clipping items about teens from your parish.

[18] The **junior high and high school religious education classes** can gather for the final 20 minutes of class for a prayer service to celebrate World Youth Day. Prayer ideas can be found at www.nfcym.org.

[19] Ask some young people to write **reflections on the scripture readings** for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Publish them in the parish bulletin or newsletter.

[20] **Ask a youth who has been involved in church activities to write an article** about how his or her faith has grown or changed, and publish it in the bulletin or parish newsletter.

[21] **Create a slide show that highlights young people** — both the actual youth of the parish (use photos and descriptions of youth involvement) and the needs and gifts of youth in general. Show it at weekend Masses before Mass begins or after Communion.

[22] Use this occasion to launch a six week **Scripture Study for Youth.** Or announce / advertise a four-week Youth Scripture Study that will happen during Advent!



[23] **Ask all parish groups and ministries to pray for youth at their meetings** (either all meetings in October or meetings during the week before or after World Youth Day). Provide them with a prayer for young people or a short prayer service to get them started. Prayers can be obtained from www.nfcym.org.

[24] **Ask all parish groups to add an agenda item to their meetings:** How can this ministry (1) respond to the needs of young people, and/or (2) involve the gifts of young people?

[25] Scouting is Youth Ministry! Use this weekend for a **special recognition of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or Cub Scouts** at your parish, especially those who received **Religious Emblems** during the past year.