

NET Information and Guidelines

Catholic Diocese of Richmond 2021-2022

Retreat Scheduling

The NET Team will be in our Diocese from November 29 through December 13, 2021. If you are interested in hosting a NET retreat, please send an e-mail to evangelization@richmonddiocese.org with your requested date(s) – retreat dates are available on a first come, first serve basis. Our office will respond to you within 48 hours to confirm the availability of your request. Once your date(s) is confirmed, our office will send you a contract that needs to be read, initialed, and signed – this contract must be returned to the Office for Evangelization by the date given to fully secure your retreat.

The deadline to request a fall retreat is Monday, September 27, 2021, at 11:59pm.

Diocesan Confirmation Retreats

The Diocese will host two Confirmation Retreats, to which your parish may choose to send candidates. Registration details will be available on the Office for Evangelization website. The dates and locations are:

- December 4, 2021 – Saint Edward the Confessor in Richmond
- December 11, 2021 – Saint Thomas More in Lynchburg

Fees and Billing for Hosting a NET Retreat

- Weekday retreats: \$700
- Sunday retreats: \$1000
- For overnight or multi-day retreats, contact the Office for Evangelization for pricing.
- If your parish or school is in need of financial assistance to help subsidize the cost of your retreat, please contact the Office for Evangelization in writing.
- The Office for Evangelization will invoice each parish/school at the end of the retreat season.

Retreat Length Guidelines

The ideal length of a one-day NET retreat is six hours. We recommend that a retreat be at least four hours, but not longer than ten hours unless it is an overnight or weekend retreat. Please follow the guidelines below to ensure adequate rest for the team:

- NET Teams may not depart host homes earlier than 7:00 am or arrive later than 10:00 pm.
- Retreats cannot begin before 8:30 a.m. (even if your school day starts earlier)
- The team must arrive at the retreat site a minimum of one hour prior to the start of the retreat.
- The team may only do one retreat with one group of youth on any given day.
- You can decide the times of meals, Mass, and recreation on retreat; the team will build the retreat schedule around those times.

Retreat Size Guidelines

The size of the group greatly affects the quality of the retreat and the experience the youth have on the retreat. Please consider the following:

- The ideal size is 60 youth. **The absolute maximum is 150 youth.**
- If your group has less than 20 youth, you may want to consider inviting youth from a neighboring parish to join your retreat.
- If your group has more than 150, you must schedule multiple retreat days and divide your group accordingly (by grade, gender, etc.).
- We recommend you provide separate retreats for middle school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12), allowing the team to focus all retreat content to a particular maturity level.

Retreat Facility Guidelines

It is most helpful to have a facility that includes:

- A large enough meeting room for all of your youth.
- Enough chairs for everyone.
- Ten spaces such as classrooms or hallways that can be used for small group discussions.
- A chalkboard or dry-erase board.
- A podium or music stand for the team member giving the talk.
- A microphone (especially if the group is over 75 youth).
- A chapel or the main church for Prayer Ministry at the end of the retreat.
- Reconciliation and/or Mass can be included, but is not required, as part of your NET retreat.
- Please Note: If you are hosting an overnight retreat, please choose a site that will provide hot water showers for the team and at least two separate sleeping areas for the men and women.

Retreat Theme Options

All of NET's retreat presentations are based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and are drawn from Sacred Scriptures, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the writings of the saints. NET's presentations are created by the professional NET staff, go through a rigorous review process, and receive final approval, prior to their being used, by NET's Program Director. NET Team members who give the presentations are not the authors of the presentations unless it is their personal sharing or testimony. All presentations, including personal sharing, testimonies and dramas, are reviewed by the professional NET staff prior to being made public.

- **With Great Power (Confirmation, Holy Spirit)**
With great power comes great responsibility! At Confirmation, the grace of Pentecost is unleashed, and we receive greater access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God can do incredible things with us if we are open to His action. How will your life look different when living in the power of the Holy Spirit? This theme explores the seven gifts given to us at Confirmation and the personal experience of young people who open themselves to the action of the Holy Spirit after Confirmation. This theme is suitable for all Confirmation programs.

- **Anchored in Hope (Suffering, Hope)**
 There is no cross, big or small, in our life which the Lord does not share with us. When storms rage, boats will rock. When you suffer, what or who is your anchor? This theme explores the power of being anchored in the hope of the resurrection in the midst of suffering.
- **Fully Alive (True Happiness)**
 Only God is big enough to fill you. The pursuit of happiness motivates every decision we make. Why is it, then, that we find ourselves unhappy so often? This theme explores our search for true happiness, highlighting the one thing that is big enough to fill our deepest desires – God himself.
- **In His Image (Identity, Baptism)**
 Remember who you are. Who are you? A soccer player? A dancer? The funny guy? The nice girl? There is one identity you don't have to earn and cannot be taken away. This theme explores our inclination to identify ourselves by what we do rather than who we are as God's sons and daughters.
- **One Church (The Catholic Church)**
 One universal home guaranteed by God. What if there was an institution we could trust when our reasoning fails us? What if there was an institution guaranteed by God himself to withstand every difficulty the world offers? There is. This theme explores the Catholic Church as the universal home for all people.
- **Righteousness (Jesus)**
 We owed a debt we couldn't pay; He paid a debt He didn't owe. Who has the righteousness to volunteer as tribute? This theme explores who Jesus was and how His sacrifice restores our relationship with God.
- **Strength in Numbers (Authentic Friendship, Greatness)**
 True friends walk together through their weakness. Betrayal, gossip, and scandal: these traits often characterize friendships portrayed in the entertainment industry. What if our friendships, were instead marked by support no matter the circumstances? This theme explores the role of authentic friendships and their ability to empower us to greatness.

- **Men's and Women's Retreat (the following two are combined into one retreat)**

True Grit (Authentic Masculinity): Real men lay their lives down for others. What does it mean to be a man? Strength? Fame? Wealth? Masculinity means sacrifice. Fewer and fewer men are willing to respond to this difficult call. Do you have what it takes? This theme explores authentic masculinity in response to Christ's example of laying down His life for others.

Dignified (Authentic Femininity): Say "yes" to God. Say "yes" to love. Mary crushed the serpent's head and welcomed Jesus into the world by saying "yes" to God's plan for her life. God has an incredible plan for your life and wants to share himself with others through you. Will you say "yes"? This theme explores authentic femininity through imitating Our Blessed Mother, Mary.

Housing and Meal Guidelines

- Once all retreat dates are confirmed, we will send out an e-mail that includes the Master Calendar. The Master Calendar will list all of the retreats the NET Team will lead in the diocese, as well as the housing and meals you are responsible for. It is crucial that each parish/school contact reviews the Master Calendar thoroughly and contacts our Office immediately if there are any issues.
- If you are responsible for housing the team, you will need to fill out the Host Family Worksheet. The completed worksheet must be sent to our office by the given deadline. You will also give this Host Family Worksheet to the team leaders when they arrive. Based off of this worksheet, the team leaders will inform you upon arrival which team members will be staying with which host homes. They will take into account team member allergies when making these assignments.
- If you are responsible for housing and feeding the members of the NET team, 11 Team Members (13 if the Team Supervisors visit during your retreat), you will be provided with a list of the team members' names and ages grouped by gender. Please arrange host families so that a minimum of two team members of the same gender can be housed together at all times. No one team member can ever be housed alone! Please try to find host homes that are relatively close to each other and to the retreat site so as to minimize the amount of travel time between places.
- Team members travel with their own sleeping bags and are flexible with where they sleep for the night. Host homes are the ideal because they provide additional ministry opportunities for the team, but you may also house them in convents, retreat centers or gyms. Regardless of where they are staying overnight, please make sure to review any

details, such as doors or windows to be locked, location of light switches, shower and bathroom availability, times of the meals, etc.

- In the event that your parish/school is unable to secure housing for the NET team, and the diocese is then held responsible for food and lodging, a \$500 fee will be added to your retreat fee to cover this cost.

- Please note, if the team will be housed in a convent, retreat center, or school gym, please make sure that the team has been made aware of the following:
 - Doors, windows, and locks to be secured.
 - Lights to be on/off.
 - Meal arrangements and kitchen expectations.
 - Shower and bathroom availability.
 - Any room access limitations.
 - Fire exits and emergency procedures

**For questions or to schedule a NET retreat,
contact the Office for Evangelization (evangelization@richmonddiocese.org)**