

This communication contains initial information concerning the Diocesan Youth Conference for 2022. Please read all the information contained in this communication to ensure you have a full understanding of the event.

What is the Diocesan Youth Conference?

The Diocesan Youth Conference (DYC) is an annual weekend event that gathers high school youth from Diocese of Richmond parishes in one central location. DYC is a highly energetic and engaging opportunity for our high school teenagers to gather as a larger Church community and celebrate the richness of our Catholic faith.

What are some highlights of the Diocesan Youth Conference for 2022?

- **Sacraments.** Mass will be celebrated on both Saturday and Sunday with all attendees. In addition, opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available.
- **Breakout Sessions.** We will offer breakout sessions for adults and youth focused on engaging topics, including several panel-type discussions.
- **Diocesan Youth Choir.** We invite interested youth to participate in the Diocesan Youth Choir for Sunday Mass at DYC. Participants need to indicate if they would like to participate on their registration; these participants and their youth ministers will be notified about rehearsals during the weekend.

Who should attend the Diocesan Youth Conference?

The Conference is open to youth who are in 8th through 12th grade for the 2021-2022 academic year. No college-aged students may attend the Youth Conference; these individuals should be encouraged to attend the College Summit. *We ask all youth ministers to use appropriate pastoral judgment to determine if their 8th graders are mature enough to socially and spiritually be fully present to the conference.*

Where and when is the Diocesan Youth Conference?

The Diocesan Youth Conference will be held on Friday, February 11 through Sunday, February 13, 2022 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, Virginia.

Most youth and adult participants will be housed in the Richmond Marriott Downtown hotel located at 500 East Broad Street in Richmond. However, depending on registration numbers, several overflow hotels have been identified near the Greater Richmond Convention Center that parishes may be assigned to if necessary. All hotels are within walking distance.

I've heard that college students will be participating in the Diocesan Youth Conference? Is that true?

Yes and no. The "Campus Ministry Summit" will be happening concurrently with DYC this year at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. While most activities will remain separate, both the high school youth and college students will gather together for Friday night entertainment and for our Saturday morning Mass. All college students will have hotel accommodations in an off-site location. All registrations for the Summit are independent from the Diocesan Youth Conference.

A college student in our parish is attending the College Summit, can they travel with our parish to Richmond?

No. While the College Summit and DYC are both happening in Richmond, the start and end times, as well as the start location for each event, is very different. We are unable to accommodate transportation around Richmond for College Summit participants who travel with your parish. In addition, we cannot allow college-aged students to attend the Diocesan Youth Conference, including staying in hotel rooms with youth or adult participants from the Youth

Conference. College students who want to attend the College Summit should reach out to their local campus minister or with our office to find out about registration.

Are we participating in a service project this year?

As it has been the tradition for the past several years, the Diocese is partnering with Rise Against Hunger to package meals to support our brothers and sisters in impoverished countries who are in need.

What is the theme this year?

The theme this year is **Breathe**, based on Ezekiel 37 and John 3:8. In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet presents to us a vision of a valley of dry bones. The bones cover the valley floor, countless, dry, lifeless. The Lord reveals to Ezekiel that these bones represent the house of Israel and that they are without hope. However, the Lord gives new bodies to the bones, binding them together. Then he breathes life into the bodies. The Lord says that he will open the graves and bring the people back to Israel, additionally he will put his spirit in the people that they may come to life.

This Old Testament vision still resonates with us today. We are a people who are often far from God. We feel restless and dry. We feel stuck and stifled. However, the Lord desires something greater for us – he wants to fill us with His breath of life. In the Gospel of John, chapter 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that "you must be born from above. The wind blows where it wills and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone born of the Spirit." By our Baptism we are invited into relationship with Jesus Christ, abandoning despair and hopelessness and breathing in new life and freedom!

When God breathes life into our dry bones, when he fills us with the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to live in a spirit of freedom. That breath from God enables us to discern what God is calling us to do. It enables us to breathe freely as we know that God is the one who guides us, provides for us, loves us. The Lord gives us life; it is time to freely receive it and *breathe*.

What is the registration fee?

The registration fee per participant is listed below:

Base Registration Fees:

- Youth Participants: \$195 (based on 4 youth per room)
 \$245 (based on 3 youth per room)
 \$295 (based on 2 youth per room)
- Adult Participants: \$220 (based on 2 adults per room)
 \$345 (based on 1 adult per room)

Discounts:

- Early Bird Discount: \$50 off registration fees if entered online by November 30, 2021 at 11:59pm

Additional Fees:

- Optional Sunday Box Lunch: \$6/participant
- Gluten Free and/or Vegetarian Meals: \$50/participant
- Substitution Fee: \$50 for substitutions made by 11:59pm on January 9, 2022
 No substitutions will be accepted after January 9, 2022, regardless of reason.
- Cancellation Fee: \$100 for cancellations made by 11:59pm on January 9, 2022
 No refunds for cancellations made after January 9, 2022, regardless of reason.

Please note the following:

- **Registration closes on January 9, 2022 at 11:59 pm.**
- Any registrations not fully completed in the online system by November 30, 2021 at 11:59pm will not qualify for the early bird rate. This includes any names that are not correctly entered, or anything entered as "TBD".
- The Diocese also has needs-based funding for individuals and parishes who need financial support. Please contact our office for more information.

What does this registration fee cover?

The registration fee will cover lodging on Friday and Saturday evenings. Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as Sunday breakfast are included. A late-night snack on Friday and Saturday as well as a conference T-shirt are also included in the registration fee.

What is the lodging situation?

Typically, each hotel room has 2 queen-size beds. Each room will be assigned 2 adults OR 4 youth of the same gender unless your parish opts for smaller numbers of participants per room. The Office for Evangelization will combine parishes with odd numbers to maximize the room allocations.

All participants are required to stay at a hotel assigned by the Office for Evangelization for security reasons. There is NO day-only option available.

What are the requirements for adult chaperones?

For this event, 1 adult is required for every 8 youth who are participating in the Diocesan Youth Conference. Adult chaperones must be at least 21 years of age. Each adult chaperone must be in compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policies, which includes completing the following:

- Screening One Volunteer Form (every 5 years)
- VIRTUS training (once)

How do I register?

All youth and adults must register through their parish Youth Minister OR Catholic school coordinator. The registration process includes:

1. **Registration Form:** Print out and distribute the registration form from www.evangelizerichmond.org. A copy should be maintained by the Youth Minister in case of emergency. **DO NOT SEND THESE TO THE OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION.**
2. **Register Participants via the Online Registration System:** If you are the parish Youth Minister, contact the Office for Evangelization to get the event-specific password for the online registration system.
3. **Send payments to the Office for Evangelization** (*if you did not pay via credit card on the online registration system*): Be sure to include your parish/school name along with a list of participants for whom the payment applies. All outstanding registration fees will be invoiced to the parish.

Will there be caps on registrations this year?

There will be a cap this year of 800 youth participants; we will be in touch with each parish about what their particular cap number is this year.

Questions?

Contact us via email (evangelization@richmonddiocese.org) or phone (804-622-5159).