**Office for Evangelization**

**Catholic Diocese of Richmond**

**Discipleship Week**

**July 31-August 3, 2024 | Richmond Area**

This communication contains information concerning Discipleship Week 2024.

Please read all the information contained in this communication to ensure you have a full understanding of the event.

**What is Discipleship Week?**

Discipleship Week is a discipleship & leadership opportunity for high school teens from across the diocese who desire to know Jesus better and to live and serve as He did. This week is for teens who are ready for *more*: more faith in their own lives, more community with Catholic peers, and more action to spread the Good News. This week will include growth in personal discipleship through prayer and mentoring, practical training on how to be a Catholic leader who leads from their love of Christ, and a final group project where they put these skills into practice. They will pray, learn, and work alongside other teens from across the diocese, helping them to see that they are not alone in their love of the Lord or in their desire to serve His people. The hope is that the high school teens who attend Discipleship Week return to their communities with a renewed zeal for their Catholic faith.

The final group project is EPIC, a one-day diocesan event for middle school youth (rising grades 6-8). The high school teens from Discipleship Week will hold a variety of leadership roles at this event, from giving short testimonies to coordinating relay race games. To find out more about EPIC, contact the Office for Evangelization at [evangelization@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:evangelization@richmonddiocese.org) or visit the website [www.evangelizerichmond.org](http://www.evangelizerichmond.org).

There are a limited number of spots for Discipleship Week, and applications are required in order to be considered. Keep reading in order to find out more!

**Where and when is Discipleship Week?**

Discipleship Week will be held from the afternoon of Wednesday, July 31, 2024 until the morning of Saturday, August 3, 2024 at Shalom House Retreat Center (15340 Robert Terrell Rd, Montpelier, VA 23192). In addition to Discipleship Week itself, all participants will be given roles at EPIC, a middle school event that will happen all-day on Saturday, August 3, 2024 at Saint Joseph’s Villa (8000 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227). Participants will not need to coordinate their own transportation to EPIC, but they will need to provide their own transportation to Shalom House Retreat Center on Wednesday, July 31 and from EPIC on Saturday, August 3.

**Who should attend Discipleship Week?**

Discipleship Week is open to rising 11th & 12th graders who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. This week is aimed at equipping teens in parishes who are ready to be missionary disciples, whether in formal leadership positions at the parish or simply in the way they live their lives. Youth Ministers are encouraged to identify and specifically invite teens who they think would be interested to attend.

**Who leads Discipleship Week? Do I need to send adult chaperones?**

Discipleship Week is led by a committee of youth ministers. Local and national speakers, campus ministers, college student leaders, and other youth ministers outside of the committee may be brought to give talks and help with mentoring, projects, and small groups. All adults will follow diocesan safe environment guidelines, including being VIRTUS trained and background checked. Due to the nature of the Discipleship Week experience, parishes are **not** asked to send a chaperone with the youth they send to the event.

**Is there a limit to how many teens a parish can ask to apply?**

Parishes are asked to invite up to 3 teens to apply for Discipleship Week. There are a limited number of spaces at Discipleship Week, and we want to make sure that every parish has an equal opportunity to recommend teens.

**How does a teen apply?**

The parish Youth Minister can either submit the application for their chosen high school teen(s) after having received their registration form, or they can send the teen(s) the link on our website with the password for this year’s Discipleship Week. The application includes:

* Basic contact information, including an emergency contact and release of liabilities.
* Uploading a 250-500 word essay, written by the Discipleship Week applicant, telling us who they are and why they are interested in this opportunity to grow as a disciple and leader.
* Uploading a recommendation letter written by either the parish Youth Minster or pastor. There is an expectation that Discipleship Week teens will continue what they have started when they go back into their parishes, so a relationship with the Youth Minister and/or pastor is key!

***Please Note****: Preference is given to teens who are attending Discipleship Week for the first time. Returners are welcome to apply but will be considered after first timers.*

**All applications must be submitted by Saturday, June 15, 2024 at 11:59pm.**

**When will teens know if they’ve been accepted?**

Teens and their parish Youth Minister will be notified no later than Monday, July 1, 2024 whether or not they have been accepted.

If an accepted teen can no longer attend and needs to cancel, they need to let us know by Monday, July 8, 2024 in order to receive a full refund. Cancellations after July 8, 2024 will not receive a refund. No substitutions can be made for Discipleship Week due to the nature of the selection process.

**What are the registration fees?**

The cost for youth participants is $150/person. Parishes whose teens are accepted will be invoiced for those teens upon selection; there is no option to pay with credit card for this event.

**What does this registration fee cover?**

The registration fee covers:

* Lodging for 3 nights
* Discipleship Week programming, including speaker(s) and other set-up costs
* Discipleship Week supplies (journals, books, etc.)
* A t-shirt, worn at EPIC
* All meals and snacks for the duration of the event
* Other giveaway items TBD

**How do I register?**

The registration process includes:

1. **Invite Teens to Apply:** The parish Youth Minister should invite up to 3 teens to apply for Discipleship Week. These should be done via personal invitations, not through mass marketing. If the Youth Minister will be the one submitting their application, they should pass out a physical application form to their selected teens, obtained from [www.evangelizerichmond.org](http://www.evangelizerichmond.org). **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 password for the online registration system. For Discipleship Week, Youth Ministers can either submit the application for their chosen high school teen(s) after having received their registration form, or they can send the teen(s) the link on our website with the password for this year’s Discipleship Week. Remember, the application link requires you to upload a participant essay and a Youth Minister or Pastor Recommendation.
3. **Once Applicants Have Been Accepted:** The Office for Evangelization will invoice parishes whose teens are accepted upon selection; there is no option to pay with credit card for this event.

**Where do I go for questions or additional support?**

For all questions or support, contact the Office for Evangelization directly via email at [evangelization@richmonddiocese.org](mailto:evangelization@richmonddiocese.org) OR 804-622-5159.