



This communication contains initial information concerning the Diocesan Youth Conference for 2025. 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 2025 Diocesan Youth Conference?

- **Sacraments.** Mass will be celebrated on both Saturday and Sunday. In addition, opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available on Saturday.
- **Free Time.** Do something unique on Saturday afternoon. Want to climb a rock wall? Meet-and-greet college students from your future campus ministry? Dive deep into a hot topic? There's something for everyone.
- **Breakout Sessions.** We will offer 2 rounds of breakout sessions for adults and teens focused on a variety of topics – pick your own adventure! We will also have men's and women's sessions.
- **Diocesan Youth Choir.** Do you have a teen who sings? Invite them to be part of the Diocesan Youth Choir, who sings for Sunday Mass. Music is sent out before the conference, but rehearsals occur during DYC.
- **Rise Against Hunger.** Saturday afternoon includes a meal-packing service project event with Rise Against Hunger, giving teens a way to put their Catholic faith into action during the conference. These meals are sent to our brothers and sisters in need in the international community.

Who should attend the Diocesan Youth Conference?

DYC is open to youth who are in 8th through 12th grade for the 2024-2025 academic year. Those who have graduated high school and are older than 18 are not allowed to attend DYC; 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 during the conference.*

Where and when is the Diocesan Youth Conference?

DYC will be held on Friday, February 7 through Sunday, February 9, 2025 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center in Richmond, Virginia.

All parishes are asked to arrive between 5:15pm and 6:00pm on Friday. Youth Ministers will check in with our conference staff while the rest of the group waits together in our holding room. Parishes are asked to travel and arrive as one complete group; this aids us in the check-in process and guarantees youth are with their chaperones.

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, some parishes might be assigned to overflow hotels near the Greater Richmond Convention Center. 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 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. While most activities will remain separate, both the high school youth and college students will

gather together for our Saturday morning Mass with the Bishop. 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 to our office to find out about registration.

What is the theme this year?

The theme this year is **Complete**, based primarily on Philippians 2:2 (*“complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.”*) When we look at the world and ask who we are and what our purpose is, we can feel lost, realizing that we are incomplete by ourselves. At our core, we desire community, relationship, and mission. But here is the good news: Jesus fulfilled the old and walks with us into new life. He is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega. He is the fulfillment of our desires: it is through Him that we come to know who we are and what we were created for. United in the Body of Christ, we are free to lean into the joy of the Lord and be **complete**.

What is the registration fee?

The registration fee per participant is listed below:

Registration closes on Monday, January 6, 2025 at 12:00noon.

Base Registration Fees:

- Youth Participants: \$210 (based on 4 youth per room)
 \$260 (based on 3 youth per room)
 \$310 (based on 2 youth per room)
- Adult Participants: \$235 (based on 2 adults per room)
 \$360 (based on 1 adult per room)

Discounts:

- Early Bird Discount: \$50 off registration fees if entered online by November 30, 2024 at 11:59pm*
**Any registrations not fully completed in the online system by November 30, 2024 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”.*

Additional Fees:

- Optional Sunday Box Lunch: \$8/participant

Cancellations & Substitutions

- Each participant cancellation on or before 12noon on **January 6, 2025** Full Refund
- Each participant cancellation after 12noon on **January 6, 2025** No Refund
- Each participant substituted between January 6, 2025 and **January 13, 2025 at 12noon*** \$75
**All substitutions made after registration closes on Monday, January 6 must be the same sex as the participant they are replacing. Please note, correct t-shirt sizes for these substitutions cannot be guaranteed. On-site substitutions for youth of the same sex can occasionally be granted on a case-by-case basis and are also charged the substitution fee; please contact our office for more details.*

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?

Most hotel rooms have 2 queen-size beds OR 1 king-sized bed with a pullout couch. 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 (or part thereof) 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)

***NEW* What do I need to do to complete the Safe Environment process for my adults?**

In an effort to streamline the Safe Environment process, we are initiating a two-step process for some of our larger Office for Evangelization events.

- STEP 1: On the registration forms for adult chaperones, we ask for the date that the adult completed their VIRTUS Training along with their legal name and if they are employed by the Diocese. *This step is consistent with what has happened in the past.*
- STEP 2: After registration closes on Monday, January 6, we will ask each youth minister/group leader to complete the *Safe Environment Parish Verification Form*. This form can be found at the top of the event webpage and should be completed with the parish safe environment coordinator. All participating parishes need to return this form within 2 weeks of registration closing.

Why are we implementing this additional form? Our hope is that this form will significantly cut down on the back-and-forth communication about getting chaperones cleared through safe environment. With the parish safe environment coordinator signing off on the form, parishes can verify dates quickly as well as directly manage any situations where an adult need to renew or complete a piece of the process prior to the event.

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.

How do I reserve spots for my parish?

The only way to guarantee spots for your parish is to reserve them via a forecast form in the summer. Parishes are asked to submit a forecast form for this event over the summer by Monday, August 5, 2024. The number of spots they requested on that forecast form has been reserved for them, and they are not financially responsible for unused reserved spots.

If your parish submitted a forecast form and wants to bring additional participants, you can enter them onto the waitlist on our registration site after you have used all of your reserved spots. On Tuesday, January 7, parishes with youth on the waitlist will receive communication from our office as to the status; if offered a spot, parishes will have through Thursday, January 9 to accept it and to submit final rooming lists.

If your parish did not submit a forecast form, please contact our office at evangelization@richmonddiocese.org. There are no spots reserved for parishes who did not submit a forecast form. Parishes in this position are encouraged to enter potential participants onto the waitlist on our registration site after contacting our office.

Questions?

Contact the Office for Evangelization via email (evangelization@richmonddiocese.org) or phone (804-622-5159).