**Office for Evangelization**

**Catholic Diocese of Richmond**

**Discipleship Week**

**August 6-9, 2025 | Richmond Area**

This communication contains information concerning Discipleship Week 2025.

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, August 6, 2025 until the morning of Saturday, August 9, 2025 at Richard Bland Community College (11301 Johnson Rd, Petersburg, VA 23805). 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 9, 2025 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 Richard Bland Community College on Wednesday, August 6 and from EPIC on Saturday, August 9.

**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 and volunteers 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.

**I have a teen who attended Discipleship Week last year; can they attend again?**

Yes, you’re welcome to invite a teen to attend a second time! Based on capacity at our location, we plan to have a track available for returning Discipleship Week attendees. They will attend talks with the first time attendees, but they will have a dedicated small group for returners and will be asked to help with some of the small leadership pieces, such as leading the prayer stations.

Teens who want to attend a second time must apply again, just like the first-time attendees.

**How does a teen apply?**

The parish Youth Minister can either submit the form for their chosen high school teen(s) after having received their application, 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. If they are attending a second time, they should include how Discipleship Week has impacted their life in the past year and why they feel called to come back.
  + Prompt for first time applicants:
    1. A brief introduction of yourself: your family, your friends, your hobbies, & extracurricular activities.
    2. How are you currently involved in your parish? How do you plan to be involved this coming year?
    3. We have all encountered Jesus in some way. Sometimes that is in obvious ways that stand out to us, like during adoration at a conference or retreat, or in a moment of service on a mission trip. Sometimes that is in small everyday-life ways, like in the relationship we have with a parent, in a friend's faithful perseverance through hardship, or in experiences of peace within nature. How have you encountered Jesus?
    4. When you hear the word "disciple", what do you think of? Who is someone (past or present) who was/is a good disciple of Jesus? Why?
    5. Why do you want to attend Discipleship Week this Year? Why do you want to deepen your relationship with Christ this summer?
  + Prompt for returning applicants:
    1. A brief introduction of yourself: your family, your friends, your hobbies, & extracurricular activities.
    2. How are you currently involved in your parish? How do you plan to be involved this coming year?
    3. In ways big and small, Jesus is active and moving in our lives all of the time! What is one way you have encountered Jesus in the last 12 months?
    4. Why do you want to return to Discipleship Week? What do you hope to gain in terms of discipleship and leadership?
* 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!

**All applications must be submitted by Sunday, June 15, 2025 at 11:59pm.**

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

Teens and their parish Youth Minister will be notified no later than Tuesday, July 1, 2025 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 Tuesday, July 8, 2025 in order to receive a full refund. Cancellations after July 8, 2025 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 $175/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
* Transportation to 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. **Submit Applications via the Online Registration System:** If you are the parish Youth Minister, contact the Office for Evangelization to get the password for the online application system. For Discipleship Week, Youth Ministers can either submit the form for their chosen high school teen(s) after having received their application, 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.