

## Community Life

### **“Relationships are the starting point of Youth Ministry”**

-Ann Marie Eckert, *Total Youth Ministry: Ministry Resources for Community Life*

The reason that I became involved in the Church is because somebody within the Church built a relationship with me. That person made me feel loved, welcomed, valued, and important. It was not until after this relationship was built, that this person was effective in teaching me about the faith, and in challenging me to grow in holiness. Eventually, I fell in love with Christ because that person pointed me towards Him.

As Coordinators of Youth Ministry, we need to create the opportunities for young people to have similar relationships with others in the Church. Some young people may find this relationship with you, some may find it with other adults in the parish, while some may find it with other young people in the parish. As the Coordinator, you create the proper atmosphere for the relationships to grow.

Building community does not just mean building a tight-knit “youth group” where everybody is friends. Odds are that if you are in an average sized parish in Northern Virginia, that there are at least 500 Catholic teenagers in your parish boundaries. Your goal should be to find a way to make all 500 of these young people feel loved, welcomed, valued, and important by somebody within the parish. You do not need to get these 500 teens to “youth group”. You need to get them involved in the greater community of the parish.

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## Simple Ways to Build Community Among Young People

by Christine Najarian



One of the best things that I have found to build community is this: DON'T USE NAME TAGS. If all of the young people are constantly wearing nametags, then there's no need to learn each other's names. If they don't learn names, how will we ever build community?

When trying to build community, it is also important to have a good team of student leaders. One of the most vital aspects of community, which the "name tag" issue also touches on, is that each young person feels that they are "known." When someone arrives at a youth event for the first time, I dispatch some of the leaders, to make contact with that person and help welcome them. To be welcomed at the first event will help shape their impression of the group in general.



However, community building is more than just welcoming new members into the ministry. It is *increasing knowledge and continual care of one another*. As a Coordinator of Youth Ministry, we can create several opportunities for this.

To help the teens increase their knowledge of one another, we provide group discussion time, problem solving activities, and social opportunities. Through each of these different types of interactions, they will get to know each other in different ways and have shared experiences. Sometimes spending an afternoon playing cards can help build more community than a well-planned discussion group. This is why it is important to provide various opportunities for interaction.



The continual care of one another within the parish is vital in building community. Encouraging and teaching the teens to pray for and with one another is an important aspect of this. Helping them to speak to each other kindly and without sarcasm is another.

***Community building is made simple if you remember to:***

- 1) Make sure each new student feels welcomed and known.**
- 2) Give the teens adequate opportunity to get to know each other; and**
- 3) Teach the teens to care well for each other.**

*Christine Najarian has served as the Coordinator of Youth Ministry for both junior high and high school at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Annandale since 2001. Prior to working in ministry full time, she volunteered within multiple ministries at St. Mark in Vienna for four years. She was also heavily involved in campus ministry at George Mason University during her college years. Outside interests include guitars and slurpees.*

## The Communion of Saints as Community Life

“The church is Catholic, universal, so are all her actions; **all that she does belongs to all**. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that body which is my head too, and **ingrafted into that body** whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me: **all mankind is of one author**, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and **his hand shall bind up** all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie **open to one another** . . .

. . . No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: **any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind**, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.” **John Donne, Meditation XVII**

*With vivid imagery, poet John Donne eloquently expresses the essence of the Communion of Saints in his Meditation XVII. The Communion of Saints partakes of the unity of Trinity— that triune Godhead which is ‘community life’ par excellence. There is much to be understood about the Communion of Saints that enriches every moment of our existence. This piece only begins to plumb the depths.*

**On Praying to the Saints:** “The intercession of fellow Christians—which is what the saints in heaven are—also clearly does not interfere with Christ’s unique mediatorship because in the four verses immediately preceding 1 Timothy 2:5, Paul *says* that Christians should intercede: ‘First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and pleasing to God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth’ (1 Tim. 2:1–4). Clearly, then, intercessory prayers offered by Christians on behalf of others something ‘good and pleasing to God,’ not something infringing on Christ’s role as mediator.”<sup>1</sup>

**The Intercession of the Saints:** Because they are more closely united with Christ, the saints—those who dwell in heaven unburdened by sin and the cares of earthly life—ceaselessly call upon the help of the Lord on behalf of their brethren still living on earth (cf. CCC 956)<sup>2</sup>. “You say in your book that while we live we are able to pray for each other, but afterwards when we have died, the prayer of no person for another can be heard. . . . But if the apostles and martyrs while still in the body can pray for others, at a time when they ought still be solicitous about themselves, how much more will they do so after their crowns, victories, and triumphs?” (St. Jerome, *Against Vigilantius* 6 [A.D. 406]).

**The Basis of our Unity:** We are in communion with the saints, not only by virtue of following their example, but by an actual relationship with them—sometimes called devotion. We love the

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from [http://www.catholic.com/library/Praying\\_to\\_the\\_Saints.asp](http://www.catholic.com/library/Praying_to_the_Saints.asp)

<sup>2</sup> CCC is used as the abbreviation for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1992 edition.

saints in our common love for Christ—we are their companions and fellow disciples (cf. CCC 957). The source of our communion is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. CCC 1108). All the faithful form one body, so it can be said that “The communion of saints is the Church” (CCC 946-47).

**The Implications of the Communion of Saints:** “In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion” (CCC 953). Or as St. Paul puts it: “*If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*” *1Cor 12: 26-27*

**Church Fathers on the Communion of Saints:** Augustine writes: "Neither are the souls of the pious dead separated from the Church which even now is the kingdom of Christ. Otherwise there would be no remembrance of them at the altar of God in the communication of the Body of Christ" (*The City of God* 20:9:2 [A.D. 419]). Cyprian of Carthage reminds us of the need for continual prayer for the building up of the Body of Christ: "Let us remember one another in concord and unanimity. Let us on both sides [of death] always pray for one another. Let us relieve burdens and afflictions by mutual love, that if one of us, by the swiftness of divine condescension, shall go hence first, our love may continue in the presence of the Lord, and our prayers for our brethren and sisters not cease in the presence of the Father's mercy" (*Letters* 56[60]:5 [A.D. 253]).

## Working with Teens with Special Needs



It's common today for youth programs to include kids with special needs such as autism, learning disabilities, Down syndrome, and emotional problems. It can seem like a storm of issues for you to deal with all at once. Ask for extra graces and see what gifts are being offered by the presence of those young people with special needs. As you do so, try incorporating these simple ideas to make your ministry more meaningful for everyone involved.

- Ask parents of your special-needs teenagers about strategies that work well for information-processing or behavior management.
- Deal promptly with inappropriate behavior using gentle, firm, and positive statements that redirect the young person's actions.
- Deal promptly with inappropriate behavior by the rest of your group in regard to including your special-needs teenagers. Other options are friendly, casual group reminders on keeping things open and positive, as well as private conversations with repeat offenders, asking for their help.
- Recruit a volunteer who'll watch for ways to help your special needs teenager feel included, such as being a partner, helping to explain discussion questions or Scripture passages, or giving any needed physical assistance.
- Identify young people who can serve as buddies, then give them specific tasks for each activity. Don't expect one teenager to always be the buddy person.
- Find out what activities special-needs teenagers enjoy and use these in your events whenever possible to build confidence.
- Use your networking skills to get expert advice from school psychologists, physical therapists, special education teachers, or mental health professionals.

**As you serve, never forget that you belong to One whom even the wind and the waters obey. No storm lasts forever.**

## The Process of Group Building



### The Building Blocks of Team Development

**\*\*Self- Actualization\*\* Relationship Building\*\*Active Listening  
\*\*Trust\*\*Attitude \*\*Understanding the Task \*\*Motivation \*\*Preparation  
\*\*Practice \*\*Patience \*\*Persistence \*\*Concern for all\*\***

Whenever you are working with a new group of young people, it is always a good idea to spend some time “group building”. Whether it is as simple as an icebreaker and name game for a short gathering, or as comprehensive as a day-long process for a week-long retreat, the time spent is always beneficial in creating an open and cohesive group. Keep in mind...this is not sports, and these are not “games”. The main purpose is to foster growth and communication within the group...it should not be “easy” and is not necessarily always “fun” (although it can be!).

It is a good idea to lay out guidelines and create an atmosphere of trust when you are team building. A ‘Full Value Contract,’ is one way to do that. You can actually write out the contract on a piece of paper and have all in the group sign the contract. Keep it with you and remind the participants throughout the activities if you find that they are not following the contract.

#### **“Full Value Contract”:**

- Agreement to work as a team and to work toward individual and team goals.
- Agreement to follow safety and behavior guidelines.
- Agreement to give and receive honest (but kind) positive and negative feedback, and to attempt to change behavior as appropriate.
- Agreement of a “challenge by choice”, meaning no one will be forced to participate, but are encouraged to challenge themselves.
  - i. It is good to look at your individual goals for the day.
  - ii. What is your greatest strength? Weakness? Good to select a goal around one of these questions.
  - iii. Select one group goal.
  - iv. Sample Individual Goals are: *I will ask for help when I need it... I will not put others down...I will attempt the trust fall...I will speak up when I feel uncomfortable.*
  - v. Sample Group Goals are: We will honor the full value contract...We will confront each other if anyone is messing around...We will encourage each other to our best.

#### **Safety:**

- All facilitators have the responsibility to ensure the safety of all those participating in your group building.
- This should be at the forefront of all other goals for the day.
- The physical and emotional safety of all participants should be constantly monitored and re-evaluated throughout the day.
- Remind the participants of safety as often as you can.
- During debriefing is a great time to talk about safety when something goes far beyond the abilities of the facilitator.

**Discussion points before starting:**

- Ask the group why each of these points are so important (it's like working together as a positive family).
- Talk about the importance of trust in all that will be done.
- Talk about the importance of spotting in some of the activities.
- Discuss how the group will resolve conflict.
- What are some attitudes or behaviors that should be avoided as individuals and as a team (no name calling, no put-downs, everyone is involved, etc.)?
- What is each person looking forward to?
- What is each person expecting to get out of this experience?

**Other Important Points to remember:**

- **Modifying:** Struggle is good...the initiatives should be difficult if you want growth to happen. However, change the rules of an activity to make it easier if the group is starting to lose focus or become overly frustrated.
- **Refocus:** If you notice that the group is losing focus, stop, and tweak whatever they are doing. Ask the group to take a step back and re-discuss the solution.
- Avoid using phrases like, "Ok, now we are going to play a game." Use the term 'activity' or 'initiative', etc.
- In creating a positive environment, conflict is possible. It's normal! Use it as an opportunity for people to grow and learn to work better with one another.

*It is important that group building activities are done in a specific order to enhance the safety and effectiveness of the team dynamics and trust.*

1. **Name Games**– These activities are opportunities for the participants to learn each other's names so that they are not saying, "Hey you!" to one another. The first step of building any group is for people to refer to one another by name.
2. **Deinhibitizers** – This means getting the group to do something out of the ordinary, to act silly, and to loosen up. The objective here is to get participants to begin taking some risks. Remember to choose deinhibitizers that are appropriate for the group. It is not the intention of deinhibitizers to embarrass or make participants uncomfortable. On the contrary, deinhibitizers are to get participants comfortable and ready for the rest of the activity.
3. **Trust Exercises** – The purpose of trust building is to allow participants to speak freely and honestly, to take new risks (such as getting on new high element, changing behavior, etc.), and to feel comfortable enough with the group to share their thoughts and feelings. A classic example of this is the trust fall. Spotting is an important element of trust exercises. The sequence of spotting is as follows: Explain the meaning of spotting\* Demonstrate and explain basic position- stance, arms, hands, and eyes (focus) \* Practice in a controlled, contained context- Partner trust fall, wind in the willows\* Emphasize the relationship between good spotting and trust\*

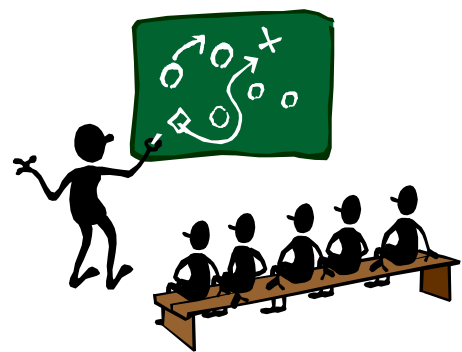
4. **Problem Solving** – These activities should be done after your team has developed a level of trust. A problem is presented to you as a team and, as a team, you are asked to solve it.
5. **Debriefing** – This is the final and most important step in the group building process. After each activity or initiative, debriefing will provide an opportunity for the crews to talk about what they experienced, and how they grew as a group. Discuss the positive growth, and what they can continue to work on. Let them think about the answers – don't dictate the conversation. Also, if you have quiet people, gently ask them if they would share with the team their own thoughts. Methods: The go-around (asking each group member to contribute a sentence or word reflecting the activity answer a question like how did you feel.)\*\*\* Sentence completion (provide one or more incomplete sentences like... I find this difficult, some qualities I like about myself are...)\*\* Direct Questioning (Ask an individual a question by name- maybe if not contributing as much- make sure to thank them by name as well)

### Some Basic Debriefing Questions

1. What was most enjoyable about the activity?
2. Did the team get frustrated? Why?
3. What is something that the team is doing very well?
4. What can the team improve on? How should the team do this?
5. Was everyone heard in the planning phase?
6. Was there a plan before all of you got started?
7. What is the advantage of having a plan ahead of attempting the task at hand?
8. What can the team do to make sure that everyone is heard?
9. Where there any surprises?

### Main Roles of the Facilitator

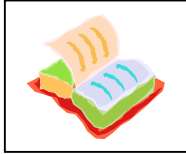
- A helper
- An individual who respects diverse values
- An observer
- A storyteller and creator of perceived risk
- A teacher
- A conflict mediator
- A listener
- A role model



### A Good Facilitator...

- Creates a program that provides growth and safety.
- Allows the group to make their own decisions.
- Is sensitive to the personality and mood of each individual and overall group.
- Functions as an enabling role for all participants to reach their highest potential.
- Leaves his or her personal agenda aside.
- Relates to each member on their level.

- Knows when to intervene and stop what is going on and refocus the group.
- Gives just enough information to start the task, and can change the rules to make it harder of or easier depending on what is best for the group.
- Encourages cheering, clapping, and enthusiasm to positively influence the group.
- Listens to subtle comments during the experience to bring up later in debriefing questions.
- Knows what is possible for the group, to both challenge, or know their limits.



**Resources used for this piece:**

*Hemlock Overlook Packet*

*Bill Gavin's Tips on Team building*

*Facilitator Preparation for Challenge Course, by Brethren Woods*

**Other Resources for Team Building:**

*Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and a Guide to Effective Leadership*, by Karl Rohnke & Steve Butler (Publisher: Project Adventure)

*Silver Bullet* (Publisher: Project Adventure)

*Cowstails and Cobras II: A Guide to Games, Initiatives, Ropes Courses, and Adventure Curriculum* by Karl E. Rohnke (Kendall Hunt Publishing)

**Websites that can be accessed from [www.ArlingtonCatholicYouth.org](http://www.ArlingtonCatholicYouth.org):**

"Egad Ideas!" <http://www.egadideas.com/>

"The Source for Youth Ministry" <http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/index.asp>

"Youth Workers Idea Station" <http://bradzockoll.tripod.com/youthworker/>



## Breaking Down Barriers: Icebreakers & Activities

by Bill Gavin

**Back Art.** Give the person who starts a picture that they have to draw and then on down the line. Whichever group comes closest wins.

**Frantic.** Object of the game is for a group to keep all the tennis balls rolling in the room. When one ball is located not rolling there is a whistle blown. Add up the time (after three whistles) to see whether the next team can break the record. Balls begin in the middle of the room. You can use balloons if you want instead. *Can use an application by saying this is like life, trying to keep all our balls in the air. "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You" (Is. 26:3).*

**Caterpillar tag.** Choose three or four people to be "it". Whenever they tag someone, they link up holding each other's waists and try to tag others (not including the other lines being formed). When all the players have been joined to one of the "it" lines, call out "Caterpillar Tag" and point to one of the lines. That line becomes the caterpillar. The caterpillar tries to tag anyone in the other lines. Whenever another line is tagged, those kids must link up with the caterpillar and begin chasing the lines that remain. The game is over when everyone has become part of the caterpillar. As a fun variation, at the end of this game, try to have the caterpillar catch its own tail--then a circle is formed.

**Toilet paper relay run.** Teams line up, paper is wrapped around one person legs, then unwound to the other end, wound around another person legs, and so on and so forth. I run ahead, tie it around someone's legs, unravel it back, but if it breaks, I return and start over. Then when I bring it to one end, it is wrapped around my legs, and the next person moves to the other end where his/her legs are wrapped.

**What a Mess?** Have participants pair up and give each person a piece of paper. Tell them to just make scribble marks on the paper--giving a minute or so. Then give the paper to the other person and have them try to make something out of the scribbling that was made. Lesson on how God writes straight with our crooked lines.

**Freeze frame.** Have participants get together in different groups to come up with a freeze frame of something they like to do. Have the other groups guess what the freeze frame is. Also, could have them imitate machines. Give out a list of machines and see if other people can guess what the machine is. They are only to play parts of the machine, not humans using the machine.



**Don't Laugh.** Participants break into 2 sides-- Coin is tossed; if it lands on heads, the heads team has 3 seconds to laugh as loudly as it can. Meanwhile the tails team can't laugh or smile at all. If the coin lands on tails, etc. If someone doesn't laugh on the team that is supposed to laugh, that team loses a point. Get 2 points for not laughing, and lose one point for not laughing when you are supposed to laugh.

**Continuous story.** Begin telling a story and then pass it on to the next person to continue it. Change to a new person when the leader says to, or when someone moves an object to the next person→ when they are done, have someone come up and tell the story (make sure it is clean).

**Mingo-Bingo.** A variation on traditional Bingo. Create a Bingo sheet with various things that people need to do for that block to be filled. Such as untie your shoe and tie it again, do 5 push ups, 10 jumping jacks, leap frog with someone wearing white shoes (get their initials), get a person to do a somersault, etc.

**Coordinated jump.** Have the entire group stand in a circle with arms on the shoulders of the person in front of them. On the count of three see if everyone can jump at the same time. Then bring in a jump rope and have the person in the middle jump rope with everyone jumping with them in unison.

**Mummy wrap.** Team to have their mummy completely covered wins



**Present wrap.** (done best around Christmas time). Team with best looking Christmas present wins.

**Shouldered Out.** Masking tape circle is formed -- ask participants to each stand in the circle with their arms crossed over their chest. The object is to shoulder other people out of the circle. Anyone whose arms unfold is out. Anyone who gets too rough is out. Another good way to do this is by having people blindfolded. ---> This is a good way to introduce talking about cliques. Ask the last person left to pull someone back into the circle (nicely); then another, then another, till everyone is back in the circle.

**The Answer Is...** “As groups you have 3 minutes to come up with as many questions that can be answered with the word, “God.’ E.g. Who made us? Who was here before anything else was? etc. The team that writes the most wins.

**Gorilla, Karate Fighter, Army soldier.** A new version of “rock, paper, scissors” except the participants have to act out a Gorilla, Karate fighter, or army soldier. Gorilla beats Karate fighter, Karate fighter beats Army soldier and Army soldier beats Gorilla -- pair up, then winners play each other (maybe you are out once you lose twice).

**Brother and Sister.** Activity where two friends or siblings compete with one another like on the “Newlywed Game” -- one person leaves, and has to answer questions about the other -- e.g. What is the dumbest thing he has ever done? What is his favorite food? What do you like the best about this person? Describe this person in one word. What does he spend most of his time thinking about? If you had one wish, what would you wish about this person? How often does this person take a bath?

**Name Scramble.** Everyone writes their name on a name tag, and then on another piece of paper scrambles the letters of their name. Each person gets someone else’s paper and then tries to find that person (e.g. gbaivliln)

**Farm Animals.** Everyone is given a farm animal (whispered in their ear), and then the whole group has to walk around making that noise with their eyes closed till they find all those who are in the same group. Cat, dog, sheep, cow, pig, etc.

**Body Language.** Have everyone form a big circle of chairs with the chairs facing outward. Remove one chair. Have music ready. When the music starts everyone must walk around the chairs (again it's fun if you make them jog). When the music stops, a caller yells out a body part. Then everyone races to touch that body part to a chair, one person per chair only. If they touch a chair before the body part is called, they are out. The one person who doesn't get a chair is also out. To speed it up, you can remove more chairs. We usually start out simple - nose, hair, left elbow, etc. but towards the end we get more complicated - your bare feet, someone else's left hand (they must grab one of the people who are already out). The object is to be the last one left.

**Guess the Gargle.** All it requires is a glass of water. Secretly show a volunteer the name of a well know song or tune, it can be anything, chart song, worship song, nursery rhyme etc. Get them to take a sip of water and they must gargle the tune and the others try to guess what it is.

**Toe Fencing.** Cool activity and if set to music, looks like a new kind of dance. All players pair off and lock hands and try to tap the top of one of their partner's feet with their own feet. Players hop around trying to avoid being stomped on. After being tapped 3 times, that player is out and the winning partner challenges another winner. The game continues till only one player is left. Sounds interesting!



**Domino Race.** Get a bunch of dominoes. In a small group, give each participant 20 dominoes and have a race challenging them to set them up in a line, on edge (you know, so they tumble and knock each other over...). Tell 'em it's a race to see who can set them up first. *Applications:* *The domino effect as it relates to lying, drugs, sex ... any sin. It always has its effect on other aspects of life. Start them off on a carpet to make it more difficult. Tell the participants that their dominoes have to be less than 3 inches from the floor at all times (no tables). Participants may figure out to use books, board-games or something else as a more stable foundation. Then the discussion focuses on putting Christ as the foundation to our lives.*

**Sandman.** Sandman goes around in a room where people are mulling about, and winks at people--when you get winked at, you put your head down. If you want to guess the sandman you can, but if you do, you need one person to back you up, and if you are wrong, you both have to put your head's down.

**Four square cone war.** Four large squares are set up with 4 teams in each. Each set of squares has a number of cones set up (players cannot go within 2 feet of cones). Object is to knock the other team's cones over. When your area has lost all its cones, you can run to whichever other team you wish.

**Who's got my shoes?** Everyone takes off their shoes and places them in the middles. At signal players grab two shoes and put them on. Then after everyone is wearing two shoes, they are to go around and find their shoes, greeting people as they go around.

**Bible Balderdash.** Regular balderdash, but using strange words from the Bible.

**No Rules Game.** Small groups, rule making rotates clockwise. For example, "You can't say 'if.' When you do, you have to stand up and crow like a rooster for 5 seconds." The group becomes self-monitoring. If a consequence sends a player away from the group--e.g. to interact with another group--rules continue to be made. Play ends when pandemonium ensues.



**Sponge relay.** move water from one end to the next by transferring the water in a sponge -- first to fill bucket wins. Variation on this is to move water from one end to the next with a spoon, filling up a small cup/wine glass.

**Activity Songbirds** This is one of those great youth activities even your more jaded high school students will have fun playing. Divide equally into two to four small groups. Tell them you're going to give each group a chance to sing 10 seconds of a song with the word *love* in its lyrics. Give the groups a couple minutes to brainstorm songs, then point at a group and have them sing in unison. A team is out if they can't think of song to sing within 10 seconds or if they repeat a song already sung by any team. (A stopwatch will make timing easier.)

**Create something with marshmallows, toothpicks, graham crackers, etc.** Good for exercise for a WorkCamp meeting. Can make into a contest by saying whomever builds the tallest building using one of the above...

**Search and find.** Leader says, "Stand up and search the room and find an object that is small, flat, solid and round. Don't let anyone know when you've found it. When you do, come whisper in my ear and if you are right I'll nod. Then you need to shout, "I see the light!" Then participant stands by the leader. The object is a coin. Continue until all participants have found the object and are standing by the leader. Then the leader reads, Luke 15:8-10 about the woman who loses one coin and searches carefully till she finds it.

**Game.** Tie a small group together and then they have to do some task as a team -- Come into the dining room, pour kool-aid for everyone, pass out cookies, say grace, eat and drink, walk to the kitchen and each person helps to wash the dishes. Then cut the string and have a discussion regarding this.

*Bill Gavin lives in Bristow, VA with his wife Gina and their 4 boys. Bill has been active in Youth Ministry since 1992, including ministry at Queen of Apostles, Bishop Ireton, Princeton University, Paul VI High School, Saint Mary of Sorrows and now Holy Trinity in Bristow. Bill attended Mary Washington University, Catholic University and Princeton Theological. When he is not coordinating the 'romper room' for his boys, he loves to lead people in worship with his trusted guitar.*

## **What to Do and Where to Go**

by Toni Papp

Living in the Northern Virginia/Washington, DC area provides a plethora of fun, easily accessible, inexpensive opportunities for youth ministry trips. All it takes is a little bit of planning time, some common sense, and a taste for adventure.

Throughout the year, there are numerous places that offer regular hours, like Laser Quest, bowling, and either ice or roller skating. However, check for special events or times, especially associated with a holiday. Skate Quest in Manassas offers Christian nights, with special rates, hours and they play Christian music. Laser Quest in Woodbridge will do private lock-ins and hours, late nights, and off-hours events.

Washington, DC is an obvious place to find free exhibits and events. Plan a scavenger hunt through several monuments and walk the Mall. You can end at Arlington Cemetery for the retiring of the colors or the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, or at the Iwo Jima Memorial to have a bag dinner and watch the Marine Corps Silent Drill Team. The Navy, Army, and Marine Corps Bands sometime perform on the Capitol grounds for free concerts, and the Kennedy Center offers tours and some short free performances. To balance costly and free, spend time at the Air and Space Museum, but purchase tickets to the IMAX theater.

Washington, DC is also the home of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Franciscan Monastery, the John Paul II Cultural Center, the Missionaries of Charity, the National Cathedral and many other wonderful places for a more spiritual visit. The National Cathedral offers tours and activities, including a scavenger hunt and gargoyles making. The John Paul II Cultural Center has changing exhibits, an activity center, and chapel, and the Franciscan Monastery boasts catacombs.

When planning a trip to DC, Metro is always helpful and fun for teens. Many younger teens have never travelled to DC or on Metro and this can be a treat. All day Metro cards are an excellent way to be mobile all over the city. Check with Metro on how to purchase a large number of cards because you are limited on how much can be charged at one time on a credit card and how many actual bills can be put in the machine per transaction.

Do not be afraid to try a bigger trip, like to Hershey Park in Pennsylvania. It just takes planning and forethought. Always ask for group rates, tax exempt status, and fee waivers for things like parking, processing or mailing. Theme parks are always a good draw for teens and can be family oriented if you include parents as drivers, or allow parents to bring other family members. Be clear about who is responsible for whom. For example, younger siblings may attend the trip if a parent does, but the parent is always responsible for that child. They may not join a group of teens, thinking the older sibling will watch them.

Check the current diocesan policy for allowing others to drive teens. There is a form needed from Risk Management for all drivers and compliance with all Child Protection policies is mandatory.

As a trip organizer, there is responsibility in thinking through the details, like figuring extra costs into what you charge participants (gas, parking, food, cost of the director attending, etc.), to providing clear directions to drivers, laying out expectations to participants, communicating to parents, setting the appropriate dress code, and being prepared with first aid kits, water, emergency forms, and contact information.

Drivers should be provided with a copy of the permission slip with medical information for each teen in their vehicle, as well as the cell phone number of people in charge, the name, phone number and address of the destination, and a briefing of expectations. This may include a reminder to heed speed limits, monitor conversations for appropriate content, wear seatbelts, and to keep music suitable.

Holy Family in Dale City has a summer program that takes teens on trips twice each week. The trips are planned well in advance, with a list provided to parents with dates, times, costs, and sign up deadlines. Many trips are popular and are repeated each summer, but new trips are introduced each year. Tubing on the Rappahannock River is great in the early summer, but toward the end of the season, the river levels are lower and the trip may not be as fun. A new trend toward businesses with giant inflatables and party rooms makes a place like House of Bounce or Kids in Motion a different kind of adventure and there is probably one close to each parish.

Ask teens about places they have been on school field trips, like team building and ropes courses. The local park authority is a great resource for hiking, canoeing, putt-putt golf, swimming, skateboarding and biking. There are some hidden gems in each county, like Hammill Mill pool in Prince William. This community pool is hidden in a neighborhood and is rarely crowded. A group discount is available, making an afternoon swim very affordable. The Holy Family group has combined this with service projects, making the day fun and productive.

A fantastic place to go is Great Country Farm in Bluemont, VA, where kids of every age (including the kids at heart) can play in mazes, carve pumpkins, pet a llama, watch pig races, play Cow Pie Putt-Putt, and much more. Berry, peach, pumpkin, broccoli and cauliflower patches allow picking opportunities year round. The Strawberry Festival, pumpkin chunking, and Glow Night are only a sampling of the special events offered by this family-owned and run farm.

Some tips that have been learned over the years of trip planning include always travelling with a full water cooler and cups in case of the unfortunate breakdown on the side of the road; remembering a car charger for your phone; double checking your reservation prior to the day of the trip; breaking large groups down into smaller, more manageable groups; making sure teens are always in groups of three at minimum; having check-in times during a long day, and letting them know how they can reach an adult chaperone at all times in case of an emergency or just because they have lost their group.

A successful trip is in attention to the details and the attitude presented by the leaders. Always include prayer in your trip, whether it is as you plan, before you leave, or at a stressful moment. A prayer, a smile, and a well thought out plan will go a long way to making your trip memorable and fun.

*Toni Papp is the Director of Youth Ministry at Holy Family Catholic Church in Dale City, VA and has been there full time since 1999. She lives in Manassas with her husband and has one almost grown up son. Her Summer Friendship program gives her lots of experience in planning fun, local trips.*

## Theatre Ministry

by Rob Tessier

In chapter 12 of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, he uses a beautiful image of how each individual person has been created for a purpose, each with unique gifts. The collaboration of the many different gifts is what creates a beautiful Church, the Body of Christ. If all the teens in a youth ministry program fit into the ears and mouth category of the Bible passage, there would be something wrong because the majority of the teens in the parish spectrum would be left out. If possible, a Youth Minister should seek to create a holistic program that invites a diversity of young people into the doors of the Church.



Theatre Ministry is the use of the performing arts to communicate the Christian message by inspiring, uplifting, and forming a production team, ensemble, and audience with solid Christian values. Theatre Ministry in a parish setting provides a hook to get drama-minded youth involved who otherwise would not have been involved in the parish. A former teen and now Youth Leader said, "Being involved in Theater Ministry locked me into the youth community at my parish that I would otherwise have been totally isolated from. I had tried to go to youth group, but since I didn't really have any good friends from school that also went, I didn't feel like I fit in very much. Getting involved with theater ministry threw me into a situation where I felt more comfortable (Rehearsals for a show) and I got to know some of the other teens of the parish and realized that I could fit in. Some of my closest friends to date were made within the theater ministry!"

Fr. James Hudgins said, "Theatre ministry brings young people back to their faith by bringing the faith into their lives. Their involvement in the performance is simply the vehicle that delivers it." The beauty of mixing ministry with theatre is the ability to keep God as the central focus. When everyone is focused on the same sense of mission and is reminded that each part is essential to the operation of the body, those involved gain a much clearer understanding of the mystical body of Christ. Constantine Stanislavsky, a great Russian Director, once said, "There are no small parts, only small actors." This message rings true in a theatrical production as much as it does to Christians who try to heed the words of St. Therese of Lisieux, "Do small things with great love."



Theatre Ministry can be used in any number of ways. A large scale summer musical is probably the biggest. Not every youth minister or every parish is going to want to go that direction, but there are simpler ways to incorporate Theatre Ministry into your holistic program. **Here are some examples:**

### A. Youth Ministry Talent Show

- Requires about six weeks notice; teens prepare their own acts; auditions can be held to be sure acts are "safe"; the performance can be displayed on its own special night or in place of a regular Youth Ministry Night
- At one parish, this event happens every December as the last Sunday Youth Night before Christmas. Parents and families are welcomed to attend. Cookies, cocoa, and other goodies are put out. Teens and even adult leaders perform everything from songs and dances to silly human tricks, bands, poetry readings, and jumping rope, juggling, to name a few. Anybody can perform as long as it is appropriate. It is very low pressure and a free event.

## B. Living Stations of the Cross

- Requires about four or five two-hour rehearsals during Lent; you can either select teens for roles or audition them; someone will need to direct their actions and another person will need to create costumes and props for the performance; the performance could be done in the actual Church on Good Friday or another Friday in Lent for the whole parish.
- At one parish, they use the same script and same actions, the same set of costumes, and the same props every year. It is easy to re-create every year. It is okay that it is exactly the same. Year after year, the Church is absolutely packed to see the teens perform the Living Stations. The teens move and take different poses, also called a *freeze*, as narrators read the station and a reflection over the microphone. It is fairly easy to pull this off and doesn't cost much to put it together.
- Using the same concept, you can perform a Living Nativity. In the Hispanic Culture the re-enacting of the Nativity is called "Las Posadas."

## C. One Act Play and the Diocesan One Act Play Competition

- Requires holding an audition; about two months of once-a-week two hour rehearsals, and can be performed as part of a Youth Night or a special presentation night or can be taken to the Diocesan One Act Play Competition. Someone will be needed to direct, someone to take care of costumes and props, and someone to look over the management and production details.
  - One Act Plays can have as few as a couple of characters or as many as twenty. They generally last 30 minutes and can be done effectively without sounds and lights. There are a large array of scripts on websites like [www.pioneerdrama.com](http://www.pioneerdrama.com) and [www.bakersplays.com](http://www.bakersplays.com)
  - The most effective One Act Plays have few technical requirements and can be successful with a minimalist approach.



## D. Cabaret Performance

- This is similar to a talent show but the point is to be sure all the acts are very good. One parish does this every winter as a setting used to display their One Act Play. The cabaret is a segmented production that brings together several types of performance, such as:
  - a. 20 minute pre-show of piano playing, magic tricks, or musician.
  - b. 30-40 minutes of Broadway Music Review mixed into the night
    1. A choreographed opening and closing number
    2. Small solos and duets mixed in-between
  - c. 30-45 minute Improvisation performance, like "Who's Line is it Anyway"
    1. High School Kids or College Kids with improv experience can do this
    2. Or, this could be a guest magician...or some other act
  - d. 30 minute One Act Play

- A stage can be rented for about \$500 or it could be performed on an elevated stage area at the parish or school. Theatre lights and sound equipment could potentially be borrowed from the local school or from someone in a band. Admission can be \$5-\$10 and the setting can be a “Dessert Theatre”; tables can be set up and the performers serve items off a menu at an extra cost.
- This requires a Producer and/or Director who will coordinate all the different acts and ensure that transitions between them are smooth. It will also require a Technical Director, a Food Coordinator, a Ticket Coordinator, and a House Coordinator (someone to decorate the room and work with ushers). There are plenty of opportunities for teens to be involved on or off the stage. There will be a need for stage crew, tech crew, ushers, servers, etc.
- This event can bring a lot of visibility to the youth and raise several thousand dollars. The funds could be a Workcamp fundraiser or even given to another charity

### **E. Summer Musical**

- This is certainly the largest undertaking. However, with enough support, time, and effort, a summer musical production has the potential to create tremendous results.
- A summer show will require a two-month period of four three-hour rehearsals a week, plus coordination of set construction, creating costumes, finding props, painting, publicity, and many other details.
- Due to the long hours poured into such an undertaking, the members of the cast and crew develop very strong bonds. They are all working together for a common goal in a Christian environment where they experience prayer and often use the message of the show as a way to discuss morality and theology.

### **Here is the process for creating a Summer Theatre Ministry Musical or Play**

1. Gathering a Team
2. Choosing Material
3. Auditions and Rehearsals
4. Technical and Production Aspects



### **A. Gathering a Team**

1. Whether they have a theatre background or not, the Youth Minister can take on the role of Producer and handle the administrative oversight of the project as well as assuring that the content of the musical or play and the way the rehearsals are being run speak to Catholic values. The most important choice for the Producer is who will direct the show.
  - a. The Director needs to be a faithful, practicing Catholic.
  - b. The Director needs theatre experience, whether in college or community theatre.
  - c. The Director must be good with teens and have the ability to communicate well with others, including other team members and parents.
  - d. The Director’s job will be to develop a vision for the show and help find other key production team staff to help develop the vision on stage.
  - e. The Director will plan and run all rehearsals and make final artistic decisions.

- f. The Director must be willing to heed to the producer if the producer feels something on stage needs to be adjusted based on audience or cast reactions.
2. The Director with the help of the Producer must select the following people:
  - a. Music Director- teaches cast the music to the show; recruits and directs the orchestra.
  - b. Choreographer- designs and instructs the dance in the show.
  - c. Production Stage Manager- tracks the cast, records blocking notes, administrates rehearsals, stays abreast of all decisions, calls cues for the show.
  - d. Technical Director- helps recruit and then oversees the technical aspects of the production. These aspects include lighting, design, sound, stage, props, set, costumes, and scenic art.
3. Each of these heads will have assistants who are in charge of various aspects of the production. The Production Team alone could involve as many as 15-30 individuals. The heads of these areas should be adults, but many of the assistant roles can be filled by teens. It is also important to clearly define the role of each person.
4. The Youth Minister does not single-handedly need to take care of recruiting. Once a Director and a few other key positions are identified, there is a wonderful multiplication of resources that takes place as everyone is seeking support for the show. Recruitment for a Production Team is a thousand times easier the second year than the first because most people will definitely want to stay involved.

## B. Choosing Material

1. When looking for that perfect Musical, here are some websites to look at:  
[www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)- The largest selection of musicals out there; have most of the modern shows



- [www.tamswitmark.com](http://www.tamswitmark.com)- Another large outlet; specializes in many of the classics  
[www.rnhtheatricals.com](http://www.rnhtheatricals.com)- Includes all the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals and the Andrew Lloyd Weber shows

- When selecting a musical, consider certain variables like message, size of cast, length of show, difficulty level, dance requirements, orchestra size, props and costumes, and technical requirements. Plus, it is very important to consider “name appeal”. There will be a need to sell a lot of tickets to make this successful. Therefore, the first two years need to include big name shows that will attract a crowd. After establishing a trust with audiences, feel free to alternate each year between a big name show with a lesser name show.
- When considering a musical, it is important not to watch the musical, but to read the script and listen to the music. The script and the music are unchangeable variables. However, the actions on stage are the interpretation of the director. There are many ways to do a show. Here are some examples of Musicals you might consider and the themes they can emphasize:



- “Godspell”- God is with us, the gospel of Matthew comes to life, brings the message of Jesus to our modern day world
- “Joseph”- Brings Bible story to life, the gift of family, God has a special plan for us if we trust Him

- “Fiddler on the Roof”- Faith is essential to the joy of people even when they are oppressed, God never abandons His own, True love can break down walls of division
- “Jesus Christ Superstar”- can be a reverent portrayal of Jesus’ Passion, opportunity to add Mary (mother), opportunity to add Stations of the Cross scene, powerful music will move audience and cast to struggles of Christ in his suffering and death
- “Man of LaMancha”- seek to live a virtuous life, redemption is available to all, God desires our conversion to become holy
- “Sound of Music”- When we give our life to God, He shows us greater things than we could have planned on our own, evil cannot overcome good
- “Honk”- Pro-Life, every life is precious and valuable, each person deserves to be treated with dignity; inner beauty; adoption
- “Pippin”- true freedom comes from a committed relationship to Christ and breaking from the bondage of sin and temptation
- “Music Man”- conversion and forgiveness
- “Seussical”- pro-life; “a person’s a person, no matter how small”

### C. Auditions and Rehearsals

1. Casting decisions are very important. One parish only allows high school students to be in the show but allows students of other ages to support in other off-stage roles. Another parish is open to Youth and Young Adults. It provides a great opportunity for side by side ministry. However, it is very important to be more careful about selecting ministry-minded young adults. They need to pass two tests: 1) the performance test (just like the high schoolers) and 2) the ministry test (they need to be adults who will be good role models to teens and ones that will be willing to go through the “Safe Environment Standards” that are required by the diocese. Be sure to stress to young adults and college students that they should see themselves as ministers to the teens and be very mindful about their interactions. With all that said, the primary purpose of the ministry is toward teens, so always give a higher preference to the involvement of a teen in the show over a young adult.
  - Advertise the auditions through your regular means of “getting the word out” and set it up so that they must call you or email you to sign up for a specific time so people don’t show up and wait around. At the auditions, it is important to have the Music Director on hand to evaluate the vocal range of each auditioner. Also, it is important to have the Production Stage Manager outside of the room having auditioners fill out forms while they wait.
  - Create a form that solicits the information you need and simultaneously communicates your goals. Also, ask them to respond how they will make God central to this process. On the back of the form, give a calendar of rehearsals and ask that they record any foreseen conflicts.
  - After the auditions, it is very helpful to have a “Callback” in which you have the auditioners sing songs from the show, read from the script, and dance for the choreographer. Stress to people that being in the cast is only one way to be involved, and there are plenty of opportunities behind the scenes for anyone not cast. Callbacks

are a great opportunity to share the metaphor of the Body of Christ and encourage each person to seek a way to support the greater mission without too much concern as to what part they will or will not get.

- Once the play is cast, rehearsals will begin. From the very beginning it will be essential to balance those “Martha and Mary” tendencies. Rehearsals should always begin and end with prayer. Also, the focus of rehearsals should be on developing relationships in the midst of actors learning their positions and movements, known as *blocking*. The goal is not only to build a great production, but to develop Christian virtue in the context of the process. Whatever the theme of the show is, it can be a great foundation to build upon with the cast and crew during the process. Also, be sure to plan at least one Cast and Crew Mass during a rehearsal... that can be another powerful way to unite the group and stay focused on the mission.

#### **D. Technical and Production Aspects**

The task of building a set, making costumes, and selling tickets, can seem daunting. Here are just a few suggestions that may help:

- Call local high schools, universities, and community theatres. Ask if they have any costumes or props that they could loan. These places may also loan out lighting or sound.
- Require parents to be on a crew in addition to recruiting heavily within the parish.
- Check with the local Fire Marshall about the codes.
- Get a Lighting Company to bid on bringing in a system of lights. Having a full lighting setup is one way to really improve the theatrical experience.

Here’s a sample budget for a one week production:

* Royalties	\$2500
* Lights	\$2000
* Sound	\$500
* Stage/Set	\$1500
* Costumes	\$1000
* Props	\$500
* Publicity	\$500

**Total \$8500**

- Tickets: If charging \$7.00 per ticket for 300 seats for five performances, that’s \$10,500! Before any concessions sales, which should increase the profit, a well known show can generate an excellent profit for a needy charity as well as provide a great ministry to the parish at the same time.

*Rob Tessier has been a full time Coordinator of Youth Ministry for 12 years and currently serves as the Director of Youth Ministry at All Saints Catholic Church in Manassas, VA. Rob created the Junior High Workcamp and Theatre Ministry models that are now used by several parishes. A recipient of the Don Bosco Youth Ministry Award, Rob has given presentations for Youth Ministers in various places including for the NFCYM National Convention. Rob lives in Bristow with his wife and 6 children. To contact Rob, please email him at [rtessier@allsaintsva.org](mailto:rtessier@allsaintsva.org)*

## **Sports Ministry** by Chris Hitzelberger

Young people in our part of the country are highly involved in sports. Many of them play on multiple sports teams year round, follow sports on television and the internet, and devote much of their free time to the subject. I have found that some teens spend more time interacting with sports coaches than they do with their own parents! If we are called to meet young people where they are, this means often engaging them through the medium of sports. I have found sports ministry to be a great tool for reaching out to young people and helping them connect their faith with their everyday life.

The purpose of sports ministry is to bring young people to a deeper relationship with Christ and each other through sports. Athletic ability is secondary in ministry: what you need is a willing heart. In fact, sports ministry doesn't always need to involve actively playing sports. Below are some suggestions on how to introduce sports into your parish ministry.

- A common issue among many parish teens is the fear of inviting friends to youth ministry events. Their friends are too busy or may not be into “the church thing”. One great outreach ministry is to gather a few youth who are involved and show up at a sporting event where some of their friends are playing. If you cannot commit to the whole game, show up for the second half. Make sure the teen sees you there- bring a banner, cheer for them, etc. After the game, make sure to say hi. It can especially leave a lasting impression (particularly for male athletes) if you show up with some fast food for after the game. Use that first connection to then invite that teen to an upcoming event. Once they see that you are willing to meet them where they are, they are more willing to meet you on your turf.
- Perhaps playing sports seems a little daunting. Sports can be introduced through other mediums. Have a movie night. Think about showing a great sports movie like “Remember the Titans”, “Miracle”, or even “Rocky”. Add an inspirational book or two written by a Christian athlete to your book shelf. The video series ‘Champions for Christ’ documents professional baseball players who are also active in their Catholic faith. Using a sports video clip or story in a talk can be another easy way to reach out to teens who love sports.
- Most parish youth ministry programs have those teens who only come sporadically to events that the CYM wants for them to come more regularly. Plan some short physical game that can be added to a meeting at the last minute and save it for a night when a few of those teens show up. This can pique their interest and encourage them to come back to the next event or meeting you are having.
- Many parishes participate in the Northern Virginia Junior Catholic Youth Organization sports program. Most parishes have a volunteer who coordinates these activities. As a CYM, you could meet with the coordinator and offer to give a special training session for coaches to assist them in growing their coaching into a ministry. You can provide simple tips, such as how to pray with young people, how to encourage them, where to direct them when they have serious concerns or questions about their faith. Even showing up at a practice to introduce yourself can help the young people feel a stronger connection to the parish and see their basketball team as something more than just a team.

- Organizing a parish-wide sports tournament may seem a little daunting, but it can be a great way to reach out to young people. Connect with a CYM who has been running a tournament for several years and plan to observe their tournament to see how it works. Do not re-invent the wheel: ask to borrow fliers, permission slips, and other ideas from them for your own event.
- Create a ‘sports night’ on a monthly basis. You could offer the same sport each month, or rotate among a variety of sports. Talk to young people and encourage them to bring their friends. Carry a handful of fliers around with you and when you meet a young person, give them one and invite them to come. These types of events can start with as few as four or five people and quickly grow.
- Always share the Gospel. While we are comfortable talking about our faith in a formal meeting, it might require something more creative on the sports field. Handing out a half page reflection at the end of the game, or relating a headline from the sporting world to the weekly Gospel reading might be a more effective means of reaching a young person.
- Don’t be afraid to involve ‘non-parish youth’ into sports programs. Sports can be a great tool of evangelization to all sorts of youth.
- Don’t be afraid to pray. Even if you are having a basketball night or meeting with NVJCYO coaches, start off with a prayer. Encourage others to offer intentions.

In all of these ideas, the important point is that you, as the CYM, need to get involved with the young people. It doesn’t matter if you are awful at basketball or were always picked last in gym class. What really matters is that you are willing to dive into something outside your comfort zone. If you take that first step, it can and will encourage young people to take a similar step.

*Chris Hitzelberger is the Coordinator of Youth Ministry at Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria, VA.*

## Sporting Events Information



The Baltimore Blast has two Christian Youth nights per season. See a Baltimore Blast indoor soccer game followed by a post-game concert featuring national Christian artists like Jeremy Camp and David Crowder. For more info call Robin at 410-558-4295.  
Email: [reichelberger@baltimoreblast.com](mailto:reichelberger@baltimoreblast.com)  
For more on Baltimore Blast soccer, visit: [www.baltimoreblast.com](http://www.baltimoreblast.com)



The Baltimore Orioles have a fundraising program—called “**High Five**”—for local schools, recreation councils, and other eligible non-profit organizations. You can earn up to \$5 for your school or organization for every ticket sold. For information, please call: (410) 685-9800

**There are two ways to earn money for your organization:**

- 1) **The Classic Group Outing Fundraiser:** You can have your entire group sit together at an Orioles baseball game at their home field. A sales representative will handle your account and provide you with brochures, flyers, posters, and materials to assist your fundraising efforts.
- 2) **Flexi-Fundraiser Ticket Drive:** Earn money for your organization by selling Orioles ticket vouchers valid for any Monday-Thursday game.



Washington Nationals General Admissions Tickets: 202-397-SEAT or [washington.nationals.mlb.com](http://washington.nationals.mlb.com)



Washington Redskins General Admissions Tickets: 301-276-6050 or [tickets@redskins.com](mailto:tickets@redskins.com)

Potomac Nationals ticket office: 703-590-2311, ext. 225

George Mason University Sports Ticket Office: 703-993-3270

## **Catholic Youth Sports Northern Virginia Junior Catholic Youth Organization**

Northern Virginia Junior Catholic Youth Organization (NVJCYO) is an organization of the Diocese of Arlington that oversees sports programs for the youth of the Diocese from 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in some sports. It is overseen by a Board of Directors consisting of representatives from all participating parishes. Membership is open to all parishes in the Diocese of Arlington that choose to participate. Requirements for participation consist of the appointment of a representative by the parish pastor to the Board of Directors and continuous attendance at Board meetings. These meetings occur four times a year. An Executive Board and roster of Commissioners operate the programs and report to the Board. Currently there are 37 parishes participating in NVJCYO.

Programs administered are tennis, basketball, cheerleading, track and field, cross country, baseball and softball. Any child that is a member of a participating parish and attending either the parish school or religious education program is eligible to participate. Each parish is responsible for the formation of teams within their own parish in accordance with the rules and regulations of NVJCYO. Either the parish representative to NVJCYO or another individual designated by the pastor coordinates the activities within the parish. Youth in a participating parish that does not have a team may sometimes be allowed to play with another parish upon approval of NVJCYO.

We provide an opportunity for the youth of our parishes to participate in and represent their parish in competitive athletics. We place an emphasis on sportsmanship and fair play. Our programs provide a vehicle for development of mind and body as well as spirit. They are designed to teach and guide our young people in learning to compete while demonstrating fairness and courtesy to others; and to reinforce their Catholic values.

*Information regarding our programs can be found on their website at [www.nvjcyo.org](http://www.nvjcyo.org) or you can call 703-916-1637. Members of the Executive Board can be contacted through the site as well. For information within your parish, please contact your parish office.*

## **Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting & Campfire**

### **SCOUTING FORMS CHRISTIAN LEADERS**

*“In the Catholic Church, there is one particular aspect of Scouting that deserves special attention today. Scouting has tremendous potential for developing Christian leaders from among Catholic youth. It provides a powerful complement to the Church's ministry to Catholic youth. Through the religious emblems program, Scouts have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and to engage in regular service to their parish churches. Scouting, under the tutelage of adult Catholic leaders, offers young people a unique opportunity to grow in faith and in leadership in the company of their peers.”*

- Bishop Gerald A. Gettelfinger, Episcopal Liaison to Scouting

#### **Committee Purpose:**

The Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and Campfire (DCCOSC) gives guidance, vitality and leadership in the spiritual phase of Scouting to all Catholic Scouts and Scouters of the Diocese. The committee endeavors to make the entire Scouting program available to young people in parish units and in units operated by Catholic Organizations. The DCCOSC supplements the programs of the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America and Campfire USA with special instructions and activities, in the spiritual phase of Scouting as it relates to Catholics.

#### **The DCCOSC has the following responsibilities:**

1. Develop, schedule and carry out a youth ministry program for all Scouting units within the Catholic Church.
2. Reach all Catholic young people and Scouters in units not chartered to Catholic organizations.
3. Schedule regular meetings.
4. Represent the Diocese at regional and national Scouting events.
5. Advise councils within the Diocese on all matters relating to Scouting among Catholics.

#### **DCCOSC GOALS:**

1. Encouraging the correlation of the Scouting program with the parish youth program so that the religious lives of Catholic young people in Scouting will receive adequate attention and that Scouting activities will become an integral part of parish life.
2. Arranging to hold field Masses and other Catholic Scouting activities with young members of the parish.
3. Assisting local councils in securing chaplain services for Catholics attending long-term Scout camp.
4. Cooperating in recruiting Catholic adults for training courses conducted by local councils. Provide supplemental training for Catholic adults in Catholic doctrine and principles as these relate to Scouting for young people under Catholic leadership.
5. Publicize and promote Religious Emblems Award Programs for young people.
6. Sponsor the Diocesan Scout Mass and Conduct Annual programs for: Religious Emblems Training, Young Scout Retreats, Older Scout Retreats, Adult Retreat, and the Adult Recognition and Fellowship Dinner.

**The DCCOSC includes the following positions:**

1. Diocesan chaplain (appointed by the Bishop)
2. Diocesan chairman (appointed by the Bishop)
3. Committee chairmen (appointed by the Chairman) for:
  - A. Religious emblems
  - B. Religious activities
  - C. Membership
  - D. Training
  - E. Communications/publicity
  - F. Council Representative
  - G. Treasurer
  - H. Secretary
4. District Representative
5. Members-at-large as needed to carry out the religious and Scouting programs.

The majority of Scouting Units in the Diocese are affiliated with the National Capital Area Council (NCAC) of the Boy Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts Council of the Nations Capital (GSCNC). Scouting units in the far south or west of the Diocese may be affiliated with adjacent Scout Councils. The areas of the Scout Councils extend into the Archdiocese of Washington in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

(The Archdiocese has an active scouting Committee and we work together on many projects of mutual interest). Campfire USA is a fairly small presence in our diocese.

*For more information contact Patrick M. Berney, Chairman DCCOSC, at 703-255-2445 or e-mail [pberney@hotmail.com](mailto:pberney@hotmail.com)*

## **Planning a Retreat**

by Toni Papp

There are many reasons to have a retreat, as well as many different types of retreats. However, one thing they all have in common in that they all involve going “away” from the normal places in our lives in order to spend conscious time with God. A prayerful day at the church is not a retreat, nor should a ski or beach trip be called a retreat. That misrepresents the meaning of a retreat. Spending purposeful time in silence, prayer, and “retreating” away from worldly distractions so that one can become more intimate with God should be part of any trip being billed as a “retreat.”

Some of the different types of retreats may include a planning retreat for your upcoming year, where your leadership team of adults and teens spend a significant time in time in prayer and discussion to plan out the year. There are also vocation retreats for those that may be discerning God’s call to them. The diocesan Office of Vocations offers vocations retreats each year, but you also can have a retreat with a vocation theme, and present information on priesthood, religious life, other consecrated life and the call to a happy, healthy marriage.

Silent retreats may be a welcome respite for some and near impossible for others, but can be most productive in re-centering oneself on God.

Prepare prayer experiences well and do not shortchange people on time with God. Too many times, preparations for prayer are not given the same attention as a talk or team building activity. However, the most significant changes in a person’s life are made when talking with God. Offer Confessions, Mass, and Adoration as part of the experience. One can never go wrong inviting God on the retreat, too!

Most Coordinators of Youth Ministry (CYMs) hopefully have been able to experience a great retreat and can attest to the value of having one. But, great retreats do not just happen. They take planning, preparation and lots of prayer. All of this needs to happen in advance.

In planning a retreat, decide who the target age group is. A high school retreat will be different from a middle school retreat, which will be different from an adult retreat. Once your target age group is decided, start thinking about where the retreat will happen and the duration.

Will it be one, two or three days? Many retreat facilities book up to a year in advance, so check several places and be ready to have a second choice weekend.

**Questions to consider when exploring a retreat facility are:**

- What is the cost per person?
- How far will you have to travel?
- Are there separate sleeping and bathroom areas for males and females?
- Is there a large room for gathering together?
- Are meals included in the price? If so, how many?
- Are there fixed meal times?
- Will yours be the only group there or will you share the grounds, dining areas, and other common areas?
- Can you arrive early to set up?
- What time is check out? What are cleaning expectations at the end?
- Is it an easily “chaperoned” facility (can you keep track of all your teens easily, even at night)?

Think about the purpose or theme of the retreat. Is it a sacramental preparation, leadership training, or just time away to experience God? The purpose of the retreat will help give shape to the talks and activities. There are several formats that can be used for planning purposes, but a very standard and effective format consists of an introduction to the topic, the teaching, a testimony, reflection and small group discussion.

Pull your support team together. Consider carefully what adults can help as facilitators/small group leaders. People bring different talents to the table and some may be more effective in a background/support role versus an up-front/presenting role. It should include set up and clean up help, a “food team” unless your retreat facility includes prepared meals, emergency contact parent, and small group leaders who can also help with large group presentations, planning and implementing activities, fleshing out talk details, and preparing prayer services. If a priest is available for your retreat experience, take advantage of their presence. Think outside of your usual volunteers and see who else might be a great person to help. Holy Family Parish usually tries to have people that the teens will see at church and around the parish, even if they don’t primarily work with youth ministry year-round. This helps foster relationships and encourages more participation in parish life.

In choosing your facilitators, always follow diocesan guidelines for background checks and any policies set forth by the Office of Child Protection and Safety. Every adult spending time on the retreat should be in compliance with all policies.

Once you have assembled your team, meet with them several times to explain your vision of the weekend, the main theme, talk ideas, and to explore other ideas. Either assign tasks to your leaders or ask for volunteers. You, as the retreat leader do not have to plan and implement everything yourself. In fact, if you attempt to do so, your retreat may have a level of stress and a one dimensional aspect that detracts from the overall experience. Communicate your vision clearly, but allow your team to develop ideas and talks themselves. Be aware of areas that they may need more instruction, such as how to plan an effective prayer service.

Advertise the retreat using various methods. Layering your message will help reach more teens, help them notice it, and catch the eye of parents also. Postcards or flyers sent to the home of prospective teens or handed out after Masses, personal invitations, posters and other creative ways to grab attention will result in a better response. Online invitations through Facebook or MySpace can be effective but should be used with caution.

Putting the weekend schedule together can sometimes be challenging. Do not “over program” the retreat, but allow time for small group discussions, free time, personal reflections, journaling, or prayer time. An adult retreat can have more unstructured time than a middle school retreat. Middle school youth need more direction, so even free time should have some parameters, such as areas that are off-limits and suggestions for games. Adult leaders should interact with the teens during this time to solidify the relational ministry aspect. The relationships made on a retreat can impact a teen much more than we may initially realize. Even years later, you may run into a young person in the grocery store and they will recognize you from the pie-in-the-face game or the Ultimate Frisbee match!

It is tempting to try to squeeze every great idea into one retreat. There are some activities that just fit better in a retreat setting over a weekly youth meeting. Resist this temptation and streamline your focus. Allowing more time for small group discussion is preferable to having to break them up just as things get interesting in the group. Every retreat should include time for people to break the ice and become comfortable with each other. Do not skip this very important part of the experience. Mix people up so that they must meet someone new, push a little out of their comfort zone and not move through the retreat in their comfortable clump. Name games, small group skits, the making of a “team banner” are all great ways to start the retreat.

Have an MC for the retreat to help introduce topics, speakers, and keep things moving and on schedule. This does not have to be the CYM, but should be someone with good speaking skills.



**Random Tips:**

Have a theme song for the weekend. Expose the teens to it in advance so they can start to know the lyrics.

- Think of a short message or phrase that you would like associated with the retreat. Layer this message through posters, decorations, giveaways, random signs that show up during the weekend. For instance, Holy Family Parish’s Confirmation retreat uses a chocolate milk analogy for integrating the Holy Spirit within us, so the phrase “Stir It Up” is used frequently. This phrase helps the teens recall their experience later when you talk with them.

- Provide song sheets, copies of prayers, notebook paper, a pen, and a folder for each teen.
- When planning activities, plan a variety to accommodate the sports-oriented, the deep thinkers, and teens with special needs or disabilities. Scavenger hunts, strategy games, team builders, relays with different stations can utilize the abilities of many versus a few.
- If you are having Adoration, take a few moments beforehand to explain it. You can give some reflection questions, have readings and some music, but make sure there are prolonged periods of silence as well.
- Be very clear about modesty expectations, including sleepwear, property boundaries, and curfews. For instance, if there is a lake with a dock, be clear that the time to sit on the dock is NOT after lights out and with someone of the opposite sex.
- Think carefully through your supply needs and make a list of who is bringing what. Double check technology needs, like projectors, proper cords and plugs, CD & DVD players. Detailed supply lists are your friend!
- Emergency contact information should be given to parents, and you should have medical release forms for every person on the retreat, including adults.
- If you have a band or an individual providing music, go over their playlist so they are familiar with the flow of the event. Stress that they must be ready to go and not be setting up or tuning while someone is trying to address the group. Music is an important component to a retreat. It can raise or lower the energy level, provide focus during prayer or Adoration, segue to the next talk or be a send-off to small groups.
- Include parents in some aspect of the retreat. Provide some post-retreat questions and tips on talking with their teen, ask them to write a letter to their teen, or end the retreat with a family Mass. One suggestion is to have parents write the letter to their teen, but instead of presenting it to them on the retreat, they read it to them on Sunday at the Mass.
- If you can go to the retreat facility early to set up, do so. Having the space already decorated and set up how you want it for the opening session helps set the mood more quickly. If it is not possible, plan carefully with your leadership team how you will implement set up when you arrive. Have teens help unload, but then send them with a couple of adults to set up their sleeping areas and possibly do an activity while others on the leadership team get ready.

*Toni Papp is the Director of Youth Ministry at Holy Family Catholic Church in Dale City, VA and has been there full time since 1999. She lives in Manassas with her husband and has one college-aged son. Her Summer Friendship program gives her lots of experience in planning fun, local trips.*

## Sample Retreat Schedule

### Arlington Diocese Boys Leadership Retreat “Seek Sanctity. . . in the footsteps of champions” Hunting Ridge Retreat Center – Sept. 12-14, 2003

#### Friday

- 7:30pm Bus arrives and unpack
- 8:00 Meet in Cafeteria/ nametags
- 8:15 Icebreakers and Trust Activity
- 9:30 Talk #1 “Being Called/Fears”
- 10:00 Leadership Talk and Exercise #1- Communication skills
- 11:00 Night prayer
- 12:00 Lights out

#### Saturday

- 7:30am Wake up
- 8:00 Mass
- 8:45 Breakfast
- 9:15 Talk #2 “Don’t check your brains at the door”
- 9:50 Questions and Answers – Faith
- 10:45 Break
- 11:00 Talk #3 “Your personal Call and Giftedness”
- 11:20 Small Groups – Your gifts and what God is calling you to
- 12:00 Lunch
- Break
- 1:45 Soda and sugar snacks
- 2:00 Talk #4 “Freedom and failure”
- 2:20 Group Examination of Conscience and questions
- 3:20 Personal Examination
- 3:30 Confessions w/ personal sharing
- 5:30 Dinner and Break
- 6:30 Leadership Talk and Exercise #2
- 7:00 Adoration explanation
- 7:15 Adoration and Music
- 7:45 Witness from youth...mercy in their lives
- 8:00 Mini talk on Jesus being a Leader
- 8:15 Leadership skits preparation
- 8:45 Skits
- 9:30 Large Group Game/ Free time
- 10:30 Bonfire/ /Sharing of examples of people that exhibit sanctity
- 11:00 Night Prayer at Fire
- 11:30 To cabins
- 12:00 Lights Out

## Sunday

- 7:30am Wake Up
- 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:45 Morning Prayer and Talk #5 "Following Christ"
- 9:30 Youth Board Discussion
- 10:00 Stretch Break
- 10:15 Mini talk on "Resolutions and sending forth"
- 10:30 Writing resolutions
- 11:00 Mass
- 12:00 Lunch / Packing
- 12:45 Pictures
- 1:00 Large Group Sharing
- 2:00 Bus departing

Editor's Note: It is important to recognize that retreats should follow a theological pattern, and not just be a hodge-podge of talks and activities. Most major national retreat programs follow a pattern of "Dying with Christ and then rising with Christ", and are often based in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Here is another typical pattern for a retreat:

- Break down barriers and discuss fears or anxieties that we bring to retreat.  
Building the sense of community on the retreat and with the larger Church.
- God created all of us out of Love, and gave us each gifts and talents.
- God provides for us in our needs
- We fail to always return that love and fall into sin.
- Opportunity for Confession
- God is merciful, and always gives us a second chance. \*Ideal opportunity for Mass\*
- Obstacles in our lives which keep us from the Lord, conversion is the process of removing those obstacles.
- Create concrete resolutions to follow after retreat.
- Sending forth...go and be "Fishers of Men"

## List of Retreat Centers

### Virginia Retreat Center Listings

[http://www.findthedivine.com/states/states\\_va.html](http://www.findthedivine.com/states/states_va.html)

#### **San Damiano Spiritual Life Center (New Retreat Center for the Diocese of Arlington)**

125 Old Kitchen Rd

White Post VA 22663

540-868-9220

[www.arlingtondiocese.org/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/)

sandamiano@arlingtondiocese.org

#### **Brethren Woods Retreat Center**

4896 Armentrout Path

Keezletown, VA 22832

540-269-2741

[www.brethrenwood.org](http://www.brethrenwood.org)

Our cabins areas are divided into three sections with two cabins in each section: Cedar Cove, Red Bud Pass & Walnut Creek. Each cabin can sleep 10 people, they consist of one room with windows, screens, bunk beds, shelves, porch area, picnic area, fire circle, and restroom facilities are located nearby. They also have activities such as a challenge course and many trails. It is also located very close to Massanutten Ski Resort, so is a great place to have a winter ski retreat.

*“They had lots of facilities, a great low & high ropes course and a very helpful, friendly staff.” - Toni Papp (Holy Family YM)*

#### **Camp Bethel**

328 Bethel Road

Fincastle, VA, 24090

540-992-2940

The main retreat center has eight rooms with shared baths, spacious meeting room with a fireplace, TV/ VCR, piano, is handicap accessible, and contains complete kitchen or there is food service available. There is also capacity: 16 persons, Heritage (sleeps 60, meets 90) (multiple bathrooms), Bethel Lodge (sleeps 12, meets 24), Pineview Lodge (sleeps 12), Forest Lodge (sleeps 12, meets 20), three efficiency cottages (each sleeps 12), and several cabins. There is a beautiful trail uphill which ends at a cross on the top of the mountain. Some of the activities nearby are: a 3 mile hike or bike to Appalachian Trail and the Blue Ridge Parkway at Black Horse Gap. Bethel is just 8 miles to historic Fincastle, 5 miles from the town of Buchanan, 13 miles by car to Blue Ridge Parkway, and 22 miles to Natural Bridge.

#### **Front Royal 4-H Center**

600 4-H Center Dr.

Front Royal, VA 22630

540-635-7171

Con. J. Kenneth Robinson Lodge at \$99.00 per room includes: \*Air conditioned,\* 24 rooms (4 beds per room), capacity 96 bunk style beds, private bath in each room, and 2 lounge areas.

Robinson Lodge at \$93.00 per room includes: 18 rooms (6 beds per room in 16 rooms), 2 rooms

(4 beds) bunk style beds, capacity 104 Lounge and (4 lower level conference rooms). Rector Lodge at \$720 per night includes: 13 rooms (6 beds per room in 11 rooms), 1 room 8 beds, 1 room 4 beds, bunk style beds, capacity 78, 4 baths (shared), and 1 central meeting room or lounge. Peters Lodge at \$662 per night includes: 11 rooms (6 beds per room), bunk style beds, capacity 66, 3 baths (shared), and 1 central meeting room or lounge. There are many options for activities like, a challenge course, recreational activities, and many trails. Contact Sue for meal and other information.

### **Rising Phoenix Retreat Center**

Green Ridge Road, NE  
Flintstone, MD 21530  
301-478-2089

We have 3 main buildings that house meeting, lodging and prayer facilities. Meadow Lodge which is new handicapped accessible building is our newest handsome addition to the already existing facilities. It contains 12 comfortably appointed double occupancy rooms, a commercial kitchen, and our Grand Room. Green Ridge House remains our modest, home-like setting. Its seven bedrooms can accommodate ten persons, with four bedrooms being singles. There are shared bathroom facilities on each of the two floors. Phoenix Round houses our original and still exceptional Gathering Room. The large circular Gathering Room can accommodate 40 persons and has two adjacent restrooms. The lower level has two meeting rooms and our permanent massage room. There are two restrooms on the lower level. Our staff will help inform and direct guests to all of the wonderful recreation and relaxation areas of the Retreat Center including Rising Phoenix Trail, the lower meadow, our seven circuit labyrinth, hot tub and our ever expanding library.

*“The center was beautiful, it had that beach house feel, the staff was very helpful, and the hammock and walks were so relaxing.” - Kelly Power*

### **The Village of Mount Zion (Roman Catholic)**

P.O. Box 130  
Ft. Valley, VA 22652  
540-933-6891  
Fax: 540-933-6892  
mountzion@catholic.org

The Main Lodge Sleeps up to 72 people! The Faith House, a more separate, more private dwelling, has accommodated as many as 20 or more people. It is ideal for small groups or a large family or two. It has a complete, modern kitchen, living room, dinning room, five bedrooms, two baths, dishes, utensils, pillows and linens. The Carriage House is an ideal get away for a husband and wife or a small family. It will sleep up to 6 people. It is completely furnished with a kitchen. Mt. Zion has multiple hiking trails, in the winter a tubing slide, and a recreational hall with a number of games.

*“The only place that St. Mark has used in past years, and would highly recommend is Mount Zion. The people are friendly, the food is great, and the houses there are beautiful! We have taken bigger groups there- especially for Confirmation retreats.”*

### **Our Lady of Mattaponi Youth Retreat and Conference Center (Roman Catholic)**

11000 Mattaponi Road

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

301-952-9074

[http://www.adw.org/youth/yth\\_mattaponi.asp](http://www.adw.org/youth/yth_mattaponi.asp)

Mattaponi@adw.org

#### Youth Retreats

Day long or overnight group retreats: our 130 acre site is a multi-purpose facility. Overnight retreat programs and services are available for groups, from 20 to 60 persons accommodated in a series of five cottages. Each cottage can hold twelve retreatants in bunk beds (four retreatants per bedroom) and two chaperones in a twin bedded room. Each cottage has two full baths, kitchenette and sitting area. Programs can include days of recollection, confirmation retreats, family retreats, parish retreats and specialized retreats for adolescents, young adults, or parish ministry teams. Groups provide their own bed linens and towels. Conference room has a large screen TV and video/DVD player, plus chalk board and flip chart (you supply paper). St. Raymond Chapel can accommodate 60 people and is fully equipped with all liturgical items. Visiting groups need not bring customary mass supplies.

#### Day Conferences

Historic manor house and grounds for day conferences, meetings, and recreational activities. The fully restored historic Bowie mansion accommodates groups of up to 40 persons for planning days, conferences, training workshops, or other programs needs. Meeting rooms, dining space, a chapel, buffet meals, audio-visual equipment, and other amenities are available to parishes, schools, youth or young adult groups, and other organizations.

Training in designing and leading retreats is available through workshops offered to parish program leaders, coordinators and adolescent/young adult leaders interested in planning and guiding specific types of retreats for young people. Please call to reserve a date for a parish workshop or to inquire about fees and meal service.

#### Confirmation Retreats

Can accommodate 35 comfortably, 50 tight. Please call the retreat center for current fees for rental, staff services and meals. Staff available or you can bring your own team. Access to meeting space, chapel and A/V room. A/V equipment available as well as chalk board, stereo and VCR/TV. Lunch Options: Groups may bring their own individual brown bag and drink or the center will provide lunch for an additional fee. Site has large open fields for hiking, mowed areas for football and soccer, a four-acre lake and an outdoor basketball court.

#### Eighth Grade Pre-Graduation Retreat

A special program designed to help your students complete their grade school experience with an upbeat attitude and to help them make the transition to high school. Call the retreat center for more information.

**Bon Secours Spiritual Center (Roman Catholic)**

1525 Marriottsville Road,  
Marriottsville, MD. 21104  
410-442-1320  
Fax: 410-442-8219  
[www.bonsecours.org/bssc](http://www.bonsecours.org/bssc)  
[bssc@bshsi.com](mailto:bssc@bshsi.com)

Located in south central Maryland, the center sits on 331 acres of farmland and woodland, with hiking trails and breathtaking natural sites. The facility offers meeting space and accommodations, and is conveniently located near Baltimore.

**Hallowood Retreat And Conference Center (Lutheran)**

7300 Banner Road  
Comus, Md. 20842-8010  
301-831-8422  
Fax: 301-874-6026  
[www.hallowood.org](http://www.hallowood.org)  
[info@hallowood.org](mailto:info@hallowood.org)

Located in rural Frederick County, MD, near Sugarloaf Mountain, about 40 miles from downtown DC. Open year-round to non-profit and corporate groups; accommodates small groups in an intimate setting and larger gatherings (up to 60 guests) in its expansive facilities. Our sixteen bedrooms, each with a private bathroom, will accommodate 30 overnight guests (also handicapped accessible).

**Camp Fraser (Baptist)**

110 Springvale Road  
Great Falls, Va. 22066  
Mailing: 755 8th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
202-347-8355  
Fax: 202-347-6360  
<http://www.calvarydc.com/campfraser.html>.

Facility is open April through October and is not handicapped accessible. Capacity is 100 for the day or 48 overnight. One large building with a sleeping area downstairs. Sports field and hiking trails.

**Camp Glen Kirk (National Capital Presbytery), Meadowkirk**

38012 Delta Farm Lane

Middleburg, VA 20117

540-687-5565

Fax: 703-997-5859

<http://www.campglenkirk.org>

[cglenkirk@mindspring.com](mailto:cglenkirk@mindspring.com)

Facility is open September through June 1m (then it is open for summer camp) with limited accommodations for the handicapped. Guest must bring own bed linens. Lovely woodsy atmosphere with large lake, canoes, volleyball and other activities. No retreats during summer camp months.

**Massanutten Springs (Presbyterian)**

712 Massanutten Springs Road

Harrisonburg, VA 22801

888-627-7774

Fax: 540-433-6118

<http://www.massanettasprings.org>

[info@MassanettaSprings.org](mailto:info@MassanettaSprings.org)

Located in the central Shenandoah Valley, the retreat center offers various types of accommodations (hotel, dormitory, or camping) and has recreational facilities and meeting spaces. Limited accommodations for the handicapped.

**Shrine Mont Conference Center (Episcopal)**

221 Shrine Mont Circle

Orkney Springs, Va. 22845

540-856-2141

Fax: 540-856-8520

[www.camps.thediocese.net/meta\\_general.html](http://www.camps.thediocese.net/meta_general.html)

[shrine@shentel.net](mailto:shrine@shentel.net)

Shrine Mont is located about 125 miles southwest of Washington, DC on 100 acres of forest land. The center features hiking trails, streams, lakes and hills and is known for its delicious home-style food, southern hospitality and serene natural surroundings. Facility is open April through October and can take a group of up to 400 people. Limited accommodations for the handicapped.

**National 4-H Conference Center (National/Secular)**

7100 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
301-961-2840  
www.fourhcouncil.edu  
info@fourhcouncil.edu

Though technically in Maryland, the 4-H Center is located just one mile over the DC/MD border in the upscale Chevy Chase neighborhood with convenient Metro access. The Center is able to accommodate groups for 5 to/or 700 people (243 guestrooms) with over 30 meetings rooms and a large auditorium. Facilities are surrounded by courtyards and gardens on 12 scenic acres.

**Concord Retreat**

P.O. Box 9  
Yellow Spring, WV 26865  
866-833-2929  
<http://concordretreat.com/>  
info@concordretreat.com

The facility is located on 175 majestic acres, nestled in the mountains of West Virginia. Concord offers a challenging low ropes course, adventure paintball courses, game rooms for relaxation, trails, as well as meeting facilities. For overnight guests, Concord can accommodate groups of up to 150 people in our large ranch-style homes and cabins.

**Hunting Ridge Retreat Center**

Hunting Ridge Retreat  
1011 Hunting Ridge Road  
Winchester, VA 22603  
540-662-9004  
Fax: 540-678-4781  
www.huntingridgeretreat.com  
huntrdg@wildblue.net

The retreat center is open year-round and includes many recreational and athletic facilities, as well as a chapel, outdoor vespers area, 8 cabins and a bonfire area.

**Coolfont Resort**

(Conference Center and Health Spa)  
3621 Cold Run Valley Rd  
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411  
800-888-8768  
Fax: 304-258-6314  
www.coolfront.com

Coolfont has housing for up to 250 people. You can have a chalet, cabin, lodge rooms, or vacation homes for your retreat. There are walking paths, swimming pools, a recreation center, skiing, a sauna, and weight room. It would be a great place to have your ski retreat!