

REACHING OUT WEDNESDAYS

Topic: High School Retreat

Diocese of Toledo: We have hosted a summer weekend retreat for high school men the past two summers. We also hosted a retreat for junior high men (those going in to grades 7 and 8). Flyers and itineraries from each retreat are available through the NCDVD Office.

Diocese of Brooklyn: Our office, in conjunction with the Rockville Centre Vocation Office, has sponsored a vocation retreat for High School students. The retreat has varied between a 2-day and a 3-day retreat. The location also varied between our two seminaries. Schedules and more information are available through the NCDVD Office.

Diocese of Gaylord: We have hosted several for high school and junior high, part of a program called St. Andrew Task Force. Retreats focus on priesthood and other vocations. Seminarians involved as well as lay members of our vocations committee. Involve other priests too. We try to schedule them on ordination weekends, having the boys attend as a group and be recognized. Talks have been given by Bishop, me, seminarians, other priests, dads, moms. Retreats are a good mix of prayer, fun, talks, sports, movies, food, etc. Have not used any specific materials, but have chosen themes: put out into the deep; nothing but net; stop, look, listen;...

Diocese of St. Cloud: I give 5-7 Vocation camp retreats every summer for boys 7-12th grade. This retreat is usually 2-3 days and I limit it to 20 boys at each camp. It is run by the seminarians and myself in different locations throughout the diocese each summer. Also, I do know that Fr. Jonathon Fassero from St. Meinrad's from Indiana goes out and puts on a one day retreat anywhere in the United States for high school men. He is available via email at: jfassero@saintmeinrad.edu.

Diocese of Paterson: In 2010 we sponsored our first Quo Vadis retreat for young men ages 15-25, fashioned after the retreat held by the Diocese of Harrisburg. Twice a year a "Pizza Night with Bishop" is held in each of the three counties of the diocese for men of whatever age. It consists of prayer, reflection on vocation and pizza/sharing.

Diocese of Fargo: We use the Quo Vadis retreat model here in Fargo for young men interested in priestly or religious vocations.

Archdiocese of New York: Fr. Sweeney has submitted information regarding the Cathedral Prep Program. The NCDVD Office has their application material as well as material regarding dates and events.

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: We have a retreat (Emmaus Days) each summer for high school men who are interested in learning about the priesthood. It is a three day retreat held at our camp. Last year's schedule is available through the NCDVD Office.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee: We host a summer camp for high school age men every summer, as well as a camp for middle school men. The details are as follows:

Camp Jeremiah is designed for young men entering sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in the fall semester. It is held after school has ended for the summer, usually at the end of June for 3 days and two nights. The camp is held on the campus of St. Francis de Sales Seminary in St. Francis, WI (just south of downtown Milwaukee). The seminary has a retreat center where the students are housed. They sleep either two or four to a room. I am a Safe Environment facilitator for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and I stay with the students, as well as 2 or 3 college seminarians, who staff the retreat along with our two Vocation Directors, Fr. Jim Lobacz and Fr. Peter Berger.

Besides daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction, there are opportunities for the sacrament of Reconciliation, spiritual direction and the Rosary at our beautiful Lourdes grotto. There are educational sessions on various subjects ranging from discernment and prayer to the life of a seminarian and the life of a parish priest. There is always a service project included: last year we served a meal to needy people at the Cathedral meal program and stuffed bags with toiletry items for the Women and Children's shelter at the Cathedral. Several hours are reserved for recreation: our archdiocesan center next door has a swimming pool and the seminary has a gym complete with bowling alley! The students always enjoy our evening of food, fire and friendship as well, as they gather outside to toast marshmallows and consume vast amounts of s'mores! We often have a movie night, where a contemporary movie or parts of a movie are viewed with a slant on discernment or ethical issues.

We also host Is It I, Lord? for high school men. They stay for four days and three nights. The activities are much the same, but geared to high school students. We have hosted these camps for three years and the attendance has grown exponentially each year. We are already planning our fourth year of camps and if the attendance grows, we will consider expanding to two camps for each age group.

The evaluations each year suggest that the young men appreciate adequate time for prayer and worship. The parents have responded positively by asking for activities during the year, so that the students have a chance to be with others who are considering priesthood. Our office has responded to this request by scheduling activities about every other month: winter baseball, capture the flag, bowling at the seminary and ultimate Frisbee! Mass or Adoration and Benediction, as well as a meal or snack are always included.

Fr. Peter Berger has also started a discernment group for high school men that meets once a month on a Saturday morning. Besides prayer, a speaker is scheduled and joins in the discussion. Breakfast included, of course!

Brochures for the camps are available through the NCDVD Office.

Archdiocese of Kansas City-Kansas: Two years ago Fr. Mitchel Zimmerman started a series of retreats for three age groups. One for grades 6 – 8, one for grades 9 – 11, and one 18 and over. They are called Venite et Videte. The first year they were about 24 hours in length. This year he is reducing the time to begin in the afternoon and end in the evening. Fr. Mitchel has refined the agenda based on his experience the first two years. It will include opening with Ultimate Football or other sport, mandatory silence with guided reflection, small group Q & A, a Holy Hour, pizza dinner, witness talks and end with Night Prayer. We are charging \$10 per person. You can see more at kckvocations.com under the discernment tab and events.