

Planted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith: Celebrating World Youth Day 2011

By Susan Searle



Purpose

In 1985, Pope John Paul II invited young people from around the world to join him in Rome to observe the United Nations International Year of Youth. Ever since that momentous occasion, Catholic youth from around the globe have continued to gather together and celebrate World Youth Day.

The theme for World Youth Day 2011 as set by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, is “Planted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith” – St. Paul (Colossians 2:7). In honor of young people and the unique gifts they bring to our U.S. Catholic churches, our bishops declared parishes and schools will observe World Youth Day annually on the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time (October 23, 2011). This particular Sunday is intended to highlight the presence, energy, and diversity of all young people. World Youth Day is a celebration of both young and older youth and also an opportunity for the entire faith community to affirm and welcome the young church of today.

This extended event provides parishes and schools with resources and suggestions for celebrating World Youth Day locally. In preparing for this special event, young people are invited to collaborate with other parish leaders in the planning, preparing, and participation of this day. Additionally, parish youth should be provided with training opportunities to learn how to serve in the various ministries of the liturgy.

Suggestions to Prepare for World Youth Day 2011

➤ Promote Young People and the Parish Youth Ministry

Since World Youth Day is intended to celebrate the gifts of youth in your parish community, the following are a variety of ways to feature young people in the weeks leading up to your celebration.

- Post photographs of your young people in a prominent area of your parish where the entire community can see them. List young people’s names and where they go to school, any special skills and talents, and how they may have volunteered in the parish and greater community.
- Use your parish bulletin to highlight youth who have recently won awards, scholarships, or to give recognition for their achievements.
- Assist youth in designing a special invitation to be mailed out to the entire faith community inviting all to participate in the World Youth Day liturgy celebrating the young people.

- Encourage parents and grandparents to write a personal letter describing all the gifts they see in their child/grandchild. Include these letters as part of your parish celebration of World Youth Day.
 - Invite the pastor of your community to write a letter to the youth of the parish describing why they are important ambassadors of faith. Share this letter in your church bulletin, at the liturgy, or give a printed copy directly to each youth.
 - Host a “Meet the Youth Night” and invite the entire parish to come to a social to meet the youth of their faith community. Have youth prepare a presentation of all the activities they do in youth ministry. Ask families to bring pot-luck dinner items to share.
 - Create a video that includes interviews of youth from your parish. Capture youth vocalizing the importance of belonging to their faith community and how their participation at church helps them grow in their Catholic spirituality.
 - All year long, have members of the parish youth ministry nominate a “star” youth participant for the week. Post their picture in a prominent place in either your parish center or in the weekly bulletin along with “why” they were nominated by their peers. (Example: Star youth gave a faith-sharing witness talk on retreat last week).
 - Put-together a yearly youth ministry slide-show or edit several of your events together into one video. Invite the entire parish community to a youth ministry movie night complete with popcorn and soda.
 - Start a youth ministry prayer chain. At the beginning of the school year, invite parishioners to draw the name of a youth to write letters of encouragement for a year. During the celebration liturgy of World Youth Day, have the young people meet the adults who have been praying for them.
- Prepare for a Sunday Celebration of World Youth Day
- Convene a planning team that includes your pastor, liturgy director, music minister, youth ministry leadership team, parents, and of course several of your parish youth! Identify adults who are youth-friendly and who desire to empower youth to be leaders in the parish ministries.
 - As a liturgy committee, reflect on the Scripture readings for the day of the celebration, keeping in mind the entire faith community and the significance the readings may have for young people. Use **Resource 1, Reflections on the Readings**, to help your committee reflect on the readings.
 - Once your committee has met a few times and is familiar with the readings, begin to discern music and environment that will complement and enhance the celebration of liturgy.
 - Divide the planning committee into smaller task groups; Word, Music, Environment, Hospitality and Eucharistic Ministers. Assign the various task groups to work on the following:

Word Group

- Gives homily suggestions to the pastor for connecting the Scripture readings – especially the Gospel – with the lives and events of the parish young people.
- Discerns who will be the lectors for Mass. Those who will be proclaiming the word should arrange a time to practice the readings from the ambo (using the microphone) before the actual liturgy.
- Write the intercessory prayers for the celebration or use the suggested ones from this resource.

Music Group

- Collaborates with the parish music minister to choose appropriate songs for the liturgy. See suggestions from this resource.
- Attends necessary practices or rehearsals to prepare for the liturgy.
- Helps to prepare a worship aid if necessary.

Art and Environment Group

- Collaborate with the parish liturgy director or art and environment team to give suggestions about creating a liturgical space that represents the character of youth. (You may want to involve youth in creating banners or posters that communicate the theme of World Youth Day.)
- On the day of the liturgy or before, help to set-up and display any flowers, banners, photographs of young people, etc.
- Clean and return the sanctuary back to its original order after the celebration.

Hospitality and Liturgical Ministers Group

- Work with the music group to write a program for the liturgy if necessary. Consider listing the names of the parish youth and the names of any adults who volunteer in your youth ministry on the program.
- Discern which youth will be ministers of hospitality (greeters) to welcome people to the liturgy.
- Work with a team of parents to plan and provide a reception after the Mass (potluck dinner, doughnuts and coffee, cake and punch, etc.)
- Consult with the parish liturgy director to schedule commissioned youth to serve as Eucharistic Ministers for this special liturgy.
- Invite youth to bring the gifts up to the altar during the liturgy.
- Ask either the presider or youth minister to begin the liturgy by welcoming the community and announcing the focus will be on World Youth Day.

Other Suggestions for the Liturgy Planning Team

- Consult with the presider and consider asking him to invite a young person to offer a witness reflection before or after the homily.
- Include a special World Youth Day blessing for all youth present at the liturgy. In consultation with the pastor, write your own blessing, use one included in this resource, or adapt a blessing from the *Book of Blessings*.
- Invite the young people to bring their Bible to the liturgy for a special blessing. Or, give each young person a Bible that is blessed during the liturgy.
- World Youth Day (October 23, 2011) occurs on World Mission Sunday. By baptism we are all called to participate in the mission of the Church and share our faith with others. During the collection, parishioners are asked to support the more than 1,100 mission dioceses in Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and remote regions of Latin America. World Mission funds are distributed in the Pope's name by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith—a Pontifical Mission Society. Because of the importance of both World Mission Sunday and World Youth Day, it will be important that both are equally recognized.
 - How might youth be missionaries of Christ to their peers?
 - How are youth called to be missionaries globally, especially to the poor?
 - How can we as church, help youth to discern their vocations in life?
- October is also National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Who are the young people in the faith community who may have family members or friends suffering from this illness? How might they be included in our prayers this day?
- How might we connect our U.S. celebration of World Youth Day to the global World Youth Day event that occurred this past August in Madrid, Spain?

Suggested Bulletin Announcement

Post the one or more weekends before World Youth Day (October 23, 2011)

Please join us in a special youth celebration! Next weekend, our parish will join with other faith communities across the United States to honor and celebrate our Catholic young people for the many blessings they bring to our Church. World Youth Day is an annual celebration instituted by Pope John Paul II in 1984 to affirm and recognize the energy, enthusiasm and creativity that young people share with our faith communities.

[Add to this bulletin announcement any specific information what will occur at/or after your liturgy for World Youth Day.]

Suggestions for General Intercessions

Suggested response: Fill us with new life, O God.

- For the adults who have accompanied the young people of our church community on their ongoing faith journey, we pray to the Lord.

- For the youth of our parish... open their hearts towards our loving God and courageously follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, we pray to the Lord.
- For the young people and all who dedicate themselves to protecting the natural environment and promote the care of God's creation, we pray to the Lord.
- For the youth of our parish... that the call of their baptism fosters their leadership within our faith community, we pray to the Lord.
- For this parish community and all the people of God... that we be filled with the Spirit and humbly serve those in need, we pray to the Lord.
- For missionaries... that their message of Christ's love be heard around this earth, we pray to the Lord.
- What other important local, national, or global events have recently occurred that may be important to recognize and pray for during the Prayers of the Faithful?

Suggestions for Liturgical Music

Gathering

- ["Celebrate Youth"](#) by Steve Angrisano (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- ["We Are Called to Serve"](#) by Tim Smith, Julie Smith (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)

Psalm Response

- "I Love You Lord, Te Amo, Señor" by Tim Smith, Julie Smith (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)

Note to Leader: This song is subject to the 2008 Vatican directive regarding the use of 'Yahweh' in liturgical music. If you select this song, be sure to use the revised version which does not include the word 'Yahweh'.

- "All Generations Will Praise Your Name" by Chris de Silva (GIA)

Preparation of the Gifts

- ["Here am I, Lord"](#) by Curtis Stephan (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- ["O Taste and See"](#) by Marty Haugen (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)

Communion

- ["Like the Bread"](#) by Tom Booth (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- ["Bread for the World"](#) by Bernadette Farrell (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- ["Cristo, Sáname / Jesus, Transform Me"](#) Estela García-López, OCP
- ["Bread of Heaven"](#) by Sarah Hart, Jesse Manibusan (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)

Reflection after Communion (*optional*)

- ["Beautiful One"](#) by Tim Hughes (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- "Be Still and Know" by Steven Curtis Chapman (GIA)
- "All Who Are Led By the Spirit" by Michael Joncas (GIA)

Sending Forth / Dismissal

- ["Go Light Your World"](#) by Chris Rice (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- ["Witnesses"](#) by Paul Hillebrand (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)

Blessing Suggestion for World Youth Day Celebration

God of Salvation,

We ask your blessing upon our young people every day but especially today on this celebration. Bless their energy and enthusiasm for life. Bless their optimism and hope for their future. Bless their desire for justice and peace in our world. Bless youth with courage to always stand for truth.

You who are our rock and our source of everlasting love, bless these young people to become true and faithful disciples of your son Jesus Christ.

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing for Youth Minister and Ministry Team on World Youth Day

Invite youth to extend their hands toward the adult leaders.

God of Love,

In glorious praise we come before you at this celebration of World Youth Day.

We ask for your blessing on the adults who have given of their time and

resources to humbly serve our parish young people. We wish to commend, honor, and give thanks for the people who served, lead, and love our parish youth.

Bless these role models of faith.

Bless their ministry with the youth of our parish.

Bless these ministers with the ability to let our young people know they are valued by this faith community.

God of Love,

We ask you to watch over these faithful servants who have been called forth to serve the youth of our community.

We prayerfully ask this blessing upon each of them today in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer for Youth on the Celebration of World Youth Day

God of Love,

We pray today for the youth of this faith community and for all the youth of the world.

May they come to love you with all their heart, mind, and soul.

God, you live in the hearts of young people...

Fill their hearts with compassion to always serve those in need.

Instill in their hearts gratitude and humility to be forever thankful.

Rest in their hearts and help them to radiate your love to others.

God, you live in the minds of young people...

Give them the wisdom and insight needed to be true disciples of your word.
Fill them with the knowledge to discern right from wrong.
Grant them peace in their restless minds.
God, you live in the souls of young people...
Teach them to be still and know you are present.
Give the grace to remember you are always here.
Remind them that they have been created in your likeness.
Amen.

➤ Other Helpful Resources about World Youth Day

- Visit the Vatican's website for more information on World Youth Day.
<http://www.vatican.va/gmg/documents/index.html>
- Read Benedict XVI's message for World Youth Day 2011.
 - English:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100806_youth_en.html
 - Spanish:
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100806_youth_sp.html
- Visit the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops website for more information on World Youth Day. <http://www.usccb.org/wyd/>

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Resource 1

Lectionary Readings and Commentary for the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time October 23, 2011

First Reading: Exodus 22:20-26

Commentary

In this passage, God gives the Israelites special instructions to welcome strangers, care for widows and orphans, and expect no interest or loans. The lesson for the Israelites and for us today is that God always hears the cry of those in need and responds to those cries through us. We are called to be the hand of Christ in the world and help those who are in need.

Questions for Reflection

- Who are the people around the world most in need of God's help?
- What can you do to help the people identified from the first question?
- Who are the people most in need in your local community, school, and church?
- Who has helped you or reached out to you when you were in need?
- Why might young people need to hear this message?

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 18:2-4, 47, 51

Commentary

The Psalm acknowledges the writer's confidence that God is always present. The psalmist says God is his strength, fortress, rock, shield, and stronghold. The Psalm gives thanks to God for protection and safety.

Questions for Reflection

- When has your faith been a source of stability and safety for you?
- What words would you use to describe God?
- Why might young people need to know God is always available for them?

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Commentary

The reading from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians praises the people for turning away from false idols and accepting Jesus' message. At the time of Paul, Thessalonica was an important city for political, economic, and commercial reasons. In the heart of this thriving city and its diverse population was a Jewish synagogue where Paul preached. Paul tells the Thessalonians they have become a model Christian community and an inspiration to others.

Questions for Reflection

- What are some of the false idols of our present day?

- What are some things that get in the way of your following Jesus' teachings?
- How would a model Christian community act?
- Whose behavior inspires you to be a better person of faith?
- How can youth be an inspiration to others?

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

Commentary

In the Gospel reading, Jewish religious leaders known as Pharisees, were trying for the third time to trap Jesus by asking him which of the Jewish laws is the most important to follow. For a devout Jew, adhering to all the laws is a requirement. The Pharisees were trying to find a reason to have Jesus arrested so they could get rid of him. Jesus, aware of what they were trying to do, summarizes the law with two: "Love God with all your heart, with your whole soul, with all your mind" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." By Jesus' action, he makes these two commandments more important than the Jewish law. The meaning of these two great commandments remains real and relevant for us today. As modern day disciples, it is our responsibility to live out Jesus' commandments to be examples of what it means to love God, neighbor, and ourselves.

Questions for Reflection

- How do you love God with all that you are?
- Why is it hard to love your neighbor? Who is our neighbor?
- What are some ways that you can show God's love to others?
- What are ways to show God how much you love God?
- What are some ways youth can live out these commandments?

Putting It All Together

After spending time reflecting on all of the sacred readings for the liturgy, discuss an idea from the readings that might speak most compellingly to the youth in the community. How might you help youth connect the Good News of the Scriptures to their faith, culture, and life experiences?

Some thoughts, ideas, themes from the Sunday readings:

- God is our rock.
- Love God and love your neighbors.
- Invite someone who knows sign language to teach "you shall love God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind" and then sign that phrase during the Gospel reading.