



Celebrating WYD 2021 in your Parish

'Stand up. I appoint you as a witness
of what you have seen.'

—ACTS 26:16



Melbourne parishes and ecclesial communities are invited to celebrate World Youth Day 2021 locally.

On 22 November 2020, at the end of Mass for the Solemnity of Christ the King, Pope Francis called for a relaunch of the celebration of World Youth Day (WYD) in the particular churches. He announced that starting in 2021, this celebration—which has been traditionally held on Palm Sunday—will be held **on the Sunday of the Solemnity of Christ the King** (Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches*, 18 May 2021).

The theme for World Youth Day 2021 (to be celebrated on **Sunday 21 November**) is ‘Stand up. I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen’ (Acts 26:16)—an invitation from Christ himself to each of us, young and old, to stand up and share our faith in Jesus. Like St Paul, we have been transformed in Christ and he is inviting us to newness—not simply to return to our old ways but rather, to stand up, look ahead and, with new eyes, run forward with the hope that lies in Christ our King.

Pope Francis invites the universal Church to use this day to engage young people and reflect our pastoral care for them. **Every parish and ecclesial community is invited to provide, at the local level, a creative and personal ‘festival of faith’—a homegrown experience that, like the international events, provides a powerful occasion for witnessing, communion and prayer.**

Why celebrate WYD in your parish?

St John Paul II showed great prophetic insight when he instituted World Youth Day:

All young people must feel that they are cared for by the Church. Therefore, may the entire Church on a worldwide level, in union with the Successor of Peter, be more and more committed to young people, to their concerns and worries and to their aspirations and hopes, so as to meet their expectations by communicating the certainty that is Christ, the Truth that is Christ, the love that is Christ ...

—JOHN PAUL II, 20 DECEMBER 1985,
AS QUOTED IN PASTORAL GUIDELINES

In Pope Francis’ view, too, World Youth Day provides an extraordinarily powerful missionary thrust for the whole Church and, in particular, for the younger generations: ‘we must never forget that World Youth Days are not “firework displays”, flashes of enthusiasm that are an end in themselves; they are the stages of a long journey’ (Pope Francis, July 2013, as quoted in Pastoral Guidelines).

What can we as a parish do to celebrate World Youth Day 2021?

This resource offers you ideas, suggestions and guidance on how your local community can animate the WYD 2021 experience for the young people of your parish. Suggestions can be tailored to your local needs and capacity.

1. Mass, prayer and liturgy

WYD offers young people a lively and joyful experience of faith and communion, a space to experience the beauty of the face of God. At the heart of a life of faith is our encounter with the person of Jesus Christ, so it is good that every WYD should resound with the invitation for each young person to meet Christ and enter into a personal dialogue with him.

—PASTORAL GUIDELINES

The Pastoral Guidelines draw us to the heart of WYD: the encounter of young people with Jesus Christ. We are invited to creatively foster opportunities for and with our young people to encounter Jesus this WYD.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR A WYD MASS

Consider:

- celebrating Mass on WYD (Sunday 21 November) and invite young people to participate
- encouraging young people to read, serve and participate actively in the liturgy
- suggesting that the parish priest might integrate some of the themes from the Pope’s address for WYD 2021 to young people in his homily
- incorporating a WYD-themed prayer of the faithful (see below/attached)
- praying a blessing over youth and young adults present at Mass
- inviting a young person to share their testimony about meeting Jesus, or to recount the impact that their previous WYD experience has had on their life.

PRAYER AND LITURGY

Consider:

- creating an opportunity for Adoration for the youth and young adults of your community. This could include meditation, silent reflection or an opportunity for the sacrament of Penance
- hosting a praise and worship event that involves prayerful singing and worship. You could perhaps invite young people to lead the music
- integrating the WYD 2021 Scripture text (the conversion of St Paul in Acts 9:1–19)
- praying the Pope’s invitations to Arise!—perhaps using a different voice for each one (see right)
- praying the Plenary Council prayer as an invitation to the Holy Spirit.

Pope Francis’ invitations to Arise!

Today Christ speaks to you the same words that he spoke to Paul: Arise! Do not remain downcast or caught up in yourself: a mission awaits you! You too can testify to what Jesus has begun to accomplish in your lives. In Jesus’ name, I ask you:

—Arise! Testify that you too were blind and encountered the light. You too have seen God’s goodness and beauty in yourself, in others and in the communion of the Church, where all loneliness is overcome.

—Arise! Testify to the love and respect it is possible to instil in human relationships, in the lives of our families, in the dialogue between parents and children, between the young and the elderly.

—Arise! Uphold social justice, truth and integrity, human rights. Protect the persecuted, the poor and the vulnerable, those who have no voice in society, immigrants.

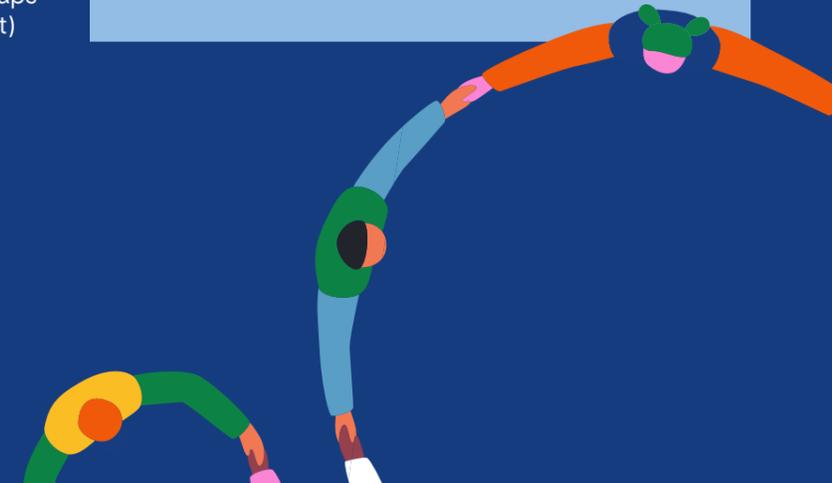
—Arise! Testify to the new way of looking at things that enables you to view creation with eyes brimming with wonder, that makes you see the Earth as our common home, and gives you the courage to promote an integral ecology.

—Arise! Testify that lives of failure can be rebuilt, that persons spiritually dead can rise anew, that those in bondage can once more be free, that hearts overwhelmed by sorrow can rediscover hope.

—Arise! Testify joyfully that Christ is alive! Spread his message of love and salvation among your contemporaries, at school and in the university, at work, in the digital world, everywhere.

The Lord, the Church and the Pope trust you and appoint you to bear witness before all those other young people whom you will encounter on today’s ‘roads to Damascus’. Never forget that ‘anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, §120).

SOURCE: FROM POPE FRANCIS’ MESSAGE FOR WYD 2021





Suggested intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful

For all young people celebrating World Youth Day 2021, we pray that as they come to experience the presence of God in their lives, their faith deepens and their lives are enriched. May they be nurtured and welcomed by their communities of faith as they journey with Jesus.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

As we begin to re-emerge from our homes back into the world, we pray that God will be with us. May we continue to be light in the world, and to be conscious of the way others may be feeling. May the Spirit guide us in our interactions, and keep us and our communities safe.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for young people around the world. May they be called deeper into the love of Christ, and using their gifts and talents as they are guided by the Holy Spirit, may they go out into their communities as missionary disciples.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our local communities of grace, we pray that the Holy Spirit might stir within our young people. May they recognise a desire and yearning for God, and find the support and guidance they need on their pilgrimage of faith.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for young people grappling with the struggles and chaos of life. May they see, hear and come to know God's deep and abiding love for them, responding to the call to holiness and discovering the joy of a life lived in Jesus Christ.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. Mini pilgrimage walk

The diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD can propose specific ways for young people to have real pilgrimage experiences. These are the kind of experiences that encourage young people to leave their homes and set out on a journey ...

—PASTORAL GUIDELINES

The *Pastoral Guidelines* paint a vivid picture of the inherent benefits of pilgrimage: shared purpose and experience, camaraderie, fun, movement and destination.

CONSIDER:

- gathering with some of your young people to propose and plan a pilgrimage walk, including the destination, the route and the meal you will enjoy once you get there.
- including the opportunity to meet Jesus through shared prayer or liturgy (a Mass or time of Adoration), perhaps the recitation of the rosary or singing songs as you walk, and at the end, the opportunity to reflect on the journey of pilgrimage with gratitude and when we might meet again.
- One parish community may plan for their own youth, or neighbouring parishes may come together.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Beginning and destination of the pilgrimage (recreation reserve, beach, mountain, Church)
- Target age-group (permission and supervision required if under 18)
- BYO water (additional bottles available)
- Food at the destination – BBQ, picnic (provided or BYO)
- Prayer – sent forth from Mass, prayer on the way, prayer at the end
- Involve other members of the community – inter-generational, families
- Invite youth of the parish, local community, regional schools, surrounding parishes, Deanery

3. Picnic or a shared meal

“Youth Day as ‘an experience of universal fraternity’... In this respect, the diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD can be an opportune time for all the young people who live in a given area to come together and talk to each other, regardless of their beliefs, their vision of life or their convictions. Every young person must feel invited to take part and be welcomed as a brother or sister.”

—PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Encouraged by the Pope's invitation to welcome young people as brothers and sisters, parishes are invited to present an opportunity to gather youth and young adults from the parish to celebrate World Youth Day over a shared meal and good conversation. Providing the space and opportunity for connection, socialising, celebration and conversation for young people to be seen and heard can be a powerful experience.

SUGGESTIONS:

Personally invite the young people of your community to a shared meal or picnic in any of the following ways:

- Host a picnic in the parish grounds or a local park
- Depending on numbers, you may prefer to host a meal in the Parish office, presbytery or hall
- Depending on the time of day, you may like to provide young people with morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea or dinner

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

This shared meal will present a worthwhile opportunity for meaningful dialogue and chance to listen to the heart of young people in your community. The following are some suggested conversation starters you may like to pose throughout the shared meal:

- Start a casual listening conversation about the life of young people in the parish – ask them what their needs, worries, hopes and desires are coming out of lockdown and looking ahead towards next year
- Have a conversation about the meaning of the World Youth Day 2021 Theme “*Stand up. I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen.*” (Acts 26:16) with the young people present
- Invite one or two young people to share a story of faith during this lockdown time and their hopes for the future of young people in the community
- The parish priest or members of the community might like to speak a word of encouragement to young people

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Allocate a member of staff or a volunteer to plan and organise the event, in liaison with a key young person/leader in the community.
- Consider involving young people in the planning process of this initiative
- You may like to consider hosting the shared meal directly following the local community World Youth Day Mass celebration
- Set up a registration through your parish office or trybooking platform to manage attendance in a Covid-safe way
- If you are hosting young people under the age of 18, be sure to consider child protection policies
- Personally invite young people and advertise the initiative in the parish/community bulletin, social media, after Mass

4. Outreach and service opportunities

“Activities in which young people have an experience of voluntary work, freely given service and self-giving are also to be encouraged. It should not be forgotten that on the Sunday before the Solemnity of Christ the King, the Church celebrates World Day of the Poor. What better occasion to promote initiatives in which young people donate their time and energy for the benefit of the most disadvantaged, the marginalised and those who are discarded by society. In this way, young people are offered the chance to become “protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism”.

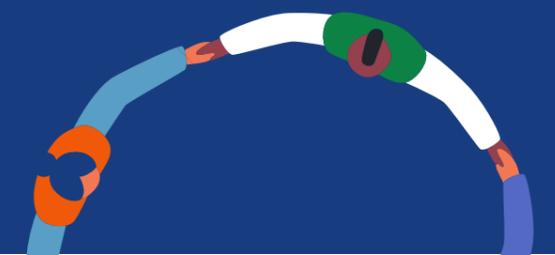
—PASTORAL GUIDELINES

As an ongoing gesture of the spirit of WYD you may like to encourage or create opportunities for the young people of your community to get involved in service and outreach.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Consider:

- Assisting St Vincent de Paul with their annual Christmas drive / hamper preparation
- Collecting and delivering grocery hampers for community assistance, initiatives for families or individuals in need
- **Share the Dignity** – November handbag drive
- **Samaritan's Purse** – operation Christmas child



Capture and share your WYD 2021 moments

Don't forget to capture the joy of your parish and community World Youth Day 2021 celebrations! Snap some photos and share them on your parish or youth/young adult social media and website. Be sure to tag #WYDMelbs so we can all share in your celebrations with you!

WYD celebrations as a starting point, not a finish line

"This celebration should be part of a broader pastoral journey of which WYD is only one stage. It is no coincidence that the Holy Father recommends that 'Youth ministry has to be synodal; it should involve journeying together'."

—PASTORAL GUIDELINES

WYD offers parishes, in a particular way post-lockdown, an opportunity to bring into focus renewed ways in which we might reach out to the youth and young adults in our local communities. This celebration gives a focal point to gather and harness the energy and creativity of our young people to reach out and minister to each other. World Youth Day should not be seen as an end in itself, rather it can be a significant and impactful experience that propels young people forward along their own journey of faith; one that is life-long and shared with the entire pilgrim Church of God.

Additional resources

- Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXVI World Youth Day, 21 November 2021
- Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches*

If you would like to discuss your community's WYD 2021 plans, or if you need assistance in your planning, please contact:

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