

DCYC Information Book Supplement

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INTRODUCTION

For nearly 70 years, DCYC has been an integral part of youth ministry in our diocese, as this annual gathering brings nearly 2,500 people together to encounter the Lord and His Church.

We have put this guide together to help aid you in planning for the upcoming conference. This information is curated based on questions we receive each year, as well as additional information that you may find helpful.

This information is to *supplement*, not *replace*, the information found in the information book.

For purposes of this document, the term “participants” will refer to youth and adult chaperones, while “youth” will refer to 9-12th grade participants, and “chaperones” will refer to adult participants who are 21 and over.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration Details

Registration for DCYC opens early in the fall semester.

Typically, registration information is available online at the end of August, and hard copies are mailed-out and should be received by the parishes in late August.

Registration opens in early September and will close in early January. Late registrants can be added for an additional fee, which cannot be waived. If you register a large group late, contact Tressi Breecher (512-949-2464) to make sure your group can be accommodated.

The dates below that will help aid in your planning process:

Sept. 1:	Registration Information available online
Sept. 1:	Begin promoting DCYC at your parish
Sept. 1:	Registration opens
*Dec. 10:	Parish registration closes
Jan. 5:	Registration closes
Jan. 5:	Scholarship requests close
Jan. 19:	Last date to make changes to registration

**Plan to close your parish registration deadline by Dec. 10, so that you have time to gather any missing paperwork, follow-up with participants, and finish working on last-minute details and so you can submit your information by Jan. 5.*

Check-In at the Event and Paperwork

When you check-in at DCYC, you will turn in the following at the registration table:

- EIM verification form for chaperones
- Youth and adult consent forms in a simple 3-ring binder
- Digital copies will be accepted. Please contact Tressi Breecher (512-949-2464) for additional information.

Please provide the original copies of the consent forms at check-in. Additionally, keep copies of the consent forms and insurance on you.

If a participant does not have insurance, please make a note on his or her consent form under the “emergency contact” section.

If a youth participant is 18 years of age and in high school, he or she will attend as a youth participant, and will need a youth consent form on file.

Students who are 18 and in high school attending as participants only (not serving as members of CREW or in other leadership positions), are not required to be EIM compliant.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available for those seeking financial assistance. Applications must be completed and submitted by the deadline for consideration. Scholarships cover registration fees only.

Only scholarships submitted by parish leaders will be accepted.

Please see the information book for details regarding the application instructions and due date.

Refund Policy

When a participant is registered for DCYC, the parish is responsible for the cost of the registration regardless of whether the person attends.

No refunds will be issued for canceled and unused registrations. However, you may swap people out. See the “DCYC Tips” at the back of the information book for the swap deadline.

Hotels

You will need to book your hotel as soon as possible. When you have determined what hotel you would like to stay at, make sure to speak with a group sales representative to get the best rates for our event. Let them know that you are attending DCYC, what parish and city you are from, and the dates of the event. This allows you to make sure you have the rooms you need, and you can always cancel rooms that you don’t need (contact your hotel for details).

The diocese is not able to recommend a hotel or mediate conversations between parish groups and the Waco hotels.

CHAPERONE INFORMATION AND EXPECTATIONS

EIM Compliance

The diocesan Ethics & Integrity in Ministry handbook¹ offers guidelines to keep in mind when planning for DCYC. Adult chaperones must be at least 21 years old. Additionally, the following information can be found on page 12, under “Off-Site Events.”

- “Any off-site event that involves minors must be supervised by at least two EIM compliant adults. (b)”
- “Co-ed events should include male and female chaperones in proportion to the minors attending. (c)”
- “The following ratios use an adults-to-minors formula with the understanding that there must always be a minimum of 2 EIM compliant adults present [...] High school age: 2:20; 1 additional adult for every 1-10 additional minor. (d)”

Please do not wait until the last minute to invite your chaperones and communicate with your pastor and pastoral staff who you are inviting. All chaperones must be EIM compliant.

If any questions arise during your planning, contact Tressi Breecher in the Youth and Campus Ministry Office, or the EIM Office (eim@austindiocese.org).

Chaperone Expectations

We recommend meeting with your chaperones at least one time prior to attending DCYC to communicate the conditions of the event as well as your parish’s specific expectations.

While many chaperones share that they enjoy DCYC, the event is tailored for the youth and intended to help them experience the Church in new ways. The days are long, there is a lot of walking, and there will be aspects of the event that are frustrating.

Chaperones are expected to behave in ways that always exhibit charity toward youth, your parish chaperones, chaperones from other parishes, event volunteers, and event staff. If a confrontational situation arises, do not escalate the situation. Ask a member of security or event organizer to help mediate the concern. We also recommend notifying the parish leader of the situation.

If a chaperone witnesses youth from another parish misbehaving, they are encouraged to gently correct the behavior and bring it to the attention of their chaperones. If needed, also inform security.

Youth must be chaperoned at all times. Every year we are informed of concerns about youth leaving the premises alone, eating in restaurants or visiting local establishments alone, or hanging out in bathrooms for extended periods of time.

¹ “Ethics & Integrity in Ministry: Preventing Abuse and Providing Healing.” 8th ed. Diocese of Austin.
<https://files.ecatholic.com/16495/documents/2023/6/DOA%20Policies%203.16.2023.pdf?t=1687289783000>

It is not the responsibility of the volunteers, security, or event organizers to make sure the youth are properly chaperoned. It is the responsibility of the parish leader and chaperones.

Diocesan Chaperone Meetings

There will be three virtual diocesan-led chaperone meetings leading up to DCYC. These meetings will share information about the event, reminders, and anything else that chaperones need to know. Group leaders and chaperones are asked to attend *one* (or more) of the meetings, as each meeting will contain the same information. Time is provided at the end of each meeting to ask questions.

Small Group Time

Time is provided on Saturday to meet with your group. You will have an opportunity to find a space within the convention center and discuss the questions provided at check-in. Our hope is that you will take this time to help your youth process what they experience. If you have a large group, you may want to divide into smaller groups.

Feel free to adapt the questions to meet the needs of your group.

Choose Your Own Adventure

DCYC is packed full of events and opportunities for your youth. However, the long days, little sleep, and continuous activity may make the event experience difficult for some people. You are encouraged to check-in with your youth periodically to make sure they are doing well. Please feel free to step out of the program and find a quiet place to rest if needed.

Your group may also choose to take a break and return to the conference later in the day. That is fine! You can “choose your own adventure,” and tailor DCYC to meet your group’s needs.

Chaperones and group leaders are encouraged to visit the hospitality room (located in the event office). Here, you can take a break, refresh, recharge and grab a snack.

Transportation

The EIM handbook outlines specific guidelines for the transportation of minors. These can be found on page twelve under the headline “Off-Site Events.”

When arranging transportation, please keep the following in mind:

- “Drivers who transport minors must be at least 25 years old (proof of valid driver’s license, vehicle registration and insurance must be documented at the parish or school for each driver), unless the diocese grants an exemption prior to the event. (h)”
- “If only one adult is to be in a vehicle, there must be more than one minor present in the vehicle unless that minor is the adult’s own child. (i)”

- “When private vehicles are used to transport minors, a transportation plan should be provided to the drivers to include route, pre-arranged stops and contact information for the drivers.
 - 1) Such a plan avoids the need to caravan while in route.
 - 2) No extra stops should be made unless approved by the director of the program or the stop is out of necessity (e.g., fuel, first aid, restroom). (j)”
- “Minors may not transport other minors to or from parish or school functions on behalf of the parish or school.
 - 1) It is recommended that minors be transported by pre-arranged group transportation for parish or school events rather than transport themselves. (k)”

Additionally, drivers should fill out the “Driver Information Form” that is to be kept on file at the parish (not submitted at DCYC). The form can be found linked [here](#), or on the *Forms and Resources* page of the youth ministry section on the diocesan website.

Youth who have vehicles at DCYC should be carefully chaperoned to ensure they are not coming-and-going from the event with other youth in their vehicles. Please keep in mind that free time and nighttime will likely provide easier access for youth to engage in this behavior, and they should be monitored accordingly.

Complete information regarding Ethics and Integrity in Ministry practices can be found in the handbook [linked here](#).

PARTICIPANT FORMATION

There are many ways to prepare people for their youth’s (or their) participation in DCYC.

First, the proper information will need to be shared with families. For example, how much will your parish charge for the weekend? Where will you be staying? How will you get there? What can people expect throughout the weekend? This information can be shared via in-person or virtual gatherings.

Gathering people together is also helpful for creating an environment to ask questions, share their past experiences with DCYC, and get to know the chaperones. This will help build the confidence of parents who are sending their children away for the weekend. These gatherings are also opportune times to spiritually prepare participants for their experience.

Like us, our young people carry many burdens that can feel like the weight of the world. These burdens can make it difficult to fully encounter the Lord and receive His outpouring of love.

As part of the spiritual preparation for DCYC, consider offering a special time, or separate penance service for your youth.

Reconciliation

Many of our young people do not regularly attend the sacrament of reconciliation, and some haven’t attended since their First Eucharist preparation. This sacrament is an integral part of our Catholic journey, as it

reconciles us with God, unifies us with His Church, and converts our hearts. Through God's grace and mercy, we are able to fully receive His love and share it with others.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart. Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him [...]." (CCC 1432)

Reconciliation will help prepare the hearts of your youth to encounter the Lord at DCYC. We encourage you to invite your parish priest to plan a special time for reconciliation and to assist in the overall spiritual preparation of those attending DCYC.

Reconciliation is also offered at DCYC throughout the day on Saturday. Due to the generosity of our priests, about 500 penitents received the sacrament last year. Adults are asked to attend reconciliation prior to the conference so we can prioritize the confessions of the youth.

Information about reconciliation for youth, including an examination of conscience, can be found on the USCCB website [linked here](#).

DCYC as a Pilgrimage

Another way to prepare participants for DCYC is to approach the experience as a pilgrimage. "Simply put, a pilgrimage is a spiritual journey. It can be made anywhere, by anyone, for just about any spiritual purpose. For Catholics, it means traveling to a destination — whether it's a holy site, outdoor space, or even near to home — to experience God in a unique way.

The goal is always transformation. Anyone can travel to a location, but the pilgrim seeks to encounter something deeper. In that way, a pilgrimage is never truly finished, because hopefully you will come back changed, unable to return to old ways of living or thinking."²

Oftentimes, pilgrimages require sacrifice on the part of the pilgrim. For an experience like DCYC, this may mean crowded areas, long lines, long days with little sleep, a loud environment, and time away from the comforts of home. However, DCYC is rich in opportunities for participants to grow in their relationship with the Lord.

Participants will have opportunities for spiritual growth through faith-filled keynote presentations and workshops, attending Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, reconciliation, and experiencing various forms of prayer. We encourage you to walk with your young people through this spiritual journey and continue to follow-up and journey with them in the weeks and months after DCYC as they continue to unpack their experiences from the event.

If you have any questions about DCYC, please contact [Tressi Breecher](#), Administrative Assistant in the Office of Youth and Campus Ministry.

You may also contact [Jennifer Kodysz](#), Associate Director in the Office of Youth and Campus Ministry.

² Information used with permission from versoministries.com