

No Young People in my Parish

The Year of Youth is an invitation to the entire body of Christ to celebrate the vital role of young people in our communities, and to spend time listening, engaging and discerning with young people. So, how can we participate if we have no (or not very many) young people in our parish and communities?

Here are some ideas you could consider:

- **Pray**

You don't need to have young people in your parish to join with the rest of the Australian Church in praying for young Australians throughout the Year of Youth. You could:

- Pray the 'Prayer for Youth' at the end of Mass or at Parish Gatherings during the Year of Youth.
- Print the 'Prayer for Youth' in your parish bulletin or include it on your website.
- Include a prayer for young people in the Universal Prayers at Sunday Masses throughout the Year.
- Provide special opportunities to come together as a community in prayer with a focus on celebrating the gift of young people and praying for the engagement and needs of young Australians, and contemplate the Year of Youth theme 'Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy'.

- **Young People outside your Parish**

The Year of Youth is dedicated to celebrating and listening to ALL young people, not just those currently engaged in communities of faith. You could consider:

- Identifying who the young people are in your wider community (i.e. local schools, tertiary institutions, sporting clubs, outreach groups, other community groups and clubs).
- Consider also any young people who have a connection to your parish (i.e. children & grandchildren of parishioners, those who have moved away for study or work etc.)
- How could your parish acknowledge and celebrate the movement of the Holy Spirit in these groups of young people?
- How could your parish actively listen to the life experiences of these young people?
- How could your parish respond to the needs of these young people and the movement of the Spirit?

- **Assist other communities**

If you are struggling to identify any young people in your local community, you could consider supporting neighbouring parishes or communities.

- Contact another parish or community to offer assistance or join in their Year of Youth initiatives.
- Ask someone from a neighbouring parish or community to come and speak to your community about their Year of Youth initiatives – *spread the joy!*
- Become a prayer partner for young people in a neighbouring community.

- **Assisting Vulnerable Young People**

You could consider giving special support to an organisation that supports vulnerable young people:

- Hold a parish fundraiser to contribute to an identified organisation supporting vulnerable young people, or to help a young person from another community attend World Youth Day 2019.
- Offer volunteer or in-kind support to identified organisations. You could consider organisations that provide programs for young people struggling with: Mental Health, Drugs & Alcohol, Unemployment, Homelessness, Access to Education, Prison System, Physical Health or other social issues.

- **Discern your response to the Year of Youth**

- Taking some time as a community to listen to the Spirit and discern your response to the Year of Youth (considering the above) is the best way to start your Year of Youth journey! There are other resources available online that could help you as you discern your response: www.youth.catholic.org.au/year-of-youth