

A Pilgrimage to NCYC 2023

Fully Alive

Genesis 1:23-27

*God created mankind in His image;
in the image of God, he created them.*

Icebreakers

A set of icebreaker games that can help get a group into the spirit of a pilgrimage gathering.

Pre-Conference Preparation Sessions

Seven sessions that can be used in order or separately. The odd sessions all focus around pilgrimage while the even sessions delve into the them of NCYC 2023.

1. Pilgrimage: More than a Field Trip
2. St. Irenaeus – The glory of God is the human person fully alive.
3. Pilgrimage: A Time for Bringing our Gifts
4. St. Teresa of Calcutta – Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.
5. Pilgrimage: A Time for Packing our Struggles & Humanness
6. St. John Paul II – In Christ & through Christ, humanity has acquired full awareness of its dignity & the meaning of its existence.
7. Pilgrimage: A Time for Being open to the Experience

Post-Conference Reflection & Processing

Two sessions to help transition into “normal” life after the pilgrimage.

1. The Pilgrimage Continues
2. Bringing the Real World Home

Icebreaker Ideas

Do You Love Your Neighbor?

Form a circle of candidates. Have them take their shoe or shoes off and put them in front of their spot in the circle. Those are now place markers. Remove one set of shoes, so there is one less spot in the circle than there are candidates.

The additional person then moves into the center of the circle and declares, "I love my neighbor! Especially _____." They can fill in the blank spot with any descriptor they would like, such as "anyone with white socks" or "anyone who has a brother". Anyone who fits that descriptor must move their location in the circle. They cannot move to a spot immediately next to them. Once everyone has moved, there will be one person in the center to repeat the process.

Continue until the game grows tired.

Biggest Fan

This one turns a simple game of Rock-Paper-Scissors into a group game. Two players have to compete best 2 out of 3 Rock-Paper-Scissors games. Whoever wins, goes on to compete more, and whoever loses becomes the winner's biggest fan, cheering them on in future competitions. If someone loses who has fans, all the fans go on to cheer the winner.

This goes on, each person's fan base growing, until there are only two retreatants. The winner, now has everyone else as their fan.

Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur

The goal of this game is to work your way up by beating other players at Rock-Paper-Scissors. Everyone starts as an egg. To show this, you have to crouch down and walk with your knees near your chest. After playing Rock-Paper-Scissors the winner becomes a chicken (walking around bent over with wings tucked in – think chicken dance). The loser remains an egg. After chicken, you can win to become a dinosaur (small arms, standing tall, roaring). If you lose, you go down to the previous level.

Play until there are no more eggs – dinosaurs win.

Ninja

Standing in a circle, the goal of this game is to slap another person's hand. The catch is that you can only move on your turn or as a reaction to an "attack". The move must be one fluid motion and cannot last long. Everyone is frozen in the motion they were last in.

If a player's hand is slapped, they move to the outside of the circle cheering on the group.

Optional rules:

- (1) Players are also eliminated when trying to evade an attack intended for someone else.
- (2) Players must make a "yah" ninja chopping noise when they attack.
- (3) An excessively violent attack can also get you eliminated.

Human Etch-a-Sketch

Break the group into teams. Their goals are to create shapes using only their bodies. The retreat leader calls out a shape (sailboat, state of Michigan, etc) and the team members lay down and make the picture on the floor.

Variation: Human math – ask math questions and they have to make the numbers out of their bodies. You can ask “the number of days it took God to create the world, minus the number of days he rested” or “the number of Jesus’ apostles plus the number of the tribes of Israel”

I. Pilgrimage: More than a Field Trip

Date: _____

As you have already seen, true pilgrimage is about more than preparing to go on a vacation or field trip. For many young people, this will be one of the first non-school and non-family travel experiences. It is important that it not become another group vacation or the youth group equivalent of a band trip. The excitement will be there, same as the others, but we hope to focus that excitement into an expression of faith.

This session strives to set the stage for that deeper and meaningful experience. It has a great focus on prayer and experiential learning. One credo for this session is “lex orandi, lex credendi” – “the law of prayer is the law of belief”. For our pilgrimage, it will add the law of pilgrimage: “lex orandi, lex credendi, lex peregrinati”.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A variety of icebreakers can be found immediately before the session guides.

Prayer

led by _____

Opening Song: Owl City, *In Christ Alone (I Stand)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpl-rLRxOrs>

Prayer:

*Let us pray. Here in your love, we stand, O God. Walk with us on this pilgrimage of faith as we journey deeper into a relationship with one another and with you. Help us along the way, guiding our feet and lighting our path. We ask this, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

Reading: Mark 1:16-20

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They abandoned their nets and followed him. He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

Quiet Reflection: (consider these or other questions)

What did you hear that stood out as Jesus’ first disciples started their journey with him?

What comfort do you think they experienced beginning their time with Jesus?

What fears do you think they had beginning their journey with Jesus?

General Intercessions:

For us, pilgrims together on a journey to NCYC and a deeper faith. May we be open to the experience and grow with one another, we pray to the Lord.

For our parish community, that it may be enhanced by this pilgrimage of its parishioners, we pray to the Lord.

For our families, that their support and love may make this pilgrimage a time of wonder, we pray to the Lord.

For all those intentions we hold in the quiet of our hearts, we bring them all to the Lord in the words Jesus gave us.

Our Father:

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Closing Prayer:

*Let us pray. You have called us, O Lord, to walk with you on this pilgrimage. May we know of your presence throughout this preparation, and during our travels. Keep us always in your love, and help us to share that love with those we meet. We ask this, as we make all our prayers, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

Pilgrim Activity

Today's prayer was rather formatted and generic. It did, however, illustrate our approach as Church to many things. Often we see Church and Mass as the same ol' same ol'. It can seem like just one more thing we do because we are told to, not something we do because we want to.

A pilgrimage to NCYC aims to break that mentality. Church is something we *are*, not something we do. Yes, we show what we are, by what we do, but who we are beneath what our actions show to the world speaks much louder. Are we simply a group of individuals who all know when to sit, stand, and kneel at the same time - or are we the Body of Christ, unified through our Baptism and gathered to give praise to God?

Prayer is a key component of pilgrimage. It allows us to unite with one another AND with our God. Each pilgrim will have multiple opportunities to pray over the course of the pilgrimage, and if he/she wishes, to lead prayer. Each session begins and ends with prayer, and pilgrims are encouraged to lead those prayers.

As a group, design a logo for your pilgrimage. It should be something that shows who you are as a group, and what you hope to gain from NCYC. Start by brainstorming themes and slogans. Then try doing an internet search of "NCYC" images and see what others have done. As a group decide how to make the logo.

Example: one year a group based their pilgrimage around a video about finding a gorilla in a crowd. The theme was "Pilgrimage is about Finding the Gorilla" and the logo had a gorilla face surrounded by the theme and parish name/location.

This logo & theme can be used for T-Shirts, trading tokens, posters, publicity, and a variety of other uses. It brings the group together with an identity that simply gathering does not achieve.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. When do you pray most often?
2. If prayer is conversation with God, what do you talk about most often? Do you ever tell God the good things you are excited about?
3. Have you ever “yelled” at God?

Pilgrim Project

Note, for the first session, it is encouraged that parents be invited to join the Pilgrim Project, Announcements, and Closing Prayer portions of the gathering. In future sessions, parents are not required to be there.

Have a conversation about fundraising and other practical aspects of the pilgrimage. Do you need meals at your meetings? What is needed to make NCYC a good experience – and how will all the pilgrims come together to make it happen? What roles can parents take so that you can focus on the spiritual and catechetical preparations?

Make a plan. Remember that the Pilgrim Project section is really about pilgrim ownership between the gatherings. When will you have fundraisers? Are you going to come together to do service together?

Announcements & Housekeeping

- Introduce and begin the Pilgrimage Journal
- Upcoming dates to remember
- Announcements/Updates from the Diocese or NFCYM

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Closing prayer is a simple prayer of intention brought together with a Hail Mary or Our Father. A “script” for young people to reference would look like:

Leader: As a people of God, united in prayer, we bring our intentions to God.

For our Church, especially Pope Francis, Bishop N., and all those who lead us in our faith. That they may be examples of God’s love, we pray to the Lord.

For us, pilgrims on a journey of discovery. That we may encounter our God on this pilgrimage through those we journey alongside and those we meet, we pray to the Lord.

For the poor and lonely in our world. That they may know God’s love through the actions of our Church and all those God has called to service, we pray to the Lord.

Now is an opportunity for you to add your own prayers, that we may join with you. Simply offer your prayer and end with “we pray to the Lord.”

Pause as pilgrims offer their own prayers

We offer all of these prayers, and those we hold in the silence of our hearts to Jesus, our Lord, as we ask for Mary’s intercession praying, “Hail Mary, full of grace....”

or

Confident that God hears our prayers, both those spoken and those in our hearts, we unite them with the whole Church, as together we pray, "Our Father..."

II. Fully Alive Saints – St. Irenaeus

Date: _____

“The glory of God is the human person fully alive.”

One key element of pilgrimage is discovery. Through the pilgrimage process, we are able to discover a deeper understanding of God, of ourselves, and of our relationships. This session will work to help us see ourselves as being ‘wonderfully and fearfully made,’ and help us explore what that means.

As a response to being wonderfully and fearfully made, the pilgrims will be asked to also recognize others as wonderfully and fearfully made. In doing so, they will partner with others to hold one another in prayer.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A variety of icebreakers can be found immediately before the session guides.

Background

St. Irenaeus was a 2nd century bishop of Lyon. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 2022. He was a scholar and is known for combating the Gnostic view of scripture. To counter the doctrines of the gnostic sects claiming a secret wisdom, he offered three pillars of orthodoxy: the scriptures, the tradition handed down from the apostles, and the teaching of the apostles’ successors.

Pertinent to the pilgrimage, St. Irenaeus is often quoted as saying, “The glory of God is the human person fully alive.” As the culmination of creation, the human person shows God’s wonder in a way unlike the rest of creation. When viewing humanity this way, the incarnation is not longer a belittling, but uniting. Through the incarnation, God unites creation to the divine in a way unknown before. Jesus Christ, fully human, is the glory of God – as could we be.

Prayer

led by _____

Psalm 139

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before,

and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts,^[a] God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?
I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Let us pray:

Lord, you are our companion on all pilgrimages. Through our lives you have known us, and you made us to be in your image. You made us fearfully and wonderfully – full of awe and wonder. For this, we praise you, and we ask that you continue to be with us on our pilgrimage. May we know your presence, and when we cannot feel you by our side, may we rest assured you are never far.

We ask this, as we make all our prayers, in the name of Jesus, your son.

Amen.

Pilgrim Activity

One component of our pilgrimage is the communal aspect. It is possible to make an individual pilgrimage, but we have chosen to undertake pilgrimage together. This means some very practical and spiritual choices will be made. Tonight is the night to begin that process.

Community – of all shapes & sizes

Take some time as a group to discuss the importance of communities to which we belong.

On a whiteboard, newsprint, or other large board – list the communities the pilgrims have. These could be secular, extracurricular, academic, or religious (or many more). When you think you've exhausted all the options, keep going. Don't just hit the low hanging fruit.

Depending on the group, this brainstorming can become silly – and that is good. It is a nice way to show that not everything on pilgrimage has to be serious and stoic, but should have a purpose – even if that purpose is not known until later.

Once the communities are brainstormed, put check marks next to “the most important”. Do not define what that means, let the group. Some groups may choose only the ones that include personal relationships, some may go with what they think you mean and choose all religious groups, some may just check everything. Let them choose as many as they like, and let them struggle with the directions until they are done. Then tell them you will be adding those communities to the pilgrimage journal as communities to pray for. If they want to change their answer to add more communities from the list, let them.

Write a short prayer to pray every pilgrimage gathering moving forward asking God's blessing on the communities now listed in the pilgrimage journal. It can be as simple as “

Traveling from & representing a community

While we bless communities, we should also recognize that our communities bless us. Fun fact – numbers in the bible often stand for a deeper meaning. Three typically hints at the Divine. Forty means many, or completion. And scholars tell us that 12 means “government perfection” but we must remember that in the Hebrew tradition, any perfection would mean right relationship between those in the family, community, or nation. Examples of 12 in the bible include:

12 sons of Jacob 12 Tribes of Israel 12 Apostles of Christ
12 legions of angels 12 Gates of the New Jerusalem

Being a part of a community is about more than being listed on a membership role. Being a part of community means allowing that community partially define you to others, and in turn, to partially define that community. It's a mutual representation. Saying "I am a Catholic" or "I am a member of the local fire department" is an identifier, just as your parish claiming "John is a member of our parish community" or your school saying "Annette is a student here." When someone makes news, the community is also highlighted.

When we travel to NCYC we are representatives of our communities. We need to be a blessing to others so that *–insert parish name here–* can be a blessing as well. That is why we are developing a parish covenant today.

As a mutual representation, the parish is taking on responsibilities for this pilgrimage. Likewise, each pilgrim is asked to take ownership and responsibility as well. Just as responsibility is shared, so too will experiences. Our joys are made sweeter and our struggles shared when we have a community.

This is an ideal place in the gathering for the pastor to talk about the importance placed in the pilgrimage group as representatives of the parish and his trust that the pilgrims will represent the parish well.

Promises in a Community

Throughout the Scriptures, God made covenants with His people. From God promising Abraham many descendants, to the promise to Noah never to flood the earth again. God promised Israel to be their God and they would be God's people. God renews that covenant through the prophets, and fulfills it with Jesus Christ. In Jesus we have a new and everlasting covenant that God will journey with us and never abandon us. Today, we still make covenants with and before God. Marriage is a covenant between husband, wife, and God.

Throughout salvation history, it has been people that fall away from the covenant, not God. We do our best, and we strive for perfection, even if we never make it. As we move into developing our personal pilgrimage covenants, be aware of making your promise realistic. Do not pledge to come back and increase youth group attendance by 200%.

Using the gifts you've identified, have each pilgrim determine how they will bring the fruits of NCYC back to the parish. These could be 'one-and-done' events such as hosting an NCYC prayer night, or it could be to help present NCYC to the parish. Someone may want to help make a promo video or host a promotion night for NCYC 2023. Maybe their gifts lend to continuing to pray for the pilgrimage group and those who supported the group. Whatever they choose, each pilgrim should find a way to bring NCYC home.

Once the covenants are signed, place them in a prominent place where you meet. These are the visual representation of our promises. As the pastor if he is present, or as the leader you can, say a blessing over the covenants. Ask each person to silently, make the sign of the cross on the hands of another pilgrim, marking them for the pilgrimage and silently blessing them.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. What does it mean to be human?
2. What does it mean to be fully alive?
 - a. Society will tempt you with risk taking and excitement.
 - b. Companies will tempt you to buy their products by making you feel it makes you more alive. (RedBull gives you wings!)
3. Read Gen 2:7. God creating humans by breathing into them is unique. We believe this is not just breath like a lion or penguin breathes, but the Breath of Life, the Holy Spirit. How do you think the Holy Spirit makes humans more fully alive?
4. When God enters into a covenant with us, how do you think that helps us live more fully alive?
5. How do you think you could be more fully present and fully alive during the pilgrimage? What do you hope to learn, experience, or see at NCYC to be more you?

Pilgrim Project

Prayer Partners

An important part of being on pilgrimage together is holding one another in prayer. We do this both formally and informally. This project is designed to help formalize some prayer partnerships.

Have each pilgrim write his/her name on a slip of paper. (You can have them written out ahead if you want.) Each pilgrim draws a name and reads it without revealing who it is. As long as they did not draw their own name, they keep it.

Each pilgrim is now asked to keep their prayer partner in prayer throughout the pilgrimage. A simple prayer that could work is, "Lord, please keep NAME close to you today," or "God, please remember NAME while you are blessing people." It doesn't have to be fancy, just there. If they want to keep the slip of paper on their dresser or somewhere they will see it and remember to pray, even better.

Next, have the pilgrims write their first names on additional slips of paper. Give those slips to people who support the pilgrimage with financial contributions, and ask for their prayers along with money. Keep a list of these supporters as well, and assure them of the pilgrims' prayers.

Later in the pilgrimage we will develop ways of showing our prayer partners our prayers.

Announcements & Housekeeping

Introduce and begin the Pilgrimage Journal

Upcoming dates to remember

Announcements/Updates from the Diocese or NFCYM

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Closing prayer is a simple prayer of intention brought together with a Hail Mary or Our Father. A "script" for young people to reference would look like:

III. Pilgrimage: A Time for Bringing Our Gifts

Date: _____

Recognizing the blessings around us (last session) is important. But just as important is recognizing how we are blessings for others. Too often, we think of how we are blessed, but forget that all we have been given, we are asked to return freely. We have been blessed in our lives, and so we must be blessings to others.

This session will help pilgrims recognize the gifts in them that make them blessings for others. It will encourage them to use their gifts in service and humility.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A sample of popular icebreakers can be found on page 11.

Prayer

led by _____

pilgrims can create their own or use the following:

Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhzII5KGTno>

A Litany of the Person

-Anonymous Trappist Monk

image of God
born of God's breath
vessel of divine love
after his likeness
dwelling of God
capacity for the infinite
eternally known
chosen of God
home of Infinite Majesty
abiding in the Son
called from eternity
life in the Lord
temple of the Holy Spirit
branch of Christ
receptacle of the Most High
wellspring of Living Water
heir to the kingdom
the glory of God
abode of the Trinity

God sings this litany

eternally in his Word.

This is who you are.

Pilgrim Activity

Virtues in Us

Sometimes it is difficult to see our own greatness. We are assured by the psalmist that we are wonderfully made (Ps 139:14), but all too often, we fail to see that in ourselves. That's one of the joys of community! Our pilgrim community can lift up the wonderful we see in one another.

We've all heard of the Seven Deadly Sins, but did you realize that with each of those there is a virtue as well? Virtue is defined as "a habitual and firm disposition to do the good." The seven Christian virtues are:

Prudence – the virtue that allows us to use our reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and choose the right means of achieving it.

Justice – the virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor.

Fortitude – the virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good.

Temperance – the virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods.

Faith – the virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us.

Hope – the virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Charity – the virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbors as ourselves for the love of God.

Note, you can educate yourself further, or have the pilgrims educate themselves further by consulting the Catechism. These virtues are paragraphs 1804-1929.

Note #2, this activity could also be done with the Gifts of the Spirit as well (CCC 1831).

Noticing Virtues (one) *There are two versions of how to raise up virtues. Depending on a variety of factors, one may work better for your group than the other.*

Materials: clear ornament balls, 7 colors of confetti, strips of paper

Give each pilgrim a clear ornament. Assign each virtue a color, and in a central place, put 7 piles or bowls of confetti. Encourage each pilgrim to put the color confetti into another pilgrim's ornament for the virtue(s) he/she sees in the pilgrim.

At the end, each pilgrim should have an ornament with a variety of colored confetti in it. Give each pilgrim a strip of paper and have him/her write a short prayer of thanksgiving on it, something along the lines of "Lord, thank you for the many gifts you give me." Roll the slip up and add it to the ornament. It should uncoil slightly and look like a spring among the confetti.

Place all of the ornaments in a bowl or basket as a centerpiece reminder of the variety of virtues the group brings to the pilgrimage. Where one pilgrim may lack one, another can help.

Reflect with them about what colors surprised them in their ornament. Notice that sometimes people see virtues, gifts, or characteristics in us that we do not see.

There are many personality profiles (Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, etc.) that can tell us about ourselves and often encourage us to grow in areas where we score lower than others. For example, someone who scores as a high introvert is often encouraged to develop more extraverted skills. Strengths Finders is a profile that only gives you your top 5 strengths. The idea is that you then work to make those strengths even stronger. The focus shifts to what you have not what you are lacking. God has gifted us all – and no one was given more so that others have less. Rather we were given more so others can have more as well.

Noticing Virtues (two) *There are two versions of how to raise up virtues. Depending on a variety of factors, one may work better for your group than the other.*

Materials: colored candy (such as M&Ms, Skittles, etc.), small cups

Assign a virtue to each color candy. (Note: M&Ms and Skittles both have 5 colors, not 7. You may need to either get extra colors or limit your virtues.) Put each color in a different bowl for easy access to colors.

Give each pilgrim a cup to put before them. Everyone is then able to give candy to one another based on the virtues found in the recipient. Before enjoying their virtues, pilgrims should notice the variety of virtues seen in them.

As pilgrims enjoy their virtues, reflect with them about what colors surprised them in their cup. Notice that sometimes people see virtues, gifts, or characteristics in us that we do not see.

There are many personality profiles (Myers-Briggs, Enneagram, etc.) that can tell us about ourselves and often encourage us to grow in areas where we score lower than others. For example, someone who scores as a high introvert is often encouraged to develop more extraverted skills. Strengths Finders is a profile that only gives you your top 5 strengths. The idea is that you then work to make those strengths even stronger. The focus shifts to what you have not what you are lacking. God has gifted us all – and no one was given more so that others have less. Rather we were given more so others can have more as well.

Using our Gifts

Once we know what our gifts are, we have to realize they are meant to be gifts for others, not ourselves. Purely showing our gifts encourages others to show theirs as well. Just look how after 3 sessions people were able to see one another's giftedness.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. Were there any virtues you did not have represented that you think you have?
2. What virtue do you see in yourself most easily?
3. How do you see these virtues being useful in pilgrimage?

Pilgrim Project

Thank You Cards

One part of recognizing gifts in others and ourselves is thanking them for sharing those gifts. As part of the pilgrimage, have the pilgrims create or sign thank you cards for those who make the pilgrimage happen. The hand-written and thoughtful thank you cards can be sent out the week of NCYC so they are received while pilgrims are in Indianapolis.

Also consider having the daily Mass at your parish offered for the intentions of the benefactors of your NCYC pilgrimage on your travel day. Let them know they will be remembered at Mass on that day in your thank you notes.

Announcements & Housekeeping

Pass the Pilgrimage Journal

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Closing prayer is a simple prayer of intention brought together with a Hail Mary or Our Father. A “script” for young people to reference would look like:

IV. Fully Alive Saints – St. Teresa of Calcutta

Date: _____

“Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

Being a part of a pilgrimage community includes treating those around us with love and kindness. Showing kindness may seem easy at first, but it does not take long to realize that true kindness is more difficult, but also more rewarding.

When we spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, we find ourselves beginning to live more like him. In his face, we see kindness – and Adoration can help us learn to see it in ourselves, and thus show it to others.

*A major event at NCYC is Adoration with the large group. In particular if your group does not have an experience of Adoration, this session will give them a point of reference. **Invite your parish priest or deacon in advance of the session to lead Adoration & Benediction.***

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A variety of icebreakers can be found immediately before the session guides.

Background

St. Theresa of Calcutta was better known as Mother Teresa during her lifetime. She founded an order of religious sisters whose purpose and calling was to help those who were dying on the streets of Calcutta to die with dignity and knowing they were loved. Through her ministry to the poor, Mother Teresa inspired people around the world love one another, and in doing so, to help make the world a more peaceful place.

Prayer

led by _____

Leader: Mother Teresa once said, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”

May we make room in our circle for our God who is (sign of the cross) Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Lord, we come before you today asking that you teach us to act with great love in all we do. May we be the living expression of your love to those we meet, and may our pilgrimage to NCYC teach us how to be your servants daily. We ask this in your most holy name.

All: Amen.

Lector: A reading from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians.

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does

not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: Mother Teresa also said, “Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.” Let us spend the next while practicing how we show kindness in our being.

Pilgrim Activity

For Catholics the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a core belief. We believe that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist, not merely as a symbol. Because of this belief, Catholics have developed a number of traditions around the Eucharist. For instance, Catholic Churches keep a tabernacle so the Blessed Sacrament can be kept for those who could not attend Mass. We bring Communion to the sick and homebound.

But because the Blessed Sacrament is kept in the church, it means we must recognize Christ’s presence kept in the tabernacle. We genuflect when we approach or cross in front of a tabernacle as a sign of respect. We maintain reverence in the church. We visit the Blessed Sacrament to pray.

Even though the purpose of the tabernacle was originally to keep the Blessed Sacrament for the homebound, it became a source of comfort and prayer for visitors as well. Praying before the Blessed Sacrament is called Eucharistic Adoration. At times the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for prayer. This session will give us an opportunity to pray before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, but first let’s review what we do and why we do what we do.

Spend some time before Adoration to look at what we use, what we do, and why we do that. Coming into a formal prayer with background knowledge allows the participant to enter more fully.

What we use (vocabulary)

Monstrance – an open receptacle for viewing the consecrated Host

Incense – a symbol of our prayer rising to God

Bonus: thurible – the metal censer suspended by a chain for incense

What we do

At its most basic, Eucharistic Adoration is prayer before the Blessed Sacrament spent adoring and worshiping Jesus Christ. In formal Eucharistic Adoration, we go through a series of steps:

Exposition (kneel) – The Blessed Sacrament is placed in the monstrance and incensed.

Adoration (kneel or reverently sit) – We pray before the Blessed Sacrament. At times prayers, scripture, songs, or a brief homily may be used.

Benediction/Eucharistic Blessing (priest or deacon only, all others kneel) – Blessing with the Blessed Sacrament.

Reposition (kneel) – After being incensed, the Blessed Sacrament is returned to the tabernacle.

Acclamation (kneel or stand) – We sing or recite a song or prayer (usually the Divine Praises)

Why we do it

The format of the prayer for Eucharistic Adoration lends itself to mystery and inward reflection. It is meant to allow the worshiper to place him/herself in the presence of God, even among others. The use of incense and the historic use of certain prayers gives a sense of grandness. This is not to say there is no room for modern worship to be included as well.

An outline of the prayer (If you or your priest/deacon has another Eucharistic Adoration prayer already that you use or are more comfortable with, use that one.)

EXPOSITION—After the people have assembled, the following or another suitable song may be sung while the minister prepares the Holy Eucharist for adoration (Acc #381, CPC2 #353)

O saving Victim, open wide
The gate of heav'n to us below,
Our foes press on from ev'ry side;
Your aid supply, your strength bestow.
To your great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
O grant us endless length of days
In our true native land with thee.
Amen.

O salutaris Hostia
Quae caeli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.
Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna Gloria,
Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria.
Amen.

ADORATION—The Liturgy of the Hours may be celebrated during the period of exposition, or there may be prayers, songs, readings from Scripture and a brief homily to direct the attention of the faithful to the worship of the Lord. The following or another suitable Eucharistic song may be sung. (Acc #411 or 412, CPC2 #266, 267)

Down in adoration falling,
 This great Sacrament we hail;
Over ancient forms of worship
 Newer rights of grace prevail;
Faith will tell us Christ is present,
 When our human senses fail.
To the everlasting Father,
 And the son who made us free,
And the Spirit, God proceeding
 From them Each eternally,
Be salvation, honor, blessing,
 Might and endless majesty.
Amen.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
 Veneremur cernui,
Et antiquum documentum
 Novo cedat ritui;
Praestet fides supplementum,
 Sensuum defectui.
Genitori Genitoque
 Las et jubilation,
Salus, honor, virtus quoque
 Sit et benediction:
Procedenti ab utroque
 Compar sit laudation.
Amen.

BENEDICTION SONG—V. You have given them Bread from heaven
(Easter: alleluia)

R. Having within it all Sweetness (Easter: alleluia)

EUCCHARISTIC BLESSING—If the minister is a priest or deacon, there may be a blessing. Before the blessing, a prayer such as the following may be said.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you gave us the Eucharist
as a memorial of your suffering and death.
May our worship of this Sacrament of your body and blood
help us to experience the salvation you won for us
and the peace of the kingdom
where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

REPOSITION—After the blessing, the minister places the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

ACCLAMATION OR SONG—The people may say an acclamation or sing another song such as the following.

Divine Praises

Blessed be God.
Blessed be His Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be His most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be His most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary, most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste Spouse.
Blessed be God in His angels and in His saints.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. Catholics believe Jesus is fully present in the Eucharist. How did you see Jesus tonight?
2. Catholics also believe Jesus is present in the proclaimed Word during liturgy, and the gathered congregation, and in the priest-presider. How do you show that you are a part of Jesus' real presence at Mass?
3. How can you show that loving presence of Jesus to your fellow pilgrims – both from your parish, and those you've never met before?

Pilgrim Project

We are moving into the practical leg of our pilgrimage. It's time to look toward our voyage as well as preparing the pilgrimage. Look at oriental trading and other 'tchotchke' stores. Part of being at NCYC is trading tokens of home. What small, inexpensive token could your group take to trade with others? Remember they will want a fair number of tokens to trade, so keeping the cost to a minimum is important.

Popular ideas from years past: buttons, clothespins with parish name & location, self-addressed & stamped postcards, local sports paraphernalia, necklaces, etc. The goal is to reflect the theme, your pilgrimage, and your home. Someone from Iowa, for instance, may want to have corn, or from Ohio, a buckeye. If your parish or youth ministry has a social media presence, you may want to include your handle so people from around the country can follow you.

Announcements & Housekeeping

Upcoming dates to remember

Announcements/Updates from the Diocese or NFCYM

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Closing prayer is a simple prayer of intention brought together with a Hail Mary or Our Father. A "script" for young people to reference would look like:

V. Pilgrimage: A Time for Packing our Struggles & Humanness

Date: _____

Pilgrimage is never an easy process. At times the excitement can replace the apprehension or questions, but if it is easy, we are not putting ourselves into the process. As humans we bring baggage, and not just luggage, to our pilgrimage.

This session aims to help pilgrims recognize the baggage (sins) they bring with them and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, move through that experience and into a grace-filled journey. It is designed with the assumption that at least one priest will be present to hear confessions. If this is not the case, the service can be led by the pilgrimage leader and pilgrims encouraged to seek the grace of the Sacrament when it is available.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A sample of popular icebreakers can be found on page 11.

Prayer

led by _____

Pilgrims can prepare a prayer, or the Reconciliation service can take its place.

Pilgrim Activity

Reconciliation Service

Before the service, recruit the following:

- *Priest(s) (Gospel, homily, examination of conscience, confessions)*
- *2-4 Readers*
- *Music? (or use recorded music)*

Opening Song

Opening Prayer

Let us pray. You have given us, O Lord, the opportunity to grow. Bless us as we continue our pilgrimage, seeking to reconcile ourselves with you, our communities, and ourselves. Grant us, we pray, your merciful forgiveness and grace, through your Son who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

1st Reading (Exodus 12:1, 11-14)

A reading from the Book of Exodus.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, you shall eat like those who are in flight. It is the Passover of the Lord. For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every

firstborn of the land, both man and beast, and executing judgement on all the gods of Egypt – I, the Lord!

“This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the Lord, as a perpetual institution.”

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

A sung psalm or song of your choosing

Gospel (Matthew 10:5-10a, 11-13)

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, “Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey; or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave. As you enter a house, wish it peace. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; if not, let your peace return to you.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily or Reflection

Examination of Conscience

Introduce the pilgrims to a scriptural examination of conscience. In place of an examination of conscience, each reading will be shared a second time, much as it is for Lectio Divina. As it is shared the second time, reflective questions are posed. Listen to how scripture can challenge us to look at our lives and prepare for the Sacrament.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,

Have I listened to when God speaks to me?

“This is how you are to eat it:

Do I listen to what God commands me to do?

With your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand,

How do I present myself to others? Is it how God would want?

you shall eat like those who are in flight.

How often am I in a rush and not present to the moment? Do I ignore important things when I rush?

It is the Passover of the Lord.

For on this same night I will go through Egypt,

Do I believe God is present, among us in the world? Do I ignore his presence?

striking down every firstborn of the land, both man and beast, and executing judgement

Do I ever put my own judgement before God's? When do I think I know best?

on all the gods of Egypt – I, the Lord!

Do I put other gods before God? Placing more value on money, reputation, or possessions?

“This day shall be a memorial feast for you,

Do I remember why I do the things I do? Do I get so wrapped up in doing, I forget why?

which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the Lord,

Do I continue the good things from my family? Do I respect the traditions given to me?
as a perpetual institution.”

Do I go to Mass and celebrate my faith?

Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus,

Do I go where God wants me to go, or do I go where I want?

“Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town.

Do I avoid situations where I should not be, or do I put myself in situations where I am likely to sin?

Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Do I look for those who need me, or do I only look for what I need?

As you go, make this proclamation:

Do I exercise my role as prophet, proclaiming the Good News?

‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

Do I believe God's kingdom is among us now? Do I act like God is already here?

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons.

Do I use my gifts to make others' lives better? Do I relieve their pain when I can?

Without cost you have received;

Do I recognize that God has given me great gifts? Do I accept my wonderfulness?

without cost you are to give.

Do I use my gifts for others or do I only use them for myself?

Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts;

Do I put more value on money than I do people?

no sack for the journey; or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick.

Do I spend more time planning so I can succeed than I do helping others?

Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it,

Do I recognize the gifts of others? Do I tell them when I see their gifts?

and stay there until you leave.

Am I present to others when I am with them? Do I listen and strengthen my relationships?

As you enter a house, wish it peace.

Do I wish others peace or do I sow seeds of distrust through gossip and talking behind people's backs?

If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it;

Do I bring peace to those around me when I meet them, or do I bring stress?
if not, let your peace return to you.”

Do I accept the peace in my life, or do I worry about things I cannot control?

Individual Confession

While pilgrims are going to confession, have quiet music playing and a reflective activity. Provide a handout of the examination of conscience, or other examinations. Provide the Act of Contrition for those who need it. One activity that can be useful are adult coloring pages which allow the youth to be active and reflective at the same time.

Closing Prayer & Blessing

Let us pray. Through the grace of this sacrament, O Lord, you have strengthened us for our pilgrimage. May our journey to NCYC be reflective of our faith journey with you and to you. Continue to guide us in your love and mercy, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

May almighty God bless you,
+ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Closing Song

Pilgrim Discussion

1. Why do you think we have a Reconciliation service as part of the pilgrimage?
2. How do you feel?

Pilgrim Project

This is left empty for this session so you can fill it in with anything your group needs between sessions.

Announcements & Housekeeping

Pass the Pilgrimage Journal
Updates from Diocese or NFCYM

Closing Prayer – led by _____

This should be kept very simple this session as the whole time was spent praying.

VI. Fully Alive Saints – St. John Paul II

Date: _____

“In Christ and through Christ, humanity has acquired full awareness of its dignity and the meaning of its existence.”

Human dignity is the cornerstone of Catholic Social Teaching. From our awareness of the dignity of the human person comes our understanding of how and why we treat others (both individually and as a society) in a particular way. St. John Paul II challenged us constantly to treat others with dignity, and not selfishly.

Pilgrimages are full of sacrifices. Some are small, such as getting on the bus together at a particular time. Others are large, such as choosing to help someone through a difficult part of their journey rather than going off to enjoy a different part of your own journey. In this session, we will explore what dignity and pilgrimage have to do with one another, and how St. John Paul II’s approach to human dignity might make our pilgrimage even more successful.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A variety of icebreakers can be found immediately before the session guides.

Background

St. John Paul II was pope from 1979-2005. He was known for his outgoing nature, and globe-hopping pilgrimages to Catholics around the world. During a series of talks, he introduced what has come to be known as a Theology of the Body. In essence, he challenged the Church to approach God and our faith firstly as created beings.

St. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body included a renewed awareness that procreation and human sexuality is not taboo in the Church. It is, however, understood through the lens of love and dignity.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A variety of icebreakers can be found immediately before the session guides.

Prayer

led by _____

Around You, People of God

Leader: Look around you, People of God – look around you.
Who is the person sitting next to you?

- Reader 1: The person next to you is the greatest miracle and the greatest mystery you will ever meet; and at this moment is a testament of the word made flesh, of God's continuing advent into our midst...
- Reader 2: The person next to you is an inexhaustible reservoir of possibilities, with potentialities that have been only partially touched ...
- Reader 3: The person next to you is a unique universe of experiences, seething with necessity and possibility, dread and desire, smiles and frowns, laughter and tears, fears and hopes, all struggling to find expression...
- Reader 4: The person next to you is surging to become something in particular, to arrive at some destination, to have a story and a song, to be known and to know ...
- Reader 5: The person next to you believes something – something precious, stands for something, counts for something, labors for something, waits for something, runs for something, runs toward something ...
- Reader 6: The person next to you is a whole colony of persons, persons met all during their lifetime – really a community in which still lives a father and mother, a friend, and an enemy ...
- Reader 7: The person next to you has some things they can do well, some things they can do better than anyone else in the whole world. There is something that this one life on earth means and cares for, but does this person dare speak of this to you?
- Reader 8: The person next to you can live WITH you, not just along side you. This person can live not only for him or herself, but also for YOU. They can comfort, encounter, understand you, if that is what you want. And in turn, they are to be understood also.
- Reader 9: The person next to you can never be fully understood – more than any description or explanation. They can never be fully controlled, nor should they be.
- Reader 10: The person next to you is a mystery ... as the word made flesh is a mystery.
- Leader: And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us
So, people of God,
Look around you
For God is Here.

Pilgrim Activity

Penny Toss

Ask 3 volunteers leave the room. They are blindfolded and one-by-one come back to accomplish a task. They must throw pennies into a bucket while blindfolded. The large group is prepped to respond to each volunteer differently: 1. Cheer the person on; 2. Boo the person; 3. Remain completely silent.

After the activity, have the 3 share their experiences. What was it like to be supported, rejected or ignored?

Human dignity is not about supporting or not supporting, it is about recognizing the PERSON. More harm is done when we reject or ignore the personhood of a human.

Recognizing dignity is only the first step! After we recognize the dignity of a person, we are called to love them. Loving does not always mean liking, but it does mean wanting them to be better, happier, closer to God.

Our Church has taught through the centuries that God created everything out of love, and as a result of that, love can be found everywhere. When scripture tells us that we are made in the image and likeness of God (who we also know is love) it means that we have the capacity to love as God loves – with no selfish reason, but rather simply because what we love is from God.

Small Group Processing

Create a way to “teach” what love and dignity look like in everyday life. It is not about the big topics like war and hunger, but about the people they see each day. This could be done via: skit, song, poster, prayer, whatever creative method they would like to use.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. Who has heard of love language? It is (at its simplest) how we show love for others. Some show it by giving gifts, others by saying it out loud (among many other ways). What would you say is *your* love language? What do you think is God’s?
2. How does dignity relate to the creation story? How do you see human dignity expressed in how God, Adam, Eve, or any other ‘player’ acts in the story?
3. If we are called to act out of love towards the dignity of every human person, how does that change how you hear Jesus tell us to love our enemy?
4. What do you think is the big difference between loving and liking?

Pilgrim Project

Writing a Prayer Partner Prayer Service

Goal: To develop a short, yet prayerful service to reveal prayer partners while at NCYC.

Have the group write a prayer service that can be prayed one night in Indianapolis. It should include:

- Prayer for the pilgrims (by everyone)
- A reveal of who each pilgrim has been praying for
- An opportunity for pilgrims to offer prayers
- Prayer for those at home who are praying for the pilgrims/pilgrimage.

Note: as group leader, you may plan to have leaders of the parish hold individual pilgrims in prayer. This prayer service may serve as a good moment to reveal who back home has been praying for the pilgrims.

Announcements & Housekeeping

Introduce and begin the Pilgrimage Journal

Upcoming dates to remember

Announcements/Updates from the Diocese or NFCYM

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Closing prayer is a simple prayer of intention brought together with a Hail Mary or Our Father. A “script” for young people to reference would look like:

VII. Pilgrimage: A Time for Being Open to the Experience

Date: _____

Pilgrimage is a time to experience. Whatever expectations we have are best left at our doorstep, and the unique experience of NCYC 2019 embraced. Some elements may carry over, others will need to change.

This session is the time to give pilgrims the final overview of what they can expect. It is an opportunity to discuss practical elements of the journey, as well as an opportunity to prepare for the spiritual and religious elements.

In a world where parents have been and are involved in so much of their teens' lives, you may want to invite them to this session, especially the Pilgrim Project portion where communication and plans will be discussed.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A sample of popular icebreakers can be found on page 11.

Prayer

led by _____

Pilgrims can develop their own, or use the following.

This reflection is often credited to Nelson Mandela, but actually comes from poet Marianne Williamson. Listen to these words, and hear them as if God were whispering in your ear.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness
That most frightens us.

We ask ourselves
Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you *not* to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small
Does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine,
As children do.
We were born to make manifest
The glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us;
It's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we're liberated from our own fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others.

Pilgrim Activity

Looking back

Take some time to look back at the last nine sessions. Bring with you the logo the group designed, the stack of covenants, their broken heart mosaic, a white elephant gift (or the children's book used), and the ornaments with their virtues. As a group think of the highlights SO FAR of the pilgrimage. This is a good opportunity to once again set the context of NCYC and pilgrimage.

Hearing a History

If your group has previous pilgrims to NCYC, "interview" them to learn about their experience of going to NCYC for the first time with those who are new. Remember that each NCYC is unique and everyone involved is committed to making the next one better than the last, so things change. Where someone may lament that finding their workshop was difficult, NFCYM may have new signs – don't get hung up on "oh, you need to be ready for..." or "you'll be expecting this, but in reality..." kind of statements. Just tell stories.

Here are some interview questions to help this process.

1. What made you want to go to NCYC initially?
2. Who was the Emcee or a presenter you remember from NCYC?
3. What was one thing that surprised you about a gathering in the arena (Lucas Oil Stadium)?
4. What was your favorite thing to see in the convention center?
5. Do you still talk to anyone from your first NCYC?

Expecting the Unexpected

As a group watch this video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=ubNF9QNEQLA (Test Your Awareness: Whodunnit?)

How many people noticed the changes? Pilgrimage is all about being aware of what is going on around us, and in us. As we draw closer to NCYC, we need to raise our awareness. Each day is about being aware that God is moving in and all around us.

NCYC is also a changing thing ... in multiple ways. It changes *us*, but it also changes. NCYC 2019 may keep many of the same elements as previous NCYCs, but it is its own thing. There will be changes, and certainly the group of young people is different. The stories you just heard are wonderful memories, but they are from past NCYCs. Now it's time to be ready for *THIS* NCYC.

Preparing Ourselves

As a group follow up on the pilgrim project from the last session. Take another look at workshops being offered. Encourage veteran pilgrims to experience new workshops rather than

reliving ones they have been to before. Encourage new pilgrims to choose workshops based on their interests over the veterans' experiences.

It is important at this point to reassure pilgrims (especially those who have not gone to NCYC before) that the primary hope for NCYC is to provide them with a good experience. Nerves and anticipation are normal, but it is the sincere hope of everyone involved that NCYC be a true experience of Church for them.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. What are the greatest excitements for NCYC?
2. What has been the best part of pilgrimage so far?
3. On this pilgrimage, how have you been Blessed? Broken? Given?
4. How have you Blessed? Broken? Given?

Pilgrim Project

Practical Pilgrimage Packing

As a group plan and pack a suitcase or tote for your voyage, or dividing what needs to be taken among pilgrims so it can be packed in their own suitcases. What you need to pack will vary depending on where your starting point is. For those traveling by air, less packing is probably needed. Those traveling by bus will want to figure out what snacks and activities to take for the bus.

While you are at NCYC you will need some things. Consider making room for trading tokens, a bible, copies of any prayer services you will need, guides to Confession (including an examination of conscience and act of contrition), your pilgrimage journal, and any other things that your pilgrimage specifically needs to take.

Including the group in this process allows them to take more ownership of the pilgrimage, even if ultimately, as group leader, you are making the final decision. Remember that in YOUR packing you need copies of all health forms and any release other forms from your Diocese and NFCYM.

Personal Packing

Spend some time talking about what pilgrims should pack. They need comfortable shoes and their clothes, obviously, but what else might teens forget? Review FAA travel restrictions for airlines if you are flying. Your Diocese may provide a packing list for NCYC participants.

Communication System

Send home key contact information for parents to have. Even with cell phones, give the hotel phone number and address to parents. If your group will be using social media, give them those handles.

If you have not already, collect cell phone numbers from all your pilgrims for emergency. Be sure to follow your Diocese's Safe Environment or Communication policies. There are group messaging apps that ensure safety when communicating with youth.

Finally, let parents know when and how you will be communicating your return. If you are traveling by air, are you going to send a mass text as you board your final flight? If you are

traveling by bus, are you going to call everyone when you are an hour away? Make those decisions and communicate them to the parents.

Parish Sending

Let the parents and pilgrims know (hopefully remind them) about if and when the parish will be sending them to NCYC. A sample Rite of Sending can be found on page x.

Announcements & Housekeeping

Pass the Pilgrimage Journal (if you are leaving for NCYC soon, collect it and bring it with you, if not, arrange a time to collect it before NCYC.)

Last minute announcements from the Diocese or NFCYM

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Closing prayer is a simple prayer of intention brought together with a Hail Mary or Our Father. A “script” for young people to reference would look like:

Post NCYC I. A Pilgrimage of Thanks

Date: _____

When the pilgrims return to their parishes, it may seem like everything is ended, and if this were a Catholic band-trip, it may be. But pilgrimage is about the inner journey, not just the external voyage. For that matter, we only focus on pilgrimage during a specific period, but we have been on this inner journey since baptism.

This session will provide the pilgrims an opportunity to process what the pilgrimage meant in their lives as they also thank those who made the voyage possible. Much like Session V: "He Broke It...", this session focusses around preparing and sharing a meal, only this time they are the hosts, not the guests.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A sample of popular icebreakers can be found on page 11.

Prayer

led by _____

Use a prayer you found at NCYC, or give the pilgrims an opportunity for silence.

Pilgrim Activity

Sending Invitations

Before going to NCYC, prepare an invitation to any donor who helped make NCYC possible for the pilgrims. This could be those who donated money, those who donated their talents, and those who donated their services. Be sure to include parents and parish staff in the invitation list.

Preparing the Meal

Hosting a meal makes things a little different. First you need a menu. There is no need to expect the pilgrims to prepare a five-star meal, but it should be something that is more than peanut-butter and jelly. Given when we return from NCYC, a soup dinner would be both easy and filling.

Suggested Menu: soup, bread, salad, beverages

Tasks for the Pilgrims:

Prepare the soup

Cut and plate the bread

Prepare the salad

Set the table(s) – this can include putting out place cards, and/or thank you cards.

Preparing & leading grace

Sharing the Meal

As with the shared meal in preparation for NCYC, this meal is about more than the food. It is an opportunity to share their experience with those who made it possible. Pilgrims should be spread around the group and prepared to engage in conversation about NCYC.

Cleaning Up

In a change from the expected, invite everyone to share in the clean-up. This is primarily to show that as the pilgrimage ends, the pilgrims rejoin and are a part of the community again. They are on an equal footing with the rest of the parish. It also allows the conversation to continue in a very informal manner.

A Final Gift

As a final gift for those who made the pilgrimage possible, give each of them a copy of this year's pilgrimage journal, or selected passages. How this is done depends greatly on the pilgrimage group. Some groups keep a journal that can be easily photocopied, others have penmanship or other obstacles to that and need to have typed copies.

If you were able to get enough postcards from Indianapolis, a post card for each donor is often another inexpensive thank-you gift.

Closing Prayer – led by _____

Post-NCYC II. Bringing the Real World Home

Date: _____

After a mountain-top experience such as NCYC, a retreat, or powerful prayer experience, it is often difficult to transition back into daily life. Coming from such a large conference where people share the same core values and beliefs into a secular world that often rejects those values and beliefs is difficult for teens. The desire to “fit in” trumps the desire to “be the change you want to see in the world.” This is compounded by the inability to express the experience to others. As a popular leader in the youth ministry world is known to say, “they are experience rich and vocabulary poor.”

This session aims to help teens transition from an experience where they feel close to God and their faith into a world where that is challenged. It also will strive to help them put words around the experience so it can be shared. Lastly, as a group, the pilgrims will prepare a report to the parish of their experience and thanking the community for their support.

Icebreaker

Icebreakers should be used as the group gathers to break them out of their shells and working together as a pilgrim group. A sample of popular icebreakers can be found on page 11.

Prayer

led by _____

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina literally means Sacred Reading. This is a prayer that allows the participant to listen to the message a scripture passage has for them. You will hear the same reading three times. Each time, you are asked to listen for something in particular.

- The first time, listen for a word that stands out – not a reason, just what word stands out.
- Second time, listen for a phrase that stands out. Again, you do not need a reason, just a phrase.
- The last time, where is your heart as you listen? What is your prayer with God?

Matthew 17:1-9

After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid.

But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, “Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Pilgrim Activity

Putting Words on the Experience

We are Peter, James and John! We have experienced a Transfiguration of sorts, but like Peter we do not fully understand what it means. We could not stay to “build three tents” but instead had to come home. Now we may be finding that we cannot talk to anyone about the experience because it is beyond words. Let’s start with us. We’ve experienced it together, so let’s tell our stories.

As a group create a time-line of the pilgrimage, in particular the voyage to NCYC. Allow the pilgrims to tell their stories as they create the time-line. Everything from the crazy billboard in the airport or the popcorn snack at the first bus stop. There should be plenty of laughter as they tell their stories, and a lot of “Remember when...” comments.

Share some of the hopes that the group had come up with in the second session before NCYC that they had held in prayer between sessions. Compare those to the experiences the group had. Were their hopes met? Were they exceeded?

Developing a Common Language

One of the reasons we have difficulty expressing the pilgrimage to others is because they did not share the experience, and so they do not have a common language. Watch a digital native try to explain the internet or a computer game to a baby boomer. The languages used are worlds apart.

Ask the group to define the following words: (*pre- and post-Internet definitions given*)

	Now	Then
Bump	to move an online post or thread to the top of reverse chronological list	to encounter something that is an obstacle
Block	to prevent someone from contacting such as a road	to be placed in front of something, or path, so that nothing can pass
Catfish	you on social media a person who sets up a false profile for fraudulent or deceptive purposes	a freshwater fish with whiskerlike barbels
Cloud vapor	any of several parts of the internet that allow online processing	a visible mass of particles of condensed vapor suspended in the atmosphere
Friend	(v.) to add a person to one’s list of contacts on social media	(n.) one attached to another by affection or esteem
Follow	to subscribe to someone’s updates	to go or come after or behind someone
Handle	screenname, or internet name be held by	part of something that is designed to your hand
Swipe	to drag a finger across a touchscreen	to steal
Tablet	a general-purpose computer writing	a pad of paper, a flat piece of stone with contained in a touchscreen panel

Tag	to link to someone else's profile	to supply with an identifying marker
or price		
Text	(v.) to send a text message	(n.) a book or piece of writing
Troll	a person who sows discord	a dwarf or giant in Scandinavian folklore
Tweet	a short message on Twitter	a chirping note
Unplug	refrain from digital or electronics	to disconnect something from an electrical outlet
Viral	becoming popular quickly	of, relating to, or caused by a virus
Windows	Operating System for Computers	Glass openings in a wall

If vocabulary has changed this much just since the Internet, it is no wonder that language can be an obstacle for communication.

It is not all vocabulary that stands in our way of easy communication, however! We must learn to tell our stories in a way that inside jokes and unspoken details are not needed. Pick one experience from the timeline and write a story. Provide the background needed for someone who was not there to know what happened.

Pilgrim Discussion

1. What have the last ___ days been like?
2. Have you tried to explain something that someone just did not understand?
3. What event from NCYC do you keep reliving?

Pilgrim Project

Plan a dinner to say thank you to the people who made NCYC happen. Plan the menu; create the guest list; make the invitations. This will lead directly into the second Post-NCYC session.

Present this as a two-fold opportunity. 1. You can thank those who made NCYC happen without being able to join the group. And 2. You can tell your story to them.

Closing Prayer – led by _____