

# JOURNEY TO THE FATHER

High School Age Catholic Youth  
Conference

## FOR THE GROUP LEADER

### ORGANIZING AND RECRUITING

We realize that preparing to bring teenagers to a conference can be a large undertaking and offer the following suggestions based on past experiences

#### ORGANIZING YOUR GROUP

- ?? A group can be as few as 3 teens with an adult but it makes sense, as much as possible, to work with larger numbers. Meeting and travelling with a larger group of teens makes the trip more exciting for young people; gives them an opportunity to make friends who share their beliefs; and may lay the foundation for a continued faith community. It also makes things more enjoyable for adults.
- ?? It may require reaching out to other adults and encouraging them to join you.
- ?? It may require volunteering to blend a number of smaller groups into one.
- ?? It may require working together with another parish.

Due to the nature of the conference, as well as the sleeping arrangements, it is necessary that there be at least one male adult chaperone for every 10 young males and one female chaperone for every 10 young girls. *If you bring only ten youth (6 girls and 4 boys), you would need two chaperones - a male & a female.*

### RECRUITING CHAPERONES

Be assured that it is possible to interest adults in working with teens. We have brought as many as 12 adults and 80 teens including clergy to one conference; 14 adults and 40 teens to another - all lay people. May we suggest:

#### **BEGIN WITH PRAYER.**

- ?? Put your planning in God's hands. Ask him to send you the adults you need to open the minds and hearts of the young people so they will wish to participate. Trust Him. Involve prayer chains, prayer groups, Adoration chapels, etc. in your prayer back up. Ask them to continue praying for you and with you (and for us) until the conference is finished. Try to have a team prepared to pray continually during the conference.

#### **IMMEDIATELY**

- ?? Begin to plant seeds about needing help for the summer conference among your neighbours and friends. Begin sharing with youth about the possibility of going and encourage them to invite adults to come with them.
- ?? Put up the Posters and begin Bulletin and Verbal announcements at Mass about the opportunity for youth to attend and the need for adult volunteers.
- ?? Ask your Parish Priest to help screen potential volunteers if the group does not know them.
- ?? Have all adults (21+) apply for Police Checks. These can take several weeks for your local Police Dept or Provincial Police office to process.
- ?? Remember - some adults need to be invited to help.

While some adults will simply volunteer for the weekend, hopefully others will want to continue working with teens afterwards, to help them grow in their faith.

## GROUP REGISTRATION

### NOW

- ?? Send in the **REGISTRATION DEPOSIT FORM** and deposit. Provide your best estimate of the number of participants you anticipate registering in your group.
- ?? Keep extra names on a waiting list because some may drop out - both adults and teens.
- ?? Make a list of possible volunteers and teens and begin recruiting by phone if you don't already have the numbers you need.
- ?? Hold an information meeting.
- ?? If you can obtain permission from your parish priest, speak after Masses.
- ?? Make use of the JTTF promotional materials.
- ?? If young people from your area attended one of the previous JTTF Conferences, invite them to work with you (they can invite new teens and/or give a witness talk at a Mass or meeting).

### AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

**Establish your group and submit the CONFIRMATION OF GROUP REGISTRATION and balance of fees for all members.**

#### CAUTIONARY NOTE

***Space at this Conference is limited to 500 participants. Fully-paid registrations are accepted on a first come, first serve basis.***

***Waiting until the deadline could result in being placed on a waiting list and/or disappointment for your group.***

### TWO MONTHS PRIOR

- Set up one or two sessions to help the leaders get to know one another, to pray together, to discuss their roles and responsibilities on the weekend.
- Arrange transportation to the Conference.
- Assign Chaperones to their small groups & invite them to get to know one another - even by phone.
- If possible, arrange an evening with the chaperones, students and their parents - to share information and begin developing a group mentality. You could design T-Shirts to wear and build a group identity.

### NOTE

***We will offer a special session for all chaperones at the Conference.***

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***Don't get discouraged if your group is small. They will meet others as they "Journey To The Father"***

## THE ROLE OF CHAPERONES

When recruiting and preparing volunteers, make them aware of exactly what will be expected of them.

### CHAPERONES

- ?? will be expected to supervise their small group during travel, during conference sessions and during sleeping hours.
- ?? are in charge and need to be encouraged to use their authority to keep their youth focussed at the Conference. This may mean sitting between two teens bent on talking during a session or quieting down their group for sleeping.
- ?? should be an example of obedience and cooperation with the Conference staff.
- ?? can help locate a lost sleeping bag or be an ear to a teen that needs to talk.
- ?? can help teens process what they are experiencing and can be a great support to them back home.
- ?? should find opportunities to pray with the young people - something as simple as grace before meals; praying a rosary while travelling or spontaneous prayer and praise (in word and song).

Also provide chaperones with a copy of the information sheet entitled **Chaperones – Check List.**

***Adult leaders can also help fundraise before the trip.***