



YOUTH FESTIVAL
RESOURCE

*'Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God'*

Mt 5:8

We are all very excited about the next Australian Catholic Youth Festival which will take place in Adelaide in December 2015! The Archdiocesan Office for Youth (AOY) has put together this resource to help support you in getting young people from Melbourne to attend this event. This resource contains some general information about the youth festival, extra information relevant to Melbourne participants, tips on how you can bring a group to the festival, ideas on how you can use the festival to boost or start a local youth group, and links to editable permission forms.

Being the former hosts, we want to ensure that as many young people as possible get to the next youth festival. We hope that many of you will take advantage of the momentum from the last festival and decide to take your own group of young people to Adelaide.

Contacts

If you require assistance in your planning for the youth festival, please don't hesitate to contact the Melbourne Archdiocesan Office for Youth. Our mission is to support youth ministry in our Archdiocese and we would love to help you!

- Email:** aoy@cam.org.au
- Website:** www.cam.org.au/youth
- Ph:** 03 9287 5565

An electronic copy of this resource (with links and downloadable forms) is available on our AOY website www.cam.org.au/youth/ACYF-2015/ACYF-News

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Introduction to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival is a national gathering of young people established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC). It provides young people with an opportunity to deepen their relationship with Jesus, be empowered to be disciples in the world today, and encounter and celebrate the vitality of the Church in Australia.

The first festival was held in Melbourne in 2013 and was deemed a great success! With over 3500 participants, it was the largest gathering of Catholics in Australia since World Youth Day in Sydney. Images and videos from the 2013 youth festival can be found on the official website: www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au.

The festival will be interactive and engaging, and participants are able to attend a wide range of activities across the three days. The workshops will cover a variety of topics of interest to young people, including social justice, song writing and ethical issues. Each day there will be main plenary sessions where all participants gather together to celebrate as one group. There is also an interactive expo where young people can engage with Catholic movements and organisations. In addition, participants have the opportunity to experience different spiritualities and prayer forms including meditation, adoration, praise and more, led by experienced facilitators and talented Catholic musicians.

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival has taken a scriptural verse as its theme - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (Matthew 5:8). This theme was provided by Pope Francis as the theme for World Youth Day in 2015, in preparation for the pilgrimage to Krakow in 2016.

The Australian Catholic Bishops are calling all young people from year 9 (in 2015) up to the age of 25 to join in this celebration of the Catholic Church in Australia.



At a glance...

Where can I get more information?

The official festival website will be gradually updated to include all the relevant information including dates for registration, policies and the schedule. Visit www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au. The AOY will also update our website as information becomes available. To ensure you don't miss out, join the AOY mailing list at www.cam.org.au/youth/About-Us/Subscribe-to-ENews

When is the festival?

Thursday 3rd – Saturday 5th December 2015

Where is it being held?

The Adelaide Convention Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide

Who can attend?

The festival is for young people from year 9 (in 2015) - 25 years of age (as at December 2015). All participants under 18 need to be accompanied by adults. Group leaders can be of any age.

Who is organising the festival?

The festival is organised by a steering committee, and is overseen by the ACBC Office for Youth.

What happens at the festival?

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival is a national gathering of Catholic young people. It exists to provide young people with opportunities to deepen their relationship with Jesus, be empowered to be disciples in the world today and encounter and celebrate the vitality of the Church in Australia. This is achieved through a number of large gatherings, workshops, liturgies, prayer experiences an expo and the festival atmosphere.

How much will it cost to attend?

See page 7.

How do I get to Adelaide?

Flights from Melbourne to Adelaide usually range from \$50-\$150 however for group bookings it is often difficult to get competitive rates. If you are able to borrow a mini bus driving is likely to be the cheapest option however it is an 8 hour drive not including stops. If you need to hire a coach it can often cost as much as flying.

How do I register?

Registration will be completed online through the festival website. This will open in April 2015.

How will we get around Adelaide during our visit?

The festival will be held in the Adelaide Convention Centre which is walking distance from the CBD. If your group is staying outside the city they will need to purchase local transport tickets for public transport in and out of the city.

Who can I go with?

If you would like to attend the youth festival, ask whether your parish, youth group, community or school is planning to send a group. If you don't have any luck, contact the AOY and we will put you in touch with a suitable group to go with.

Can I volunteer?

The festival will be looking for volunteers to help with the event. For more details visit www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au in the coming months. Volunteers will be required to comply with the festival policy which includes completing a number of checks. You may also like to consider volunteering to take a group of young people from your local area or assisting as a leader of a local group who is attending.

For more information please visit the website: www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au



Plans of the Melbourne Archdiocese

The AOY is encouraging parishes, youth groups, communities and schools to consider sending their own groups to the festival. We hope many young people from our Archdiocese have the opportunity to attend this exciting national event!

The AOY will support groups attending the festival by:

- Hosting regular information updates across Melbourne at the Connect regional youth ministry meetings (February, May and October 2015) for those interested in leading a group
- Running festival related formation for leaders at our Blueprint workshop day on April 18, 2015
- Creating this written resource to assist group coordinators with their preparation
- Running a workshop day on October 17, 2015 to prepare group leaders who are accompanying a group to the youth festival
- Creating a written resource with content to assist with running small groups and preparing your group to attend the festival
- Hosting a Commissioning Mass with Archbishop Hart at the Cathedral on November 29, 2015
- Offering a limited number of subsidies to assist with the registration costs of group leaders.

The AOY will assist young people who would like to attend the festival by connecting them with a suitable group located near them. **If you are planning to lead a group to the festival, please contact us!** If you are a young person who would like to attend the festival but don't have a group, please contact us too!

For more details contact the AOY by calling (03) 9287 5565 or email aoy@cam.org.au



Guide for bringing a youth group

This step-by-step guide is designed to help you understand the practicalities involved in bringing a group of young people to the festival.

1. Where do we start?

You may need to form a small planning team to organise taking a group from your parish or community to the festival. This not only shares around the tasks, but also allows for different perspectives and talents to be contributed. Your team may include: youth leaders, your Parish Priest, parents of youth, youth representatives, and other key parishioners. Remember, getting young people involved early in the planning helps them take ownership of the group, ensures it will be relevant for them, and assists them in forming friendships.

2. What is our group going to look like?

I. How many people can we bring in our group?

We encourage group coordinators and youth leaders to dream big and take initiative to organise large groups. Consider reaching out to youth groups, parishes and high schools in the area. Set a goal for your group size to begin with and go from there. Having said that, if you have only a small number of young people who can attend, the youth festival has something wonderful to offer them, so we encourage you to take them along!

II. What ages will we have?

The age bracket for youth participants at the festival is from year 9 until 25 years. Are you hoping to bring young people under 18? We hope so! Please remember that these young people will require supervision during the festival. Anyone older than 25 can be still be involved as a group leader, or through supporting the group with planning and fundraising. They may also consider being one of the official youth festival volunteers. (For more information about volunteering, visit www.youthfestival.org.au)



3. Who will lead our group?

I. Group Coordinator

All groups require a Group Coordinator in order to register for the festival. This person is responsible for registering the group and looking after their group members during the festival. If you are planning to have young people under 18 in your group, the group coordinator is the person responsible for them during the festival.

II. Adult Leaders

Additional leaders may be needed to assist the Group Coordinator if you have a large group. Leaders should be able to relate well with young people, support the Group Coordinator and be open to supporting the faith journey of the festival participants in their group.

Consider involving the following people:

- Young people just outside the age bracket (e.g. 26-35 year olds)
- Your Parish Priest or a seminarian who has worked in your parish
- Parents of young people in the group
- Other key leaders in the parish who interact well with young people

Please note:

- All Group Coordinators and Adult Leaders must be over 18 years old.
- It is Archdiocesan policy that all adults working with children hold a current Working with Children check. The check is free for volunteers. As the festival involves an overnight stay, all leaders will also need to have a police check.

Please check out the Archdiocese's policy on working with young people "May Our Children Flourish". It can be downloaded from www.cam.org.au/Caring-for-Children.aspx The AOY also recently made a resource specifically for youth groups who are going on camps based on our Archdiocesan policies. This is called "Providing a safe environment for young people" and can be downloaded from www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/Resources/SafeEnviroResource_web_editable.pdf. The youth festival also has a policy for leaders which will be available shortly to download from the website: www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au.



4. How much will it cost to attend?

The main costs for attending the festival are outlined below.

- **Registration**

The registration costs for the festival are divided into three groups. Participants travelling from interstate will pay less than those from the hosting Diocese. Young people attending from the Melbourne Archdiocese are in Group B which means that registration will cost \$170 for early bird (until mid-August) and \$195 full registration.

- **Transport to Adelaide**

Flights from Melbourne to Adelaide usually range from \$50-\$150 each way however for group bookings it is often difficult to get competitive rates. If you are able to borrow a mini bus driving is likely to be the cheapest option however it is an 8 hour drive not including stops. If you need to hire a coach it can often cost as much as flying. You may need to budget for airport transfers if you are flying to Adelaide however the airport is close to the city so these costs should be minimal.

- **Accommodation in Adelaide**

As the festival will start on the afternoon of Thursday 3rd December and finish late on Saturday 5th December it is likely that your group will need to find accommodation for at least three nights (Thursday, Friday and Saturday). The festival steering committee has appointed the company “Premier Event Concepts” to secure a number of low-cost beds during the festival

between \$40-\$65 per night at venues including backpackers and hostels. Most of these beds are in the CBD so you may be able to walk from your accommodation to the festival each day and may not need to pay for daily transport in Adelaide. To discuss rates and your group needs, contact:

Shanna Sheldrick
0437 377 107
shanna@premiereventconcepts.com.au

You are also free to organise your own accommodation.

- **Food during the festival**

The festival has separated out meals from the registration costs to allow more flexibility for participants. A meal ticket can be purchased when registering, which costs \$75 and includes five meals: dinner on Thursday, and lunch and dinner on Friday/Saturday. If you prefer, you can decide to organise your own meals from restaurants or food outlets near the festival.

With all of these elements in mind, an estimated price to attend the festival would be \$600-\$700 per person depending on individual preferences.

5. How can we cover the costs?

It is important for the young people who are attending the festival to contribute at least some of their costs for attending the festival. This increases ownership in their involvement and will help them get more out of the experience. Consider the following ideas to help reduce the cost for your group.

I. Fundraising

Fundraising involves the whole community coming together to support young people in attending the festival. Fundraising is also a great opportunity for building camaraderie and team work in your group. The AOY has released a resource to help groups with ideas for fundraising activities which can be found at: www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/FundraisingPack.pdf

II. Sponsorship by Parish

Consider speaking to your Parish Priest about whether the parish is able to assist your group financially.

III. AOY Festival Support

The AOY is offering a limited number of subsidies to assist with the registration costs of youth group leaders. Check out the AOY website for more details about how to apply.

6. How do we register our group?

At the time of printing, the festival organisers are yet to confirm exact arrangements for registration however they are hoping to have similar arrangements to the previous festival. In 2013, the Group Coordinator registered first via the festival website and was confirmed once payment was received. Group Coordinators were required to read through the preparation information on the registration page before registering. Once a Group Coordinator had registered, participants and adult leaders could be added to the group until the close of group registration. This could be done one by one, or all at once. Those registering more than 10 people at once, were able to upload them in a registration spread sheet available on the website.

Tips:

- Continue to check the festival website for updates regarding registration: www.youthfestival.catholic.org.au
- Read all registration policies before registering

- If possible, register all your group members in time to get the early bird rate!
- Don't forget to notify the AOY that you are taking a group so we can support you too.

7. How can we encourage people to join our group?

It's important to let your parish know about your group's plans to attend the festival. Promoting your participation can encourage others to jump on board.

• Individual invitation!

This is by far the most important way to encourage young people to join your group. Once you have a small group, encourage every person to invite another friend.

• Talking at Mass

Ask your Parish Priest if you can have 2 minutes at the end of each Mass for a weekend, to speak about your group attending the festival and invite people to come along.

• Making flyers

Include the contact details of your Group Coordinator. You may like to hand these out after Mass, at schools, to friends etc.

• Talking to parents and grandparents

Many parents and grandparents have children and grandchildren in the age bracket who may like to go to the festival. Encourage them to invite these young people to join your group.

• Social media

Consider setting up a Facebook invite to your group. Send links about the festival to your contacts and follow the ACBC page for updates that you can share in your networks.

• Advertising in the parish or school bulletin

Ask the Parish Priest or Principal if you can include a notice in their regular bulletin. Consider schools in the area including Government schools and Catholic schools who are not taking their own group to the festival.

• Nominate youth ambassadors for your group

Young people can be the most effective advocates for the festival among their peers. Nominate enthusiastic youth ambassadors to be a central point of contact for other young people in your community.

For more ideas please have a read of the Archdiocesan Office for Youth Promotion Resource found on the AOY website: www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/YouthGroupPromotionsGuide.pdf

8. What forms do we need?

As a group leader taking young people interstate, you will need to ensure you have collected all the necessary information to have a safe pilgrimage. It is advisable that all participants fill in a form before attending the festival. For the participants who are under 18 years, a signed permission form must be obtained from their legal guardians. You will also need to collect information in the case of an emergency. An editable form is available for download as a part of the “Creating a Safe Environment” resource that was published by the AOY in 2014. This can be found in the online resources section of our website: www.cam.org.au/youth/Resources/Online-Resources

9. How do we prepare our leaders for the festival?

In addition to the regular updates at the regional Connect meetings, the AOY is running two leaders' formation sessions.

- **Blueprint Workshop Day – Saturday 18th April**
This workshop day will focus on key skills for youth ministry including how to create a “ministry of presence” and how to pray with young people. It will also include an overview of the Melbourne Archdiocese's policy on legal requirements for working with young people.
- **Youth Festival Leaders Formation – Saturday 17th October**
This formation session will focus on practical skills in leading a group of young people interstate. As a group we will brainstorm challenges that may occur and work through strategies to overcome these difficulties. We will also break open ways that group leaders can deepen the experience for young people they are accompanying. The day will include an outline of the festival schedule, the latest updates from the National Steering Committee and further information about the Melbourne Commissioning Mass.

10. How do we prepare the young people for the festival?

Once you register your group to come to the festival, it's a good idea to get together and get to know each other! You may want to host regular gatherings or a few information nights where participants can meet

each other, and familiarise themselves with the practical aspects of attending the festival.

In particular we encourage you to attend the following event:

- **Commissioning Mass and Celebration – Sunday 29th November 2015.**

The Commissioning Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Hart at St Patrick's Cathedral and followed by a social gathering. This event would be an ideal preparation activity for groups to attend together to get to know each other. We encourage you to consider catching public transport together to get the feel of pilgrimage!

In the months leading up to the festival, additional resources will be released by the festival steering committee and the AOY to assist groups in preparing spiritually for the festival. Check out the relevant websites for updates.

11. What other practical aspects should we consider?

It is a good idea to get together with your leadership group to plan what the days will actually look like for your group. As a starting point you might want to discuss the schedules for each day. The official program will be released in the lead up to the festival and will include a diverse range of activities focused on spirituality, social justice and the arts. Groups should try and participate in activities that your young people are most interested in – but also encourage your young people to engage in activities that may be outside their usual experience of church. In addition to this, it is recommended that your group consider having a time of debrief and sharing during the days of the festival. This could take place during meal times, whilst travelling to and from the festival, or at a designated time/ place during the festival.



Using the festival to boost your youth group

The experience of gathering with a large number of young people to celebrate their faith often encourages young people to seek ways of living their faith more actively in their home parishes. The Australian Catholic Youth Festival may be an opportunity for your parish to start a youth group, or give existing groups encouragement to grow.

Here are some tips for using the Australian Catholic Youth Festival to help start or boost your youth group:

- Decide to take a group to the festival. Use the festival as a deadline to get something going in your area.
- At the festival, meet as many other young Catholics as possible. Talk to them about their experience of being part of a youth group. Share ideas.
- Collect contacts from other youth groups, priests and religious who can share their story or give a talk to your group.
- Enrich your own faith by participating in the activities made available at the festival, including talks, workshops, praise and worship sessions, Reconciliation, Adoration and Mass.
- Learn more about social justice and the opportunities available to volunteer in your local area.
- Experience the impact music has on helping young people and grab some ideas about songs you can use in your own music ministry.
- Visit the marketplace and buy resources including books, music and CDs for yourself or your youth group.

List of helpful resources

These resources can be downloaded from the AOY website or by clicking on the links below in the electronic version of this resource:

1. AOY Fundraising Resource - www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/FundraisingPack.pdf
2. AOY Youth Group Promotion Guide - www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/YouthGroupPromotionsGuide.pdf
3. AOY Starting a youth group - www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/StartingAYouthGroup.pdf
4. Creating a Safe Environment - www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/Resources/SafeEnviroResource_web_editable.pdf
5. CAM resource on Caring for Children – “May our Children Flourish” - www.cam.org.au/Caring-for-Children.aspx
6. Social Networking Protocol for the Church in Australia - www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/ACBC-SocialNetworkingProtocols.pdf
7. Editable permission form - <http://www.cam.org.au/Portals/60/documents/Providing%20a%20Safe%20Environment%20%20Editable%20Forms.doc>

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FOR

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