

2019 - 2020
ST. AGNES YOUTH GROUP
HANDBOOK



ST. AGNES PARISH
332 MADISON HILL ROAD
CLARK, NEW JERSEY

WWW.STAGNESYOUTHGROUP.COM
SAINTAGNESYOUTHGROUP@GMAIL.COM

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Welcome to St. Agnes Youth Group

Dear Youth Members and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to St. Agnes Youth Group.

This handbook serves as a guide and reference source for youth members and parents about the many activities of the youth group as well as the rules and policies that youth members are expected to follow throughout the year. Please keep this handbook as it hopefully answers any questions that may arise.

In His Peace and Love,

Barbara Dietrick and Rob Kircher
Directors of Youth Ministry

Disclaimer

The information contained herein is subject to modification, change, interpretation, and elimination at any time at the youth group moderators' discretion.

Adult Moderator Contact Info

Should you need to contact either of the moderators directly, here is their personal information:

Barbara Dietrick 908-358-8235 Dietrickb@aol.com

Rob Kircher 908-472-4777 rkircher525@gmail.com

If there is a problem, please contact Barbara directly.

All general questions and emails regarding a youth member missing a meeting/event should be directed to saintagnesyouthgroup@gmail.com, so that it is marked on the attendance sheet.

Please add the adult moderators' email addresses and our YG email address to your address book so that you are able to receive all group emails.

The Youth Group website (www.StAgnesYouthGroup.com) is the best resource to check the schedule, download permission slips, and stay up to date on the Youth Group program.

Youth Group Eligibility

The St. Agnes Youth Group welcomes all high school age students (grades 9-12).

Youth members do not need to be a parishioner of St. Agnes Parish.

Note: the sacrament of Confirmation does not determine eligibility, as the Confirmation age varies by parish.

Students requiring more than the four standard years of high school to graduate will not be eligible to attend youth group activities after their fourth year of high school. This is due to the significant age disparity between the freshmen and any seniors who may be repeating that year a second or third time.

Attendance

Attendance is taken at every youth group meeting and event.

However, attendance at regular meetings is NOT mandatory. We understand that there will be times that youth members will have other commitments.

The more meetings and events that you attend, the more you will get to know your peers, as well as get more out of your Youth Group experience.

If you cannot make a meeting because of family, sports, or school conflict, you can email Rob at saintagnesyouthgroup@gmail.com before the meeting, and we will mark it as excused. (This can factor into play at various times when making decisions regarding one's dedication and commitment to the program and its rules.)

There are only a few times where attendance is a requirement.

-To be selected for Core Team, attendance is one criterion that the current Core Team members base their decisions upon. But note: It is not simply your physical presence at the meetings but also your involvement, behavior, etc.

-To attend the Lock-In, you must attend at least 3 total Youth Group events, at least one of which must be a fall service event*. The Lock-In is a fun filled night, with many great activities and lessons. It is considered a reward for those that are **participating** in the youth group and serving the community.

-To take part in Living Stations, attendance is mandatory for all practices. And unfortunately, you will be replaced upon your second missed practice. We need commitment and consistency in order to have a successful production. Living Stations is a major undertaking, and is the youth group's biggest gift to the parish.

-To go on the Six Flags Trip, you must be an active member of the Youth Group during the spring schedule**, attend one of the designated masses on the weekend of the trip, and also fulfill one of the following requirements:

- (A) Be a Part of Living Stations (through the production night) OR
- (B) Attend TWO (2) of the service activities* in the Fall Schedule.

*Fall service activities are the Pumpkin Trip, Food Bank Trip, and our Rake and Run.

**The criterion for being an active member during the spring schedule varies by year, depending on how early or late Easter falls, thereby determining how many spring meetings are held.

Youth members are welcome to join at any regular meeting during the year, with a few exceptions. We cannot have new members join on the day of a trip or special event, nor once Stations practices are underway.

Code of Conduct

Youth members are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards fellow members, adult moderators, and visitors to St. Agnes Youth Group.

Disruptive conduct during meetings and events cannot and will not be tolerated.

Youth members are to remain in the location of the meeting/event at all times. Departing from the meeting area without permission is prohibited.

Youth members who destroy or vandalize church property will face disciplinary action. In addition, parents will be held liable for the damages.

Youth members found forging parental notes or permission slips will be disciplined accordingly.

The St. Agnes Youth Group is a smoke free organization. Any students found smoking at a youth group meeting or event will face disciplinary action.

No threats will be tolerated, whether verbal, in writing, or on the Internet. If the adult moderators deem a threat to be of a serious nature, the youth member(s) will be removed from the youth group environment and face disciplinary action. Formal charges/reports will be filed with the proper authorities when appropriate.

Note: Any other inappropriate youth member behavior/act not mentioned in this section will be subject to disciplinary action.

Discipline Policy & Consequences

Youth members who choose not to accept the rules and policies of the youth group are subject to disciplinary action.

Adult moderators will use a variety of measures including but not limited to: parent conferences, having the youth member meet with the pastor and/or additional parish priests, warnings, suspensions, or any other strategies determined by the youth ministry directors.

The behavior and discipline policy is enforced during all youth group related activities and events.

The general pattern of consequences that will be followed is:

1st Discipline – Verbal Warning

2nd Discipline – Parent must attend next meeting with youth member.

3rd Discipline – Youth member will be suspended from the program for a period of time or permanently depending on the magnitude of the infraction.

Note: Discipline and consequences will vary according to the youth member's history of inappropriate behavior and frequency of such history, as well as the severity and nature of the incident.

General Policies and Procedures

General Rules for Meetings and Events

Almost all regular meetings have a portion of the meeting dedicated to the night's activity, followed by free time for socializing/playing sports, etc. All youth members are expected to cooperate and participate in the activity. Disruptions and lack of participation will cause the activity to run longer, and conversely the free time to be shortened.

One major rule of the Youth Group is Respect! When anyone (adult or youth member) is speaking, the rest of the group is expected to be attentive and silent.

You are responsible for cleaning up after yourselves – this includes, but is not limited to, chairs, food and drink, sporting equipment, pens and markers, etc.

All meetings and events have definitive starting times – Please be on time, so that we can start the activity at the scheduled time.

Please have your rides AT church by the designated end time of the event. Please give whoever is picking you up a copy of the schedule so that they are also aware of the end time. This also avoids having to call for a ride every week.

If you have a question as to what time a meeting or event is - check the schedule, your email, or the Youth Group website to find out.

NO outside beverages are permitted at any Youth Group function unless otherwise specified. The youth group provides snacks and drinks at almost every meeting and event. On special occasions, such as the Christmas and End-of-Year Parties, youth members are welcome to bring baked goods, etc. to supplement the usual weekly snacks and drinks.

Some trips and special events require youth members to bring their own lunch, but that will be specified in advance.

Permission Slips

All youth members must turn in a permission slip, signed by their parent/guardian, to attend any trip/event that requires parental permission.

The parent/guardian signing the permission slip must have their signature on file in the youth group book. Any members without permission slips will not be permitted on the trip.

By signing the permission slip, the youth member, as well as their parent/guardian, agree to adhere to the rules of the group and take all responsibility for their actions while on the trip/at the event.

All permission slips must be turned in in **HARD COPY** form. Sorry, but digital scans cannot be accepted.

*Please note: Organizations have varying rules as to permission slips for 18 year olds. Here at St. Agnes, we require ALL members to have permission slips regardless of age.

Parent Signature Book

All NEW members must have at least one parent/guardian come into the building at the start or the end time of a meeting to sign the youth group book, in order for us to ensure the authenticity of the signature on all parental notes and permission slips received thereafter.

The parent that signs the YG book **must** be the parent to sign **all** YG documents.

*It is recommended that both parents sign the YG Book, to avoid running into a last minute situation where the parent whose signature is on file isn't available to sign a document.

It is critical that parents sign all documents in the same manner that they signed the book so that the signature can be verified. Initials and illegible signatures will not be accepted.

Members must have their parent sign the YG book within two meetings of joining the program.

This procedure is in place for the safety of the youth members, as well as to protect the church and the adult moderators running Youth Group.

Youth members will not be permitted to attend meetings if the parent/guardian signature is not obtained within a two-meeting grace period.

No YG member will be allowed on trips without their parent/guardian having signed the book in advance.

Note: Parents cannot sign the YG book on the morning of the trip, so please plan ahead!

Parents who have previously signed the book **do not** need to do so again- all signatures are kept on file.

Also, if a parent/guardian signature is already on file from an older sibling, we **do not** need the parent to sign the book again for the younger sibling.

Registration Packet

ALL youth group members must return a "Registration Packet" EVERY year.

The parent/guardian that signed the YG book **MUST** be the one to complete and sign the packet, as noted above.

This packet ensure that both the youth members and their parents/guardians agree to the rules and policies of the group as described in this handbook, as well as other key information such as emergency contacts, allergy info, publicity release, and PGC information.

One packet can be completed per family, with all YG members signing the "Youth Agreement" section.

Completed packets can be returned at any YG meeting or left in the parish office in an envelope marked for YG.

The packet is due back within two meetings of joining Youth Group for the year.

No youth member will be allowed on any trips unless the packet is turned in prior to the day of the trip.

Leaving Meetings or Events Early

Any youth member needing to leave a YG function before its scheduled end time MUST turn in a note signed by the youth member's parent/guardian whose signature is on file.

-The note must state what time the member will be leaving as well as who will be picking them up.

Communication

There are two main forms of communication that St. Agnes Youth Group uses: email and our website.

All members will receive email updates and reminders throughout the year. It is essential that all youth members check their email frequently, especially when events are upcoming.

When emails are sent that require responses, it is critical that all youth members reply promptly and accurately, so that we can make any necessary decisions and plan accordingly for the event/activity.

At the start of the year, all youth members' will receive a test email requiring a reply to ensure that we have all email addresses correctly typed on our list.

www.StAgnesYouthGroup.com is the official website of St. Agnes Youth Group, and is the best source for youth members and parents/guardians to find the most up-to-date information. Additionally, all permission slips, the calendar, and the handbook can be downloaded from the website. Please bookmark the website!

Emergency Weather Updates

In the event that a youth group meeting or event is forced to be cancelled or rained out due to weather (or another emergency) check the Youth Group website first – the homepage will be updated before emails are sent out.

Core Team

The Core Team is a group of approximately 20-25 youth group members, selected by their peers, to take on a leadership role in the group, as well as take on the extra responsibility of additional service activities.

Core Team members are selected based on the criteria of: behavior, commitment to the Youth Group, responsibility, dedication, moral fiber, work ethic, attendance, etc.

New Core Team members are selected by the existing Core Team, and that voting takes place in April/May.

Additionally, to remain on the Core Team, existing members must receive a two-thirds majority of votes by their peers on Core Team. This vote takes place twice each year – fall and spring. This allows for the removal of non-involved, non-committed, non-responsible, etc. Core Team members.

- Core Team members whose attendance (CT and/or YG) falls below half of the total activities at the time of voting must receive 75% of the vote in their favor to remain on Core Team.

The adult moderators have the right to remove members from Core Team who are failing to meet the responsibility of being a part of Core Team.

Letters of Recommendation

If any youth members need a letter of recommendation for a college, a scholarship, or a job application, they are certainly welcome to ask Barb and/or Rob to write one.

-Please ask a few weeks in advance to allow Barb/Rob time to write your letter, as many youth members often ask at the same time.

-Also, bring any information of who the letter has to be written to, what it's for, facts about your schooling, volunteer activity, etc. This helps to personalize your letter.

Barb and Rob will also sign community service hour sheets for school or clubs.

Protecting God's Children Policy

The Archdiocese requires that all parents volunteering to work with youth, including as trip drivers, **MUST** hold current certification through the "Protecting God's Children" program, as well as consent to a background check.

There are three components to the PGC program:

- Course certification (initial – Protecting God's Children, re-certification – Keeping the Promise Alive)
 - Valid for 5 years
- Authorizing a background check (which needs to be updated every 5 years).
- Completing the volunteer application and returning it to the Parish Office, along with your course certificate.

Recertification can be completed by one of the following methods:

- Attending the Keeping the Promise Alive re-certification course (approx.. 1-1.5 hours)
 - Registration must be done in advance - either online using your original Virtus login account information, or by contacting Larry Boland.
 - Check the Virtus website for the most up-to-date KPA course offerings.
- Re-taking the Protecting God's Children course.
- Contacting Larry Boland to inquire about online re-certification.

If you have taken the course previously, you should receive monthly articles by email from the Virtus system.

- By reading the articles and answering the questions that follow them, you'll stay in good standing with the Virtus program, which will make online re-certification a more likely possibility.
- If you do not receive the monthly articles via email, but would like to, please contact Larry Boland.

Each fall, these courses will be offered at many parishes throughout the Archdiocese.

- A PGC course is coordinated each year in conjunction with one of our YG meetings so that parents can attend the course while their YG members are at the meeting. Being that the course runs a bit longer than the meeting, YG members can be dropped off early and can remain at the meeting until the course finishes.
- The up-to-date list of all course local offerings is always available on the Virtus website.

We ask that all parents please complete the PGC page of the "Registration Packet" - filling it out with either your current certification info, with the date that you'll be signing up to take the course, or with your certification details.

Parents who have not previously completed the Volunteer Packet will need to do so.

- The packet is available at www.StAgnesYouthGroup.com/PGCPacket, and printed copies are available upon request.

In order for our fall trips to happen successfully, at least one parent of each Youth Group member **must** hold current certification through the PGC program.

- Each trip requires approximately 10-15 parent drivers, thus requiring a minimum of 30-45 trained parents, as the goal is not to have any parent drive for more than one fall trip.

Parents who opt not to attend the course, or choose to let their certification lapse, will put their child's position to attend trips in jeopardy, as we have to be fair to the kids whose parents have committed their time to complete the program and assist us.

-On the morning of each trip, the cars will be filled with youth members whose parents have met the training requirement. Should any seats remain, youth members whose parents did not attend the training will have their names pulled at random to determine who goes on the trip, and who will go home.

Larry Boland – Safe Environment Coordinator, Archdiocese of Newark - lawrence.boland@rcan.org - 973-497-4012

Protecting God's Children Policy, continued

The St Agnes PGC procedure is as follows:

- Register on Virtus Online (www.virtus.org) to sign up for the Protecting God's Children workshop, and to complete the background check.
- **All** volunteers must complete a packet which includes a volunteer application and the Archdiocesan Code of Ethics. The packet can be downloaded at www.StAgnesYouthGroup.com/PGCPacket. Printed copies are available upon request.
 - The **original** PGC workshop attendance **certificate** needs to accompany the packet.
 - Completed packets should be sent to the parish office:
St Agnes Church
332 Madison Hill Road
Clark, NJ 07066
Attn: Janine Matthews – PGC

Once the completed paperwork is received and the background screening is completed, you will receive the following for your records:

- A letter of approval resulting from the background screening
- A copy of the certificate of completion for attending the Protecting God's Children workshop.

A re-screening and refresher course are required every five years.

If you need further assistance, contact Janine Matthews at 732-388-7852 ext 1.

Trips & Parent Drivers

There are only a few times that we ask parents to help with driving, as trips are not possible without their help!

One parent per youth group member **must** volunteer to drive for at least one of our fall trips. Failure to do so may result in your child being unable to attend a trip due to lack of drivers.

There are the three trips in the fall (Pumpkin Picking, Food Bank, and the Rake and Run) and the Six Flags trip in the spring.

All parents helping with Youth Group in any matter, including as drivers, **must** hold current certification through the “Protecting God’s Children” program. (see the previous page for more information).

In mid-September, we will distribute sign up forms for youth members to bring home to their parents/guardians to have them fill out their driving availability. Please return the forms quickly, so that a driving schedule can be put together. If all of the youth group parents volunteer, each parent should only have to drive once.

For our three fall trips, all youth members **MUST** return a completed “Trip RSVP / Parent Driver Form” by the designated due date. The form must be signed by the parent whose signature is on file, to ensure that parents have seen the form, checked their availability, and confirm that they are willing to drive.

- Failure to turn in the completed forms in a timely matter will result in the youth member running the risk of not going on the trips.

- On the morning of each trip, the cars will be filled with youth members who returned forms first.

- Should any seats remain, any youth members who failed to return a form will have their names pulled at random to determine who goes on the trip, and who will go home.

Parent drivers remain with the group for the duration of the trip. This is for a variety of reasons, first and foremost to have our chaperones present at all times. Additionally:

- For the Pumpkin Trip and Rake & Run, we need to be able to depart promptly when ready to switch locations, in order to remain on schedule.

- For the Food Bank trip, the parent drivers will be required to stay with the groups of kids in various locations inside the Food Bank while we are there, as per the Food Bank’s chaperone requirements.

ALSO: Parents, your cancellation, as a driver, at the last minute can cause the trip to not have enough drivers, which will lead to the cancellation of the trip. **If you have an emergency, please find a parent (who completed the training) to cover for you (and the number of seats you committed to), in addition to informing the adult moderators as far in advance as possible.**

- Parents who fail to find a replacement will put their child in jeopardy of being excluded from the trip.

We truly appreciate the youth group parents’ help to make these programs happen!

Fundraising

In order to not be an added financial burden to parents and to be financially independent from the parish, our Youth Group program runs a few fundraisers throughout the year.

Active participation is expected of all Youth Group families throughout the year, as participation is essential in order to ensure the success of the fundraisers.

The fundraisers that the youth group is planning to run this year are the Discount Card and our year-round clothing drive.

Clothing Drives

The Youth Group collects for our clothing drive **year-round**, and call for pickups quarterly.

-Additionally, Fall and Spring drive events are held at a parish-wide level.

We encourage all youth group members to spread the word to family, friends, and neighbors, that if they are cleaning out clothes (and household cloth items) with the changing of the seasons, to bag the items and save them for our clothing drive!

If you have bags to donate at **ANY point** during the year, you can bring them to any YG function (or contact Barb or Rob to arrange a drop off time). There is also a year-round drop off bin inside the parking lot lobby entrance to church. We have plenty of storage space until the next pickup.

Please note: the metal bins in the St. Agnes parking lot do **not** benefit our YG clothing drives at all – they are controlled by and benefit the Archdiocese of Newark. Always bring bags into a YG function

The clothing drive benefits all parties involved. You gain closet/dresser space, the needy receive much needed clothing, and Youth Group receives fundraising based on the poundage collected.

Clothing donated through our drive is distributed as clothing – items are not shredded for rags.

Tax receipts are available upon request.

Spread the word to family, friends and neighbors that we collect year-round – that way they can either send their donation bags with you to a meeting or they can contact us directly.

Here are some suggestions of items that can be donated:

Any clothing items:

-Shirts, pants, dresses, sports/school uniforms, etc.

-Summer: shorts, tank tops, swimsuits, etc.

-Winter: jackets, sweaters, etc.

-Accessories: hats, socks, belts, scarves, ties, etc.

(Basically, anything and everything that you could wear)

-Footwear: Shoes, sneakers, boots, sandals, etc.(in decent condition, and in a complete pair)

-Household items: blankets, curtains, sheets, tablecloths, bedding, towels, etc.

-Purses, backpacks, handbags

-Stuffed Animals and Soft Toys

Cell Phones

Youth members are allowed to keep their cell phones during regular meetings and most events. However, youth members are expected to keep their phones on silent or vibrate and refrain from using them during group activities, in order to avoid distractions to the group.

At all Masses that the Youth Group attends, cell phones are to be turned completely off and away for the duration of Mass.

During the Lock-In, all cell phones, iPods, other electronic devices, and watches, will be collected and locked away (or just leave them home) for the entire night, as these devices, and knowledge of the time, are distractions to the youth members and the group at large.

-The adult moderators will have their cell phones on them at all times, so if parents/guardians need to reach their child, they are able to do so via the adult moderators.

During Living Stations practices, cell phone use is prohibited, as the practices take place in darkness, and cell phones illuminate the church. Youth members are asked to leave their phones on silent and in the pews for the duration of the practice. For the production night, cell phones will be collected and locked up until afterward.

Youth Group T-Shirts

A youth group tradition that we started many years ago is our Youth Group Shirts.

Our entire group wears them when we do things as a group, such as service events, fundraisers and trips. It is both a way to show unity amongst us, as well as represent where we are from!

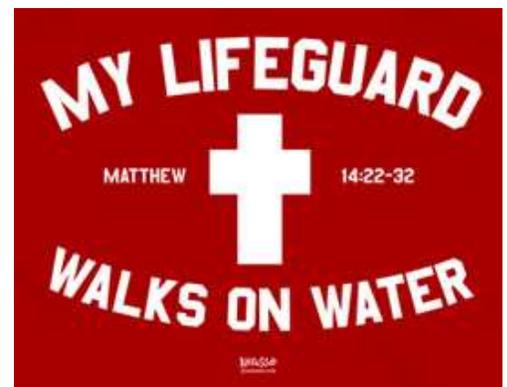
The shirts are \$15 each.

The front has the design on the right, and the back reads “St. Agnes Youth Group - We Walk By Faith”.

Please do NOT wait until the day of an event to buy your shirt

-There is too much to be done to get the trip off and running, so we will NOT be selling them the day of the trip.

Also, if you wait too long, you may run the risk of us being sold out of your particular size.



Youth Group Masses

Continuing our tradition, Youth Group will attend a parish Mass together each month from October through June. Please see the schedule for the exact dates and times of our YG monthly Masses.

For parish masses, we will sit together on the choir side of church. Please arrive about 10-15 minutes prior to Mass.

Youth Group t-shirts are to be worn by all youth members.

Youth Group members are encouraged to attend all YG masses with their families.

-Family members are invited to join us in wearing something red.

Pews will be reserved on the choir side of church for YG members, and families are encouraged to sit behind us.

Living Stations of the Cross

Living Stations of the Cross is a major undertaking of the Youth Group each year. From January through Easter, our sole focus is Living Stations.

Any youth members who choose to not take part in Living Stations are on hiatus from the Youth Group until regular meetings resume after Easter, as there are no regular meetings during this time frame.

Attendance

As previously mentioned, attendance during Stations is MANDATORY. One missed practice is allowed. However, stations cast members will be replaced upon their second missed practice.*

Absences should be saved in case of illness, family commitments, emergencies, etc. Youth members are advised to plan ahead and complete homework prior to Sunday night practices.

If a youth member has to miss a practice, he/she **must** either email, call, or text Rob **PRIOR TO** the start of practice. Sending the message with a friend or via email or text message after the practice starts is unacceptable.

Youth members need to be responsible and let the adult moderators know when they will not be there. The group cannot afford to waste precious time waiting for youth members to arrive for a practice, when they aren't attending that night.

Two (2) "late" arrivals or early departures will be counted as 1 absence. "Late" is defined as arriving 15 minutes after the scheduled start time without prior notice. An early departure is defined as leaving prior to the wrap-up discussion.

When the Stations schedule is distributed, it is critical that all youth members check that they are able to make the practices and the performance, before roles are assigned and practices begin.

In the event that weather, or any other emergency, causes a scheduled Stations rehearsal to be canceled, the adult moderators may extend subsequent rehearsals or poll the cast and crew to find a makeup rehearsal date with the highest availability. Any cast/crew members who state that they are unavailable for the makeup date will not have that absence count against them.

Role Selection & Assignment

At the Stations kickoff meeting, we will give a brief overview of our Living Stations and ask everyone for their top role choices.

The Core Team has the responsibility of voting to cast each role. A meeting will be held to discuss each role prior to voting on parts; choices will be based on each member's behavior, commitment to the Youth Group, responsibility, dedication, moral fiber, work ethic, attendance, etc.

There are NO "cuts" – everyone who wants to be a part of Living Stations will have a role in the production.

*In the event that no cast replacements are available for a given character position, the adult moderators reserve the right to amend this policy, should they be informed at the start of the practice schedule of a conflict in schedule with another commitment, or should an emergency arise.

Special Events

Pumpkin Picking Trip

The trip departs from and returns to the St. Agnes Parking Lot at the times designated on the schedule. Everyone will meet downstairs in the Whelan Center so that attendance can be taken, permission slips collected, and the youth members sorted into cars.

The first half of the trip takes place at a farm that has a corn maze as well as pumpkin patch. The farm information will be on the trip's permission slip.

Each youth member must buy at least one pumpkin to paint and then deliver to the nursing home residents. (Youth members may opt to buy additional pumpkins for themselves, if they wish.)

Thus, Youth Members must bring money with them. The corn maze cost and approximate pumpkin price will be sent out and announced at meetings as the trip approaches.

Following the pumpkin picking and painting, the trip then goes to the nursing home where youth members visit with the residents. Youth members are expected to start a conversation with the residents, not just hand them the pumpkin and leave, as they could potentially be the only visitors the resident has that day, week, month or year.

Youth members must bring their own lunch **and** drink. We eat at the farm during the trip.

All youth members must have a completed permission slip to attend the trip, signed by the parent/guardian that signed the Youth Group book.

Youth Group T-Shirts are to be worn by all youth members.

Being that the service portion of the trip is the second half when we visit the nursing home, early departures will not be permitted for this trip. Late arrivals can be accommodated when we arrive back at St. Agnes to paint the pumpkins, however the YG members will be responsible for bringing their own small pumpkin.

Parent Drivers will be needed for this trip. Please see page 9 for more information.

Rain Date procedure – Check the youth group website. We will keep an eye on the weather forecast, and post an update as soon as we can.

If the trip is rained out on Saturday and moved to Sunday, all times and details remain the same.

ALSO NOTE: There will be NO regular meeting on Sunday night, regardless of which day the trip takes place.

Food Bank Trip

The trip departs from and returns to the St. Agnes Parking Lot. The Community Food Bank of New Jersey is located in Hillside, NJ.

Everyone will meet downstairs in the Whelan Center so that attendance can be taken, permission slips collected, and the youth members sorted into cars.

Youth members will help with various jobs needed by the food bank, such as the sorting and repacking of food for distribution, packing clothing, stuffing mailing envelopes and more.

All youth members must have a completed permission slip to attend the trip, signed by the parent/guardian that signed the Youth Group book.

Youth Group T-Shirts are to be worn by all youth members.

No early departures or late arrivals can be accommodated due to the nature of the trip.

Parent Drivers will be needed for this trip. Please see page 9 for more information.

This trip happens rain or shine.

Rake and Run

The trip departs from and returns to the St. Agnes Parking Lot.

Everyone will meet downstairs in the Whelan Center so that attendance can be taken, permission slips collected, and the youth members sorted into cars.

Youth members MUST bring their own rake (borrow from a relative or neighbor if you do not have one). Any youth members who arrive without a rake will not take part in the trip. **Please label all rakes** so that there is no confusion as to who owns which rake when there are many that are the same.

The purpose of the Rake 'n Run is to rake the leaves of the elderly or disabled (or both) in our community, who are unable to afford a landscaper and normally have to rake their own leaves. Our group shows up at a house, rakes the leaves, and moves on to the next house. A form will be put in the bulletin for people to sign up others (or themselves if applicable) who meet the criteria, and YG members/parents can email Barb and Rob if they know anyone that meets the criteria.

The group will return to St. Agnes about midway through the day, to have lunch together.

All youth members must bring their own lunch – food only.

**No outside drinks are permitted – YG will provide the usual drinks that are available at meetings.

All youth members must have a completed permission slip to attend the trip, signed by the parent/guardian that signed the Youth Group book.

Youth Group T-Shirts are to be worn by all youth members.

Due to the logistics of the trip, late arrivals and early departures can only be accommodated while we are at St. Agnes for lunch.

Parent Drivers will be needed for this trip. Please see page 9 for more information.

Rain Date procedure – Check the Youth Group website. We will keep an eye on the weather forecast, and post an update as soon as we can.

If the trip is rained out to Sunday, all times and details remain the same.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be NO regular meeting on Sunday, regardless of which day the trip takes place.

The Lock-In

The overnight Lock-In Retreat begins at 5:00pm in the gym, before we attend the 5:30 Mass together.

All phones, watches, iPods, and any other electronic devices are collected and locked away in the Youth Ministry office until the morning – since knowing the time, texting, etc. takes away from the experience of the night. Youth members are encouraged to leave these items at home.

The adult moderators will have their phones should parents/guardians need to reach the youth members, or should any of the youth need to call home, or should the adults need to reach any parents/guardians due to any emergencies or problems.

Dinner is provided following mass and about half-way through the night various hot snacks are served (like chicken nuggets, mozzarella sticks, pizza bagels, etc). Regular cold / dry snacks (pretzel, chips, etc.) and drinks are available throughout the night.

After the night's activities conclude, youth members will have time to socialize/relax/eat/sleep.

All youth members must have a completed permission slip to attend the Lock-In, signed by the parent/guardian that signed the Youth Group book.

A small number of parents will be needed to come in and prepare the midnight snack foods in the kitchen, since the adult moderators cannot, as they will be running the events. Parents have always enjoyed this social hour in the past! Parents will be contacted as the event approaches.

As mentioned on page 3, youth members must attend a total of 3 YG functions, including at least 1 fall service event, in order to attend the Lock-In, which is seen as a reward for those that are actively participating in the youth group and serving their community.

All qualified youth members are required to RSVP to an email that will be sent out in the week preceding the Lock-In.
-Failure to RSVP on time will result in not being permitted to attend the Lock-In.

Note: No youth members will be permitted to arrive late to the Lock-In, except in the case of extenuating circumstances out of the member's control.

-For the Lock-In, "late" is defined as after the point at which the schedule of activities for the night commences.

-Choosing to attend a play, game, party, etc. does NOT constitute an extenuating circumstance.

In the event that the Lock-In needs to be postponed, it will be rescheduled for a Saturday-Sunday in January.

Six Flags Trip

The Six Flags trip is a perk reserved for the youth members who have served the parish and the community throughout the year.

As previously mentioned, youth members must be an active member of the Youth Group during the spring schedule, and also fulfill one of the following requirements:

(A) Be a part of Living Stations (through the production) OR

(B) Attend TWO (2) of the service activities* in the Fall Schedule.

[*Fall service activities are the Pumpkin Trip, Food Bank Trip, and Rake and Run.]

Because the trip is all day on Sunday, all youth members must attend one of the designated masses on the weekend of the trip.

Date, times, and prices will be distributed as a part of the spring schedule.

NO Late Payments will be accepted. Pay careful attention to the deadlines!

Additionally, there are NO Refunds. Tickets have to be ordered in advance and cannot be returned.

This trip takes place rain or shine, as the tickets are only valid on the assigned date.

All youth members must have a completed permission slip to attend the trip, signed by the parent/guardian that signed the Youth Group book.

Youth Group T-Shirts are to be worn by all youth members.

Parent Drivers/Chaperones will be needed for this trip. Please see page 9 for more information.

- YG will cover the parents' park admission, lunch, parking, and tolls.

No late arrivals or early departures will be permitted for the Six Flags trip. All YG members must travel with the trip from the St. Agnes departure in the morning until we arrive back at St. Agnes in the evening.

Baccalaureate Mass

Our traditional Baccalaureate Mass and reception where we celebrate and send off our seniors take place at 7pm on a Sunday night in May/June.

-As of September 2019, the Baccalaureate Mass for the Class of 2020 will take place on Sunday May 31st.

All YG members are strongly encouraged to attend to celebrate their graduating peers, just as they will want underclassmen to attend the Baccalaureate celebration upon their graduation.

All families are invited to attend both the Mass and Reception.

-Families of the seniors will receive invitations in the mail as the Mass approaches.

Relay for Life

Our Youth Group had participated in the Relay for Life of Clark each year since its creation.

-Our participation in Relay for Life 2020 is TBD.

-Look for more information as the spring approaches. All info below is included should YG participation continue.

Relay for Life is a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society (ACS). The event honors the cancer survivors in the community, remembers those who have lost their battles, and supports those who are currently battling the disease.

It is a fun event, but it is a fundraiser first and foremost for a serious cause.

Any YG members interested in joining the Youth Group team must commit to the team and register by the set deadline (dates to be announced in early Spring).

Additionally, because the event is a fundraiser first and foremost, all youth members of the St. Agnes Youth Group team must raise AT LEAST \$50 for the ACS. (Please note: this is, in fact, a lower threshold of donations than the ACS requires. They expect \$100 per participant.)

Everyone must have their money turned in by the set deadline. Don't wait until the week of the deadline to start your fundraising!

All team members must turn in their permission slip by the set deadline.

At Relay, team members will sign up for walking times, as every team is asked to have representation on the track at all times.

If the event takes place overnight, and for any reason (weather, power failure, etc) Relay for Life is forced to end or be cancelled abruptly during the course of the night, we will transport all Youth Group Team members to St. Agnes, where we will remain until the event's scheduled end time in the morning.

-Team members will contact their parents/guardians either at the time of the event cancellation (if it is a reasonable hour), or in the morning prior to the ending time, to inform them of the location change.

-Although a cancellation of the event and relocation of our team to St. Agnes is not ideal, we do not wish to disturb and/or startle parents in the middle of the night, nor have youth members driving past their legal hours.

-Depending on the weather conditions, all items such as tents, etc. will be packed up if possible. However, our first priority will be getting the youth members safely to St. Agnes, and therefore tents, etc. may have to be packed up in the morning. Additionally, adult chaperones will transport youth members to church, and thus youth members will be leaving their cars at ALJ's parking lot until the morning.

Youth Group Highlights 2019-2020

September

Meetings Begin

October

Monthly Mass

NO MEETING on 10/13
(Confirmation)

Pumpkin Picking Trip

November

Food Bank Trip

Monthly Mass

Rake and Run

Lock-In

December

NO MEETING on 12/1
(Thanksgiving weekend)

Monthly Mass

Movie Night

Christmas Party

January

Monthly Mass

Regular Meetings

Living Stations Starts

February

Monthly Mass

NO STATIONS PRACTICE on 2/2
(Super Bowl Sunday)

Living Stations Practices

March

Monthly Mass

Stations Photo Night

Living Stations Practices

April

Monthly Mass

Living Stations Performance (4/5)

NO MEETING on 4/12 (Easter)

Living Stations Cast Party

Regular Youth Group Meetings Resume

May

Monthly Mass

Six Flags Trip

NO MEETING ON 5/24
(Memorial Day)

Baccalaureate Celebration – 5/31

June

Monthly Mass

End-of-Year Party

Alumni Reunion

Relay for Life (TBD)

This is an outline of the Youth Group events of the year, and is subject to change.

For the current schedule, visit our website at www.StAgnesYouthGroup.com