In 1984, at the close of the Holy Year of Redemption, the International Jubilee of Youth was celebrated in St. Peter’s Square in Vatican City, and the World Youth Day Cross was given to the youth. In 1985, the Holy Father announced the institution of the official World Youth Day. Ever since that momentous occasion, Catholic youth from around the globe have continued to gather together and celebrate World Youth Day.

Most people associate World Youth Day with the event that occurs on a large scale every two to three years, in which the event is celebrated with a week-long international gathering in a different host city. However, WYD is actually an annual event in the years in between major international celebrations. In many of the world’s dioceses, this event takes place on Palm Sunday. In the United States, our bishops declared parishes and schools will observe World Youth Day annually on the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time, (October 28, 2012).

World Youth Day is intended to highlight the presence, energy, and diversity of all young people. That particular Sunday is a celebration of both young and older youth and also an opportunity for the entire faith community to affirm and welcome the young church of today.

October 21, 2012, World Mission Sunday, is a wonderful opportunity to remind and encourage the young church of the Baptism by which we are all called to participate in the mission of the Church and share our faith with others; to animate and support the more than 1,150 mission dioceses in Africa, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and remote regions of Latin America. Because of the importance of both – World Mission Sunday and World Youth Day – it will be important that both are equally recognized.
The themes for World Mission Sunday, “Called to Radiate the Word of Truth” (Apostolic Letter Porta Fidei, n. 6) and World Youth Day 2012, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4) as set by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, remind us that we are called to share the Good News in joyful proclamation.

In his World Youth Day message, delivered on Palm Sunday 2012 before thousands of young people Pope Benedict reminded them that “Joy is at the heart of Christian experience.” It is the joy in the hope of our faith that will truly transform our world and countless lives. We are all called to spread this joy, as missionaries by Baptism, to support hope-filled witness in prayer and by proclamation.

Pope Benedict spoke of this joy in his address: “We can see the great attraction that joy exercises. In a world of sorrow and anxiety, joy is an important witness to the beauty and reliability of the Christian faith. The Church’s vocation is to bring joy to the world, a joy that is authentic and enduring, the joy proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born.”

• Do we share our faith with the same smiles? The same joy?

This is not something that is always easy to do, but our Holy Father offered some advice and wonderful questions for reflection:

“In these difficult times, so many young people all around you need to hear that the Christian message is a message of joy and hope! I would like to reflect with you on this joy and on how to find it; so that you can experience it more deeply and bring it to everyone you meet.”

Many young people ask themselves is perfect joy really possible? The quest for joy can follow various paths, and some of these turn out to be mistaken, if not dangerous.

• How can we distinguish between the things that give real and lasting joy from those offering simply immediate and illusory pleasures?

• How can we find true joy in life, a joy that endures and does not forsake us at moments of difficulty?”

In his closing remarks, Pope Benedict offers his hope for the young church,

“Dear friends, to conclude I would encourage you to be missionaries of joy.”

Father Andrew Small, OMI, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the United States, witnessed this same joy when meeting young people in several tea estate villages he visited in the Diocese of Sylhet in Bangladesh, “I’ll carry your smiles back to kids back in the United States.” The same young people live in poverty. Their jobs – mostly in the tea estates for just about 50 cents a day – don’t pay enough for families to have access to houses, or to provide the basic needs for their families. The Church itself is poor, doing what it can with limited resources. But love is present in abundance, Father Andrew observed. "The bishops, priests, religious, and catechists love the people, and the people love them," he explained. “That relationship of love and concern has touched my heart.”

• How might youth be missionaries of Christ to their peers?
• How are youth called to be missionaries globally, especially to the poor?
• How can we as Church help youth to discern their vocations in life?

To read the whole text of His Holiness’ Message for World Youth Day 2012 click here: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/youth/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20120315_youth_en.html
On October 15, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed as new “missionary” saints several individuals who had dedicated their lives to spreading the Gospel and to promoting the good of humanity in different times, places and ways.

Of all of them, Benedict XVI said: Their names will be remembered forever . . . The saint is precisely that man, that woman, who responds with joy and generosity to the call of Christ, leaving everything to follow him.

**St. Filippo Smaldone** (July 27, 1848 – June 4, 1923)

He founded the Salesian Sisters of the Sacred Hearts and is known for his work with the deaf. Born in Naples, he was ordained a priest in 1871 and during his time in the seminary he began efforts to help the deaf of his native city. He also did work with the sick and nearly died of a plague. He credited his survival to Our Lady of Pompeii. In 1885 he founded an institution for the deaf at Lecce, Italy. He went on to work with the blind and with orphans, before dying at 75 from diabetes-related complications.

The Pope underlined that St. Filippo Smaldone “was above all a witness and servant of charity, which he showed in an eminent way in his service to the poor, especially deaf-mute people, to whom he dedicated all of himself.” St. Filippo Smaldone saw reflected in those he cared for the image of Jesus; he was known to say that as one prostrates oneself before the Most Blessed Sacrament, thus one should kneel before a deaf-mute.”


**St. Rosa Venerini** (February 9, 1656 – May 7, 1728)

St. Rosa was a pioneer in the education of women and girls in 17th-century Italy and the foundress of the Religious Teachers Venerini (Italian: Maestre Pie Venerini), a Roman Catholic religious institute of women, often simply called the Venerini Sisters.

Challenged by the desire to do something great for God, she began, in May of 1684, to gather the girls and women of the area in her own home to recite the rosary. The way in which the girls and women prayed, and above all, their conversation before and after the prayer, opened the mind and heart of Rosa to a sad reality: these women were enslaved in cultural, moral and spiritual poverty. Finding in this her calling from the Lord, she dedicated herself to the instruction and Christian formation of young women, not with sporadic encounters, but with a school understood in the real and true sense of the word.

When speaking of St. Rosa Venerini, Pope Benedict XVI highlighted “her far-reaching activity, undertaken with courage, for the emancipation of young women of her time.” He added: “St. Rosa was not content to supply girls with adequate instruction; she was concerned about guaranteeing their complete formation, with steadfast references to the doctrinal teaching of the Church.”

Saint Rafael Guízar Valencia (April 26, 1878 – June 6, 1938)

Saint Rafael Guízar Valencia was a Catholic bishop who cared for the wounded, sick, and dying in Mexico’s 1910-20 Revolution. Named bishop of Veracruz, he was driven out of his home diocese and forced to live the remainder of his life in hiding in Mexico City.

He was ordained a priest in 1901. With the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, persecution of the Catholic Church became severe, and Guízar became a special target because of his outspoken defense of the Church. He went underground—disguised as a junk dealer—to continue his work as a priest. In 1915, when the government ordered that he be shot on sight, he escaped to the United States, and then went on to serve the Church in Guatemala and Cuba.

While in Cuba, he was consecrated as bishop of Veracruz. The end of the Revolution enabled him to return to Mexico in January 1920, and he joined Knights of Columbus Council 2311 in Xalapa, Veracruz, on August 16, 1923.

As bishop, he founded a clandestine seminary to train future priests, noting: “A bishop can do without a mitre, a crosier, and even a cathedral, but never without a seminary, because the future of his diocese depends on the seminary.” He was forced to flee Mexico once again in 1927 during the persecution of the Church under President Plutarco Elías Calles. He returned in 1929, the year the Church reached an accord with the government after the end of the Cristero War.

Speaking in Spanish, Pope Benedict XVI pointed to St. Rafael Guízar Valencia as the “bishop of the poor,” ready to face persecutions in Mexico in the early 20th century and to press ahead with his activities in favor of vocations.

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20061015_valencia_en.html

St. Théodore (Anne-Thérèse) Guérin (October 2, 1798 – May 14, 1856)

Mother Théodore Guérin entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence in 1823, and she devoted herself to the work of teaching in schools. In 1839, she was asked by her Superiors to travel to the United States to become the head of a new community in Indiana. After their long journey over land and sea, the group of six Sisters arrived at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. There they found a simple log-cabin chapel in the heart of the forest. They knelt down before the Blessed Sacrament and gave thanks, asking God’s guidance upon the new foundation.

With great trust in Divine Providence, Mother Théodore overcame many challenges and persevered in the work that the Lord had called her to do. By the time of her death in 1856, the Sisters were running schools and orphanages throughout Indiana. In her own words: “How much good has been accomplished by the Sisters of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods! How much more good they will be able to do if they remain faithful to their holy vocation!”

Mother Théodore Guérin is a beautiful spiritual figure and a model of the Christian life. She was always open to providing for the Missions the Church entrusted to her, and she found the strength and the boldness to do so through the Eucharist, in prayer and in an infinite trust in Divine Providence. Her inner strength moved her to address particular attention to the poor, and above all to children.

Of St. Théodore (Anne-Thérèse) Guérin, the Holy Father outlined the activities of the missionary in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century, in remote areas amid hardships and difficulties: “A beautiful spiritual figure and model of the Christian life.”


Whatever state of life God calls us to, we bring with us an assortment of experiences, interests and gifts — however small they seem to us. These lives stand as a reminder that all we are is meant to be put at the service of the Lord and our neighbor, wherever we find ourselves. Where and how is God calling you to spread His Good News – His love?

Action: The following is a wonderful activity you can share with young people. “YouShare: To All the Ends of the Earth” by Julie Vankat is used with permission of the Center for Ministry Development, www.cmdnet.org. All rights reserved.
YouShare:
To All the Ends of the Earth
By Julie Vankat

Purpose
Just like the apostles in the upper room, our youth have a hard time finding the courage to share their faith with others. Also like the apostles in the upper room our students also have the gift of the Holy Spirit and can call upon the gift of fortitude when they are challenged to share their faith. This session provides an opportunity for youth to both reflect on the gift of the Holy Spirit in their life and to then put it into action by creating a video for YouTube that inspires others to have faith.

Component: Evangelization

Session at a Glance
7:00 p.m. Welcome 7:50 p.m. Action!
7:10 p.m. Opening Prayer 8:20 p.m. “It’s a Wrap” Closing Prayer
7:20 p.m. Brainstorming 8:30 p.m. Good Night!
7:40 p.m. Campaign Presentation

Extend the Session Ideas
Consider pairing up with another parish youth ministry or challenge all the parishes in your diocese to do this same session by a certain date. See which group’s videos get the most hits on YouTube and offer a prize for the winning group.

Watch YouTube videos that are aimed at sharing faith. Here are a few examples:
• “This is My Story (Part 1)” — http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmlTHfVaU9o
• “This is My Story (Part 2)” — http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4LSEXsvRAI&feature=related
• “Lost Generation” — http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRG4ySdi_aE
• “A Strong Atheist and a Piece of Chalk” — http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJKF6Jpd1wM

Materials Needed
• Basket of candy (see #1 in Prepare in Advance)
• Bible, marked to Acts 2:1-13 and Acts 4:29-31
• Table, cloth, pillar candle, matches or light stick
• Small poster boards, ten per small group
• Markers, one pack per small group
• Extra art supplies such as large poster board, Play-Doh, paints, etc.
• Video camera or a digital camera that is able to film video
• Computer, LCD projector, and screen

Note to Leader: Your audio/visual set up needs to be adequate for everyone to be able to hear/see the video.

• Handout 1, A Prayer for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, for each participant
• CD or MP3 player and speakers
• Songs for prayers:
  o Opening Prayer: “Dive” by Stephen Curtiss Chapman (Speechless), or “Flood” by Jars of Clay (Greatest Hits), available from Amazon or iTunes
  o Closing Prayer: “They’ll Know We are Christians” or “Go Tell It on the Mountain” or another song with sharing faith as its theme. Click on the links to listen to the song and see the lyrics
Prepare in Advance

1. View the videos made by the author’s students:
   a. http://www.youtube.com/bbless14 “He lives in us”
   b. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4hNuMpZhKc (If this doesn’t work, go to youtube.com and type in “prayer and Loss class 3rd period”).

2. Buy several different kinds of wrapped hard candy or mini candy bars that will be used to help determine the small groups. If your numbers are larger enough (24 or larger), create 6 groups by putting equal amounts of six different candies in a basket. If your group is less than 24, make five groups.

3. Go to YouTube (www.youtube.com) and create an account.

4. Set up the computer, projector, and screen. A screen is optional if you have a flat white wall.

5. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with check-in sheet and nametags. Hospitality is important! As the leader, spend the arrival time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

Session Outline

Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)
As the young people arrive, have them fill out a nametag. Also have them choose a candy from the basket at the sign-in table. Make sure everyone takes a piece of candy, even if they don’t plan on eating it later. Let them know they should wait to eat the candy until you tell them it is okay.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)
Distribute Handout 1, A Prayer for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, to each person. Invite the participants to sit with the people who have the same type of candy as they do, creating six (or five) groups.

Gather
Prayer Leader: (begin with the Sign of the Cross)

O God,
who gave us Saint Alphonsus
   to be a faithful steward and preacher,
   help us, too, be faithful and willing
   to share our faith with others.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listen
Invite the reader to proclaim Acts 2:1-13. Allow a few moments of quiet before playing the song you selected.
Play the song you selected.

Respond
Prayer Leader:

Turn to the people in your group and talk about how you share your faith with others—outside of church and youth ministry. How do you feel when you talk about your faith with someone else?

Send Forth
Invite the group to close with “Prayer for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Handout 1). Each group will take a part.

Brainstorming (20 minutes)

We just heard about the apostles hiding in the upper room until the Holy Spirit came and filled them with courage. The Spirit gave them the power to speak in many different languages. Today, we know it can be scary to share our faith, and it can make us feel vulnerable. It is important, however, to do our part to help others know about the Trinity and the work of God in our lives. Your generation speaks in its own language and often now you speak through technology. Tonight as a group, we are going to create a YouTube video. This video should tell the story of why being Christian is important to you—what does your belief in Jesus mean in your life?
What does being a follower of Jesus mean in terms of the way you act? How does it affect the way you see yourself, others, the poor, etc.? You will be given 20 minutes with a small group to brainstorm the best ideas you can come up with for this video. You will be given poster board to create storyboards that would explain your vision for this video. Make sure that everyone in your small group will appear in some part of the video. Pick a member of your group who can then successfully present your idea to the large group. We will pick one group's idea and film a video tonight.

During the 20 minutes each group will use the poster boards to create a step-by-step plan of the video. They will select a reporter to explain it to the group.

**Campaign Explanations** (10 minutes)
Allow time for each group to use their storyboards to present their idea to the large group. At the end of the presentations, have the large group vote on which idea they want to pursue. Remind them to pick the one they like best regardless of their loyalty to their group. Suggest that the other ideas will be worked on at a later date or that each group or any individual is welcome to create their own video.

**Action!** (30 minutes)
Have the reporter from the group with the winning idea organize the group by first explaining the roles each person or group will play. Have them explain the idea again scene by scene. It may be useful to designate a group as the set crew or props crew. They will use poster board to create backgrounds or props. Have the group practice a few times and then film it a couple of times. Once there is a version that is good, first save it to your computer. Then go to YouTube and log in. Upload the video.

*Note to Leader:* It is possible that your group may not finish filming the video. If that happens, finish that at your next gathering and show another video in its place for the closing prayer. I suggest watching one of the videos listed under “Extend the Session.”

**Gather**
Invite a volunteer to light the candle on the prayer table.

**Prayer Leader:** *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Holy Spirit, source of courage and wisdom, help us to have the strength to show our faith to others, through words, actions, and compassionate listening. Help us to live in such a way that all will know of our faith in God. Amen.

**Listen**
Invite the reader to proclaim Acts 4:29-31. Allow a few moments of silence before showing the YouTube video.

**Respond**
Invite the youth now to text this line to a friend or family member who is not there:

“Rejoice in the Lord always!” or their favorite verse from the Bible.

**Send Forth**
Close by singing the song you selected.
A Prayer for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
A Prayer of St. Alphonsus Liguori

Prayer Leader:
Holy Spirit,
Divine Consoler,
I adore You as my true God,
with God the Father and God the Son.
I adore You and unite myself to the adoration
You receive from the angels and saints.

I give You my heart
and I offer my ardent thanksgiving
for all the grace which You never cease to
bestow on me.

O Giver of all supernatural gifts,
who filled the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God, with such immense favors,
I beg You to visit me with Your grace
and Your love and to grant me the gift of holy fear,
so that it may act on me as a check to prevent me
from falling back into my past sins,
for which I beg pardon.

Group 1:
Grant me the gift of piety,
so that I may serve You for the future with
increased fervor,
follow with more promptness Your holy inspirations,
and observe your divine precepts with greater
fidelity.

Group 2:
Grant me the gift of knowledge,
so that I may know the things of God and,
enlightened by Your holy teaching, may walk,
without deviation, in the path of eternal
salvation.

Group 3:
Grant me the gift of fortitude,
so that I may overcome courageously all the assaults of
the devil,
and all the dangers of this world which threaten the
salvation of my soul.

Group 4:
Grant me the gift of counsel,
so that I may choose what is more conducive to my
spiritual advancement
and may discover the wiles and snares of the tempter.

Group 5:
Grant me the gift of understanding,
so that I may apprehend the divine mysteries
and by contemplation of heavenly things detach
my thoughts
and affections from the vain things of this
miserable world.

Group 6:
Grant me the gift of wisdom,
so that I may rightly direct all my actions,
referring them to God as my last end;
so that, having loved Him and served Him
in this life,
I may have the happiness of possessing Him
eternally in the next.

All:

Amen!