

Antioch Retreat History

For the past 16 years, the Youth Ministry of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church have hosted this retreat for youth 13+ and young adults. This is a yearly tradition that was started by the Youth Ministry of Nativity Catholic Church until 1996 then restarted in 1999 (planning started Fall 1998) by the Youth Ministry Team of St. Francis.

Thanks to the support and hard work of the St Francis Parish, Priests and team we have been able to continue this great tradition! For the first time in September of 2006 we held the retreat for a second time in 1 year due to a great response and interest! 2013 celebrated our 15th year!

What is the Antioch Retreat

This program is named The New Antioch because it was inspired by an earlier Antioch program for college students and because “it was at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians.” (Acts 11:26)

This effort represents a complete revision of another parish program which had been adapted from a campus ministry program introduced at the University of Notre Dame at South Bend, Indiana, in the early 1960's. Although the content is completely new, the process and general format are the same, and similar to many recent Christian weekend and community experiences. The basic dynamic involves the Spirit of the Lord moving among good young people as they search for God.

The New Antioch was developed in a small suburban parish in the Archdiocese of New York. During this development period, a solid Christian community has been sustained. Hundreds of teenagers have belonged to the New Antioch Community in Sacred Heart Parish, Dobbs Ferry, New York, since it began in 1979. Hundreds of communities have developed through the efforts of this quiet, suburban parish. Groups from as far away as Australia and as close by as the next parish have been inspired, trained, and supported by the prayers and encouragement of this community. Mission teams have traveled far and wide to spread the Good News.

This is a distinctive model of Youth Ministry for several reasons:

1. It is built on the community model of Church and takes place at home, in the parish.
2. It joins adults and youths in a communal relationship, rather than a parent or teacher/child relationship.
3. Young people are trained to do every type of job in the program with adult guidance and support.
4. The primary focus of the community is spirituality and social action.
Experience shows that teenagers are able to develop their own format for fun and socializing.
5. Catholic Christian doctrine, values, and practices are offered through a catechesis of sharing faith.