



Diocesan Youth Leadership Team Official Handbook

Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
Diocese of Evansville, IN

Second Edition

This document was last revised September 2014

About the Diocesan Youth Leadership Team

Mission Statement

The Diocesan Youth Leadership Team is comprised of youth committed to service and the responsibility of evangelization, through involvement, by providing opportunities to grow in the Catholic faith.

DYLT members act in leadership roles and represent all diocesan youth as a voice for the needs, views, and issues surrounding the young Church. In addition, they seek to grow spiritually and personally as they listen to God's call and support each other as they discover their role as Christ's disciples in the Church and the world.

7 Themes

The themes below were created during the 2014 summer constitution restructuring period, and provide an outline of the priorities and goals of DYLT.

- ***Building Community.*** DYLT is first and foremost a community of youth who come together to have fun and make new friends from around the diocese. Their goal is connection and support of one another; only secondarily are they providers of games and events.
- ***Focusing on Youth.*** What things are important to the youth of today? DYLT focuses on youth and their needs by providing local and low-cost or free events in order to effectively minister to youth from all walks of life.
- ***Encouraging Diocesan Involvement.*** DYLT engages parish-nominated youth from throughout the diocese; through the leadership of DYLT, youth from throughout the diocese can experience the Church on a diocesan scale and be empowered to take part in the local and universal Church.
- ***Connecting with Adults.*** DYLT recognizes the critical role that adults play in helping to spread the Good News and to grow DYLT by providing a personal invitation to leadership-oriented youth from around the diocese. It is only through assistance from adults that DYLT can flourish.
- ***Growing in Faith.*** By implementing a John Paul II Quote Reflection at the beginning of every meeting, DYLT hopes to more intentionally share faith with one another through the help of our patron saint.
- ***Taking Ownership.*** DYLT develops each member's leadership skills with the aspiration that all members will become comfortable leading various parts of DYLT meetings. They strive to take on active responsibility for the team and its events.
- ***Practicing Regularity.*** In order to continue DYLT events year-round, DYLT maintains a regular meeting schedule as often as possible. DYLT Meetings usually fall on the fourth Sunday of the month from 1:00-3:00pm in the host's time zone unless otherwise specified.

Membership Guidelines

Members must be entering their freshman year of high school through age 21, and must have a current DYLT Application on file. In order to promote a larger variety of members from throughout the diocese, DYLT members will now be selected by local parish leaders (priests, deacons, religious, youth ministers, PCL's, or other adults).

Each parish must select a minimum of three youth who are willing to participate in DYLT: two youth are Parish Representatives, and a third youth is the parish's Auxiliary Member. In the case of clustered parishes that share a common youth group, each parish will send one Parish Representative per parish and one general Auxiliary Member from any of the parishes. Additional youth from any churches who would like to participate may do so as Members-at-Large.

The two Parish Representatives will commit to participating in DYLT meetings and events for a minimum of one year. Parish Representatives are eligible for any of the 5 Officer positions, and may take part in any other responsibilities or leadership positions that are available.

The Auxiliary Member will participate in and contribute to DYLT events in the same capacity as the Parish Representatives, with two noted exceptions: the Auxiliary Member will not participate in votes, and will not hold one of the 5 Officer positions. They may, however, participate in any other leadership opportunities through DYLT. Auxiliary Members may become Parish Representatives if one of their parish's representatives steps down from their role.

Members-at-Large are additional, optional positions, filled by members who will attend DYLT meetings and events; however, Members-at-Large do not vote or hold leadership responsibilities. Youth with particularly busy schedules who still want to be a part of DYLT may fit best into this category. See the "Leadership Opportunities within DYLT" section for opportunities that are open to Parish Representatives, Auxiliary Members, and Members-at-Large.

Members are expected to be active participants and leaders in their local parishes, youth groups, and schools. In addition, all members must be respectful and supportive of other members of DYLT; if you disagree with someone's idea, please let them know respectfully.

Attendance Policy

Social events put on for DYLT members only are optional, but highly encouraged. Diocesan events hosted by DYLT are mandatory. In addition, all members must attend the majority of DYLT meetings. Members require a valid excuse and advanced notification to the Vice Chairperson or Secretary in order to be absent at a meeting; only one meeting per member can be an unexcused absence.

In the case of any absence, excused or unexcused, members are responsible for reviewing the past meeting's minutes and remaining informed on various events. All members should contact the Officers as necessary with any questions.

Upon a second unexcused absence from a meeting, the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson will call the member to review his or her attendance record. A second excused absence will not require a phone call. However, after three absences in a row (excused or unexcused), the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson will invite the member to consider if a commitment to DYLT is something he or she is willing and able to make. At this time, chronically absent Parish Representatives may be asked to step down, and the Auxiliary Member may become the Parish Representative. Per the discretion of the elected Officers, any habitually late members may be asked to re-apply to DYLT (this will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis).

Members may continue to represent their parish for multiple years if they so desire, but they must recommit themselves to DYLT each year; neither new members nor returning members may drop out mid-year. DYLT Applications are to be re-submitted or re-signed every year as an opportunity for every member to intentionally review DYLT's Mission Statement and Membership Requirements.

Leadership Opportunities within DYLT

DYLT offers many leadership opportunities for its members. Parish Representatives have the opportunity to assume Officer roles in DYLT (see the Officers and Elections sections of the handbook), but there are many other opportunities for all members to be active leaders. Members-at-Large, who generally do not hold leadership roles, are encouraged to lead by participating in Outreach, Hospitality, Prayer, and Subcommittee assistance as necessary (see below). Auxiliary Members and Parish Representatives who do not hold officer positions are encouraged (and expected) to demonstrate and develop various leadership skills through a variety of avenues, including but not limited to:

- ***Outreach.*** Encourage friends and local parish members to attend diocesan-wide DYLT events. A personal invitation is one of the most successful ways to share our talents and faith with the larger diocese.
- ***Hospitality.*** Providing an atmosphere of hospitality to new members and prospective students who may be interested in joining DYLT helps to retain new members and to build new relationships through DYLT.
- ***Prayer.*** Although it is primarily the Porter's (Holy Bouncer's) role to provide prayer at the meetings, he or she may ask for a volunteer to lead prayer. When this is the case (or if the Holy Bouncer is absent from a meeting), members are encouraged to lead by volunteering to provide a short opening or closing prayer.
- ***Reflections.*** Sharing a John Paul II Quote Reflection with the group at the beginning of meetings helps incorporate our faith and life experiences during DYLT meetings. Both leading and openly participating in these reflections is necessary to share our faith as community.
- ***Writing.*** In order to share DYLT's presence with the larger diocese, DYLT plans to contribute photos or articles for The Message once a month. Writing or contributing information to DYLT-related photos and articles in The Message helps to spread the word and the mission of DYLT.
- ***Subcommittees.*** Subcommittees are temporary roles, usually most necessary during the planning of large events, such as Youth Rally. Both Parish Representatives and Auxiliary Members may volunteer to hold subcommittee leadership or co-leadership roles. Elections may be held for subcommittees if necessary, following the same structure as outlined on the Elections page. Members-at-Large may assist Subcommittees as necessary.
- ***Core Team.*** Sometimes it is necessary to hold extra meetings outside of the regular meeting schedule. Attending any extra meetings as part of a voluntary "core team" helps us to more effectively prepare for future meetings. Both Parish Representatives and Auxiliary Members are invited to be a part of the temporary core team meetings.

The Process of Electing New Officers

Elections for new Officers will be held before the annual “Call-Out Meeting” (see below). Ideally, the Election Meetings will be held in April, but may be rescheduled as necessary. Elections in April allow for dual Officers during the summer: the previous officer spends three or four months training in the newly-elected officer for the upcoming school year.

All Parish Representatives should do their best to attend the Election Meeting. In the event that a Parish Representative is unable to attend the Election Meeting, the parish’s Auxiliary Member may stand in to provide a vote, but may not run for Office.

Nominations for officer positions can be given to any returning Parish Representative (excluding nominations for the Porter, which may be given to any Parish Representative, new or returning). Self-nominations are acceptable and encouraged. All nominations must be accepted by a “second.” Note that previous Officers may be re-nominated or self-nominated for multiple terms, but must be re-elected on a yearly basis. After all nominations have been completed, the voting will be done in a silent manner, i.e., on paper.

In keeping with their membership requirements as Parish Representatives, all elected Officers are expected to dedicate a full year of service to DYLT.

The Call-Out Meeting may occur either in May (immediately following the April Election Meeting) or in September (immediately following the beginning of the school year), or during another month of the team’s choosing. The purpose of a Call-Out Meeting is to gather all new and potential Parish Representatives, Auxiliary Members, and Members-at-Large to introduce them to DYLT. At the end of each Call-Out Meeting, new and discerning members – should they accept their nominations – should fill out and submit their DYLT Applications to the Secretary. Due to scheduling needs, the general monthly dates above may be changed as necessary.

Officers: Roles and Responsibilities¹

Chairperson

- Creates the agenda for each meeting, with the Secretary's assistance
- Sends the upcoming meeting agenda to adult supervisors for review
- Opens and closes each meeting
- Announces business to be discussed and members with information to share
- Calls for votes and announce the results of each vote
- Keeps order

Vice Chairperson

- Takes over the Chairperson's responsibilities if he or she is absent
- Takes over the role of the Chairperson if he or she is unable to continue in office
- Gathers updates from subcommittees prior to monthly meetings
- Seeks out charitable events and service projects to benefit our diocese
- Takes attendance at meetings and tracks attendance records with the Secretary

Secretary

- Takes meeting minutes and sends them to members, Officers, and adult supervisors
- Receives applications from prospective members and files them
- Tracks attendance records with Vice Chairperson
- Maintains two functional and updated DYLT Binders: the team's copy and the office's copy
- Helps the Chairperson create the agenda for each meeting

Porter (the Holy Bouncer)

- In charge of all hospitality at each meeting
- Takes over the Secretary's duties when he or she is absent
- Leads prayer; may also ask for volunteers to lead prayer
- Coordinates volunteers for Quote Reflection and follows up with them before each meeting to ensure they are adequately prepared.
- Suggests quotes and provides feedback if Quote Reflection volunteer requests it

Communications Officer

- Finds DYLT-related stories for The Message
- Writes articles (or coordinates DYLT volunteer writers) and provides photos and captions as available
- Interviews other DYLT members to discover and compile stories
- Shares upcoming events and event reminders with DYLT (summer socials, Christian concerts, religious movies, diocesan and youth group events, etc.)
- Communicates reminders of meetings and events via email, text, or other means

¹ All Officers are expected to communicate their absences with one another before meetings to allow their replacement officer adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Quick Facts

Location:

Diocese of Evansville, IN

Contact Information:

Steve Dabrowski, Director of Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
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DYLT age range:

Entering freshman year of high school through age 21

Officer Positions:

Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Porter (the Holy Bouncer), and Communications Officer

Patron Saint:

Pope Saint John Paul II, pray for us.

Contact Information

The Diocesan Youth Leadership Team is under the direction of Steve Dabrowski, Director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Evansville, IN.

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Diocesan Youth Leadership Team website:

<http://www.evdio.org/youth-team.html>