

Stateside Celebration

Quick Guide

WYD Stateside Planning Guide for Pastoral Leaders

Pilgrimage in the Twenty-First Century transcends geography. With the advent of technology and social media, the act of pilgrimage is no longer limited to those who have the means to travel internationally – but to all who journey with a faithful heart. Prior to the international World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis offered a special blessings to those who make the journey “via television or radio” and “with appropriate devotion, by means of social communication ... wherever they may be” during the global gathering.¹

Stateside celebrations allow more youth and young adults to engage in the pilgrimage experience – and broadens the understanding of what it means to be a pilgrim on a voyage of faith. Here is a quick guide to developing a World Youth Day stateside celebration in your local community.

STEP 1: WHO

AUDIENCE

The focus of “World Youth Day” is young people from ages 16 to 35, which includes those who are known as “youth” in the United States (that is, teenagers) and those known as “young adults” (that is, men and women in their late teens, twenties, and thirties). With this broad age range in mind, the first thing to do is determine the target audience of your particular stateside event. Some possibilities can include the following:

High school youth, ages 13 to 18

College-age young adults, ages 18 to 25

Young adult twenty-somethings, ages 20 to 29

Young adult thirty-somethings, ages 30 to 39

Within the young adult demographic, you might also consider a targeted approach to single young adults or young dating, engaged, or married couples, or to particular language or cultural groups in your community.

COLLABORATORS

Before proceeding, it is important to get other ministry leaders connected to these efforts. Expand your team to include those whose ministry impacts the lives of young people. It is also important to check in with them, to make sure they aren’t already developing something similar. Potential collaborators can include leaders in:

Youth Ministry

Campus Ministry

Young Adult Ministry

Adult Faith Formation

Evangelization Ministry

Music and Liturgical Ministries

Marriage and Family Ministries

Service and Justice Ministries

Cultural Diversity Ministries

Men’s and Women’s Ministries

Vocation Ministries

Religious Congregations

Catholic Academic Institutions

Catholic Communications/Media

Local Catholic Groups and Clubs

Establish a collaborative core team with managers and volunteers, and develop a clear committee structure with particular people in charge of the various aspects of the project, outlining all expectations and deadlines.

¹ <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-grants-indulgences-for-world-youth-da>

STEP 2: WHAT

WHAT

Once an audience is determined and collaborators are brought on board, the next step is to outline what the stateside celebration will be. With a planning team, consider the following:

- What is your vision of success? What do you hope to accomplish?
- What would draw your audience into an experience of pilgrimage and an encounter with Christ?
- What type of event would you and your collaborators enjoy planning?

Some possible event options could include the following (or a combination thereof):

- Full or half-day program replicating the major WYD events (catechesis, reconciliation, Via Crucis, Mass)
- Two-day overnight gathering on the weekend, replicating the overnight WYD vigil experience
- Live-streaming, broadcasting, or showing video of World Youth Day activities in Kraków
- Two- or three-hour evening programs during the week, featuring different activities each night (catechesis, reconciliation, Via Crucis, Mass)
- Mass and/or presentation by local bishops celebrating WYD stateside
- Pilgrimage to a local site of Catholic heritage (shrine, cathedral, historic site, etc.)
- Interactive video chat between stateside pilgrims and international pilgrims in Kraków
- Eucharistic procession through local town or neighborhood
- One or two day (and overnight) retreat experience, focusing on mercy and pilgrimage
- Praise and worship rally or concert with WYD themes, songs, and topics
- Keynote speaker, catechetical presentation(s), and workshops on WYD themes and topics
- Missionary and service activity in the local area or to an impoverished or suffering community

In all of this, however, remember that the event itself is *not* the end goal; rather, the ultimate destination of a stateside celebration is an encounter with Christ, the Gospel, and the community of the Church. In addition to planning this particular program, also consider WHAT comes next – beyond this one-time experience. Factor the follow-up tasks and the ongoing ministry work into your planning process from the very beginning.

STEP 3: WHERE

Consider all the potential options for the location of this event, which may also be determined by the collaborators involved with the planning of the project. Some possibilities can include:

Parish center
Diocesan center
University campus
High school campus

Religious community grounds
Local Catholic site/venue
Local retreat facility
Nearby Catholic shrine

Cathedral, basilica, or large church
Seminary, monastery, or convent
Location with Polish connections
Large open outdoor public space

Secure your location as early as possible, with a few backup sites in the event that initial plans fall through or an alternative plan if weather becomes an issue. Consider accessibility of the site for handicapped persons, the options for parking, and any fees associated with reserving the location.

STEP 4: WHEN

WHEN

Timing is everything, especially in a time-starved world. Think about the time constraints of your audience and what would fit with the international World Youth Day. Many stateside events are often held concurrent with one or more of the World Youth Day events, especially if the stateside participants will watch or interact with those celebrating overseas. Here is the standard outline of the weeklong program in Kraków in 2016:

Tuesday July 26, 2016	Wednesday July 27, 2016	Thursday July 28, 2016	Friday July 29, 2016	Saturday July 30, 2016	Sunday July 31, 2016
<i>Morning through Afternoon</i> Pilgrim Arrivals Arrivals to Kraków area; checking in at housing sites around Kraków	<i>Morning</i> Catechesis with Bishops Catechetical Venues/Sites around Kraków	<i>Morning</i> Catechesis with Bishops Catechetical Venues/Sites around Kraków	<i>Morning</i> Catechesis with Bishops Catechetical Venues/Sites around Kraków	<i>Morning through Afternoon</i> Walking Pilgrimages to Evening Vigil from Łagiewniki area to Brzegi (near Wieliczka)	<i>Morning</i> WYD Final Mass and Closing Ceremony with Pope Francis Brzegi/Wieliczka
	<i>Afternoon</i> Youth Festival around Kraków	<i>Afternoon</i> Youth Festival around Kraków	<i>Afternoon</i> Youth Festival around Kraków		<i>Afternoon through Evening</i> Return Walking Pilgrimages from Final Mass
<i>Evening</i> Opening Mass Cardinal Dziwisz Arch. of Kraków Błonia Park	<i>Evening</i> Special Mass for USA Pilgrims WYD English Language Site	<i>Evening</i> Papal Welcome Ceremony with Pope Francis Błonia Park	<i>Evening</i> Via Crucis Prayer with Pope Francis Błonia Park	<i>Evening</i> Candlelight Prayer Vigil with Pope Francis Brzegi/Wieliczka	from Brzegi to housing/home; departures from Kraków

When working with the international schedule, be sure to factor in the time difference between your location and Poland. The schedule with adjusted times (based on your time zone) can be found at www.wydua.org.

If you are considering offering multiple events over several days, you will need to factor which days or nights you will host local activities, and the timeframe of each of those smaller events. If you are looking to host an overnight program (to mirror the WYD overnight vigil), look to what night(s) you can host this event in your local community or at whatever site you have chosen to host this program.

HOW

STEP 5: HOW

Once the direction, audience, collaborators, time, and location are decided upon, the hard work of putting the program together comes next. Allow for several planning meetings to iron out the details – the planning guides provided by the USCCB World Youth Day Office (available at www.wydua.org) can help you develop the event. The following checklist will be important to managing a successful stateside celebration and, even more important, the ongoing faith formation of the youth and young adults in your local community.

THE “HOW” – A SIMPLE WYDUSA STATESIDE CELEBRATION CHECKLIST

- Begin in prayer, and continue in prayer throughout the whole planning process. Use the official *World Youth Day Prayer for the United States*, available at www.wydusa.org.
- Form and call together a collaborative leadership team (see WHO above).
- Identify the potential audience(s) for this program (see WHO above).
- Name the key objectives and goals for the stateside celebration (see WHAT above).
- Decide on the direction and scope of your stateside celebration (see WHAT above).
- Select a date, time, and location for the events (see WHEN and WHERE above).
- Obtain the necessary approvals (from the bishop, pastor, administrator, site manager, etc.).
- Set a budget and factor in the expenses and income anticipated.
- Consider what aspects of the event can be contracted out (e.g. registration; staging; audio/visual, etc.).
- Outline an initial schedule (e.g., check-in; catechesis; music; reconciliation; Via Crucis; vigil; Mass, etc.).
- Create a communications strategy for marketing, publicity and social media.
 - Send information to wyd@usccb.org for national promotion on www.wydusa.org.
- Focus on the spiritually preparation of young people in the community (e.g. retreats; days/evenings of reflection; articles in parish/diocesan communications, bulletins, and websites, etc.).
- Consider how stateside and international-bound pilgrims will interact (before, during, and after WYD).
- Visit and secure the location, reviewing the event plan step-by-step.
- Invite the speakers, artists, and pastoral leaders you have chosen for the program, if necessary.
- Develop a meal plan for the day (e.g. choosing meal options, food preparation, distribution, etc.).
- Consider alternative plans for inclement weather conditions (especially with any outdoor elements).
- Develop a plan for the use of technology during the program (e.g., live streaming; video play; social media; workshop A/V needs; microphones for music and worship, etc.), as well as lighting and sound.
- Recruit volunteers and managers and assign them to the needs of the program.
- Set up a registration system for the event (on-site or in-advance; by phone, in-person, or online), the collection of fees (if necessary), as well as identifying the equipment and personnel needed for this.
- Develop a plan for safety and security issues.
- Form a wrap-up team for clean-up, closing and securing facility at the close of the program, etc.
- Develop and collect responses for an evaluation/survey for stateside participants.
- Following the event, thank collaborators, volunteers, community leaders, and participants.
- Plan ahead for follow-up and evangelization (e.g. regular communications; reunion events; one-on-one interaction; connecting participants to ministry opportunities and vocational resources; etc.).