



How to "Holy Week"

A GUIDE TO HOLY WEEK MISSIONS

Mission Youth started in 1993 following the call of Pope John Paul II to all young people: “Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places, like the first Apostles who preached Christ and the Good News of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel (Rom 1,16). It is the time to preach it from the rooftops (Mt 10,27). Do not be afraid to break out of comfortable and routine modes of living, in order to take up the challenge of making Christ known in the modern "metropolis". It is you who must "go out into the byroads" (Mt 22,9) and invite everyone you meet to the banquet which God has prepared for his people. The Gospel must not be kept hidden because of fear or indifference.” -St John Paul II, Denver 1993

To answer this call, Mission Youth envisions mobilizing missionaries across the continent and beyond to courageously bring Christ's love to those in need. We respond to Pope Francis' invitation “Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent.” -Rio de Janeiro 2013. We desire to train, form and accompany young people to continue growing in their relationship with Jesus beyond the specific activities of the mission through ongoing prayer and friendship, especially through the opportunities provided by Regnum Christi young men and women.

Mission Youth exists to engage young people, adults and families in spreading Christ's love through local missions and abroad serving communities in their specific needs. We believe all Catholic Christians are called and capable of being missionaries through their baptism. This living of baptism is a rich part of our Regnum Christi charism which we imbue every mission with. Our mission is to the people we serve, and also to the missionaries themselves as we form them to be apostles, accompanying them in the practice of the works of mercy which open the door to share God's love & evangelize.

Holy Week Missions are the hallmark mission experience of Mission Youth. It is the week that Catholics remember and celebrate the greatest mystery of our redemption in the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Through evangelization and mercy missions, we are participating in bringing the graces and fruits of His Passion to others. We are reminding all who we encounter that God exists, that He loves them and that He died to bring them to heaven with Him.

Any questions, feel free to contact the National Mission Youth Support Team or the website!
www.missionyouth.com

Steps for planning a Holy Week Mission

Step #1: Identify a need within your parish and/or community

- Prioritize Evangelization and acts of mercy
- See to build a culture of Encounter & Communion through the following examples
 - Outreach to those most in need (homeless, unborn, elderly, shut-ins, etc)
 - Parish outreach to the homebound
 - Elderly
 - Organization that serves poor or underprivileged
 - Pro-life
 - Parish liturgy renewal/revival

Step #2: Registration

Practical Mission Set Up

- Contact your local pastor for permission to evangelize within the parish boundaries.
- Obtain your Mission Youth Annual License (grants you use of name, logo, online store discount, insurance and resources)
- Register your event through the website to operate under either the parish/school or local Regnum Christi section. (Grants you access to the official insurance waivers)

There are two basic options:

1. Mission will run under the legal auspice of the parish or school
 - The parish assumes legal ownership of the program as their ministry, and should provide the necessary waivers and consent forms, as well as insurance coverage under the diocese.
 - Local diocesan safe environment requirements for adults must be followed and adhered to.
 - Any mission registration fees are collected through the parish, using the parish account, as well as expenses paid or reimbursed.
2. Mission will run under the local Regnum Christi Group
 - Through your event registration you will receive the proper forms, such as RC Activities, Inc. adult waivers and minor permission forms, certificate of insurance, etc.
 - If the mission involves minors, each official adult leader must complete the required RC Activities Volunteer Certification process online at <https://rcaactivities.com/volunteers> as well as local diocese's safe environment requirements.
 - If the mission is an overnight event, there is an extra cost of approximately \$0.50 per day for the required accident insurance for overnight events.
 - A local RC Activities, Inc. bank account must be used for all registration income
 - If you are working with an organization or gathering in a public space, (i.e.: shopping outlet malls, or sidewalks in front of abortion facilities, etc.) also check with local authorities or leadership to see if any permissions or forms are required.

Step #3: Gather and Train a Core Team

You don't have to work alone! Gather a team of 3-10 people to help you run the mission! Virtual and in person training available through Mission Youth website

- Areas to cover by your team:
 - Team leader formation and training
 - Budget & finances
 - Liability & legality
 - Mission projects
 - Materials and supplies
 - Promotion and Communication
 - Registration and missionary check-in
 - Missionary Training
 - Prayer and liturgy
 - Team building for missionaries
 - Logistics: food, transportation, etc.



What does a Holy Week Mission Look like?

Length: It can be a one day event or a full week long event

Key Elements

Share the Faith

At the heart of every mission, no matter what is done, is the sharing our faith. It can be as simple as a personal experience and witness of God's love in your life or as complex as offering catechism classes.

Prayer and Sacraments

Every mission should include prayer and sacraments for the missionaries, and if possible, for those we mission to. Usually, the mission day starts with a prayer time: a missionary consecration and receiving the missionary cross. Mass and confession should be made available if possible. And, it is great to end the day with adoration to give over to God all the prayer intentions gathered and the people who were encountered that day. Missionary prayers can be referenced in the Prayer Book available on-line.

Formation & Training

Where possible, training should be offered to the core team and missionaries attending the mission. It can be weeks before the mission on a Saturday or an evening or it can be done in the first hours of the mission. Training topics are available through the Mission Youth Support Team.

Team life & community

The underlying spirit of every Mission Youth Mission is a mini experience of the Church: Different people coming together to share God's love. Joy, charity, respect and fun are characteristics of a missionary community. Creating a spirit of unity & charity should be intentionally promoted among all the missionaries. If you have a large group, missionaries can be divided into smaller teams to help create that family spirit. At the end of each day, missionaries can share highs and lows to help them process their experience and enrich each other. Let us never be less loving to those we mission with in our teams than to those we mission to.

Accompaniment

missionaries never mission alone. Mentorship and accompaniment are an important part of the mission so that the missionaries and those missioned to can experience a person who is sincerely interested in encountering them as a person. One important role of the core team is accompanying the team leaders of each team. In turn, the team leaders accompany the missionaries their teams.

Sample Schedule

DAY 1: Start of the Mission |

- Welcome and Registration
- Commissioning Mass or ceremony
- Mini retreat or training time
- Break into teams & have ice breakers
- Introductory talk explanation

DAY 2: During the Mission | (this can last as many days as your mission allows)

- Start the day with a brief prayer and reflection time together
- Go through the schedule of the day and any safety recommendations
- Visit the mission sites or experiences
- End the day by having the teams gather again for a highs and lows sharing time and adoration

DAY 3: Final Day |

- Closing Mass
 - Video or slideshow with pictures
 - General sharing for the missionaries
 - Survey or mission feedback
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Best Practices for the Holy Days

Holy Thursday:

Street Mission: each city has an area where those in need are present in the open. As missionaries, we can walk those streets to meet person to person those in need, to hear their stories and offer them compassion and support.

Collaborating with those who serve the poor: Every city has numerous organizations that reach out to the poor and the homeless. A Holy Week mission team is an ideal group of people to help volunteer at soup kitchens, homeless shelters, etc.

Evangelization Adoration: The missionaries organize praise and worship during the evening hours, and a team of missionaries stands at the door and in the street with small tea-candles. Each passerby is invited to go into the church and light their candle, placing it before the altar. Some local priests are invited to be hearing confessions during the holy hour. The goal is to fill the space before the altar with candles and allow people to experience a moment of Adoration.

The Great Parish-wide Invite: The missionaries will go door to door in the local neighborhood to personally invite every home to join in the Easter celebrations. They pass out flyers with dates and times for prayer services, as well as a welcome letter from the local pastor. They take down any prayer intentions and gather any requests for things like communion to the sick. If they are invited to do so, the missionaries can answer any questions about the faith that the persons in the home may have.

Holy Thursday Mass

Seder Meal

Washing of the Feet

Good Friday

The Crosswalk: In a downtown or heavily trafficked area, the missionaries carry large crosses through the streets. They greet people as they go and invite passersby to write down a prayer intention and nail it to the cross with a small nail. The crosses serve as a visible reminder to all motorists and onlookers that Good Friday is happening.

Stations of the Cross/ The Flash Mob Way of the Cross: Often a parish youth group will perform a real-life way of the cross in the parish or school. The flash-mob way of the cross takes the message about Jesus out into the streets. The youth from the parish pray the stations by arriving suddenly into a public space, like Times Square for example, and go about acting out and praying the stations. The people passing by take pictures, comment on the event, and many times join in. When well done, it is a great accomplishment and evangelization work. If done in a public place, it may be necessary for prior permission from local authorities.

The Good Friday Bible School: Often, children don't have school on Good Friday, but their parents still have to go to work. Thus, the parents are glad to be able to drop their kids off at a half day parish event. Thus, a parish "day-care" on Good Friday is another way to serve. The kids are explained the Holy Week themes and participate in games and activities for Easter. The missionaries prepare and run the event.

Reflection on the Last Words of Christ

Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday

Helping to clean and prepare a Church for Easter/ Parish Projects: At times a parish priest may need help with his parish. An inner-city parish is often in need of fresh paint, or the gardens being weeded and cleaned. All parishes need help decorating the church for the Easter Vigil.

Easter Egg hunt or games for kids

The UNselfie challenge: The missionaries give out Easter Eggs on the sidewalk of a heavily trafficked area. The eggs contain challenges to do something for someone else, like calling your mother. Thus, they are a way of being selfless, or "unselfie". The eggs contain little candies and Christian messages.

Post Easter Vigil Party: At the end of the event, or at the end of the mission, it is good to have a party and to thank God for the fruits. Instead of the event just ending quickly and everyone going home, we need to stop and recognize the beauty and gifts of the moment. Too often we just run on the surface of life but never go deep. The Holy Week Mission takes many people very deep in their faith. A post-Easter Vigil party is always fun!



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