



# The Office for Ministry with Youth

Accompanying Through, With, & In Christ



## YOUTH Co-leadership Protagonism Initiative

2025 Cohort

In partnership with **goodfaith**



## Office for Ministry with Youth

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Dear Ministers with Youth and Ministry leaders,

We are very pleased to announce the beginning of the new Cohort of our **Youth Co-leadership Protagonism Initiative (YCOPI)** in 2025.

Following you will find YCOPI's Goals, Objectives, Timeline with Phase Descriptions, Recruiting Guidelines, and Q&A.

**The YCOPI 2025 Cohort is limited in size to about 10 parishes! Registrations will remain open until all the spots are filled or until August 11, 2025, whichever comes first** (there are deadlines associated with participating in our NCYC delegation as part of the YCOPI formation process. Further details are found in the session descriptions below).

When you have found a youth to participate, please email [PhillyOMY@archphila.org](mailto:PhillyOMY@archphila.org) for availability, and forms required to register your youth and parish.

The excitement and empowerment of our first YCOPI Cohort participants has been more than we expected as they continue to engage their faith in tangible ways. They give witness to YCOPI's ability to help parishes establish, grow, and sustain Ministry with Youth beyond a "youth program". We are hopeful that you will be able to take advantage of this opportunity for your youth, your parish, and the Church of Philadelphia.

Thank you for all your support and care for the young Church of Christ!

*Marisally Santiago*

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# YCOPI Goals

[YCOPI](#) is designed to equip and empower youth to institute and lead Youth Mission Initiatives within parish settings. It builds on the core tenets of Goodfaith's long-standing [research](#) and proven ministry model in service and social justice.

[YCOPI](#) emphasizes formation for both youth and adults in the spirit of missionary discipleship. The initiative puts in place an integrated, intergenerational infrastructure to lead tangible youth-led action plans and implement a parish-wide communications strategy. It provides both youth delegates and their adult accompaniers with orientation, training, content, and knowledge needed to sustain these efforts in the long term. Oriented around the Gospel call to service, these efforts have been shown to animate the young Church and strengthen parish communities.

## YCOPI Objectives

[YCOPI](#) seeks to:

- Equip youth to imagine and lead a YOUTH MISSION INITIATIVE (YMI)s in their respective communities. These youth delegates, in turn, engage their own communities and “spheres of influence” in whatever their chosen YMI is.
- Deepen youth delegates’ skills and spirituality through cognitive exercises (for leadership training and skill development), as well as catechetical and theological practices (for spiritual discernment and transformation).
- Empower adults through the skills of accompaniment so they can effectively walk with these youth delegates throughout the process.

As a result:

- Parishes are strengthened because of empowering youth delegates to create youth-led parish/community missions and intergenerational engagement in these YMIs.
- Parishes produce young leaders of faith, who see themselves as agents of change.
- Young people in parishes identify their faith as motivation for the work they do, and the work they do as informing/nourishing their faith.

## In Their Own Words

Our first YCOPI Cohort not only met these objectives but surpassed them in many ways! You can see quotes of their experience on our [YCOPI web page](#). Here are some of their words:

- “I feel like I have become closer to God because of YCOPI. They helped me with my faith journey. I would want every youth to experience this.” Rosario, youth delegate

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- “Before, I didn’t see myself as an important ‘player.’ Then I saw it was easier for me than adults to get youth involved. I realized I was an important part of getting youth involved in things.” Emily, youth delegate
- “When looking at a parish, it’s easy to overlook the amount of youth. We need to nourish and help them to know the next step in their journey. They’re open to so much more.” Sandy, adult accompanier

## YCOPI Timeline with Phases and Descriptions

*\*All sessions are to be attended by youth and accompanying adults.*

\*We are grateful that [YCOPI](#) participation can be largely underwritten by the OMY and private donors! However, please note that there are some direct costs to attend overnight experiences including the Deep Dive Weekend Retreat, the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), and the Immersion Week. The OMY [YCOPI](#) team will offer fundraising support as needed.

### **Phase 1: DISCOVERY** (October 2025 – December 2025)

Through a discernment process and in collaboration with their accompanying adults, youth delegates will discover how the Spirit is calling them to serve their communities following Goodfaith’s “Pathways to Discipleship” Ministry Model.

- **Session I - Orientation and Introductions: September 11, 2025, 6:30pm to 8:00pm**
  - **Session 1: Virtual Orientation Gathering**
  - **Location:** Zoom
  - Introduce key concepts, nurture peer relationships, and plant seeds for Youth Mission Initiatives
- **Session II - Discovery and Discernment: Listening to Him: October 11, 2025, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm**  
(Doors open with continental breakfast at 8:30am, program from 9:00am to 3:30pm.)
  - **Location:** TBD
  - Designed to engage young people through the Pathways model fostering encounter, accompaniment, protagonism, and spiritual imagination and aligning works of justice in relationship to the Eucharist.
  - Introduce the discernment process of St. Ignatius of Loyola as cohorts reflect on their unique gifts and begin to prepare for the design and planning of their Youth Mission Initiative (YMI).
- **Session III - Preparation for the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC): November 6, 2025, 6:30pm to 8:00pm**
  - **Getting Ready for NCYC 2025 – “I Am | Yo Soy”**
  - **Location:** Zoom

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- Discuss the purpose of attending NCYC in light of the design and planning of their YMI
- **Session IV - “I Am | Yo Soy” – Attending NCYC 2025: November 20 to 23, 2025**
  - **Location:** Indianapolis, IN
  - **Cost:** \$880 or \$970 per youth, \$1,085 or \$1,445 per adult. Scholarships available.
  - Optional for adult accompaniers.
  - An adult will be assigned to serve as the YCOPI group leader in the Philadelphia Pilgrim Delegation.
  - **\*There are deadlines associated with participating in our NCYC delegation. This could mean some of the youth may not be able to attend if selected later in the selection process.**
  - Further delegation details are available at [phillyOMY.org](http://phillyOMY.org) > [Coming Up!](#) > [NCYC 2025](#)
- **Session V: Baptismal Call to Action - Unpacking & Contextualizing NCYC: December 4, 2025; 6:30pm to 8:00pm**
  - **Location:** Zoom
  - Unpack the experience of NCYC
  - Exploration of where the Spirit is leading youth to live out their Baptismal Call.
  - Reflection on the needs of communities, develop Youth Mission Initiative (YMI) idea, training in core competencies and skills.

## **Phase 2: FORMATION** (January 2026 – June 2026)

Training the youth delegates through peer learning cohorts using the “Pathways” corresponding curriculum and in skill sets that facilitate the design and development of their individual YMI’s while continuing to equip adults on youth accompaniment.

- **Session VI: Deep Dive Weekend Retreat - January 16 to 18, 2026 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend); Arrival and departure times TBD**
  - **Location:** Malvern Retreat House
  - **Cost:** \$315+ \*Participants should plan to cover at least a portion of this cost. Pending additional funding, the OMY will work to subsidize costs as much as possible.
  - This extended session will be devoted to YMI planning and execution. Youth will walk away from this experience with a detailed “roadmap” (or action plan) to begin to implement their YMIs in their home communities. The Eucharist and discernment-centered presentations and prayer will play a central role throughout the weekend.
- **Session VII - Building Community, Learning, and Planning: February 12, 2026, 6:30pm to 8:00pm**
  - **Location:** Zoom
  - Working session designed for continued training and peer learning

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- **Possible Service Immersion Experience: March 21, 2026, approximately 9:00am to 3:30pm**
  - **Location:** TBD
  - An opportunity for youth and their adult accompaniers to live out their Baptismal Call through an immersive experience by encountering Christ in the other.
- **Session VIII - Prepping the “Pastor Pitch”: April 9, 2026; 6:30pm to 8:00pm**
  - **Location:** Zoom
  - Youth will be guided in preparing a presentation of the YMI to their pastor and pastoral staff.
- **Session IX - Refugee Mother’s Day Lunch: May 9, 2026; Time TBD**
  - **Location:** In person
  - A Service Immersion experience with Catholic Social Services (CSS)
  - \*Date and time pending final planning by CSS.
- **Session X - Glorify Mass and Commission Celebration: Saturday, June 20, 2026; 10:00am, followed by light reception with YMI presentations with Archbishop Nelson Pérez**
  - **Location:** Chapel of the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Philadelphia, PA
  - Mass celebrated by Archbishop Pérez
  - Celebrate and strengthen the Spirit for mission beyond the formation portion of the “initiative” and commission participants to engage their YMI’s in their parish communities.
- **Goodfaith Weeklong Immersion Experience: July 2026, Trenton, NJ**
  - Immersion experience to further strengthen participants in their Baptismal Call be people of faith engaged in works of service and justice.
  - **Cost: \$650+** \*Participants should plan to cover at least a portion of the cost. The OMY will work to subsidize costs as much as possible pending additional funding.
  - Optional for adult accompaniers.
  - Further details are pending.

### **Phase 3: ACCOMPANIMENT AND MISSION (August 2026-May 2027)**

Accompanying the youth delegates and their accompanying adults as they implement their YMI’s in their communities.

- **Quarterly Accompaniment Gatherings**
  - **Date and Time:** August 2026-April 2026, Quarterly, exact dates and times TBD
  - **Location:** Zoom

- Gatherings to review, affirm, encourage, and ground them in the mission they are engaging in.
- **End of year In-Person Gathering and Invitation**
  - **Date:** May 2027
  - **Location:** TBD, In-Person
  - We will celebrate and re-strengthen the Spirit for mission beyond the “initiative” and extend an invitation to lead in the next YCOPI Cohort and be part of the Philadelphia Catholic Youth Conference (PCYC), the OMY’s Archdiocesan day conference for high school aged youth, on Saturday, November 21, 2026, at Immaculata University.

## Recruiting Guidelines

To assist with selecting the youth delegate and accompanying adults the youth delegate may choose, please consider the following:

Characteristics of the **youth delegate**:

- Growing or seeking to grow in confidence (speak up for what they believe in)
- Passionate
- A team player
- Not overly committed to other activities
- Has enough time to commit to YCOPI
- Spiritual and open to spiritual practice
- Compassionate
- Tapped into the needs in their community or global needs/causes that have local roots
- Has the support of parent/guardian

Characteristics of the **accompanying adult**:

- Empowering
- Supportive
- Creative problem solver
- Flexible
- Spiritual
- Compassionate
- Knows how to delegate
- Able to manage group dynamics
- \*Should not be a parish staff member. We also encourage that it not be a parent, although it can be as long as the youth chooses them.

Other things to consider:

- Not necessarily the “go to” youth or adult in the parish but has the right heart and disposition.
- How well the accompanying adult and youth delegate will work together.

## Q&A

### What is the cost associated with YCOPI?

We are grateful that YCOPI participation is largely underwritten by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and private donors! However, please note that there are some direct costs to attend overnight experiences including the Deep Dive Weekend Retreat, the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), and the Immersion Week.

Each youth delegate and accompanying adult should plan to cover:

- *Portion* of the Deep Dive weekend retreat,
- *Total* cost of their participation in the National Catholic Youth Conference, and
- *Portion* of the weeklong Immersion Experience in July 2026 as noted on the timeline details.

There are no other costs involved in participating in YCOPI. The YCOPI team will offer fundraising support as needed.

### What is the time commitment?

YCOPI is a **two-year** process.

- **Year one** consists of alternating in-person and zoom monthly formation gatherings, a weekend retreat, the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), and a commissioning Mass and celebration.
- **Year two** consists of quarterly peer learning cohorts and an end of year Gathering and Invitation

Youth delegates and their accompanying adults are expected to attend and fully participate in *all* the gatherings and opportunities offered in the two-year initiative. Of course, we understand that circumstances change that might preclude the attendance or participation of a youth delegate and/or their accompanying adult. We just ask for a good faith effort to engage as fully as possible in the process!

The time commitment for the Youth Mission Initiative (YMI) planning and implementation will vary throughout the duration of the initiative.

### What if a youth delegate or mentor cannot attend the Deep Dive Weekend Retreat?

The Deep Dive weekend retreat is an essential component of YCOPI. If a youth or adult is unable to attend the Deep Dive Weekend Retreat, please keep them in mind for later and/or engage them in the work of the Youth Mission Initiative when implemented in the parish.

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**What if a youth delegate or mentor cannot attend the Commissioning Mass and Celebration, and/or the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC)?**

Like the Discovery Weekend Retreat, the Commissioning Mass and Celebration is an essential component of being a youth delegate. It is also essential for their accompanying adult. This is where Archbishop Nelson Pérez will officially commission each youth to engage their YMI.

Since the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is a key component of the YCOPI experience, participation of youth delegates is expected. Accompanying adults are *highly* recommended to attend but not required.

**How many youth and adult accompaniers can participate from my parish?**

Each parish may recruit one to three teens from their parish. Each teen may choose their own adult accompanier or share the same person in common.

Do note, it is important that the youth select their adult accompanier. If it's more than one teen, it is important that the teens choose whether to have their own individual adult accompanier or share one in common. Of course, they may be assisted in their selection by the pastor, Parish Liaison, parent, etc.

**Besides the youth and adult accompaniers, is there anyone else from my parish required to be involved?**

Although the youth delegate and the adult accompanier are the only ones required to attend the formation process, each parish will need a Parish staff liaison/representative to be the “connecting” source between the youth/adult accompanier team and the pastor and parish.

**Can I identify a youth of any grade level?**

No. Due the two-year timeline of the initiative, candidates to be a youth delegate *must* be a rising high school freshman, sophomore, or junior in the 2025-2026 academic year.

**How do I inform the Office for Ministry with Youth that we have selected a youth for YCOPI?**

Please email the Office for Ministry with Youth (OMY) at [phillyomy@archphila.org](mailto:phillyomy@archphila.org) when you have identified and selected a youth for YCOPI. Letting the OMY know via email will reserve your parish's spot in YCOPI. The OMY will then send you the forms to submit via email or mail to the Office for Ministry with Youth, 222 North 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103.