

St. Isidore Center for Youth Catechesis

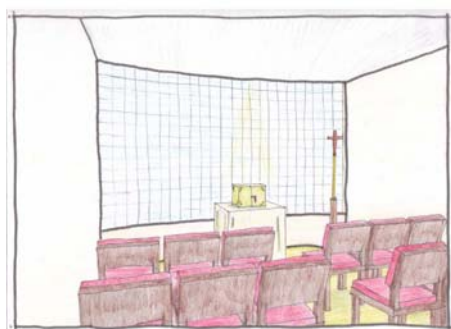
Q & A

Our parish goal is to grow our youth ministry to 300 + members. Given that our current youth group is very small, how do we know we can attract that many youth?

Let's begin by distinguishing between the terms *Youth Group* and *Youth Ministry*. Youth Ministry describes the entire scope and sequence of the programs, content, activities and events that our parish uses to pass our faith tradition on to our junior high and high school students.

Youth Group is one of many possible ongoing programs such as our Dead Theologians Society (DTS), which meets on a regular basis with a consistent number of participants to study the lives of the saints. Currently, when our teens talk about going to "youth group" on Thursday nights, this is what they are referring to.

The new space allows growth for more youth groups such as Teen Bible Study, Church History, Religions of the World, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Catholic Social Teaching, etc. on other nights of the week. Our new facility would make this possible and our plans include this change in programming.



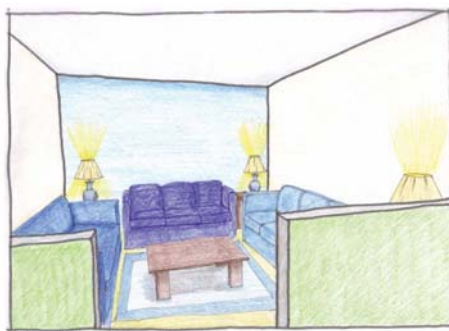
View of Adoration Chapel

Our current Youth Group (DTS) has about 50 or 60 teens, 15-30 of which show up on any given Thursday night.

Youth Ministry currently includes the faith formation of our 350 junior high and 9th grade Confirmation preparation programs. These groups of 8-10 teens

currently meet in parishioners' homes with two adult facilitators. This setting, while preferred by our teens over classrooms, is not considered "best practice" according to the standards for safe environment and staff supervision established by our Bishops.

Our current Youth Ministry also includes several trips and retreat experiences offered each year. Our new space could host these retreats.



View into a Small Group Room

Why do we need an off-site space for this purpose? Can't we utilize our current buildings more efficiently or build on campus?

In 2006 our parishioners and ministry leaders sent us a loud and clear message that our ministries have outgrown our facilities. That is why we created the facility master plan for the next 20 years. The economy has caused us to put that plan on hold. But acquiring this space gives us an incredible opportunity to grow our youth ministry now so that we have a better knowledge of what we will need as we begin to build on campus when the economic situation allows us to do so. We are also exploring a lease with option to buy, but are not anxious to become property owners and landlords at this time.

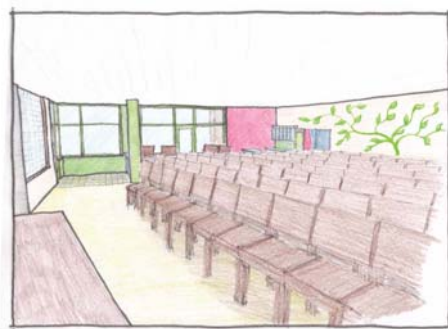
Our new space will be 80% full when we open because our 350 junior high and Confirmation students will be meeting in the facility once per week. The 20% of the time and space remaining each week will be our margin for growth into the new offerings for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders mentioned above.

There are over 1,800 junior high and high schoolers in our parish. 350 of them are already involved in faith formation. In reality, we think that the time and space this facility provides will max out quickly when our new offerings become

more widely known to the teens. Our view is that the acquisition of a space this size is a conservative move necessitated by our financial limitations. But it still allows for enough space to meet our goals for youth ministry in a timely way.

How are children led from RE and St. Isidore School into Youth Ministry?

Our current K-6 RE program will continue as it has operated for the last several years, in the classrooms and meeting rooms of the school and Ministry Center. Families in the RE program are offered the opportunity to register for the following year in the spring. This continues into the junior high and high school years. Our school students are exposed to Youth Ministry opportunities beginning in 5th grade through in-school retreat experiences facilitated by our Youth Ministry Director. He also makes frequent presentations to the junior high students throughout the year. Our school and RE ministries work collaboratively to make sure we offer as complete an opportunity for faith formation as possible for students from pre-school through their high school years. We like to compare our ministry to junior high students to building the minor league "farm team" for a major league youth ministry program.



View of Main Meeting Area

What is being done to make people more aware of youth ministry?

The first thing we did was hire David Heimann as our Youth Ministry Director. His gifts, education, experience, and abilities qualify him for the task ahead -- expanding the opportunities for teens to become active Catholic disciples of Jesus Christ. This expansion has already begun. The offerings that this proposed facility make

possible will help him accomplish this goal.

Additionally, we will be making our mission and ministry (specifically to youth) known in the “marketplace” – literally! Our location next to the mall will serve as a tool for evangelizing our community.

Is the facility multi-purpose or for youth only?

The facility will be open for current programming (junior high and Confirmation groups) five nights per week, Sunday-Thursday. It will open at 3pm on these days and remain open until 9:30pm. The 3-6pm time slot will provide a supervised after-school safe “hangout” for teens to do projects, homework, drink a cup of coffee, use the wireless internet access, spend quiet time in the chapel, or spend time with friends in the recreation room.

From 9am-3pm other parish activities will have access to the space. For example, our daytime Bible study sessions could be held in the space with plenty of room to offer babysitting for participants’ pre-school children. Parish and School Staff formation activities can also be offered during the day in the facility.

How was the facility size determined?

The space needs were determined by the need for 1) comfortable, living-room-style spaces for several small groups to meet at one time, 2) a gathering space for large-group shared prayer and presentations, 3) a devotional chapel, and 4) supervised recreation and “coffee bar” areas for informal activity.

How and how often will the facility be used?

Initially the site will be open for our junior high and Confirmation sessions as well as sessions for sophomores, juniors and seniors. Sunday through Thursday evenings will be scheduled with 5 small groups beginning at 6pm. At 7:15 a second session of five small groups will enter the building and all groups (10) from both sessions will share evening prayer or a common presentation as a large group until 7:45. The 5 groups from the first session will then depart for home and the second session will run until 9 pm.



Friday and Saturday nights will be reserved for special events like retreats, praise and worship, and/or special presentations.

Are there security measures in place to make sure it will be a safe space?

Yes. Each registered youth participant will be issued a bar coded card that will serve as their pass to enter the building. When they scan their card a time-stamped email or text message is immediately generated and sent to his/her parent that they have entered. The same procedure will be used when exiting the building.

Teens may bring non-registered friends, but they must sign in and, if they visit a second time, must register to receive their own pass card so they can continue enter the facility.

The entrance will be staffed by a supervisory adult during open hours.

Are there plans for adequate supervision?

Our current program for grades 7-9 require each group of 8-10 students to have two adult facilitators. This is a ratio of 1:4 or 1:5 adult to teen. The site will always be staffed by at least one full time staff member, including shifts covered by our Associate Pastors.

We now have a team of over 90 volunteers in our youth ministry program that will also provide trained, screened supervisory help at the site. The after school drop-in time will have no more than a 1:8 ratio of adult supervision to youth participants.

Can we afford to do this?

We don't know! Given our current level of giving to the weekend offertory collection, no, we cannot afford it.

Our hope is that enough parishioners who 1) share our dream of what this facility can do for St. Youth Ministry and 2) have the financial means to do so, will contribute the funds to make it happen. We are looking for donors who would be willing to fund all or part of the facility's monthly expenses once per year for up to five years.

The estimated monthly cost to operate this facility during this five-year lease is \$7,600-\$7,800 per month. Most of the daily cleaning and upkeep will be done by the teens themselves. Any additional maintenance functions will be absorbed by our current facilities staff. The space will be staffed by existing employees.

We will ask some donors to commit to covering the expenses for one month per year. They will be recognized for their generosity on our donor wall inside the facility.

Others have already been asked to cover one third of a month over the course of the lease. They too will be recognized in an appropriate way within the facility.

Many families will be asked to make a monthly commitment that might be a bit of a sacrifice. But while it might be a stretch to donate, we hope they will share the vision that it is worth it to provide this space for their children and grandchildren's spiritual growth.

Specific areas of the building can be dedicated to the memory of a loved one or in the name of a higher level donor by contacting our pastor, Fr. Jerry.

An ongoing fund raising effort will grow as we proceed, including the efforts of the youths themselves to support this facility financially.

The project will not and cannot (per Bishop Sartain) proceed until we have the funds committed.

Here is a question for you:

How can you help? You can pledge your time, talent, and/or treasure to make this dream come true for our teens. Use a pledge card and envelope to make your commitment. Thank you!