

My dear young people:

MESSAGE

Once again, I invite you to join the Church in the Philippines in celebrating National Youth Day on 16 December 2012 as we start our nine-day preparation for Christmas.

This year's theme is about "Rejoicing in the Lord always" – taken from Pope Benedict XVI's message for World Youth Day 2012.

JOY is at the very essence of Christmas. We rejoice because "a child is born to us" [Is 9:6], Jesus Christ, who is the Savior of the world. Through him our lives are transformed. From darkness and despair, we find light and hope. With Jesus, we are able to overcome weakness and uncertainty, sin and death.

In this Year of Faith, we are being asked to deepen our experience and appreciation of our faith in order to share it to others and to the world. Just as Jesus was the Father's gift to the world – through Mary – we are also invited to become gifts ourselves. This is why Christmas is also about giving.

To be sure, it not only involves material gifts, but, above all, the gift of ourselves – made manifest through our communion and service, through holiness of life and authentic witness.

Today, many young people continue to search for meaning amidst the tensions and tragedies that they encounter in their lives. May this NYD2012 celebration provide us all a special moment of grace in order to become instruments of joy, hope and new life to others, and find that Christmas is truly about giving – joyful giving in the Lord!

Happy NYD2012! A blessed Christmas to one and all!



+ JOEL Z. BAYLON, DD

Chairman

CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth

CONCEPTUAL PLAN
for the local celebration of
NATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2012
Rejoice in the Lord always
[Phil 4:4]

THEME

The celebration of the National Youth Day (NYD) 2012 is rooted on the Message of the Holy Father to the youth of the world on the occasion of the XXVII World Youth Day (WYD). The Scripture verse, "Rejoice in the Lord always" [Phil4:4], serves as the underlying theme of both the Pope's message and the observance of the NYD 2012.

RATIONALE

In the Philippines, the NYD is a day assigned by the Church as a special day for her great treasure, the youth. Traditionally set every 16th of December, this becomes an occasion for activities and events which highlight the Church's preferential love for the youth.

The youth ministries in the dioceses spearhead the undertakings and programs in this regard, including the setting aside of the Mass collections during this day for the youth ministry.

FORMATION PROGRAM

As in past NYD's, the ECY created this formation program as a tool for the youth ministry offices (diocese, organization, parish, etc.) in celebrating the NYD 2012. This program is addressed particularly to youth ministers who are responsible for the animation of the NYD in their own settings. This may be modified to suit local contexts.

For the profession of faith, prepare a meaningful way of reciting the Nicene Creed, which is one of the prayers recommended for the observance of the "Year of Faith".

Where appropriate within the liturgy, the participants will be asked to approach the altar, with their written commitments, or the clay-sculpture, drawing or collage which represent these. The preside will bless these, to encourage the participants in living out these pledges as missionaries of joy.

B. Reflection from Scripture

As a suggested Scripture text, the story of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the well [Jn 4:3-42] may be used. After getting to know the Lord at the well, she could not contain her joy; she immediately announced her own personal experience of Jesus to her community.

C. Personal Activity

Give participants a few moments to reflect on how they can be able to give joy to others; encourage them to journal them. Afterwards, ask them to express this creatively, e.g. through clay sculpture, drawing, collage, etc.

OR

Ask participants to think of 3 concrete steps on how to be a “missionary of joy” in their own context (personally / in groups, e.g. by parish, etc.). Have them write this down afterwards on a sheet of paper, or on specially prepared handouts.

D. Sharing

Instruct participants that as a way of sharing their commitments as “good news” to others, they should post these on their personal Twitter accounts and/or Facebook walls (with the hashtag #NYD2012), or forward them as GM through text, as soon as possible after this NYD2012 celebration.

If this is not possible due to particular contexts, the organizers are requested to think of appropriate and meaningful ways for the participants to proclaim the commitments they will make.

III. Closing Liturgy (60-70 minutes)

End with the Eucharist, which can also be a venue for launching the “Year of Faith” among the youth.



OBJECTIVES

This NYD 2012, through this formation program prepared by the CBCP-Episcopal on Youth, will be a celebration where young people will be able to:

-) recognize their need and capacity for joy, and assess their experiences of joy (temporary or lasting)
-) experience true joy through a personal encounter with Christ
-) nourish this friendship with Christ in and through the Church
-) respond positively to the challenges of Christian joy which are charity, vocation and communion

TIME ELEMENT

This program is designed for a time element of one whole day.

MODE OF CELEBRATION

Date of celebration is 16 December 2012, or any date near it. This 2012 celebration will be in local levels, i.e. diocese, vicariate, parish, schools, youth organizations, etc.

YOUTH MINISTRY AWARENESS WEEK

The week preceding the NYD (09-15 December) is celebrated as YOUTH MINISTRY AWARENESS WEEK (cf. NYCC 2003 Resolution). This weeklong celebration is spearheaded by the Regional Youth Coordinating Councils.

Resources you may use will be available in www.cbcpcy.ph

SESSIONS

A. Opening Session (2 hours)

1. Animation
2. Getting-To-Know-Activity: Dating Game
3. National Youth Day Orientation
4. Guided Reading: Message of the Holy Father on the occasion of the XXVII World Youth Day
5. Opening Prayer

B. Session 1: “Seekers of Joy” (2 hours)

1. Activity: Tree of Joy
2. Small Group Sharing
3. Tree Gallery
4. Plenary Input
5. Silence

C. Vocation Promotion: Interactive Booths (2 hours)

D. Session 2: “Keepers of Joy” (2 hours)

1. Animation
2. Interview
3. Input
4. Skit
5. Conclusion

E. Closing Session: “Givers of Joy” (2 hours)

1. Introduction
2. Commitment Setting
3. Closing Liturgy

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Young people are welcome to participate; this is for them! However, to facilitate the flow of the program, and perhaps, also to consider the size of the venue, the number of participants need to be limited to a maximum of 500 persons; more than this number would require a simultaneous program to be held at another venue, or on a separate day.

GIVERS OF JOY | Session 3

Objectives:

This session aims for the participants to respond positively to the challenges of Christian joy by expressing, possibly in creative ways, their commitment to be missionaries of joy. At the end of the session, the participants are expected to be enthusiastic witnesses of the New Evangelization.

Materials Needed:

Art materials: Old magazines, pairs of scissors, clay, art papers, coloring materials
Writing materials
Mass Kit
Space in the altar/sanctuary for displaying the signs of commitment

Time Element: 2 hours

Flow:

I. Introduction (5 minutes)

Joy is a gift received and, thus, meant to be shared. Our hearts are made for joy. The message of Pope Benedict XVI has helped us see the joyful and happy side of faith.

With this, we are called to be joyful witnesses of the new evangelization.

II. Commitment Setting (45 minutes)

A. Motivation

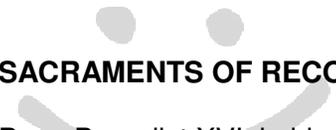
Motivate participants to reflect on this challenge from the Pope's message:

“...be missionaries of joy. We cannot be happy if others are not. Joy has to be shared.”

Say a short prayer for those who raise their hands in each proclamation; for example:

Joy in faith: Lord, we would like to receive joy through our personal relationship with You. Give us the grace to be always aware of Your loving presence in each moment of our lives, and to live in complete and childlike trust in You.

Invite everyone to sing an appropriate closing song, e.g. Ang Puso Ko'y Nagpupuri, etc.



SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST

Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for the WYD2012 on which this formation program is rooted in, invited young people to frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, calling it “the sacrament of joy rediscovered”. Organizers of the NYD2012 Formation Program are strongly encouraged to make available priests for confession from Session 2 until before the Concluding Eucharist, and to continuously inform and invite participants about this sacramental opportunity to “rediscover joy” in their relationship with God, with others and with themselves.

The date of NYD2012, 16 December, is still in the starting period of the “Year of Faith”, opened last 11 October 2012. It will be fitting to celebrate the Concluding Eucharist of this formation program as a venue for launching the “Year of Faith” among the youth (if this has not yet been done), or as a liturgical celebration of faith which brings joy. As the Pope has written, “Seek joy in the Lord: for joy is the fruit of faith.” Animators of this closing liturgy will do well to weave its elements (songs to be used, initiatives to be included, etc.) according to this theme.

OPENING SESSION

Objectives:

This session aims to create within and among the participants a joyful atmosphere. At the end of the session, the participants are expected to have a basic understanding of the NYD.

Materials Needed:

Crucifix
Bible (for enthronement)
Candles
Matchsticks
CD player or musical instruments
PowerPoint: Lyrics of songs
PowerPoint: Biblical texts

Time Element: 2 hours

Flow:

I. Animation (10 minutes)

An animation activity which can set a joyful and excited mood can be done before the start of the session.

II. Getting-To-Know Activity: Dating Game (45 minutes)

Provide a worksheet with a circle and ask the participants to place the numbers inside the circle to make a clock. Each number will correspond to a "date", i.e. for each number, they will have to choose their "date" (12 dates). Their chosen date should agree to the time the participant assigned to him/her as to avoid having two dates at a time. To avoid having many dates, they should write in the clock the names of their dates. For example, as you call out a time, the participants will go to their corresponding date. For every hour/date, one question will be asked.

How willing are we to be involved in serving the Lord by sharing our time, energy, and resources in serving the "lost, the least, and the last"?

E. Joy in Christian Fellowship

Pope Benedict XVI said, "There is a close bond between communion and joy. It is not by chance that Saint Paul's exhortation "Rejoice in the Lord always" [Phil 4:4] is written in the plural, addressing the community as a whole, rather than its individual members. Only when we are together in the communion of fellowship do we experience this joy. I ask you to make every effort to help our Christian communities to be special places of sharing, attention and concern for one another."

Are you developing in the communities you belong to (e.g. home, parish, youth group, etc.) the kind of Christian fellowship that fosters joy?

IV. Conclusion (10 minutes)

As a way of synthesizing the kinds of joy elaborated, you may use the story of Zacchaeus [Lk 19:1-10].

Zacchaeus' personal encounter with Jesus brought him to an experience of joy: being called personally by the Lord (joy in faith), conversion (joy in obedience), celebration of the Lord's presence (joy in the Sacraments), and commitment to service (joy in love and service), with all of these in the context of community (joy in Christian fellowship).

What source of joy am I invited by the Lord to discover or to deepen?

In a prayerful way, ask participants to raise their hands in supplication when you announce each of the sources of joy elaborated in this session: in faith, in obedience, in the Sacraments, in love and service, and in Christian fellowship.

“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior!”

Could lack of joy indicate lack of obedience from our part?

C. Joy in the Sacraments

“The liturgy is a special place where the Church expresses the joy which she receives from the Lord and transmits it to the world.” In the Mass, Christian community celebrates the central mystery of salvation, which is the death and resurrection of Christ. “Christian joy is born of this awareness of being loved by God who became man, gave his life for us and overcame evil and death. It means living a life of love for him.”

How often do we go to Mass? How often do we recourse to the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation?

D. Joy in Love and Service

“If we are to experience the joy of love, we must also be generous. We cannot be content to give the minimum. We need to be fully committed in life and to pay particular attention to those in need. The world needs men and women who are competent and generous, willing to be at the service of the common good. Develop your talents and put them at the service of others and find ways to help make society more just and humane wherever you happen to be.”

Bl. Frederic Ozanam, one of the intercessors of World Youth Day 2013 and founder of a charitable organization, put it simply: “We must do what is most agreeable to God. Therefore, we must do what our Lord Jesus Christ did when preaching the gospel. Let us go to the poor.” For in the poor we can see and feel Christ’s presence and be evangelized in the process. Mt 25:40 says, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me”.

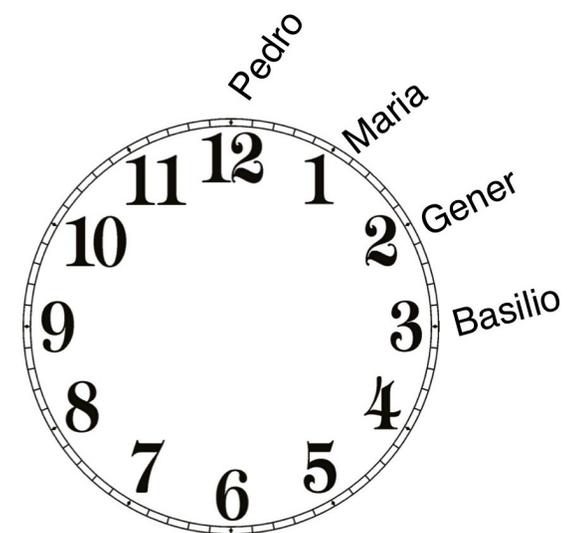
Encourage participants to go to those they do not know much/ yet.

12 Questions (These may be changed/modified)

1. What excites you about today?
2. What is your involvement in the church?
3. What is your favorite quote?
4. What was the last movie, TV show or book that made you happy?
5. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?
6. What is your happiest moment?
7. What is the best gift you have ever received?
8. What are the things that make you happy?
9. What was the last experience that made you a stronger person?
10. What do you think is the key to finding happiness?
11. Why did you join this celebration of the National Youth Day?
12. What do you expect from this NYD celebration?

For each “date”, allow some time for the participants to get to know one another.

Sample clock with “dates”:



III. National Youth Day Orientation (10 minutes)

What is the National Youth Day?

In 1986, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), as a way of concretizing its preferential apostolate for the youth, approved the annual celebration of National Youth Day (NYD) every 16th of December, the first day of the *Misa de Gallo* or *Simbang Gabi*.

How is it celebrated?

The NYD is celebrated annually in the dioceses and other communities on 16 December, or on any date near it. Yearly, the CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Youth (ECY) prepares the NYD conceptual plan and proposes a program for its celebration. Since the year 2000, the plan and program are centered on the theme and message offered by the Holy Father for the World Youth Day (WYD) of that year. Adaptation of the plan and program, to suit local contexts, is referred to the creativity and possibilities of the organizers.

The NYD is also celebrated through a national gathering held on a date before 16 December. The last one was the NYD 2011 on 14-19 November of that year, hosted by the Federation of National Youth Organizations. When celebrated this way, the program is echoed in the NYD celebration in the dioceses on 16 December, or on any day near it.

This year's celebration will be once again at the diocesan level and national youth organizations, following the theme

Rejoice in the Lord always!

Phil 4:4

III. Input (45-50 minutes)

The speaker will share ways of preserving Christian joy in our hearts as proposed by the Holy Father. Before each point, invited groups (who have prepared beforehand) will present short skits (5-7 minutes) developing that point.

A. Joy in Faith

"Joy is the fruit of faith." How to maintain joy in faith:

1. Be aware of the presence and friendship of Jesus
2. Accept his word, which is joy for our hearts
3. Experience joy in the Liturgy
4. Be steadfast, reliable and faithful to commitments
5. Be generous especially by responding to the call of God towards a specific vocation
6. Grow in fraternal love (with your groups or communities)

With joy we carry our own crosses, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake..." [Col 1:24] as attested by the lives of the saints (*refer to Pope's message citing Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati and Bl. Chiara Badano's examples*) and can be best contemplated by remembering that Jesus Christ gave his life for us on the cross, a sign of God's great love for us.

B. Joy in Obedience

Pope Benedict XVI gave us an assurance that God fills with joy all those who respond to his invitation to leave everything to be with God. There is a great feeling of joy when we respond to the vocation to give our whole life to the Lord.

A good example of joy in obedience is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the "Cause of our Joy", who responded fully to God's love by devoting her life to him in humble and complete service. In Lk 1:38, we can find, "And Mary said, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." In Lk 1:46-55, we can find Mary's song, the Magnificat,

KEEPERS OF JOY | Session 2

Objectives:

At the end of this session, each of the participants will be able to:

- Rediscover ways to receive and maintain the gift of deep spiritual Joy;
- Share experiences of finding true joy in a personal encounter with Christ;
- Realize that they can nourish this friendship with Christ in and through the church.

Materials Needed

Animation materials
Materials for the skits

Time Element: 2 hours

Flow:

I. Animation (5 minutes)

Session starts with an animation to signal the end of lunch break with the vocation bazaar. This also invites the participants to return to the session hall and sets the proper mood and atmosphere for the next session.

II. Interview (5 minutes)

Interview a few participants about their session in the morning and the tour around the bazaar during lunchtime. Elicit feelings and insights.

Summarize the morning session as an activity that helped them rediscover their own sources of joy, own yearnings from within their hearts which are made for joy, and the source of true joy: God. Connect it with the next input, "How do we receive and maintain this gift of deep joy?" and introduce the speaker.

IV. Guided Reading: Message of the Holy Father on the occasion of the XXVII World Youth Day (30 minutes)

Guide the participants in reading the Message of the Holy Father to the youth for the WYD2012. This is an essential component because it introduces the participants to the foundation of this formation program.

V. Opening Prayer: *The joy of being Christian* (15 minutes)

Call to Prayer: Invite everyone to sit in his/her comfortable position.

Suggested Opening Song: Let Heaven Rejoice (Dufford, SJ) / In the Lord, I'll be ever thankful (Taizé) / Sing to the Mountains (Dufford, SJ) / O Come, O Come Emmanuel (15th Century French hymn)

As the song is sung, the Bible is brought forward in a solemn procession and enthroned in the altar prepared for it.

Opening Prayer: God of Life, You have shown us the way to true joy through the life, death and resurrection of Your Son. We have come to know Your love for us, and we desire to follow You in our lives. Bless this desire through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading [Phil 4:4-9], followed by a period of silence

Closing Prayer: Father, You know the needs of our hearts. Help us to experience the true joy which you promised through this day where we celebrate our being young. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we ask this in Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Brother. Amen.

Suggested Closing Song: Magnificat (Taizé) / Ang Puso Ko'y Nagpupuri (Hontiveros SJ) / Bayan, Magsiawit Na! (Aquino SJ)

SEEKERS OF JOY | Session 1

Objectives:

Help the participants recognize their need and capacity for joy, and assess their experiences of joy (temporary or lasting)

Materials Needed:

Construction papers (cut-out fruits)
Poster board
Pentel pens
Glue sticks
Scissors (one pair for every four participants)
Masking tape
Set-up space where participants can work in groups of ten.

Time Element: 2 hours

Flow:

I. Activity: Tree of Joy (30 minutes)

This activity will help the participants be aware of their different joys in life. Later in the session, they will be led to realize that the tree represents God's plan of joy for us.

Group the participants into small groups of ten (pre-assigned or at random). Invite these small groups to gather around prepared work surfaces. At each group, place a variety of construction papers, glue stick, scissors, pentel pen and poster board. Then give these instructions:

- *In the poster board, draw a tree. The different parts of the tree represent a meaning:*
Root: God as the source, only source of joy
Trunk: Nourishments (e.g. Scriptures, Church, sacraments)
Branches: Different areas of life (e.g. family, friends, school, workplace)
Fruits: Experiences of joy

This is done as a way of developing section 4 of the Holy Father's message, where he invited young people to express the joy of love in charity, vocation and communion. The following strategies may be proposed to the booth organizers:

- ✦ A trivia game (describing the patron saint/s of the organizations/congregations/charity institutions) with certain giveaways to be given to the delegates who will visit the booth
- ✦ Portraying the life of the patron saint/s thru a short video of the organizations/congregations/charity institutions
- ✦ A Scripture text can be shown in a creative way, such as the washing of the feet into a free foot spa/foot reflex, God's love is for free through giving of chocolates or any simple food, etc.
- ✦ The life and works of Jesus Christ presented in the life and work of the community of the booth organizer

Make sure that the booths of the different organizations/congregations/charity institutions will give knowledge and joy to each of the delegates.

VOCATION BAZAAR | Interactive Booths

Possible Materials Needed:

Power outlet/s for electrical gadget/s to be used

Mini sound system

Tables

Chairs

Tents

Materials for the displays and for the gimmick of each organization/congregation/charity institution

Tarpaulin or signage for the each booth

General Guidelines:

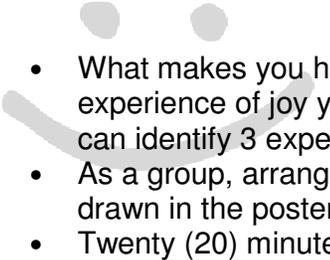
Organizers of the NYD2012 celebration will invite different organizations, congregations and charity institutions, especially those existing in their setting, e.g. the diocesan youth ministry office invites religious congregations, covenant communities, outreach groups within the diocese. For this, it will be helpful to use an invitation letter addressed to the organizations/congregations/charity institutions with a reply slip.

In the NYD2012 venue, provide a place, e.g. tables, tents, etc. where the participating organizations/congregations/charity institutions can put up their exhibits.

Each booth should have its own promotional gimmick in order to attract people.

It is important that booths are open only during the long lunch break (around 12:00 noon to 2:00 in the afternoon).

The content of each booth should showcase the charism and works of the organization/congregation/charity institution but in a very interactive way, also to represent the vibrancy and dynamism of the youth so that the participants will be engaged.

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- What makes you happy? In every fruit, identify one experience of joy you have in your life. Each person can identify 3 experiences.
 - As a group, arrange and glue the fruits into the tree drawn in the poster board.
 - Twenty (20) minutes will be allotted for this task.

II. Small Group Sharing (15 minutes)

Invite participants to share their answers in their small groups.

III. Tree Gallery (10 minutes)

After the group sharing, ask the group to display their collage where everyone can view them. Afterwards, invite the participants to look at the work of other groups. Give them around 5 minutes to view. Then, gather them back in plenary and engage them in a synthesis, leading to the input.

IV. Plenary Input (50 minutes)

Scripture text: The Rich Young Man [Mt 19:16-26]

Reading of the text: *The manner of reading will depend on the creativity of the facilitators.*

Points to reflect on:

1. **SITUATION** of the Rich Young Man: How will you describe the rich young man?

Despite his edge from other young people (being rich, young and good as far as following the commandments are concerned), he was restless, in search for something that he termed “eternal life”. He must be lacking in true and lasting joy.

What is your situation now? What are you full of? On the other hand, what are you restless about?

2. His **QUESTION**: “What must I do to gain eternal life?”

What led the rich young man to ask this question?

What about you: What do you ask about in life right now?

3. Jesus’ **INVITATION**: “If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

What invitation is Jesus extending to you?

4. The rich young man’s **REACTION**: “He went away sad...”

The rich young man did not get what he wanted from Jesus, which is “joy”. What prevented him from having that joy?

If you were in his place, what would be your reaction to Jesus?

From the Pope’s message: *The participants may be given a personal copy of the excerpts of the Pope’s message. At this point, they may simply be asked to silently and prayerfully read them.*

1. God made our hearts to seek for true and lasting joy.

A yearning for joy lurks within the heart of every man and woman. Far more than immediate and fleeting feelings of satisfaction, our hearts seek a perfect, full and lasting joy capable of giving ‘flavour’ to our existence.

This is particularly true for you, because youth is a time of continuous discovery of life, of the world, of others and of ourselves. It is a time of openness to the future and of great longing for happiness, friendship, sharing and truth, a time when we are moved by high ideals and make great plans.

2. God alone can satisfy our longing for joy.

Whatever brings us true joy, whether the small joys of each day or the greatest joys in life, has its source in God, even if this does immediately obvious. This is because God is a communion of eternal love, he is infinite joy that does not remain closed in on itself, but expands to embrace all whom God loves and who love him.

3. Joy comes from being accepted, welcomed and loved by God in and through Jesus

God wants us to share in his own divine and eternal joy, and he helps us to see that the deepest meaning and value of our lives lie in being accepted, welcomed and loved by him. Whereas we sometimes find it hard to accept others, God offers us an unconditional acceptance which enables us to say, “I am loved; I have a place in the world and history; I am personally loved by God. If God accepts me and loves me and I am sure of this, then I know clearly and with certainty that is a good thing that I am alive.”

V. Silence (15 minutes)

Engage the participants into a meditative exercise, guided by what they have just read/listened to.