

Youth Ministry Volunteer FAQ

What volunteer opportunities are available?

There are many ways to serve! Current opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Planning Team (Core Team) members to help plan and facilitate Middle School and High School Youth Group gatherings.
- Catechists for Youth OCIA and Confirmation Preparation (beginning in August).
- Volunteers to provide dinner for our monthly Confirmation gatherings.
- Office support, marketing, flyer design, and PowerPoint creation.

What age groups can I serve?

You can serve in one of the following ministries:

- **Middle School Youth Ministry:** Grades 6–8
- **High School Youth Ministry:** Grades 9–12
- **Confirmation & Sacrament Preparation:** Grades 8–12

How much time is expected?

Your commitment depends on the ministry and your availability. Opportunities range from serving **one evening each month** to approximately **1–5 hours per week**.

Are there one-time opportunities, or is it a long-term commitment?

Yes! We offer both short-term and ongoing opportunities. Our shortest commitment is serving during our **5-week Confirmation Preparation series**, which begins **Thursday, August 13** and meets five consecutive Thursdays.

Can I volunteer with my spouse or a friend?

Absolutely! Spouses and friends are welcome to volunteer together. Before serving directly with our youth, each volunteer must complete the Diocese's Safe Environment training, fingerprinting, and background screening, and be a practicing Catholic. These

requirements reflect our commitment to providing a safe, welcoming, and faith-filled environment for every young person entrusted to our care.

Experience & Qualifications

Do I need to have teaching experience?

Not at all! While some roles involve teaching, many do not. Whatever gifts God has given you, we'll do our best to help you find a role where you can serve with confidence and joy.

Do I need to know a lot about the Catholic faith?

Our volunteers should be practicing Catholics who are striving to live their faith and make it a priority in their daily lives. A general understanding of Catholic teaching, traditions, and Scripture is expected, and we're here to support you as you continue growing in your own faith. You don't need to be a Catholic scholar or theologian to serve the youth!

What if I've never worked with teens before?

Everyone starts somewhere! You'll receive guidance and support from myself and our experienced catechists and volunteers. The most important qualities are a willingness to serve, patience, and a pastoral heart. If you're ever unsure how to handle a situation, we're always here to help and support you.

I'm nervous about leading a group. Are there other ways to help?

Absolutely! Not every volunteer is called to lead a small group. We also need volunteers to:

- Assist catechists and small group leaders.
- Help set up and create a welcoming environment.
- Take attendance.
- Prepare and distribute materials.
- Help with hospitality, meals, and logistics.
- Support office projects, communications, and creative needs.

There are many meaningful ways to serve behind the scenes while making a lasting impact on our youth.

Training & Requirements

Will I receive training?

Yes! Training is provided depending on the role you choose. We also have resources available for ongoing learning, and you're always welcome to reach out with questions or if you're ever unsure about something. Whenever possible, a staff member or experienced catechist will be available to provide guidance and support.

Are there Safe Environment requirements or a background check?

Yes. Before serving with our youth, all volunteers must complete the Diocese of Venice's Safe Environment requirements, including fingerprinting, background screening, and completing the VIRTUS Safe Environment training.

To get started, email youthministry@ourladyoflight.com for information on the next steps.

Please note that even if you have already completed a background check through your employer, another diocese, the school system, or another organization, the Diocese of Venice generally requires all new volunteers to complete their own fingerprinting and Safe Environment training.

How long does the onboarding process take?

The onboarding process typically takes about **two weeks**, depending on how quickly you complete each step. We encourage you to be proactive by scheduling your fingerprinting appointment and completing the VIRTUS Safe Environment training as soon as possible.

Scheduling

When do the programs meet?

Our ministry schedules can be found on the Youth & Young Adults Ministry page of our parish website. Current meeting times include:

- **Middle School Youth Ministry (Grades 6–8):** Meets biweekly alongside Footsteps in Faith on **Sunday mornings** and **Wednesday evenings**, beginning in September.
- **High School Youth Ministry (Grades 9–12):** Meets **weekly on Thursday evenings**, beginning in September.
- **Young Adult Ministry:** Meets **every other Tuesday evening**, beginning in September.
- **Confirmation Preparation:** Immediate Preparation classes **begin August 13** and run for five consecutive weeks. Monthly Confirmation gatherings are typically held on the **first Sunday of each month**, beginning in October.

Do I have to attend every session?

This depends on your role. If you serve as a small group leader or catechist, consistent attendance is highly encouraged. Being present regularly helps build meaningful relationships with the youth and provides the stability and mentorship they need.

Of course, we understand that life happens and occasional absences are unavoidable. We simply ask that you communicate with us in advance whenever possible.

Can I volunteer only once or twice a month?

Absolutely! We have several opportunities that require only a monthly commitment, such as assisting with our monthly Confirmation gatherings, providing meals, helping with special events, or supporting behind-the-scenes projects.

Are there weekend opportunities?

Yes! If weekday evenings don't fit your schedule, there are weekend opportunities available.

Current Sunday opportunities include:

- **Middle School Youth Ministry** on Sunday mornings.
- **Monthly Confirmation Gatherings**, typically held on the first Sunday of each month following the 5:00 PM Mass.

We strive to offer a variety of opportunities throughout the week, so volunteers can serve in a way that best fits their schedule.

Practical Questions

How do I sign up?

Simply email **Zoe Guerra, Director of Youth Ministry**, at youthministry@ourladyoflight.com to get started. I will help you discern the best role for your gifts and guide you through the next steps of the onboarding process.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Feel free to reach out to **Zoe Guerra, Director of Youth Ministry**, at youthministry@ourladyoflight.com. I'd be happy to answer your questions and help you find the right opportunity to serve!

When can I start?

As soon as you've completed the required onboarding process—including your background screening, fingerprinting, and Safe Environment training—you can begin serving in your assigned ministry.

What if I can only help behind the scenes?

That's perfectly okay! We have many opportunities to serve behind the scenes, including hospitality, office support, event setup, meal coordination, marketing, communications, and creative projects.

Please note that because many of these roles still involve working around youth or during ministry events, the Diocese of Venice's background screening, fingerprinting, and Safe Environment training are generally required for all volunteers serving in Youth Ministry.