



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
Archdiocesan Task Force for Youth & Young Adult Ministry

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Youth & Young Adult Archdiocesan Survey Results Announced

November 17, 2021 - With the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, the Archdiocesan Task Force for Youth and Young Adult Ministry conducted a survey of clergy, parents, youth workers, Church School teachers, teens & young adults from mid-September through mid-October 2021 through the services of a professional evaluator, to understand the needs of the youth of our Archdiocese. The results from over 1,900 responses were evaluated and the information was compiled into a summarized report. The results were presented to the Archdiocese Board of Trustees at the end of October, and available for all to view on our website at <https://antiochianyouth.org/index.php/survey>

These are the main takeaways of the survey results:

1. *Most impactful activities:* Intergenerational activities, shared struggle, loving dialogue
2. *Least impactful activities:* Those that are too social or too competitive, or those that are overly didactic.
3. Youth and laity found more positive aspects of the pandemic.
4. Youth were "all over the place" about "hot topics" but desire loving dialogue.
5. Youth were more likely to see social media as a useful platform for spiritual life.
6. Camp rated highly impactful across the board.
7. Teens and young adults want more dialogue and discussion.

In the Encyclical for the Year of Youth, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH said, "I hope to begin a dialogue within our Archdiocese—a dialogue not *about* our youth but *with* our youth." In light of this call, our goal is to create substantive opportunities for our youth to make the choice to grow in their faith utilizing a loving dialogue *with* our youth. The respondents resoundingly echoed that they do indeed desire this kind of loving dialogue called for by His Eminence.

His Eminence also called for a greater involvement of youth and young adults in the life of our parishes. The survey showed a great desire on the part of our young people to be more involved. One teen respondent put this desire in a particularly moving way:

"The hardest thing about being a young person in the church is wanting to serve God so badly, yet not being sure how to do so since many roles are traditionally filled by adults. Adults assume that because we are young we don't have the skills, ideas, or attitude to serve, but that's simply not true."

Additionally, it was highlighted that camp was the most impactful program that the Archdiocese offers. The youth are eager to “bring camp home” each year, and live the faith the way it is modeled at their respective camp. Camp allows campers to experience and actively participate in spiritual growth through fellowship and education. One teen respondent remarked:

“Camp was the most helpful. It showed, not taught, the Orthodox faith.”

A Youth Worker respondent reflected on their experience and stated:

“Camp and Teen SOYO presents a reality that's often overlooked in our parishes... every Orthodox Christian, regardless of their age, is fully a member of the body of Christ... It's one of the only times many kids recognize the reality of their importance in the Church.”

A focus of our efforts will be to offer even more aid to our young people in taking these powerful experiences at camp and applying them to everyday life. Based on the call of His Eminence in his encyclical and the data we have received through our conversations with our young people and those who are ministering to them as well as this survey, the Archdiocesan Task Force plans to offer pilot programs and curricula that focus on holistically engaging our parishes in inter-generational ministry that fully engages all of our faithful in becoming “as little children” according to Christ’s commandment. Details about these new initiatives will be announced soon.

Please visit our website at www.AntiochianYouth.org to learn more about the pilot programs being created by the Task Force. Contact the Task Force via email at TaskForce@antiochian.org

Survey Results can be found on our website at: <https://antiochianyouth.org/index.php/survey>