



ABOUT THE PILGRIMAGE

The Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage has been part of the life of the Diocese for 50 years.

It is a week in the year when young people have the opportunity to meet other young people and act in service of others.

Assisted pilgrims who travel to Lourdes need help to move around the town and the Youth Pilgrimage offers that assistance.

We travel to Lourdes in groups on coaches and each coach acts as its own community – a home away from home.

We encounter those we may never have had the chance to encounter before, unlooked for friendships are born, and each day offers new adventures.

It can be a life changing experience!



LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND GUARDIANS

All you might need to know about what the Lourdes Pilgrimage is, what your child will gain by being part of the pilgrimage, and how to be part of the pilgrimage this year.

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Get in Touch

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE WEEK?

Well we can guarantee each day will be full of new experiences and your child will not be bored!

Youth pilgrims will have their breakfast together and then be 'on duty'. This is what we call the roles they have in the week.

This can be assisting others around the town or helping the wider pilgrimage in other ways. After lunch there may be other duties, or a coach group may have some free time to spend together to do their own thing.

In the evening there is usually something for us to be doing to help and assist and then each coach has some social time.

And each coach has a day off to get away and spend time together at the beach or one of the local towns.



WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO BEING PART OF THE PILGRIMAGE?

- Faith – Many young people come back from Lourdes alive and joyful in their faith. For young people who are struggling with their faith Lourdes is perfect for them to be reminded of what faith offers them
- Friendships – Meet and build friendships with young people from different schools and towns
- Experiences – New and different experiences every day. Your child will come back changed from their week away
- Resilience – Meeting new people, being in a new place, taking part in duties we may not be familiar with all help build our resilience.
- Independence – Being away from home and caring for yourself offers us those life skills we all need.
- Responsibility – Pilgrims are responsible for themselves and are given the responsibility of helping our assisted pilgrims
- Confidence – Being away from home, taking on new tasks, being responsible for others – all help build confidence in who we are and what we can do.
- The Future – Being able to say you have been part of the Pilgrimage and acted in service of others in your own time will help anyone stand out from the crowd on CV's, Job Interviews and College or University applications.

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER MY CHILD?



Each coach group has a staff team (usually 7). This gives an excellent staff to youth ratio: far higher than any school trip. Coach Staff teams bring together a wide variety of skills and backgrounds,

from those working in Education such as chaplains, teachers and school leadership, those with medical training and others holding roles in the private and voluntary sectors. All staff members are DBS cleared and are committed and experienced in areas such as Risk Assessments, Health and Safety and care for young people.

WHAT DOES THE PRICE COVER?

- **The price covers the full pilgrimage.** (That is 9 nights away from home and all travel).
- All Travel to and from Lourdes
- Hotel Accommodation in Lourdes
- Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner in Lourdes
- Pilgrimage T Shirts and Travel Insurance
- *A young person need only take a minimal amount of money for spending on drinks or snacks in the day.*

IS THERE HELP WITH FUNDRAISING?

Yes – but a young person would have to apply first.

Coaches will have their own fundraising. And individuals or friendship groups can organise their own fundraising, with support from schools and parishes.

Any parish would be glad to have young people more involved in the life of the parish and help with fundraising through the year. If a young person is pro-active and takes some initiative there is always support around and there is no reason why the cost could not be substantially reduced.

FROM A PARENT

I had heard of the Lourdes pilgrimage but was not sure what it was all about and whether my son would enjoy it. He was the only one going from his school and was nervous about meeting other people and travelling to another country. And we were as well. But once he went to the first preparation meeting and met the coach staff and the other pilgrims he felt really at ease. The staff answered all my questions and I felt confident letting him go. He came back from Lourdes full of stories and made lots of new friends. That was all two years ago and the pilgrimage is now part of his year. And ours. We can't wait to hear what he's been up to. Definitely worth going!