



THE VINE
ST. NORBERT YOUTH MINISTRY
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September 2011

Dear Parents:

I am Maggie Keefe Bruce, and I am the Youth Ministry Coordinator for St. Norbert Parish. St. Norbert Youth Ministry is a very vibrant and important program with a High School Youth Ministry program as well as a Junior Youth Ministry program. It is a way for teens to connect with the church and to feel a part of our Catholic community. We offer a variety of events blending religion, service to the community, and recreation.

St. Norbert Youth Ministry for high schoolers has a wonderful program called “Bridging The Gap Between Faith & Everyday Life With Teens” during which we discuss various topics in mainstream culture and how they relate to our faith life. Teens can use this opportunity to grow in their faith and find deeper meaning in everyday life. Another component to the faith aspect of our ministry are our various retreats throughout the year. For our younger members, we have the Freshman and Sophomore Winter Retreat in January; and for our Juniors and Seniors, we are offering two Kairos retreats this year – our Fall Kairos in November, and our new Spring Kairos in March.

I believe the High School Youth Ministry needs to have an active role in our community. Members can feed the homeless at Hilda’s Place Soup Kitchen and “Feed My Starving Children,” assist the elderly of our parish, help with the Giving Tree in December, and become involved in our Parish choirs and events. Teens that are active in the community not only benefit others, but they also enrich their own lives.

Our Habitat for Humanity service trip will be broken into two weeks this year. Our active Youth Ministry members should view this as a culmination of their service experience; and families should stress to their teens that attendance on a Habitat for Humanity trip is not about getting service “out of the way” to focus on other things during the year, it is about the privilege of serving others alongside people we can trust and who are mutually supportive. Our German friends will be returning to Northbrook this year, as well, and we will be inviting a small group of teens to work with them on that week of Habitat. Prior to our service with Habitat for Humanity, the Germans will be living with host families around Northbrook; so if you feel willing and able to open your home, please let me know!

We must remember that we need to have fun, too! We have some recreational events for our teens. These are times when old friendships can be nurtured and new friendships can grow. CYO Basketball is a great way for St. Norbert teens that are not on a high school team to get together and enjoy the sport. If you are interested in coaching this wonderful program, please contact me right away! Please come to the CYO Basketball Opening Meeting in October to receive all registration materials and information. CYO Practices begin in early November, and games begin in December.

Your teen will be receiving a Grapevine flyer in the mail. Please review and discuss the Grapevine Calendar with your high schooler. Help your teen to choose a mixture of religion, service projects, and recreational events. Enter these dates on your calendar and look for further information as the events draw near. Encourage your high schooler to read the Grapevine Online and to participate in the events that interest them. As technology evolves, we have found a great resource in Facebook and its ability to help us stay connected. Please join the “St. Norbert & Our Lady Of The Brook Youth Ministry” group to stay informed of upcoming events and changes since things can and will be added throughout the year. The Church Bulletin and St. Norbert Parish website are two other ways to keep informed of upcoming events.

In closing, I pray that the teens enjoy the multitude of opportunities we offer them through the High School Youth Ministry. We adults are the stem of the Vine, planning events, getting information out, and collecting permission slips. The high schoolers are the branches of the Vine, devoting their time and enthusiasm in a variety of ways. Last but not least, the fruit of the Vine is the positive effect the teens have on our parish and our community, and the positive effect it has on them. Don’t forget that the Vine is only as strong as its branches. May our branches flourish in St. Norbert Youth Ministry. Feel free to call me if you have any questions.

God Bless,
Maggie Bruce
Youth Ministry Coordinator