

DISCOVERY YOUTH CAMPS

After many years of attending summer camps and helping organize Camp St. Martin for the past decade, I can confidently say that summer camp has a profound impact on young people. It gives teens the chance to step away from the busyness of everyday life and encounter God through creation, community, prayer, rest, and fun. I've witnessed countless youth experience life-changing moments that inspire them to follow Christ more deeply.

In response to the postponement of Camp St. Martin, our parish is hosting a local summer camp near Grande Prairie. We are excited to introduce **Discovery Youth Camps!** These camps will offer an unforgettable summer where youth can encounter Christ, enjoy the beauty of God's creation, and make new friends. Located just 10 minutes south of Grande Prairie at Pineridge Adventure Camp, our hope is this experience will strengthen the faith community among youth and families in our parish, and Archdiocese.



- Camp Dates:**
- **High School (Grades 9–12): August 4–9**
 - **Jr. High (Grades 7–8): August 10–15**
 - **Family Camp (All Ages): August 15–17**

We count on your support—whether through spreading the word, volunteering (before or during), or praying for our youth and leaders. Space is limited, so register soon!

Visit saintjoseph.ca/discovery for details and registration. Don't miss this summer's adventure with Jesus at Discovery Youth Camps!

MEN'S CONFERENCE

The Men's Conference was an amazing educational and social opportunity. As a young man still learning what it means to truly love someone and how to love them, I couldn't have found a better way to spend a day. The content was simple enough for younger men to understand but deep enough for men in longer term relationships to find opportunities for growth. There was plenty of time to talk with other guys about their relationships and create meaningful connections with fellow brothers in Christ. Finally, splitting the day in half was the outstanding lunch served by the CWL. If given the opportunity to attend another Men's Conference I would sign up without hesitation.

PARISH MISSION- PILGRIMS OF HOPE

On Monday night of the Pilgrims of Hope Parish Mission, the theme was "Living in a Hope-filled Church". During his talk, Fr. Ivel explained the different meanings of "church": as a building, congregation, greater organization, and belief system. He also spoke of St. Paul's letters and asked the question, "What kind of letter would Paul write to St. Joseph Parish in Grande Prairie?" We thought about his rhetorical question. Later, he said that St. Joseph Parish had "something special" and that the Holy Spirit was definitely present here. This statement filled us with hope, and gave us pride in our brothers and sisters in Christ. Now, we think St. Paul would write a glowing letter to our parish, and this encourages us to continue to pour into our faith community.

The next night's theme, "The Gift of Hope in Reconciliation", didn't seem ground-breaking at first. We came expecting a homily about why reconciliation is great and an important sacrament, something we've heard before. But mainly we went to receive the Sacrament; neither of us had received reconciliation in years. That night, Fr. Ivel spoke about what sin really is. He took us through his experience walking through Auschwitz, the Nazi death camp. He changed how we thought about Jesus' forgiveness and how transcendent God's love is. Then, Fr. Ivel went through some common questions about the Sacrament, and removed any doubt about its essentialness in our life.

The Pilgrims of Hope Parish Mission moved us closer to God, and our church community, with prayer, reflection, and God's grace.

'RETURNING HOME'- FROM A YOUNG ADULT

I think anyone, seasoned or new-to-the-faith Catholics should consider attending these sessions. They are short and sweet, and so are those spear-heading the discussion. I am a cradle Catholic; I grew up with the sacraments and attended Mass diligently 1-2x per week every week for the last 3-4 years. Yet I knew I could learn something from the experience in that room, and simply going was an opportunity to grow in faith, application to daily life, as well as community. The bonus of this is getting to know our priests better! You can ask them direct questions, hear about their experiences, and allow them to expand your views of prayer, scripture, reconciliation, the Creed, the Mass, and associated articles. Only once a week for a mere 6 weeks, what could you learn? Who could you meet in the tiny church of Catholics Returning Home? Who could benefit from walking alongside you during this journey?

HE IS RISEN



RECEPTION INTO THE CHURCH

I was brought up in a protestant family that had a strong faith in God and provided a firm biblical foundation. My wife’s upbringing was similar, and we are both grateful. I was baptized at 12 years of age, on June 22, 1996, at Grande Prairie Alliance Church, (unaware that my future wife was also baptized at that same service).

In the fall of 2023, while coaching football at St Joseph Catholic High School, a fellow coach who became a close friend asked me what I knew about the Catholic Church. I realized I knew very little. After some meaningful conversations, my friend loaned me the “Compact History of the Catholic Church”. I started reading the book alongside my wife, and I began attending Mass with my friend. After a few weeks my wife started joining me.

In the fall of 2024, my wife reached out to the church as we had so many questions, and we were invited to start attending OCIA. We began a bit late, but it didn’t seem to matter. With the community and our sponsors, we began to grow. Through OCIA and taking time to research on our own, so many questions that we had while growing up were getting answered.

My wife and I have walked through the Rite of Election, Reconciliation, Confirmation, and the Eucharist during this Lenten season. We are so blessed to have done this together and we are thankful for the help of everyone in OCIA, including our sponsors. We continue to seek to grow and learn and we look forward to attending Mass every week.

HALF-DAY COUPLES RETREAT

Her story:

I eagerly signed my soon-to-be fiancé and myself up for a short marriage/engaged encounter session, only a day after Valentines Day. Packing a pen and notepad in hand, we found ourselves immersed in an afternoon of deepening conversation. Though we were not able to 'look back' on years of marriage together as many questions prompted, we delighted in the opportunity to look forward and reflect on the short circumstances we had journeyed through with a fresh lens of clarity and faith. The entire session was short and sweet, covering an array of topics and perspective. I thoroughly enjoyed the quality time, the well-set atmosphere, and opportunity to mingle with other couples journeying together. I will look back happily on the movement my partner and I made together that day, ultimately drawing us closer to unity in Christ.

His Story:

When it comes to marriage, most people don't think of the steps necessary to prepare for it. You are not just preparing for one big party but for the Sacrament and a life long commitment. Marriage has always been our goal and this is something that my partner and I have talked about openly and at length. Even though I haven't asked her the big question yet, I know that she knows it's coming - she just doesn't know when.

We want to continue to grow in our relationship with each other and with God. Being able to take part in the marriage encounter weekend was a wonderful and meaningful experience. Each couple had their own table which made it easy for intimate conversations. It provided an opportunity for us to discuss things from a perspective that I probably wouldn't have thought of on my own. It was an afternoon that I will remember and has me looking forward to taking part in more events like this.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Mornings, July 7 -11.
For Children ages 4-grade 5/6.
Volunteers ages 12+.

Christmas AND Easter in July?! Oh my! Kids will embark on an exciting five-day journey with Jesus making the church year come alive!

Kids will discover, and have fun learning, the life of Christ and draw closer to him through the cycle of the church year: Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent/Holy Triduum and Easter. Cat.Chat music and videos, practical and engaging faith lessons, inspiring saints, meaningful craft and snack activities, interactive games and much more.

Come live the greatest adventure story ever told! Registration opening soon for kids and volunteers (youth and adults). Call Kristen if you want to be on team!

