



# HOW TO PLAN A HOLY WEEK MISSION



This is a step by step guide on how to plan a Holy Week mission in your area. This guide will outline steps of a logistical set up, provide a sample schedule, and ideas on how to integrate the days of the triduum into your week to provide a Holy Week Mission of service, community, and formation. It is recommended that you get in touch with your nearest Regnum Christi chapter in order to provide important plans and get the word out for your mission!

## STEP #1 - Identify a need in your community & find a parish sponsor

- Is there a need for homeless outreach in your city?
- Are there opportunities for street evangelization?
- Is there an abortion clinic nearby?
- Is there a parish nearby that you can outreach with?
- Are there elderly people or homebound people in your community that you can reach out to?

It's important to find these places where you can help. Try to lock in multiple outreach options for your mission.

### Parish Sponsor

Mission Youth missions always operate with the permission & blessing of the local Catholic parish & should be aligned with the local bishop's and/or pastor's pastoral plan. Here's a few ways to set that up:

- Mission leader always notifies the local pastor where the mission is taking place to ask for his support and blessing.
- The missionaries offer their services, time and talents to the local pastor in his evangelization or concrete needs.
- If the local pastor so desires, missionaries operate under the name of the parish and/or involve/invite local parishioners in the mission and/or serve a concrete need the parish has in the area of evangelization.
- The mission leaders have the goal to form the participants to be missionary disciples/apostles within their home parishes after the mission.

### Examples of street evangelization:

- Door knocking mission: have missionaries go out in groups of **no less** than 4 to knock on doors in neighborhoods to ask residents for prayer intentions and invite them to mass if they have a local parish. It's important to note that missionaries should not go inside homes and should be careful not to give away personal information to the residents.
- Mall Evangelization: have missionaries go out in a local mall and try to start conversations with people passing by. Ask for prayer intentions and share the Gospel. Remember to adhere to the **personal safety guidelines**.

## STEP #2 - Set Up & Registration

- All missions operating under the name & logo of Mission Youth need to be officially registered with RC Activities, Inc. (<https://rcactivities.com/node/add/local-event?missionyouth=non-chartered>). This gives you the rights to use the name, logo & mission style of Mission Youth.

### Missions Under Parishes or Schools

- The parish assumes legal ownership of the program as their ministry, and should provide the necessary waivers and consent forms, as well as insurance coverage under the diocese.
- Local diocesan safe environment requirements for adults must be followed and adhered to.
- Any mission registration fees are collected through the parish, using the parish account, as well as expenses paid or reimbursed.

### Missions Under Local Regnum Christi Groups

- Through your event registration you will receive the proper forms, such as RC Activities, Inc. adult waivers and minor permission forms, certificate of insurance, etc.
- If the mission involves minors, each official adult leader must complete the required RC Activities Volunteer Certification process online at <https://rcactivities.com/volunteers> as well as the local diocese's safe environment requirements.
- If the mission is an overnight event, there is an extra cost of approximately \$0.50 per day for the required accident insurance for overnight events.
- A local RC Activities, Inc. bank account must be used for all registration fees.
- If you are working with an organization or gathering in a public space, (i.e.: shopping outlet malls, or sidewalks in front of abortion facilities, etc.) also check with local authorities or leadership to see if any permissions or forms are required.

## STEP #3 - Develop a Core Team

- Gather a group of 3-10 people to help you run the mission!
- Work together with all the Holy Week Mission Tracks present in your area (youth, young adults, families, etc.)
- Brainstorm and share ideas with other mission leaders around the country via Mission Youth chats
- You can consult with the RC Young Adult Life Team and RC Administration Team for extra resources or special needs:
  - [RC Young Adult Life Team](#)
  - [Administration Resources](#)
  - RC Customer Service: (855) 556-6872 / customerservice@rcfed.org
- Set aside time to meet and practice missionary skills even if no new team members are added to the core team. This will ensure that everyone knows what is happening when and know exactly what they are doing, leading to an efficiently run mission.

### Areas to Cover in Your Core Team

- Missionary Formation:
  - Team leader formation and training
  - Missionary Training
  - Sacraments & Prayer moments
  - Communication within mission team & with the missionaries
- Mission Experience
  - Host parish
  - Local venues or mission partners
  - Concrete need mission is answering & how
  - Donations & donors
  - Mission Schedule
  - Mission gear
- Mission Logistics
  - Promotion & social media
  - Registration & check in
  - Transportation & drivers
  - Food & supplies
  - Chaperones

It could be helpful for you to meet in person over a few days with your core team to cover all of this. This will also form a better community among the team. A strong core team means strong missionaries, strong missionaries means a strong mission. Your missionaries will be dependent on you as an example of leadership!

## What does a Holy Week Mission Look like?

Length: This can be one day long or a whole week leading up to Easter Sunday.

### Key Elements

**Share the Faith** - At the heart of every mission, no matter what is done, is the sharing of our faith that is at the core of the mission experience. It can be as simple as a personal testimony and witness of God's love in your life, or as complex as offering catechism classes. Challenge each others' faiths to grow closer to Jesus.

**Prayer and Sacraments** - Every mission should include explicit prayer time and sacraments for the missionaries, and if possible, for those whom we serve. Usually, the mission day starts with morning prayer time: a missionary consecration and receiving of the missionary cross. Mass and confession should be made available if possible (preferably daily mass and adoration). It is great to end the day with adoration to offer up to God all the prayer intentions gathered for the people who were encountered that day. Missionary prayers can be referenced in the Prayer Book available on-line.

**Formation & Training** - Where possible, training should be offered to the core team and missionaries attending the mission. It can be weeks before the mission, or it can be done in the first hours of the mission. Training topics are available through the Mission Youth Support Team. However, if you don't have time for specific training time, never fear because doing missionary work itself is the best training.

**Team life & community** - The underlying spirit of every Mission Youth Mission is an experience of the Church: different people coming together to share God's love. Joy, charity, respect, and fun are characteristics of a missionary community. Creating a spirit of unity & charity should be intentionally promoted among all the missionaries. If you have a large group, missionaries can be divided into smaller teams with adults and group leaders to help create that family spirit. These smaller teams should stay consistent for the whole mission so that everyone has a core group of people that they stay with for missions and get to know individually as the mission progresses. At the end of each day, missionaries can share highs and lows to help them process their experience and enrich each other (the best part and worst parts of their days). Mother Teresa tells us "If you want to change the world, go home and love your family." Here, we create a small family, and, in good Christian charity, we are called to love one another as missionaries, just as we love the people to whom we minister. Missionaries should also share meals and prayers together to build community.

**Accompaniment** - Missionaries never minister alone. Mentorship and accompaniment are an important part of the mission so that the missionaries and those missioned to can experience a person who is sincerely interested in encountering them as a person. One important role of the core team is accompanying the team leaders of each team. In turn, the team leaders accompany the missionaries on their teams.

## Mission Youth Staples & Other Information

Crosswalks: Send missionaries out in groups of 5-10 with a life size cross made from wood, some post-it notes, a hammer, and some nails. Have the missionaries walk around a city or neighborhood with these crosses to ask for prayer intentions from people on the street.

Holy Huddles: Have the group gather at the beginning of each mission day in a circle. Begin the day with a safety talk and a prayer. This helps to build community within the groups.

Highs and Lows: After returning from missionary activities for the day, gather the whole group into a circle and go around saying your highs and lows. This can consist of encounters, mission memories, or emotional moments of the day. This is a great way of recapping the day and offering it to Jesus.

Safety Talk: Make sure all missionaries are present for this. This is especially important for door knocking missions, abortion clinics, and homeless outreach. Share the following information:

- 1.) Don't approach people alone. Always have at least one other person with you.
- 2.) Never share personal information with strangers, even if they are nice. Don't give away your name, social media, email, phone number, address, or any other information that could be used to hurt you.
- 3.) If you are going to an abortion clinic, remember to respect the boundaries set by police and/or clinic workers. Don't intentionally trespass on the property, and be respectful to clinic workers. This can be hard sometimes, since these workers are on the side of evil and will insult you and try to anger you. It is crucial to remember that those workers are still God's children, and we are called to love them. Responding with nonviolence works best. Specifically, ignoring them takes their power to harm you away.

## Sample Schedule

### DAY 1:

#### Start of the Mission

Welcome and Registration-run by core team

Commissioning Mass or Ceremony

Mini retreat or training time

Break into teams & have ice breakers

Introductory talk explanation-this is a preparatory talk usually given by the mission director

### DAY 2:

#### During the Mission (this can last as many days as your mission allows)

Start the day with a brief prayer and reflection time together-morning prayer and gospel reflection

Go through the schedule of the day and any safety recommendations-safety talk, holy huddle, organize logistics

Celebration of Mass at some point during the day

Visit the mission sites or experiences

End the day by having the teams gather again for a highs and lows sharing time, community building and adoration to pray for all the intentions & people we met that day

### DAY 3:

#### Final Day

Closing Mass

Video or slideshow with pictures recapping memories

General sharing for the missionaries-free-form time for missionaries to share experiences

Survey or mission feedback

Departure

## Best Practices for the Holy Triduum

### Holy Thursday

**Street Mission:** Each city has an area where those in need are present in the open. As missionaries, we can walk those streets to meet people in need, to hear their stories and offer them compassion and support.

**Collaborating with those who serve the poor:** Every city has numerous organizations that reach out to the poor and the homeless. A Holy Week mission team is an ideal group of people to help volunteer at soup kitchens, homeless shelters, etc. Build connections in the communities that need the most help and offer to help.

**Evangelization Adoration:** The missionaries organize praise and worship during the evening hours, and a team of missionaries stands at the door and in the street with small tea-candles. Each passerby is invited to go into the church and light their candle, placing it before the altar. Some local priests are invited to be hearing confessions during the holy hour. The goal is to fill the space before the altar with candles and allow people to experience a moment of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

**The Great Parish-wide Invite:** The missionaries will go door to door in the local neighborhood to personally invite every home to join in the Easter celebrations. They pass out flyers with dates and times for prayer services, as well as a welcome letter from the local pastor. They ask for and record any prayer intentions and gather any requests for things like communion to the sick. If they are invited to do so, the missionaries can answer any questions about the faith that the persons in the home may have.

Holy Thursday Mass

Seder Meal

Washing of the Feet

### Good Friday

**The Crosswalk:** In a downtown or heavily trafficked area, the missionaries carry large crosses through the streets. They greet people as they go and invite passersby to write down a prayer intention and nail it to the cross with a small nail. The crosses serve as a visible reminder to all motorists and onlookers that Good Friday is happening.

**Stations of the Cross/ The Flash Mob Way of the Cross:** Often a parish youth group will perform a real-life way of the cross in the parish or school. The flash-mob way of the cross takes the message about Jesus out into the streets. The youth from the parish arrive suddenly in a public space, like Times Square for example, and go about acting out and praying the stations. Ideally, a procession should take place through the streets, pausing at each station. This serves as a very real reminder of how Jesus was paraded through the streets and mocked publicly. The people passing by take pictures, comment on the event, and many times join in watching. When done well, it is a great accomplishment of evangelization work. If done in a public place, it may be necessary for prior permission from local authorities. Check for police support to block off roadways if necessary.

**The Good Friday Bible School:** Often, children don't have school on Good Friday, but their parents still have to go to work. Thus, the parents are glad to be able to drop their kids off at a half day parish event. Thus, a parish "day-care" on Good Friday is another way to serve. The kids are taught the Holy Week themes and participate in games and activities for Easter. The missionaries prepare and run the event.

Reflection on the Last Words of Christ

Mass-Celebration of the Lord's Passion



## Holy Saturday

Helping to clean and prepare a Church for Easter/ Parish Projects: At times a parish priest may need help with his parish. An inner-city parish is often in need of fresh paint, or the gardens being weeded and cleaned. All parishes need help decorating the church for the Easter Vigil. Preparation for an Easter Egg hunt or games for kids is best done on Holy Saturday.

The UNSelfie challenge: The missionaries give out Easter Eggs on the sidewalk of a heavily trafficked area. The eggs contain challenges to do something for someone else, like calling your mother. Thus, they are a way of being selfless, or “unselfie”. The eggs contain little candies and Christian messages.

Post Easter Vigil Party: At the end of the event, or at the end of the mission, it is good to have a party and to thank God for the fruits. Instead of the event just ending quickly and everyone going home, we need to stop and recognize the beauty and gifts of the moment. Too often we just run on the surface of life but never go deep. The Holy Week Mission takes many people very deep in their faith. A post-Easter Vigil party is always fun!

Sunrise Mass: One of the most special ways to celebrate the resurrection is to celebrate Easter Mass at about 4:00am so that when it is over, the sun rises as Christ is Resurrected. Make sure to bring coffee!

