

Soul Help

SpiritQuest Strikes Again

Written by Josh Morrison, Amberlee Boulton & Ben Reid-Howells

My Perspective by Josh Morrison (Student at University of Western Ontario)

Three times I've attended the program SpiritQuest, and for the third time I'm happy to write about it to try and spread the word to other youth in the Diocese. SpiritQuest is a small program that is much quieter and more reflective than the other youth programs like the Niagara Youth Conference. It runs for a weekend at the Unity Retreat Centre in Hamilton, and its aim is to provide a time of spiritual exploration for youth who are looking for something more on their journey.

Every time I arrive at SpiritQuest, I have felt lost in some way. Every time I leave I feel like I've put myself back on the path, even if I didn't find the answers to my problems. It's a time to make realizations about yourself, which the quiet atmosphere is very conducive too. It's hard to run from yourself and God when there are no distractions around.

Every year the staff at SpiritQuest aim to guide the thinking of the weekend by providing a theme and meditations, prayers and worship based on that theme. This year the theme was "Soul Tending". It focused on facilitating discussion on what is a soul, how do we interact with our soul, how can we tend to it and keep it healthy, and how it connects us to God. After all of the activities around the theme the weekend always closes with a worship service put together entirely by participants in the program. This kind of collaborative and interactive worship is one of the most unique and special experiences because of how personal everything in the service is. SpiritQuest provides from the busy world, and ending on this kind of worship is one of the best ways to feel ready to take on the universe again with a loving heart and confident in your connection with God.

SpiritQuest is one of the best events I have ever experienced, and I heartily recommend it to any youth who is looking for guidance, calm or just a break from life. It has a way of coming out of nowhere and helping you grow in the Spirit in the most unexpected way. It's an adventure, and it's 110% worth it for any youth in the diocese.

My Perspective by Amberlee Boulton (Student at the University of Waterloo)

Once again SpiritQuest has proven to be a relaxing and worthy retreat. This year was especially interesting because of the raised age, university and high school students alike were able to communicate and share on a common spiritual level. The theme of "Soul Tending" brought the delegates together in a common bond of reflection and observance.

Having participated in SpiritQuest for five consecutive years, it is always wonderful to see the new individuals come and experience a program that is theologically and spiritually rich to a degree that I believe, is the pivotal part of this program that separates SpiritQuest from other ministry events. From the movie "Jesus Camp" and topics such as "forgiveness" and "keeping the Sabbath" the community had a number of in depth discussions and chances to hear one another's opinions and the varying degrees of ideas and faith within our Anglican youth and young adult community.

Walking away from this weekend, I feel I have observed another pilgrimage in which my soul is allowed to rejoice, grieve, and be tended. It is interesting to walk through this program over so many years, coming in as a youth and leaving as an adult. I feel this program as grown with me and continues to change and develop into a wonderful venue for young adults to spiritually explore themselves and question ideas in a safe and loving environment.

My Perspective by Ben Reid-Howells (Grade 11 student, St. David & St. Patrick's Guelph)
SpiritQuest is an event like none other. I remember signing up for it half an hour after getting home, after a life changing week at Niagara Youth Conference. I had been so affected by NYC that I knew I would need another shot of personal growth sometime in the near future. It didn't let me down.

This year's SpiritQuest was my first, and it had every element necessary to be a "Soul Tending" retreat. The quiet solo time allowed for illuminating introspection, the dynamic leaders and participants made for a unique weekend, full of imaginative activities, even the building itself was full of a certain peacefulness. Although the weekend seemed only casually enlightening, I found myself returning to regular life with recharged batteries and a new fire in the belly, or clarity of vision, I had not expected. Without hesitation I suggest S.Q. to any and all youths who feel that there's something within that cannot be fully exercised at the gym.

My Perspective by Pam Dudych (Grade 9 Student, St. Paul's Caledonia)
My first time at SpiritQuest was awesome! It was a really relaxing weekend. It helped me go over my thoughts a lot and just have some fun. I love how we got to make the Eucharist; it inspired me to know that I am capable to do something if I work towards it. I met a lot of new friends, and I got to be a little more closer to Christ knowing more about him. At the Catholic Church we didn't get to do stuff like this and didn't learn much about Christ so I knew not a lot, but after SpiritQuest I felt good knowing almost everything about him. The quiet times were the best I would have to say 'cuz on my time I actually read the bible for a little bit. I had never really had time to ever do that. I really enjoyed SpiritQuest I think a lot more kids should go but at different times. I think the small groups work better because you get to talk more and learn more. With the larger groups like if you had 30, it's hard to get everyone to talk. I would definitely recommend SpiritQuest to a lot of people, I had a blast and it's a really fun time to meet new friends, learn more about Christ and learn more about yourself.