

JESUS YOUTH Households

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

JY Households are forums of the Committed and Confirmed in the movement to come together monthly for prayer, sharing, Scripture reflection, catechesis, and discussion on human and ecclesial realities with a view to a common commitment

Friendship groups, families that welcome young people and long lasting cell groups have always been part of the Jesus Youth lifestyle. Yet, as the movement spread across cultures and continued its journey into a deeper, missionary spirituality, the need for a regular gathering of every Jesus Youth was discussed over time in the movement. The Jesus Youth household, which evolved over the last few years, can be perceived as an answer to the yearning to enter deeply into the missionary life of the Church. As a regular gathering of the Committed and Confirmed members, the Household thus becomes the fundamental unit of the life in the movement.

How do Households become relevant in the life of a Jesus Youth?

1. As the most basic manifestation of the Jesus Youth fellowship

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Jn 13:35

The Jesus Youth movement, by its very nature has always veered towards the formation of groups that resemble the warm, close and enduring fellowship between members of a family. Jesus Youth Households, in that sense, will be the most basic, tangible, regular and experiential manifestation of the Jesus Youth family and its fellowship of love. With regular gathering and growing in the same Household for years together, the support and care arising from a deeper understanding of each other will enable the members to be a visible sign of the Jesus Youth lifestyle in today's world.

2. As a sustained platform for continued catechesis

As a lay movement rooted in the contemporary world, the need for a continued and uniform catechesis in line with the Jesus Youth spirituality has been a constant desire of the leaders of the movement across the world. The regular gathering of Jesus Youth in the same location will ensure the dissemination of this catechesis within a receptive, prayerful, loving and mutually supportive fellowship. As all the households around the world participate in the same monthly catechesis, it will be the right platform for growing together as a movement.

3. As a platform where personal missions are inspired, kindled and set ablaze.

One of the highlights in the journey of a Jesus Youth - after a personal experience of God and the recognition of the Lordship of Jesus - is the discovery of the personal charisms and the involvement in a ministry where these charisms can be exercised in an effective way. The Household being a gathering of individuals who are growing in their mission through different ministries, should inspire, catalyse, sharpen and support the personal call of each Jesus Youth to be a missionary. Even though the household will not have its own initiatives and ministries, it should inspire the participants to renew, review and persevere in their mission.

4. As a tangible sign of Jesus Youth pillars at work

The growth of the movement has always been linked to its essential emphasis - the six pillars. Yet at least to some extent, the consistent practice of these pillars has been sometimes arbitrary and subjective. It is also true that sustained growth in the practice of the pillars calls for support from a community of friends, constant inspiration and prayer. The Households are thus called to be a tangible sign and a workshop for the six pillars at work.

What are the nuts and bolts of the Household?

A single Household holds approximately 20-40 committed and/or confirmed Jesus Youth congregating in each locality.

The Household, as it grows in size and reaches 30-40 members, can become two Households.

It is recommended that Households be held at a regular venue, possibly in an easily accessible place, so that the locations can be shared - and travelling Jesus Youth also can enjoy the experience of being in a Jesus Youth Household, in whichever part of the world they are.

What happens within a Jesus Youth Household?

● Jesus Youth Prayer

With an enriched gathering of confirmed and committed persons, this community becomes a place where the Jesus Youth prayer can be shared in a deeper way.

● Catechesis

A Scripture based guided reflection that will be provided every month becomes a consistent, progressive pattern followed by all Households. A short reflection on the month's Word of God will be provided to all the household members and a detailed teaching aid will be given to the core team.

● Sharing

A time of personal sharing, listening, inspiring, complementing and consoling each other - in the context of personal living, spiritual growth, ministry and mission.

● Celebration

There is a special joy when Jesus Youth meet one another in the presence of the Lord. This joy is reflected in praying together, shared meals, snacks, times of laughter, etc.

Guidelines for implementation of Households

The Holy Spirit is moving as powerfully in the movement as ever, giving us greater clarity on the way forward in our journey of holiness. The initiation of Households is one such step inspired by the Holy Spirit. Being an initiative with a wider impact in the movement, the implementation has to be done with prudence. Human frailties and over-enthusiasm in some cases, can hinder the effective implementation and running of households. The following practical guidelines will be helpful in this regard.

Members of a Household

Typically the members of a household will be Jesus Youth residing in the same locality. Depending on the number of eligible members, there can be more than one household in the same locality. The Regional/Zonal teams will determine the number of households. Care must be taken to ensure that individual households contain a mix of members from all streams and ministries. The households should not become stream/ministry focused.

Eligibility to be a member of a Household

The households will be a gathering of Committed and Confirmed members in Jesus Youth. In course of time and as the formation plans become fully implemented, the JY household will be a platform for only the Committed and Confirmed members in the movement. In the initial period, as part of integrating the existing JY members, the membership is by invitation and done by the Regional/Zonal teams based on the following criteria. Care should be taken to ensure that JY households do not become exclusive at present. Rather, they should be more inclusive subject to the criteria.

- a) All those who have completed 3 years or more in Jesus Youth, can be invited to the Household by the regional teams. The period of 3 years can be relaxed in the case of people who, in the opinion of the Regional team, would be fulfilling the required formation modules within 3 years from the time when the formation programmes start locally. The following steps may be followed to invite members to the Household.
 - a. Make a list of Jesus Youth who can be invited to the Household and invite them personally.
 - b. An orientation meeting with all eligible members to explain the Formation plan and the relevance and importance of Households can be fruitful.
- b) It is the choice of the invited person to accept the invitation to be part of the Jesus Youth Household. However, it is the duty of the Regional team to make all invitees feel welcome to this platform, which will be the primary source of Jesus Youth spirituality and growth in the movement.

Families as Household members

In the case of married couples where either of the spouses is an active Jesus Youth meeting the above guidelines, and the other is not open to Jesus Youth yet or very new to Jesus Youth, the best way would be to invite both of them to the orientation meeting. If the person is willing to explore the opportunity of using his/her inclusion in a Jesus Youth Household as an effective platform for growing in personal spirituality and as a community, he/she should be allowed to come and continue in the household. The only condition will be that he/she be willing to undergo the formation modules in addition to being available and to participate in the household activities.

Attendance in Jesus Youth Households

Even though attendance in the JY household is mandatory, at present, since all of us are exploring the pathway the Spirit has shown to us, strict attendance is not enforced until the first two phases of the formation plans are implemented. However, the core team of the respective households should make every attempt to closely follow and support those who are irregular in attending the households or are still not convinced about its purpose.

Schedule of a household gathering - guideline

Typical household gatherings will be of around 3 hours, once a month. The whole gathering can be built around the structure of Jesus Youth prayer, which will make it much more fruitful and experiential. The proposed guideline is given below.

30 minutes	The Jesus Youth Prayer till the Praise & Worship (introductory prayer, psalms and praise & worship)
20 minutes	Sharing in small groups on how the participants lived the Word of God shared during their last gathering. This sharing will motivate and challenge members to live their lives around the Word of God and experience how the Word becomes flesh in their lives.
20 minutes	The Word of God for the month and the teaching assigned and prepared in advance.
30 minutes	Personal sharing based on the Word of God (in small groups) What does this scripture speak to me?
20 minutes	Testimonies – 2 to 3 members share their testimonies in the common group (every one should share in turn over the months)
20 minutes	Very short personal sharing (initiatives, personal outreaches, difficulties, personal struggles, etc.) of members in the common group. Conclude with one on one prayer, keeping in mind the prayer needs of the other person.
20 minutes	Jesus Youth Prayer continued (from praying with a Saint)
20 minutes	Fellowship/Celebration. Conclude the household gathering with a song of thanksgiving.

In order to deepen in our relationship with God and with one another, the personal sharing and testimonies are essential and should in no case be discarded or given less priority.

Governance of a Household

A small core team of 2-3 members with a co-ordinator should be formed to coordinate the gathering and assign different responsibilities to members. This team can be formed in the household based on the proposals from its members. The responsibilities to be assigned include:

- Leading Jesus Youth prayer
- Leading/Animating the common Catechesis
- Testimonies
- Taking care of children
- Food/Fun/Fellowship activities

Some quick facts about a Jesus Youth Household

A Jesus Youth Household is:

- A place to experience the love and life of the movement.
- A place to share one's life in Christ, including one's struggles.
- A place to encourage and motivate one another.
- A place to develop a truly Christian relationship among members leading to a Jesus-centred fellowship.
- A place to share personal mission experiences.
- A place to pray together using the gifts of the Spirit and to grow in the use of the gifts.
- A place where there is a proper balance of prayer, catechesis, sharing and fun.
- A place where one can be oneself.
- A place where there is no distinction based on office, position, experience, age, gender, etc.

A Jesus Youth Household is NOT:

- A place to plan and discuss programmes or meetings or any other Jesus Youth administration realities.
- A place to practice or display talent ministries.
- A place to discipline, criticise or find fault with others.
- A place to follow a very precise timetable with no room for flexibility.
- A place to invite new people to Jesus Youth.