



Alive in Christ



Joyful Gathering of Youth!

Last Wednesday, January 25th, St. Thomas hosted NET Ministries for a retreat themed “Authentic Friendship”. With the help of St. Bernard, St. Patrick, St. Pius, St. John (Joliet), and Mary Queen of Peace, Catholic youth from across Billings joined together for a fun-filled evening. Deacon Nate and Daria Haney provided the funds for NET Ministries coming to lead the retreat. We are thankful for their sponsorship for the evening.

The evening began with sign-in and name tags distributed. The youth then enjoyed a spaghetti dinner. Youth leaders from the various parishes, and the NET Ministries missionaries mingled with the youth establishing a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. As dinner was winding down, NET missionaries lead the youth in a game called: Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur, Eagle, Queen, King while using the Rock, Paper, Scissors format. The youth battled each other in Rock, Paper, Scissors to move through the ranks to become King. To end the game, two Kings battled one final round to find out who is champion. After the game, the NET missionaries lead several testimony and witness talks. Two NET missionaries led the youth in an exercise about friendships, peer pressure, bullying, and exclusion.

Before the youth were divided into their breakout small groups, they all had the opportunity to get snacks before heading to the various locations around the church. The small group leaders in addition to the NET missionaries included Brian Shea (St. Bernard), Sean Khan (St. Bernard/St. Patrick), Val Roozen (St. Patrick), and our own Joyce Hollowell. The groups read Bible verses and talked about friendship and faith.

The height of the evening involved all of the youth going to the Church to witness a dramatic play about the role of Jesus in their lives. The play led into a talk from the NET Ministries Team Leader about Jesus and His love for each and every one sitting in the pews. The youth said the talk was one of the more powerful moments the youth said that happened during the evening. All of the youth were encouraged to respond to Jesus’ outpouring of love to them through letters. While the youth were writing their responses, each Small Group leader prayed over the youth in their group. The youth and their Small Group leaders found the silent prayer powerful and emotional.

To end the evening, everyone returned to the parish center for the drawing of door prizes. As the retreat drew to a close, the electricity in the air carried the possibility of what’s next for our youth about how they were going to lead lives with Authentic Friendship. Please pray for those youth who attended, and for their continued engagement with the Faith.