World Youth Day 2027
School Pilgrimage Information Booklet



WYD MELBOURNE SEOUL 2027

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

World Youth Day 2027
School Pilgrimage Information Booklet

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WYD MELBOURNE SEOUL 2027

Welcome to World Youth Day 2027

WYD Seoul 2027

The next international World Youth Day will take place in Seoul, South Korea, from 3-8 August 2027, centered on the words of Jesus:

"Take courage! I have overcome the world." (Jn 16:33)

For our young pilgrims, Seoul 2027 is an invitation to step out in faith, encounter Christ, deepen their relationship with God and experience the Church beyond their own school, parish and community.

Seoul, here we come!

World Youth Day (WYD) is one of the most exciting and significant gatherings in the life of the Catholic Church, bringing together young people from across the globe to celebrate faith, friendship and the joy of following Christ.

Established by Saint John Paul II in 1985, WYD grew from a simple invitation for young people to gather in faith into a worldwide movement. Today, young people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds come together in prayer, worship, formation and celebration, discovering a shared hope and belonging in Christ.

World Youth Day is celebrated locally each year, with an international gathering held every few years in a host city. These international celebrations bring hundreds of thousands of young pilgrims together with the Pope for vibrant liturgies, catechesis, music, pilgrimage and moments of encounter with the global Church.

Our Melbourne Pilgrimage

The journey to Seoul forms part of the Melbourne Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to WYD27, led by Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli. Young people from Catholic schools in Melbourne will journey alongside pilgrims from parishes, communities, and movements from across the Archdiocese, sharing in this significant experience of faith with the local and universal Church.

World Youth Day at a Glance

Everything you need to know about joining the Melbourne Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to WYD27 for Melbourne Catholic Schools (the Pilgrimage) to Seoul.

	Key Information
Location	Seoul, South Korea
Travel dates	Departing: 29 July, 2027 Returning: 11 August 2027*
Who can participate?	Students from Melbourne Catholic secondary schools, accompanied and supported by approved MACS Small Group Leaders.
Student eligibility	Students in years 10, 11, and 12 at the time of travel
Estimated Cost	$6,500 AUD per Student Pilgrim**
What's included?	Flights, accommodation, travel insurance and most meals.
What's not included?	Personal spending money, passport costs or any other personal expenses.
Applications	MACS: Applications open: Monday, 19 October 2026 Student Applications close: Friday, 13 November 2026 Small Group Leader Applications close: Friday, 30 November 2026 RI/MPJP: Applications open: Friday, 20 November 2026 Student and Small Group Applications close: Friday, 4 December 2026
Questions?	Contact: MACS WYD27 Team Email: WYD27@macs.vic.edu.au

The Journey to Seoul

The international World Youth Day celebrations will take place from 3-8 August 2027. The pilgrimage will run from 29 July to 11 August, incorporating a few days before and after the official WYD celebrations.

**Travel dates are an estimate and subject to flight scheduling*

***Cost is indicative and is subject to change from printing date*

Welcome to World Youth Day 2027

World Youth Day is not a tour - it is a pilgrimage. It is joyful, exciting, and deeply uplifting, but it will be physically, emotionally, and spiritually demanding. Pilgrims should expect long days, lots of walking, very large crowds, simple accommodation, hot and humid summer weather, changing plans and times when they will need patience, resilience and generosity.

Typical Day

There really is no "typical" day at WYD! Days can begin early and finish late, combining prayer, Mass, formation, pilgrimage, travel and major WYD events. There will be extraordinary moments, and there will also be heat and humidity, tired feet, waiting, crowds and unexpected changes.

Prayer, Mass and Formation

Prayer is at the heart of pilgrimage. Pilgrims will celebrate Mass, pray together and participate in formation and catechesis with bishops. From 4-6 August, the official program includes catechesis, alongside opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and exploring vocation.

Walking, Waiting and Getting Around

Be prepared to walk – a lot! Moving around Seoul involves walking and public transport, often among very large numbers of other pilgrims. Waiting, queues, crowds, and changes to plans are part of the experience. Comfortable shoes and a flexible attitude will be essential.

Pilgrimage and Sacred Sites

The journey will include opportunities to visit the Myeondong Cathedral and Jeouldusan Martyrs' Shrine, as well as other notable sacred sites.* These are not simply sightseeing stops, but opportunities to encounter the faith, history and culture of Korea through the eyes of a pilgrim.

The Global Church

Imagine praying alongside people from every corner of the world. WYD offers a remarkable experience of the universality of the Catholic Church, as pilgrims share faith, stories, cultures, songs and celebrations with people they have never met.

The Big WYD Moments

The official program includes the Opening Mass, Papal Welcome Ceremony, Way of the Cross, Youth Festival, Saturday Vigil and Closing Mass. These large-scale gatherings are some of the most memorable experiences of WYD, and can involve enormous crowds, long journeys and significant waiting.

Meals and Accommodation

Pilgrims will stay in Seoul, South Korea, with most meals provided. Accommodation and meals may be simple and different from what pilgrims are accustomed to at home. Sharing spaces, adapting routines and considering the needs of others are all part of communal pilgrimage life.

The Vigil and Closing Mass

The Pilgrimage culminates in the Vigil on Saturday 7 August, and Closing Mass on Sunday 8 August. Pilgrims will undertake an approximately 10 km pilgrimage walk, where they will celebrate the Vigil with the Pope and spend the night at the outdoor venue, before gathering again for the Closing Mass the following morning.

Come as a Pilgrim, not a Tourist

WYD asks something of you. There will be moments of great joy and moments that are uncomfortable or challenging. Pilgrims are expected to participate fully, remain flexible, support one another, and contribute positively to the group, even when tired or when things do not go according to plan. The challenge is not separate from the pilgrimage – it is part of it. By stepping outside the comforts of everyday life, pilgrims are invited to make space for encounter: with Christ, with others and with themselves.

* Pilgrimage sites and itinerary are subject to confirmation.



Melbourne Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to WYD27

More than a journey to Seoul

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) is committed to supporting young people to encounter Christ, deepen their faith and discover their place in the life and mission of the Church. World Youth Day Seoul 2027 provides a unique opportunity for students to experience this formation through pilgrimage, prayer, community, and encounter with the universal Church.

The Pilgrimage reflects the *Forming Hearts: MACS Faith Formation Framework*, which recognises pilgrimage as an important opportunity for faith formation and seeks to accompany members of the MACS community as they grow in faith, hope and love.

Encounter, Engage, Embark

The MACS approach to faith formation follows three interconnected movements: Encounter, Engage, and Embark. MACS seeks to inspire people to encounter Christ, equip and accompany them as they engage in their journey of faith, and empower them to embark as active participants in the mission of the Church.

WYD27 will bring these movements to life as pilgrims are invited to encounter Christ through prayer and the Sacraments, engage deeply with their faith and with young Catholics from around the world, and return home ready to live what they have experienced within their schools, parishes and communities.

A shared journey

The Pilgrimage will bring together students, Small Group Leaders, school communities, and operational staff in a shared journey of preparation, pilgrimage, and reflection. Schools will play an important role in accompanying young people before and after World Youth Day, reflecting the MACS commitment to working together in mission.

Students will participate in faith formation opportunities* before departure to prepare spiritually, practically and as a pilgrim community. Following WYD, pilgrims will be encouraged to participate in the post-pilgrimage opportunities, carrying their experience back into the life and mission of their school.

From pilgrimage to mission

World Youth Day is not intended to end when pilgrims return home. The experience is an opportunity for young people to grow in faith and recognise how they are called to participate in the life and mission of the Church.

This reflects the *Forming Hearts* framework, which seeks to inspire students to recognize God's unique calling in their lives, equip them to explore their journey of faith, and empower them to actively participate in the mission of the Church.

* See the WYD27 Roadmap

Who Can Apply?

World Youth Day is a pilgrimage, not a holiday. Students who are considering applying should be ready to participate and engage fully in the spiritual, communal and practical aspects of the journey.

Student Eligibility

Applications are open to students enrolled in a participating Melbourne Catholic secondary schools who meet pilgrim suitability and complete the required application and endorsement process.

Age and year level

Students must be in years 10, 11 or 12 at the time of the pilgrimage.

What we ask of applicants

Students should demonstrate the maturity, resilience and openness needed to participate and engage in a demanding international pilgrimage and contribute positively to a group.

Faith and pilgrimage

Students do not need to have all the answers about their faith. They should, however, be willing to engage openly in prayer, mass, formation and reflection, and approach WYD as a genuine pilgrimage.

Behaviour and participation

Pilgrims are expected to participate and engage fully, follow the directions of Small Group Leaders and pilgrimage staff, respect others and represent their school appropriately throughout the journey. Students are required to adhere to the MACS Code of Conduct throughout the duration of the Pilgrimage.

Health and travel

WYD can involve long days, significant walking, large crowds, simple accommodation, and disrupted routines. Applicants should consider their capacity to manage these demands.

Commitment

Successful applicants will be expected to participate and engage in opportunities including required formation, preparation and briefing activities before departure.

Fundraising

Families are responsible for the full cost of participation. School communities are encouraged to support participating students through appropriate funding initiatives.* Further guidance is available in the Costs section of this booklet.

** Please see the Fundraising Guide resource.*

Pilgrim Roles and Responsibilities

World Youth Day is a shared journey, with each person playing an important role in preparing for and contributing to the pilgrimage experience. The following information outlines the key roles, responsibilities, and expectations for those participating in and supporting the Pilgrimage to WYD27.

Travel dates

The anticipated pilgrimage dates are **Thursday 29 July to Wednesday 11 August 2027**.

Information for Students and Families

Your journey to WYD

Students are at the heart of the Pilgrimage. Taking part is an exciting opportunity, but it also involves significant commitment from both the students and their families.

For students

Students will be required to participate and engage in formation opportunities and preparation meetings in preparation for the pilgrimage.

For parents and guardians

Parents and guardians play an important role in supporting their young person before and throughout the pilgrimage. A Parent/Guardian acknowledgement will form part of the student application process. Additionally, parents/guardians of participating students will be expected to attend “Pilgrim and Parent” sessions, either online or in person, along the road to World Youth Day. These sessions, to be held in Term 1, 2027, will provide valuable insights into the experience of World Youth Day as well as vital logistical information.

Supervision, Child Safety and Duty of Care

Students will travel in small groups with two supervisors per group, including at least one VIT-registered staff member. Where possible, students will be placed in a group with a Small Group Leader from their own school.

The safety, wellbeing and dignity of every young person is central to the Pilgrimage. All pilgrimage arrangements, supervision and participant expectations will align with MACS child safety requirements, the MACS Code of Conduct, and relevant MACS policies.

Application support

Student applications require a Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement, Referee Teacher Acknowledgement and Principal Endorsement, with an optional Parish Priest Endorsement policies and procedures. These requirements apply throughout preparation, travel, and participation in the pilgrimage. Please see the *Child Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding* section for further details.

Information for Small Group Leaders

Information for Small Group Leaders

Accompanying young pilgrims

Small Group Leaders have an important role in accompanying young pilgrims throughout their World Youth Day experience. While the role carries significant supervision and duty of care responsibilities, it is much more than supervision.

Through servant leadership, accompaniment and their witness of faith, Small Group Leaders help young people to encounter Christ, build community and reflect meaningfully on their pilgrimage experience. They walk alongside young pilgrims throughout the journey, ensuring they feel supported, challenged and encouraged, while modelling leadership that is servant-hearted, hospitable, attentive, joyful and Christ-centered.

Who can apply?

Both teaching and non-teaching staff may apply to become Small Group Leaders, subject to the application and Principal endorsement process.

Small Group Leaders should be prepared to:

- Accompany and supervise an allocated group of 6-8 student pilgrims
- Ensure the safety, wellbeing and active participation and engagement of students
- Model a servant-hearted, hospitable, attentive, joyful and Christ-cantered approach to leadership
- Support students through the physical, emotional and spiritual challenges of pilgrimage
- Lead and participate in moments of prayer, reflection and formation
- Respond calmly and adapt to large crowds, changing schedules, shared accommodation and unfamiliar environments
- Work collaboratively with other Small Group Leaders, staff and MACS pilgrimage leadership
- Accompany and supervise students who may be from their own or other participating Melbourne Catholic schools

Commitment

Small Group Leaders must commit to the full pilgrimage journey, as well as required student events, formation activities, staff meetings, training and preparation. Some of these commitments may occur outside normal school hours or school days.

Application and endorsement

Applicants will require the endorsement of their principal, together with Character and Parish Priest references relating to their faith leadership.

Cost and school release

The pilgrimage cost for Small Group Leaders will be fully covered by MACS for MACS schools. MACS Schools may apply for a contribution towards the cost of replacing staff participating in World Youth Day. Eligibility and the level of contribution will be determined by MACS.

While MACS has agreed to provide logistical oversight of the Catholic school contingent within the pilgrimage, it is unable to provide financial support for staff or students from RI and MPJP schools. Schools, families and nominated staff are therefore encouraged to actively prepare and explore fundraising opportunities to support interested students and Small-group leaders.

Small Group Leaders will need to be released by their school to participate in the pilgrimage and all required meetings, training, formation and preparation activities.

Formation and accreditation

Some accreditation hours will be available to Small Group Leaders as part of the formation program. The specific allocation will be confirmed once the program structure and requirements are finalised.

Information for Principals

Principals play an important role in identifying, endorsing and supporting suitable students and staff to participate in the Melbourne Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to WYD27 for Melbourne Catholic Schools.

Supporting student pilgrims

Principals are asked to consider each student's readiness and suitability for a demanding international faith pilgrimage and provide Principal endorsement as part of the application process.

Schools are encouraged to support participating students and families through appropriate fundraising initiatives. Families remain responsible for the full cost of participation.

Supporting Small Group Leaders

Principals are asked to identify and encourage suitable teaching and non-teaching staff to consider applying as Small Group Leaders, particularly those well suited to the faith leadership, pastoral and wellbeing responsibilities of the role. Principals may endorse both teaching and non-teaching staff to apply as Small Group Leaders. Participating staff will need to be released for the pilgrimage and for required student events, formation, meetings and preparation activities.

The Pilgrimage cost for Small Group Leaders from MACS Schools will be fully covered by MACS. Schools may also apply for a MACS contribution towards the cost of replacing staff participating in World Youth Day, subject to eligibility.

While MACS has agreed to provide logistical oversight of the Catholic school contingent within the pilgrimage, it is unable to provide financial support for staff or students from RI and MPJP schools. Schools, families and nominated staff are therefore encouraged to actively prepare and explore fundraising opportunities to support interested students and Small-group leaders.

Supervision

Students will travel in small groups with two supervisors per group, including at least one VIT-registered staff member. Where possible, students will be placed with a Small Group Leader from their own school; however, Small Group Leaders may be required to supervise students from other participating Melbourne Catholic schools.

Information for Staff Pilgrims

Staff Pilgrims will participate in World Youth Day as members of the wider pilgrim community. Like all participants, staff attend as pilgrims rather than tourists and are expected to participate fully in the spiritual, communal and practical dimensions of the experience.

MACS strongly encourages teaching and non-teaching staff aged 30 years or under who are interested in experiencing World Youth Day to consider attending as a Staff Pilgrim. Staff interested in this pathway should seek further information and confirm eligibility through the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM). Funding for Staff Pilgrims is not provided by MACS.



Application and Selection Process

Applying for the Pilgrimage is the first step in preparing for pilgrimage. The application and selection process are designed to ensure that participants understand the commitment involved and are ready to contribute positively to the WYD pilgrim community. Once a pilgrim or small group leader is accepted, a formal registration process will commence.

1. Submit an application

Eligible Student Pilgrims and Small Group Leaders (SGLs) must complete the relevant WYD 2027 application form:

Applications open – ALL MACS schools: Monday, 19 October 2026

Applications open – ALL RI/MPJP schools: Friday, 20 November 2026

Applications close – MACS Students: Friday, 13 November 2026

Applications close – MACS SGL: Monday, 30 November 2026

Applications close – ALL RI/MPJP schools: Friday, 4 December 2026

2. Complete required acknowledgements and endorsements

Applications will require the relevant acknowledgements, references, and/or endorsements.

Student Pilgrims:

- Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement/Endorsement
- Referee Teacher Acknowledgement
- Principal Endorsement
- Parish Priest Endorsement (*optional*)

Small Group Leaders:

- Principal Endorsement
- Parish Priest Endorsement

3. Application review and selection

Applications will be reviewed by MACS panel with consideration given to applicants' suitability, readiness, and capacity to contribute positively to the pilgrimage.

- RI/MPJP Student application review: 4 December – 11 December 2026
- RI/MPJP Small Group Leader review: 4 December – 18 December 2026

4. Outcome and acceptance

Applicants will be advised of their outcome according to the relevant pathway:

Applicant	First round outcome	Final Outcome
MACS Student pilgrims	Friday, 4 December 2026	Friday, 12 February 2027
MACS Small group leaders	Friday, 11 December 2026	Friday, 5 March 2027
RI/MPJP Student pilgrims	Monday, 14 December 2026	Friday, 12 February 2027
RI/MPJP Small group leaders	Monday, 21 December 2026	Friday, 5 March 2027

Successful applicants will receive further information about confirming their participation and next steps.

5. Successful Small Group Leaders and Students to formally register as a MACS Pilgrim/Small Group Leader

6. Training and formation commences in Term 1, 2027

Successful pilgrims will participate in required formation, training, briefings and preparation activities in the lead-up to departure.
Please see the *WYD27 Roadmap* for further details.



Costs

Participation in the Pilgrimage involves a significant financial commitment. Students, families and schools are encouraged to plan early and work together to empower students to participate in WYD27.

Student Pilgrims

The indicative cost is $6,500 per student, with families responsible for the full cost of participate and schools encouraged to support participating students through appropriate fundraising initiatives.

Small Group Leaders

For Small Group Leaders from MACS schools, the pilgrimage cost will be fully covered by MACS, and schools may apply for a MACS contribution towards staff replacement costs, subject to eligibility.

While MACS has agreed to provide logistical oversight of the Catholic school contingent within the pilgrimage, it is unable to provide financial support for staff or students from RI and MPJP schools. Schools, families and nominated staff are therefore encouraged to actively prepare and explore fundraising opportunities to support interested students and Small-group leaders.

Staff Pilgrims

For Staff considering attending World Youth Day as a Staff Pilgrim (Under the age of 30) please seek further information about the pilgrimage, costs, itineraries and the application process via visit the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne World Youth Day website. Visit the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne WYD Website
Funding for Staff Pilgrims is not provided by MACS.

Child Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding

The safety, wellbeing, and dignity of every pilgrim is central to Pilgrimage. Participation in the Pilgrimage will operate in accordance with relevant MACS policies, procedures and child safety requirements, which continue to apply throughout preparation, international travel and pilgrimage itself.

Child Safety and Duty of Care

MACS is committed to providing a child-safe environment for all student pilgrims. Supervision, conduct, accommodation, transport, activities and other pilgrimage arrangements will be planned and managed in accordance with MACS child safety, duty of care and international excursion and travel requirements.

All participants are expected to uphold the MACS Code of Conduct and any additional Pilgrim Code of Conduct requirements established for WYD27.

Privacy and Personal Information

Participation in an international pilgrimage requires the collection and management of personal information, including information necessary for applications, travel, safety, and wellbeing. Personal information will be managed in accordance with the MACS Privacy Policy and applicable data collection, use, storage, and retention requirements.

Phones, Device and Social Media

Clear expectations will apply to the use of mobile phones, personal devices, photography, and social media throughout the pilgrimage. These expectations are designed to support child safety, privacy, respectful participation, and appropriate engagement in the pilgrimage experience.

Pilgrims will be expected to comply with relevant MACS ICT, social media and device requirements, together with any specific arrangements established for WYD27.

Everyone has a role

Creating a safe pilgrimage community is a shared responsibility. Pilgrims are expected to follow reasonable directions, respect appropriate boundaries, look out for one another and raise any safety or wellbeing concerns with their Small Group Leader or pilgrimage leadership team.

Further detailed information regarding safeguarding, supervision, communication, devices, privacy, and participant conduct will be provided to pilgrims and families as part of the formation process.