

Syro Malabar Church

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church is one of the 22 Eastern (Oriental) Catholic Churches in communion with Rome. It is the second largest Eastern Catholic Church after the Ukrainian Church and the largest of the Saint Thomas Christian (Nazrani) denominations with 5 million believers. It is a *sui iuris* Church governed by the Synod of Bishops headed by the Major Archbishop. The Syro-Malabar Church (SMC), with its deep-rooted spirituality and high rate of vocations to priesthood and religious life, can be considered as the most vibrant Catholic community in the world.

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has different commissions for its pastoral activities working under the Synod of Bishops. The Syro Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM) is the youth movement under the Syro Malabar Youth Commission of the Syro Malabar Church.

Syro Malabar Youth Movement-SMYM

Syro Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM) is the official youth movement of the Syro Malabar Church. SMC has more than 1.6 million catholic youth scattered all over the world. Although we have been working hand in hand with movements like ICYM in the past years, we had always longed for a youth movement for our Mother Church. The Laity Commission of the Syro Malabar Church took up the initiatives in 2011 to coordinate the different youth movements in our church and to bring our youth together. Efforts were continued for many years and as an outcome, we now have the Syro Malabar Youth Movement (SMYM), with the approval of the Synod of Bishops. This official Youth Movement of the Syro Malabar Church, officially commenced on the 30th day of August 2014. The Syro Malabar Youth Commission was also constituted in the first session of the Synod of Bishops, 2015.

The SMYM is in its infancy, but is flourishing with a decisive presence in all the 29 dioceses and four major mission centers of the Syro Malabar Church in India and abroad. The SMYM champions and lives out its mission to follow the tradition and beliefs of the Syro Malabar Church for the Kingdom of God and Society, to strive for the integral development of the youth and to bind together the youth of the SMC. SMYM has started out with various programmes and activities for the holistic development of youth aligning its members with the religious and social causes of the Church. Some of the programmes designed by the SMYM are as follows:

- Nurturing families living in the railway colonies and slums in different parts of India.
- Leadership formation and trainings for future leaders of the church.
- Helping the youth with continuous guidance and support on faith formation.
- Active promotion of the life, values and church teachings using the social media.
- Support and guidance for the professional development of the youth.
- Cultural exchange program of the youth of the mission centers with youth in Kerala.
- Campus programmes against substance abuse and formation of de-addiction clubs on campuses.

Proposed Project Title: Y-LAF

Y-LAF =Youngsters' Life and Attitude Formation

Y-LAF is the flagship program initiated by the SMYM to support the young, in forming a right and dynamic attitude towards life. Y-LAF is a three-day, intensive, in-class training program, based on the five core areas of young life. The program is designed and directed towards helping the young life and their priority needs such as:

- Establishing a meaningful relationship with God, man, nature and to oneself.
- Peer group selection and handling.
- Having a clear clarity about true love and chastity.
- Understanding the holiness of sex and the human body.
- Selection and acceptance of vocations.
- Understanding Good & Bad habits.
- Using the media in proper ways.

Y-LAF mainly focuses on the attitude formation of young, considering the five important areas of young life,

- Relationships & Peer Group pressure
- Love, Friendship & Holiness of Life
- Sex Education
- Challenges of Christian Life
- Media awareness

Context

Young India is fast developing and is in a massive change-over phase with more than 65% of the population below the age of 35 years. With the changes in the present socio-cultural, economic and political scenario, it is the need of the hour to have young Christian leaders with a strong and clear view on faith, moral and ethical values. Whether India's youth will prove to be a blessing or curse, a demographic dividend or blight, firmly rests in the support and guidance given by responsible organizations. Today's young people are the church of tomorrow, so it is the duty of the church to reach out and nurture the life of the young, in building up a generation which is strong and dynamic. Keeping this in mind, the SMYM has designed the Y-LAF as an ongoing attitude formation programme for the young people of the SMC across the world.

Target Group

The target group of Y-LAF is young people between the age of 17 and 25 in the first phase of training. And for the second year onwards, the target group will be students who have completed the highest catechetical study programme of each archdiocese, diocese and mission center. This particular age is targeted since they form the potential migrant group to different parts of the world for studies and employment. They are to be well equipped and infused with moral values to fight and conquer the temporal troubles of the world, away from the support system of family and community. All the topics of Y-LAF deal equip them for the same.

Implementation

The Y-LAF programme is implemented in three phases,

1. Resource training
2. Youth Training
3. Follow-up

Resource Training

Y-LAF programme brings together the best resource persons, trainers and young leaders from across the country to effectively deliver the programme. The resources will be divided according to the needs of the different regions. There will be a launch programme

and boot-up camp for the resource persons at the SMYM head quarters, from where they shall be trained. Boot-up camp also aims to foster and train competent young leaders to act as resource persons for the Y-LAF programme in the future.

Youth Training

The most significant phase of the programme is the youth training sessions held across the country in all the 29 dioceses and four mission centers. It shall be conducted as a three day residential training program in every Archdiocese, Diocese and mission center. Each diocese will host a Y-LAF youth training, for 100 participants from its parishes and the Y-LAF program will reach out to 3300 young minds directly and thousands of the youth and families indirectly.

Follow-up

For a Y-LAF participant, it is a lifelong program which starts once he comes out of the Y-LAF youth training and starts his routine. It is a lifelong association with the SMYM and its faith support activities. There will be an active support and guidance team which will be formed in each diocese and also a core support team which will be working from the SMYM headquarters.

Proposed Budget

The total budget is estimated at Rupees Thirty lakh. An amount of Ten lakh Rupees can be realized as local contribution from registration, local diocesan contribution, donations and benefactors.

We would like to conduct the Y-LAF training program in 30 places for 100 participants each in the first year. The expense for each program is expected to be one lakh rupees, which shall be held in every dioceses and mission centers.

The breakdown of the expenses per program is as follows:

Proposed Expenses	Per participant (Rs)	Per participant (\$)	Per Location (Rs)	Per Location (\$)
Food Expenses	400		40000	
Accommodation Exp	200		20000	
Resources	200		20000	
Activity Materials	200		20000	
Total	1000		100000	

The total expense is also inclusive of the boot camp expense, which is distributed as resource expenses in youth training program. It is calculated at the rate of Rupees 1000 per participant and the resource allocation is done accordingly.

There will be registration fees of hundred rupees which will be counted under the head of local contribution. The registration fees is kept one tenth of the total expenses considering the situations of the local youth.

Conclusion

Syro Malabar Youth Movement is committed to the cause of the 1.6 million Syro Malabar youth spread across the world. The present day is witness to multiple discourses on the issues prevalent in the society and church and the only solution, we realize, is to give the right attention to the young people at the right time. It is imperative that our youth be capable to overcome the hurdles of the competitive, individualistic and materialistic world which creates a self aggrandized generation, for the betterment and survival of the church and society. However, our church has no such single platform to cater and act for the youth of our church. The three day intensive Y-LAF programme aims to mould leaders who shall be the torchbearers and heralds of good news in the world.

To awaken and strengthen our future leaders we appeal for your support for the programme. The three phase Y-LAF programme with the resource personnel training, youth training and follow up is envisioned as a platform to ensure the continuation of a society cemented in strong values and bonds as it is the fundamental structure of a sustainable human ecology.