

Jr. high rally draws 250



Michele Judkins (left), Diocesan Youth Committee member Ashley Wood (center) and Shannon O'Leary (right), all parishioners of St. Lawrence Church in Greece, make bracelets during the rally.



Nearly 250 sixth- through eighth-grade students participated in the diocese's 11th-annual Junior High Youth Rally April 26 at the New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls. Above, Rachel Powell (from left), Matthew Passantino, Christopher Lambree, Erin Murphy and Lauren Knauf, all parishioners at Irondequoit's St. Margaret Mary Church, participate in the rally's parish sharing segment.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark preaches during Mass for the junior-high students.



Twelve-year-old Allie Waye-Walker, a parishioner at Our Lady of the Lakes in the Finger Lakes, hugs another rally participant at the sign of peace during Mass.

Approximately 250 boys and girls in grades 6 through 8 gathered April 26 for the 11th annual Junior High Youth Rally, held at New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls.

The rally, with a theme of "Follow the Leader," offered many opportunities for fun, such as the "Holy Hula-baloo" that included swimming, an obstacle course, Twister, karaoke and basketball. Spiritual offerings were plentiful as well, with Bishop Matthew H. Clark celebrating a late-afternoon Mass. Following liturgy, participants gathered in small groups to reflect on Thomas the Doubting Apostle, as recalled in the Gospel reading that day.

Michael Theisen, diocesan director of youth ministry, said the Junior High Rally is vital because "it's often the first time young adolescents are gathered on a diocesan level for the larger church, and also their first chance to see Bishop Clark." Theisen said the rally whets young Catholics' appetite for involvement in future diocesan initiatives.

Catholic Courier photos by Rebecca Gosselin