

It is often said that everyone who visits Lourdes returns changed. How visible that change is and how it is lived out varies from person to person but we firmly believe that a visit to Lourdes makes a difference. Countless parents have commented on the positive impact they have seen in their children after just 10 days on pilgrimage and the Redshirt events in the UK; faith, confidence, openness, maturity and self-esteem are just a few of the areas that are grown and developed through the pilgrimage and beyond.

Since 2004, over 700 young people from all over the Diocese have experienced what it means to be a Redshirt and a Catholic, and each year a group of 60-70 teenagers travel together to Lourdes. The group is made up of young people from school years 10 and 11 and is led by a committed and dynamic group of young adult volunteer leaders who are passionate about sharing the joy of our faith and of Lourdes with those in their care. The vast majority of leaders are experienced in working with young people and many of them are teachers. Each member of the team has received an enhanced DBS check prior to the pilgrimage.

Frequently asked questions



What's the best thing about being a Redshirt?

One of the best things about the Redshirts is the friendships that are made and deepened through our time together, not only with young people from the same school, but students across the Diocese. The sense of community and openness of the group is commented on every single year – anyone is welcome, and everyone is accepted for who they are.

What is the commitment of being a Redshirt?

The Redshirt experience is not just limited to the pilgrimage itself, which begins Thursday 25th July and ends Friday 2nd August 2019. We know the importance of building a community amongst the group so we have several preparation days in advance of the pilgrimage, plus a reunion.



What if I don't know anyone who is going?

Many young people are daunted by the prospect of meeting so many new people and not knowing anyone but they soon forget about any concerns once the first meeting gets going. Many of them are in a similar position.



What does being a Redshirt in Lourdes actually look like?

Our days can be very varied but here's an outline of what you could call an 'average' day:

- 7.30 Breakfast
- 8.15 Morning prayer
- 8.45 Welcome ministry at mass
- 9.30 Mass
- 11.00 Free time
- 12.00 Lunch
- 13.00 Catechesis (teaching from team leaders)
- 14.30 Free time
- 15.00 Pilgrimage activity (could be a procession or meeting with other pilgrims)
- 17.00 Talk preparation (could be drama/music/art/reflections etc.)
- 18.30 Free time
- 19.00 Dinner
- 20.00 Evening program (could be more talk preparation time/or a pilgrimage activity)
- 21.30 Night prayer
- 22.00 Chill time
- 22.30 Bed time



Practical information

We travel to Lourdes by coach and ferry and our travel within France is mainly overnight with arrival in Lourdes the following day. There are frequent comfort stops and plenty of opportunity for purchasing food (although we encourage a picnic to be carried on the outbound journey, and provide a picnic for the homebound coach drive).

Our base will be in the Hotel Arcades, with easy access to the town and the main religious area, the Shrine. Your child will share a room with ensuite facilities with at least one other Redshirt whilst on pilgrimage and there will be leaders on every floor. All meals are provided, special dietary requirements can be catered for.



How much does it cost?

The total cost is £650 and this includes all aspects of the Redshirts experience, including travel, accommodation, food, drinks and pre and post events in the UK. Your child will need spending money only for gifts, sweets, fizzy drinks and ice creams.

Many schools and parishes are happy to support these young people in this venture and will allow them the opportunity to fundraise, so it is worth chatting this through with your parish priest, if you will find it a challenge to fund the £650.

We would never want to refuse a child through financial constraint and would welcome any enquiry about staged or supported payments, should other avenues not yield the necessary support, please do contact us, redshirts@ablourdes.org, to discuss this further.

So if your child is interested in embarking on a journey that is guaranteed to be a whole lot of fun, help them make great friendships, help them to understand who they truly are and help them to grow in their faith then Redshirts 2019 is exactly what they are looking for!

Further information is available from www.ablourdes.org or from redshirts@ablourdes.org.