

## **Diocese of Killaloe Information on Retreats & Other Programmes 2026.**

### **Why Retreats?**

In providing Retreats which can be faith-based, reflective and educational, schools are opening the door to spirituality, self-awareness, critical reflection, wellbeing and the possibility of God and meaning for young people.

In doing so schools are providing them with hope and an understanding of their purpose in life. As members of a school community the students can appreciate their place in the world and in their local faith communities.

Life today can be very challenging, our young people are finding themselves in a world full of distractions and devoid of silence, space and opportunities to just be.

Retreats, pilgrimages, visits to places of religious significance, walks, inspirational guest-speakers, etc. provide our young people with the tools to cope with the bigger questions in life, the meaning of life, their role in this life, as well as the hope that God and their fellow human beings will support them on their journey.

It is desirable therefore that students experience a retreat at least once if not more during their time in secondary school.

### **Factors to Consider:**

Please note that the details provided here are given on an information basis only and you should check with the providers concerned for the current and up to date details on the content of their programmes, pricing and provision.

The following factors are important and can be useful to take into account when considering retreats/pastoral programmes in your school.

- School Ethos and Culture.
- Religious Education Subject Plan and Policy.
- School Policies on Child Safeguarding, Guest-Speakers, Garda Vetting, Group Supervision, Code of Behaviour etc.
- Informing Students and Parents of The Retreat Content.
- Opt In or Opt Out Policy.
- Cost of Retreats.
- Does each year group have a retreat or only 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Years?

- Informing the student support services/personnel in your school such as the Guidance Counsellor and Year Heads that the retreat is taking place in the event any student needs additional support.
- Inclusion and the needs of AEN students.
- Inclusion and needs of students of all faiths and none.
- Location and Equipment – is it suitable for the programme and or activities taking place? Does the school or retreat group provide additional materials and or catering?
- Local factors – cultural, liaison with local parish and faith-based communities, clergy and personnel, available resources.
- It is advisable to seek references from the person or group you engage to provide the retreat and it is very useful to consult with other schools, school chaplains and religious education teachers to get an insight as to the suitability etc. of retreat providers/personnel.

## **List of Providers.**

### **Alpha Ireland.**

Are you thinking of running Alpha in your church or school, but don't know where to start? Do you want to help raise up the next generation in faith, but don't know who to talk to? The Alpha Ireland Team is here to help! In addition to offering online trainings, **we offer 1-on-1 coaching support over Zoom**. If you don't know where to begin or have specific questions about running Alpha in your context, we would love you chat with you. You can book a call with Gerard, Emily, or Julie using our support page on the website <https://alphaireland.org/booking>

### **KNOCK SHRINE.**

#### School Retreats

Knock Youth Ministry offers a range of retreats for both primary and secondary school students from September to May each year. Retreat programmes are flexible and can be tailored to suit your group's needs or time limitations. Thousands of students have attended a school retreat here in Knock Shrine. The aim of the retreat is to bring young people to Knock and give them a positive experience of Knock, a powerful experience of God and enable them to realise the power the church and the Sacraments have to transform their lives.

All of our retreats are given in a laid back friendly environment helping the students to take that much needed 'time out' to explore their relationship with God. We tailor each day to suit the needs of the teachers and students.

If you would like to plan a school retreat, please get in touch with a member of our Youth Ministry team who will be happy to assist you.

T: (094) 93 75321

E: [youthministry@knockshrine.ie](mailto:youthministry@knockshrine.ie)

Website Address: <https://www.knockshrine.ie/support-programmes/school-retreats/>

### **Stay Over Option At Knock Shrine.**

Stay at the high quality pods at Knock Youth Village

You can contact the Youth Ministry Team at Knock for more information.

<https://www.knockshrine.ie/support-programmes/youth-programmes/>

You can contact Mairead Jennings in Knock.

Tel: 094 93 75321/094 93 88100

Email: [youthministry@knockshrine.ie](mailto:youthministry@knockshrine.ie)

Nestled in mature grounds at Knock Shrine, the Youth Village offers high quality and comfortable accommodation with self-catering facilities. The pods are located in a secure environment, offering serenity and a deep connection with the environment. This new space is exclusively reserved for our VAKS each weekend over the summer season.

The Central Meeting Point offers a Meeting Room, a Chill Out Area and a large fully equipped, self-catering kitchen with all utilities supplied.

This is an ideal place to meet for meals and group activities.

Contact The Knock Youth Ministry team for rates for overnight school retreats.

## **An Tobar Nua**

We are a multi-denominational Christian group who have been leading secondary school retreats across the country for over 10 years. We are currently delivering retreats in Connaught, Leinster, Munster, and Ulster, including Community and Comprehensive, Religious Order, and ETB schools.

There is no charge for our retreats if we come to your school, although as a charity we gratefully accept donations. We cater to all secondary school years, 1st through 6th Years, and our team can facilitate both large and small groups.

Website Address: <https://antobarnua.ie/retreats/>

Telephone Contact: 091 562175

Contact Address: 25/27 Lower Dominick St. Galway, Ireland

Email: [information@antobarnua.com](mailto:information@antobarnua.com)

## **NET Ministries.**

Specialising in encounter ministry, NET missionaries plan and facilitate retreats for young people of all ages to experience the love of God. A NET retreat consists of fun activities, faith sharing, small group, and a time of prayer.

If you are interested in having NET Ministries in your school or parish and wish to learn more, please go to our website or contact the Retreat Scheduling Coordinator to request more information.

Email: [retreats@netministries.ie](mailto:retreats@netministries.ie) Website Address: <https://www.netministries.ie>

Contact Address: NET Ministries Ireland, College Court, Main St, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal, F93HYE0

Retreats cost €700 up to 60 students and €10 per additional student.

## **ThrowFire.**

Fr. Joe McGrath, Ardagh and Clonmacnoise Diocese, is the founder of Throw Fire Retreats. . In 2006, the Diocese of Townsville in Australia introduced Christian Meditation as an essential part of the school day under the leadership of a Dr. Cathy Daly and it had a profound effect. The Throw Fire Team begin their retreat days with meditation and will take groups of up to 200 students. They charge €7 to €8 per student(2024 pricing) and provide all the materials and catering needed for the day. They survey the students

beforehand and create a retreat around their concerns. The morning part of the day 9 to 11 consists of games, mixing, icebreakers, talk and groupwork. The middle part of the day they deal with gifts, talents and the future. The afternoon session consists of arts and crafts with a purpose and working with clay. The students bring something home with them e.g. a clay candleholder. They prefer to work in an out of school setting and work with students of all faiths and none. An evaluation is conducted in the next Religious Education class and the petitions and prayers of the students are included in mass by Fr. Joe at the next available opportunity. Throw Fire also work with groups of teachers. A half day session with teachers costs approximately €300 to €400 (2024 pricing).

Further details can be found at [ThrowFire.ie](http://ThrowFire.ie).

Phone: 087 116 1388. Email: [frjoe@throwfire.ie](mailto:frjoe@throwfire.ie)

### **Other Information.**

Another retreat provider is **The Mustard Seed Group** and schools also take groups to sites of religious significance for pilgrimages, prayer services, mass, reflection etc.

Such sites include Holy Island on Lough Derg Mountshannon Co. Clare, Croagh Patrick, Co. Mayo, Local Camino Routes, and walking in the Burren.

**Pius Murray of Walking With Pius** has guided and accompanied school groups on these very informative and reflective walks. Pius is based in the Corofin area of Co. Clare and can be contacted at 087 9828173.