Montana to Ohio 2026

Faith Development in Community: Youth Mission and Cultural Exchange Trip Reflections

DIOCESAN CONVENTION PRESENTATION

THE JOURNEY – COMPLETING THE 2ND HALF: MT TO CLE

August 8–16, 2026

This trip completed the second half of an exchange, building on the work Ohio youth completed at Camp Marshall last year.



PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM ACROSS MONTANA

Participant origins by church community

31 PARTICIPANTS



MISSION & OBJECTIVES

Service

Providing meaningful support to the Cleveland community through construction, meals, and maintenance.

Interfaith and Episcopal Faith Exploration

Exploring Jewish and Episcopal traditions, learning about Episcopal history by viewing the Philadelphia Eleven and meeting Nancy Wittig, one of the first 11 female priests.

Cultural Exchange

Exploring the Cleveland Museum of Art and MAGNET's program, Cedar Point exposed Montana youth to cultural experiences not easily replicated in Montana.





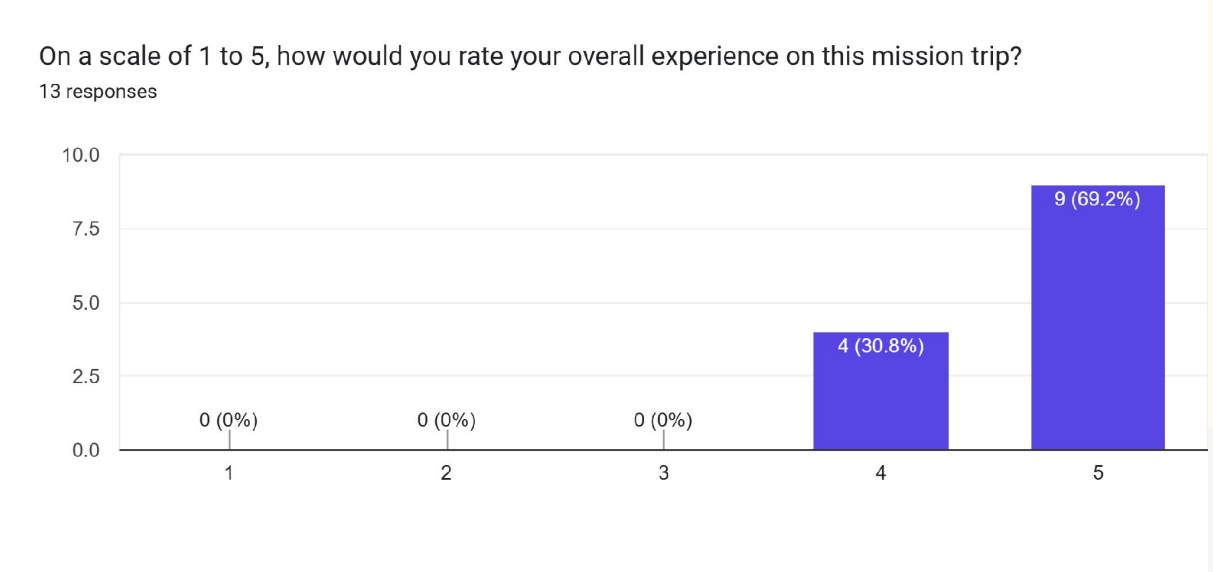


PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

4.7

Overall Satisfaction Rating

Youth feedback shows an overwhelmingly positive response to the spiritual connections made with peers.



FAITH IN ACTION: SERVICE

Hands-On Impact

Our youth engaged deeply in three primary service projects, living out their faith in tangible ways:

- **Habitat for Humanity:** Constructing wooden playhouses for local families in need.
- **Community Meals:** Preparing and serving food while sharing meaningful fellowship and engaging with guests.
- **St. Luke's Episcopal Church:** Performing vital maintenance, construction, and overall site cleanup.



TRIP HIGHLIGHTS



Cultural

Visiting the **Cleveland Museum of Art** and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame sparked creativity.



Interfaith

The visit to **Mishkan Or** and the discussion about the Torah was a major highlight.



Fellowship

Bonding at **Cedar Point** and sharing dinner at host family homes created lasting friendships.

EXPLORING INTERFAITH

Widening Our Vision

By stepping into the sacred spaces of our Jewish siblings at Mishkan Or, our youth learned about the shared roots of our faith and the beauty of religious diversity.
The "Discussion about the Torah" was cited as one of the most spiritually engaging moments of the trip.

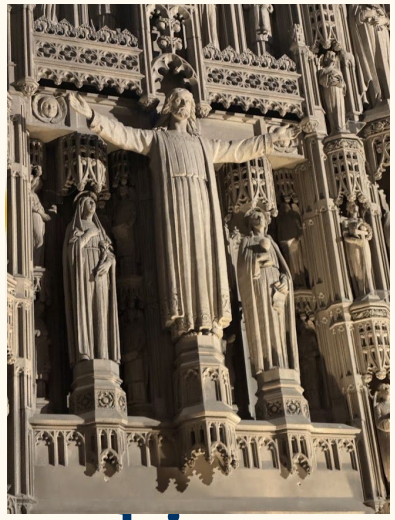


MOST ENGAGING ACTIVITIES



Data reflects participants who rated the activity as "Excellent" or "Very Good".



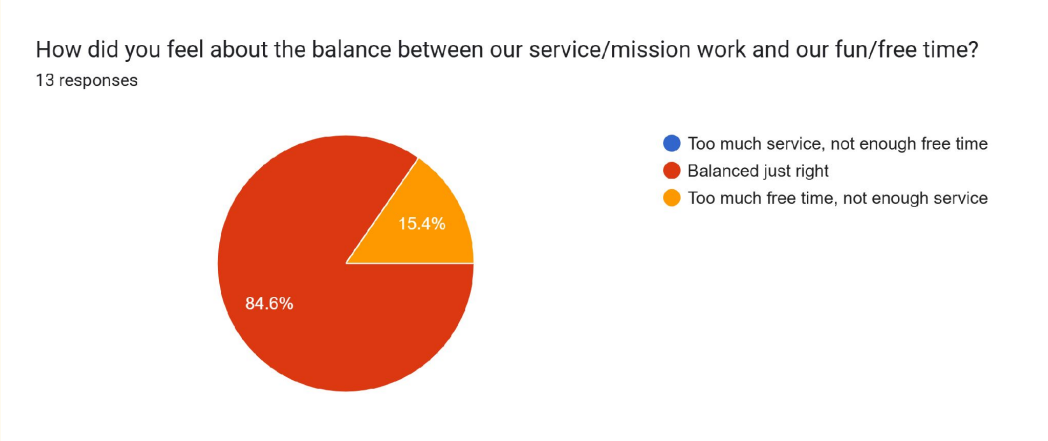


“Sharing a spiritual journey with youth and adult mentors from another state was the most meaningful part of my year.

— 2026 Mission Trip Participant

LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

What Worked Exceptionally Well	Areas for Growth
Interfaith Immersion: Visits to synagogues were highly impactful.	**Pacing:** Some participants felt the schedule was too busy.
Service Projects: Building playhouses was a group favorite.	**Rule Consistency:** Request for clearer communication on rules.
Host Hospitality: Dinner at host homes was an enjoyable way to end most of our days.	**Logistics:** Plan smaller groupings for outings to reduce wait times.



OHIO HOSPITALITY MADE THE EXCHANGE POSSIBLE

Generosity in Ohio turned a major trip into an affordable, deeply personal exchange.

1/2

THE TRIP COST

cut in half

because hosts opened their homes, church, kitchens, and vehicles

ST. PETER'S OPENED EVERYTHING

They housed us, fed us, transported us, and let the group overrun their homes and church. Their extreme hospitality made the exchange feel like family—and made it financially possible.

THE OHIO DIOCESE WELCOMED US DEEPLY

A cathedral tour—including the dark corners—a shared meal, and an organ recital gave the group a memorable view of the Diocese and its life together.

MONTANA FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CHAPERONES WERE KEY TO OUR SUCCESS

Who traveled, how participation widened the circle, and how Montana youth were funded.

24
Montana youth from many churches traveled to Ohio

7
Adult chaperones and mentors

48
Montana and Ohio youth side by side

$15,000
Bishop Fox Grant

$20,000
Diocesan Grant

$28,781 Spent
= $928 per participant

Youth came from many churches; for some, this was their first Diocesan youth event. Funds supported Montana youth only, so cost was never a barrier. Ohio participation was funded separately. Funds managed by the Diocese of Montana. $28,781 of $35,000 was spent.

WHAT WE LEARNED AT ST. LUKE'S, CLEVELAND
46 ABLE BODIES CAN TRANSFORM A SMALL CHURCH

St. Luke's in Cleveland, OH, is a 140-year-old church located in the inner city of Cleveland and serves an economically challenged community.

46

VOLUNTEERS

one focused weekend

A small economically challenged congregation benefits when a large group of workers dedicate a day's labor. We scraped, painted, built, cleaned, organized, weeded, mowed, and shared a commitment to helping a community.

A MONTANA OPPORTUNITY

Many small churches in the Diocese of Montana face basic maintenance needs. A mission work weekend with 30 people at any of our smaller congregations with maintenance needs could be transformative.

A practical next step: choose one church, one weekend, and one priority list.

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE

This exchange was possible because people and institutions gave generously of their resources, time, and care.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

Bishop Fox Fund

The Diocese of Montana

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Lakewood, Ohio

OUR CHAPERONES

John Bertram

Marni Walter

Noelle Kent

Mother Jocelyn Snider

Mikel Schoeneman

Peter Fahrenkopf

Susan Jensen

DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP & STAFF

The Diocesan Staff

Jill Sallin

Maggie Stockwell

Bishop Stebbins

Thank you for helping make this mission and cultural exchange possible.

THE CLEAREST MESSAGE FROM THE EXCHANGE

Everyone wants to do it again in 2027

The Mission Trip and Cultural Exchange built relationships, welcomed new youth into Diocesan life, and showed how shared service can multiply impact.

Next: Discussion on planning a Montana Mission Weekend?

"Faith Development in Community"

Questions:

Please find any of the trip chaperones. We'd welcome the conversation.

