

GUIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW FRATERNITY OF FRANCISCAN YOUTH (YOUFRA)

1. FUNDAMENTALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOCAL FRATERNITY

To start a new YouFra local fraternity, at least five young people will be required to begin the YouFra journey.

In order to begin the journey, interested young people must:

- make an official request to the Council of the higher level who will then assign YouFra sponsoring fraternity, or in the case where there is no such Council, to the corresponding Council of the OFS;
- make a request to the appropriate Council of the OFS to provide fraternal animation;
- make a request to the appropriate Major Superior to provide spiritual and pastoral assistance;
- make a request for a member of the Franciscan Youth fraternity to be designated as a liaison by the Council of the local sponsoring fraternity or by the Council at the higher level.

In addition, interested young people should be provided with practical and organizational guidelines as well as guidelines for preparing the necessary environment for the meeting (location/meeting space).

Having fulfilled these conditions, the group of interested people will be qualified to become a “group in formation” and will be assigned to a local fraternity as sponsor. If the members of the group are Young Franciscans who have made the Promise with another fraternity, the President of the sponsoring fraternity shall contact the fraternity(ies) involved. In this case, some of the members of the group will be appointed to assume the responsibility for the leadership and guidance of the group or as a Provisional Council.

If, in a nation, YouFra fraternities do not exist yet, it will be the responsibility of the National Council of the OFS or, in its absence, the Presidency of the International Council of the OFS to provide assistance in this regard. In this case, the people who are taking the initiative to establish a YouFra fraternity will get in contact directly with the Presidency of the International Council. The intervention of the Presidency should be requested for making the Promise by the candidates and also for the establishment of the local fraternity.

2. PERSONS INTERESTED AND AVAILABLE

The following is required of those individuals who want to establish a new Franciscan Youth fraternity:

- to have an interest in knowing St. Francis of Assisi and his spirituality;
- to want to discern his/her call to the Franciscan Youth;

- to have a spirit of conversion;
- to meet the following necessary conditions: to profess the Catholic faith, to live in communion with the Church, to be of good moral character, and to show clear signs of a call;
- to know and accept the stages of formation;
- to participate in the life of the fraternity; and
- to have a willingness to serve the YouFra.

3. PREPARATION OF THE GROUP

Once the group in formation has been approved, as a sign of co-responsibility, the local sponsoring fraternity or the Council at the higher level, will designate a member who will work actively in providing orientations to the group in coming together to build the fraternity. It will be the responsibility of this person to invite the youth to the meetings of the fraternity, to prayer, to active collaboration, to the animation of the fraternity and to the financing of its activities and works. In addition, this person must be qualified to assist with the formation of the group.

4. FRATERNAL ANIMATION

The OFS, by virtue of its own vocation, must be ready to share its experience of living the Gospel with young people who feel attracted to Saint Francis of Assisi. For this reason the new Franciscan Youth fraternity will need special accompaniment from the OFS through a Fraternal Animator (*GG.CC. 96.1 and 96.6*).

5. SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL ASSISTANCE

As a sign of communion and shared responsibility, the appropriate Major Superior will appoint a spiritual assistant to assist this new fraternity (*GG.CC. 96.6*), to ensure its fidelity to the Franciscan charism, communion with the Church and its union with the Franciscan Family (*GG.CC. 85.2*).

The Fraternal Animator and Spiritual Assistant will collaborate in assisting in the formation of the young people and will accompany them.

6. PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO START A NEW FRATERNITY

After the group in formation has met for the first time, a program will be established for the group as well as a schedule of meetings that will ensure that the group:

- meets frequently (e.g., every week) in order to live together their relationship with God and with others;
- promotes a knowledge of and interest in Franciscan spirituality and fraternal life;
- prays together;

- studies and reflects on the Word of God and on themes that ensure a human, Christian and Franciscan formation;
- learns about the life of St. Francis, St. Clare, as well as YouFra, the OFS and the Franciscan Family;
- sets a date for receiving group members as candidates in YouFra; and
- celebrates the rite of admission to the YouFra (according to the YouFra Ritual).

7. CELEBRATION OF THE PROMISE

After at least one year of formation, the young people will prepare for the celebration of their first Promise. For this, it will be necessary to:

- make a written request to have their Promise received by the President of the local sponsoring fraternity, or by the President of the Council of the higher level;
- make a spiritual retreat as a preparation for the celebration of the Promise;
- celebrate the Promise according to the YouFra Ritual.

The Promise will be recorded in the archives of the local fraternity and a copy will be sent to the Council of the higher level.

8. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LOCAL FRATERNITY

For the official establishment of a local fraternity, the following is required:

- a minimum of five members who have made the Promise;
- a request by the brothers and sisters involved to the YouFra Council of the higher level or, in the case where there is no Council at that level, to the corresponding OFS Council;
- assurance of fraternal animation by the appropriate council of the OFS;
- assurance of spiritual assistance by the appropriate Major Superior;
- the issuance of the document of establishment by the YouFra Council of the higher level or, in the case where there is no YouFra Council at that level, by the corresponding OFS Council.

The Local Ordinary is to be informed in written about the establishment of the new YouFra fraternity.

The document of establishment will be issued to the YouFra local fraternity by the YouFra Council of the higher level (or, in the case where one does not exist, by the corresponding OFS Council). The document will be kept in the archives of the local fraternity, with a copy to the Council of the local OFS fraternity. The event will be transcribed in the book of Chronicles as part of the history of the fraternity.

9. FIRST CHAPTER OF LOCAL FRATERNITY

Once the new local fraternity has been officially established, it will celebrate its elective Chapter in conformity with the YouFra National Statutes, if they exist, and in accordance with the General Constitutions of the OFS.

10. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW NATIONAL FRATERNITY

To establish a new YouFra National Fraternity, it is necessary that the OFS National Council or, in its absence, the Presidency of the International Council, appoint a provisional National Council of YouFra who will have the task of animation, guidance and providing the necessary preparation for the establishment the national fraternity.

It is also required that:

- at least five local YouFra fraternities be established within the nation with a minimum of 50 members who have made the Promise (except for very small nations or in nations where Catholics are a small minority);
- the National YouFra Council establish, if necessary, regional fraternities; each regional fraternity must have at least 3 local fraternities;
- the document of establishment of the YouFra National Fraternity be issued by the National Council of the OFS or, in its absence, the Presidency of the International Council;
- fraternal animation be provided by the National Council of the OFS;
- spiritual assistance be provided by the appropriate Major Superior(s);
- the YouFra National Fraternity have its own National Statutes, approved by the National Council of the OFS or, in its absence, the Presidency of the International Council.

The National Conference of Bishops is to be informed in writing of the establishment of a YouFra National Fraternity.

11. FIRST NATIONAL CHAPTER

Once the new YouFra National Fraternity has been officially established, it will celebrate its National Elective Chapter in conformity with the YouFra National Statutes and the OFS General Constitutions.

12. LOCAL FRATERNITY IN DIFFICULTY

In the event that the number of young people who have made the Promise in a local fraternity becomes fewer than 5 members, for a period longer than a year since the celebration of the Promise, these members will be accompanied by the YouFra Council of the higher level, until there is a revitalization of the local fraternity.

The members of the fraternity that finds itself in difficulty can also be accompanied by a nearby YouFra fraternity, but in this case, the YouFra Council of the higher level will ask the nearby fraternity for this kind of fraternal service.

The appropriate Major Superior must be informed of the situation in which the fraternity finds itself in order to resolve questions of spiritual and pastoral assistance.

13. REGIONAL FRATERNITY IN DIFFICULTY

In the event that the number of local fraternities established with a regional fraternity decreases, the YouFra National Council will accompany these local fraternities directly or can ask for help from a nearby YouFra regional fraternity.

The appropriate Major Superiors who provide spiritual and pastoral assistance should be informed of the situation.

14. NATIONAL FRATERNITY IN DIFFICULTY

In the event that a YouFra National Fraternity is in difficulty, that is, it has fewer than five established local fraternities, the OFS National Council or, in its absence, the Presidency of the International Council, will help the fraternity by appointing a provisional YouFra National Council which will be responsible for leading and guiding the local fraternities existing within the nation.

If the situation improves and conditions become favorable for a re-establishment of the National Fraternity, the Provisional Council will ask the OFS National Council or, in its absence, the Presidency of the International Council, for permission to celebrate a national elective chapter and thus re-establish the ordinary life of the national fraternity.