



LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ

www.LifeTeen.com

START-UP BOOK

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THE NEED FOR CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY

In 1997 the Catholic Bishops of the United States created the document *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. A wake-up call to the Church, this important youth ministry document spelled out clearly the need for Catholic youth ministry in the Church today.

“What is needed today is a church, which knows how to respond to the expectations of young people. Jesus wants to enter into dialogue with them and, through his body, which is the church, to propose the possibility of a choice, which will require a commitment of their lives. As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the church must become the traveling companion of young people...”

- Pope St. John Paul II, World Youth Day 1995, Philippines

With then Pope John Paul II words echoing in the ears of the young Church and the United States Bishops, *Renewing the Vision* built a strong framework of goals for ministry with adolescents.

Goal 1: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Goal 2: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community.

Goal 3: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

To accomplish these goals, the entire Catholic community must unite to minister to and empower the young Church to be Disciples of Christ. Life Teen recognizes the need for “relational” ministry and “catechetical” resources; we recognize the need for comprehensive Catholic youth ministry beginning in middle school and advancing to high school.

8 COMPONENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

Life Teen is comprehensive youth ministry! Leading teens closer to Christ, connecting them to the life of the entire parish and infusing the surrounding community with the light of Christ is central to Life Teens mission and movement. We are called to “go forth and love and serve the Lord and one another.” This is accomplished through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and *Renewing the Vision’s* 8 Components of Comprehensive Youth Ministry.

THE MINISTRY OF ADVOCACY

“The ministry of advocacy engages the Church to examine its priorities and practices to determine how well young people are integrated into the life, mission and work of the Catholic community.”

- *Renewing the Vision* p. 27

Life Teen recognizes that advocacy is more than being a voice for the teens of your parish. Advocacy is being a voice for the voiceless: the unborn, elderly, children, poor and many more. Advocacy raises teens’ awareness on issues that often go unnoticed, allowing them to be a voice and witness the Gospel in the world today.

THE MINISTRY OF CATECHESIS

“The ministry of catechesis helps adolescents develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and the Christian community, and increase their knowledge of the core content of the Catholic faith.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 29

Reaching teens where they are at developmentally, spiritually and physically is what makes Life Teen effective. Based on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) doctrinal guidelines for high school catechesis, our Life Teen Curriculum Guides provide a 4-year catechetical structure that can be used in building an engaging and educational semester for your teens.

THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY LIFE

“The Ministry of Community Life builds an environment of love, support, appreciation for diversity, and judicious acceptance that models Catholic principles; develops meaningful relationships; and nurtures Catholic faith.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 34

“Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20) Community is where relational ministry becomes a reality. Through both gathered and non-gathered activities, relationships are developed at Life Nights, Starbucks, sports fields, pews and retreats. Bringing teens into the entire parish life is accomplished when adults and peers are engaged in the life of teens, both at Church and in their everyday lives.

THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELIZATION

“Evangelization means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. Its essence is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person of faith, both being the work of the Spirit of God.”

-Go and Make Disciples p. 2

Evangelization and Catechesis are two primary tasks of the Church and of a successful youth ministry program. Life Teen seeks to lead teens in a real relationship with Christ and build the foundation for lifelong discipleship. Evangelization “reaches out to young people by meeting them in their various life situations and building relationships.” It “invites young people personally into the life and mission of the Catholic community” and “calls young people to grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.” Finally, evangelization “calls young people to be evangelizers of other young people, their families, and the community.” (Renewing The Vision p. 37)

THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND SERVICE

“The Ministry of Justice and Service nurtures in young people a social consciousness and a commitment to a life of justice and service rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ, in the Scriptures, and in Catholic social teaching; empowers young people to work for justice by concrete efforts to address the causes of human suffering; and infuses the concepts of justice, peace, and human dignity into all ministry efforts.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 38

Life Teen approaches Justice and Service one person at a time. As Blessed Mother of Teresa humbly reminds us, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” As the movement of Life Teen continues to strive forward, a missionary Spirit is leading the way through Life Teen Missions in the United States and Internationally. Global Life Nights and service projects unite the entire Life Teen

family annually to serve the poor and witness the Gospel in every neighborhood. Each Life Teen parish is encouraged to offer ample opportunities for the teens to be involved in works of service and charity.

THE MINISTRY OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

“The Ministry of Leadership Development calls forth, affirms, and empowers the diverse gifts, talents, and abilities of adults and young people in our faith communities.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 40

Through a spirit of servant leadership, Life Teen empowers, affirms and calls teens to live as humble disciples. Adults are called to serve teens and their community as Core Members, Parent Life ministers, chaperones and liturgical coordinators. Teens are encouraged to witness and serve their peers as Edge Core (for middle school youth ministry program), liturgical ministers and peer leaders. Our summer Life Teen Leadership Conference for high school junior and seniors is one of our most popular annual events.

THE MINISTRY OF PASTORAL CARE

“The Ministry of Pastoral Care is a compassionate presence in imitation of Jesus’ care for people, especially those who were hurting and in need.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 42

Pastoral Care is more than “teen counseling”. It is a ministry of discernment and humility to recognize our limitedness and seek the help teens need for true healing to take place. Creating networks and connections for teens and their families during crisis situations is an important tool for youth ministers. Our training for Core and youth ministers incorporates aspects of pastoral care for teens.

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

“The Ministry of Prayer and Worship celebrates and deepens young people’s relationship with Jesus Christ through the bestowal of grace, communal prayer, and liturgical experiences; it awakens their awareness of the Spirit at work in their lives, it incorporates young people more fully in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharist; it nurtures the personal prayer life of young people, and it fosters family rituals and prayer.”

- Renewing The Vision p. 44

Life Teen is centered on the Eucharist and the celebration of a youth focused liturgy is what makes Life Teen unique and transformational. Our mission of leading teens closer to Christ starts at Mass. Weekly programming such as Life Nights, Edge Nights, Bible studies, and XLT Adoration experiences flow out of our Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

Life Teen is a complete, comprehensive and interactive model of religious formation. Grounded in the sacraments, middle school and high school teens are introduced to dynamic catechesis that removes the classroom desks and draws them into an interactive learning experience.



LIFE TEEN OVERVIEW

LIFE TEEN IN A PARISH

From small towns to big cities across the nation, you can find dedicated and passionate priests, youth ministers, music ministers, volunteers (Core Members) and parents serving teens. To see teens committing their lives to Christ inspires and often renews the vibrancy of an entire parish.

Confirmed by the words of Pope St. John Paul II, Life Teen believes that the Church needs to “find ways of involving young people in projects and activities of formation, spirituality, and service, giving them responsibility for themselves and their work, and taking care to avoid isolating them and their apostolate from the rest of the community.” (cf. Listen to the True Word of Life, Pope St. John Paul II, 1993)

The basic components of Life Teen in a parish incorporate:

- Weekly Youth Mass
- Weekly Life Nights
- Relational Ministry
- Core Adult Training
- Teen and Core Retreats
- Justice and Service Opportunities
- Community building that engage teens in the life of the parish while advocating their needs

Life Teen also provides resources and opportunities for:

- Summit Lectionary Discipleship
- Unleashed Missionary Discipleship
- Video Resources
- Social Media Support
- XLT Prayer with Eucharistic Adoration
- Teen Events
- Summer Camps
- Training
- And so much more lifeteen.com/cym

Teens learn about the Mass by being “full, active and conscious” members of the community. Teens not only engage in the liturgy, but also serve as leaders of hospitality, altar servers, lectors, ushers, musicians, vocalists, and, when appropriate, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.

“Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy”

- Sacrosanctum Concilium, 14

In addition, clergy are renewed and affirmed in their vocation as they reach out to the young Church through the Sacraments.

High school teens are encouraged to serve with their families on projects throughout the year to foster a spirit of peace and justice in their schools and community.

Adults volunteer to serve as Life Teen Core Members, liturgical coordinators and chaperones. The opportunities to serve in Life Teen are numerous; there is no limit to the number of teens that can be reached through this ministry.

WHAT ATTRACTS TEENS TO LIFE TEEN?

TRUTH

In Life Teen, teens learn about Jesus Christ - the way, the truth, and the life. At such an influential time in their life, the Life Teen program is committed to satisfying teens' thirst for the truth by exposing them to Christ and the wholeness of Roman Catholic teachings.

EXPERIENCE

Providing powerful liturgies, Life Nights, retreats, service opportunities, and a strong Catholic community for teens and their families is how Life Teen best helps teens experience the power and love of Christ in the Eucharist, in the Word of God, and in each other.

ACCEPTANCE

Teens desire acceptance and authenticity. When youth ministers, Core Members and priests model honesty and transparency, teens can enter an environment where they are accepted for who they truly are, not who they disguise themselves to be.

THE REASON WHY WE DO THIS

We have always viewed teenagers as a distinct culture that evolves faster than the latest cell phone upgrade. Clothing, family, peers, language, music, social media and attitudes about life are all elements that help define and influence this culture. It is essential to understand teen culture in order to bring teens into a deeper relationship with Christ.

Life Teen helps you stay current, pay attention to trends, and relate to your teens. Through youth Masses, weekly Life and Edge Nights, evangelization through relational ministry, retreats and more, we appeal to teens through creative, relevant, practical resources and events that bring our Catholic faith to life. Rather than simply imitating teens' style, we help you become aware of what they view as important and how to reach them where they are.

HOW LIFE TEEN SUPPORTS PARISHES

The mission of the entire Life Teen staff is to support parishes in providing quality and transformational youth ministry for high school teens.

Youth ministry can be a daunting and isolating experience, but as a Life Teen parish you are part of the family. As a family, we are here to listen, encourage, support, and challenge. Most importantly, we are here to pray for you, your parish and your teens. Below are 5 distinct ways we seek to support your ministry:

LIFE TEEN STAFF

Life Teen believes in the power of relational ministry. Just as we encourage relationships with teens, we are here to be in relationship with you. Consider us your extended Core Team! We have a team of veteran youth ministers who are ready to listen, give advice and offer support.

Our entire staff is available to answer questions, assist you in registering for any of our events or trainings, aide your order for our online store, and discuss resources, videos, and our websites at any time. One team that is available to support you in a very specific way is the Parish Support Team. It is composed of the following staff members:

Regional Directors

Regional Directors are available from 9am-5pm Monday - Friday, east to west coast. They are available to assist you with any questions you have regarding Life Teen, Edge, and College Life. They can assist you with calendaring, semester scheduling, Core training, resources or any other questions you might have regarding your ministry. In addition, they are available to pray with and for you as you continue to serve Christ and the young Church.

Area Contacts

The Area Contact moves the Life Teen mission forward by providing outreach and support for parishes within a defined geographic area by serving as the local Life Teen representative. The Area Contact's role is to give guidance, training and support to the parishes within the area by responding to calls and e-mails, hosting quarterly 2:42 meetings (from Acts of the Apostles 2:42), and maintaining contact with local youth ministers.

RESOURCES

Planning, creating and implementing programming week after week is an overwhelming task. Part of our mission is to support you by providing 100% Catholic, teen- relevant, user-friendly resources. This allows you to spend more time with teens and less time planning events. Most of our resources are included in a subscription service called Life Support.

Life Support

Three times a year, your parish will receive Life Support resources to your parish door. All Life Support resources can be adapted to meet individual parish needs and is loaded with fun and impactful resources created to keep your parish centered on Christ and alive in the Spirit:

LITURGY PLANNING GUIDE:

Plan engaging and prayerful liturgies with key words and themes, homily suggestions for teenagers, and song selections for every Sunday of the liturgical year.

SUMMIT DISCIPLESHIP:

Dive into the Sunday readings while forming teenagers as disciples. Small group gatherings designed around themes from the Sunday readings.

LIFE NIGHT SERIES:

Evangelize and catechize teenagers with relevant large group gatherings focused around an intentional theme. Four Life Nights per guide.

UNLEASHED MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP:

Take teenagers deeper as disciples and prepare them to be sent out as missionaries. Each small group gathering is focused on an apologetic and formational theme, perfect for evangelized teenagers desiring to learn how to share and defend their faith.

CORE FORMATION:

A series of gatherings written for Core Members. Each gathering includes reflections and discussion questions that can be used as Core Team meetings, a retreat, or as individual formation.

TEEN RETREAT:

Every year receive an engaging, fun, and powerful retreat designed for teenagers. Keep your retreat ministry fresh with a new topic every year.

VIDEO SUPPORT:

Every shipment includes digital copies of our newest video support resources. Use videos to spark conversation and supplement Life Nights and retreats.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT:

Advertise and support your upcoming Life Nights and retreats on social media with ready-to-use graphic kits and social media resources.

EXTRA RESOURCES:

Receive our newest books, journals, and branded items in each box.

ONLINE ACCESS:

Receive online access to our library of curriculum resources, retreats, Life Nights, and discipleship groups. Direct download of our video library is available to parishes subscribing to a Life Support subscription or higher.

WEBSITES AND ONLINE SUPPORT

Life Teen has the premiere catholic youth ministry websites for teens and adults. LifeTeen.com consistently provides quality blogs, articles, movie reviews, podcasts and photos that help teens explore their faith, prayer life, relationships, personal life and culture.

LifeTeen.com/cym houses everything a youth minister, priest, music minister or Core Member needs to start up and implement a strong, vibrant youth ministry program. This website includes everything from downloadable PDF resources, streaming curriculum and training videos, creative youth ministry blogs, and social media connections to Life Teen's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

TRAINING AND EVENTS

Throughout the year, Life Teen offers a variety of training opportunities for adults and events and camps for teens. We see each event as another opportunity to "get the family together" and strengthen the mission God has given us.

Adult Training

Life Teen training conferences and retreats offer more than just practical youth ministry training. They offer incredible Catholic experiences that enliven your spirituality and relationship with God. Each adult conference or retreat has its own identity and flavor that is sure to set you up for success in ministry, vocation, and your personal life.

Our Adult Trainings will train and empower various levels of leaders at your parish, including:

- High School Minister
- Middle School Minister
- Directors of Religious Education
- Priests
- Music Ministers
- Core Members (adult catechists who volunteer their time weekly to lead teens closer to Christ through relational ministry opportunities, catechesis, prayer and witness)
- Parents

To see a list of our current adult training conferences and events, visit: lifeteen.com/events/

Youth Events

Leave the logistics and programming to us – just come play and pray with your teens! Each Life Teen youth event is a dynamic opportunity for teens to gather and experience Christ as community, Word and Sacrament.

Visit: lifeteen.com/events/ for a current list of Steubenville Conferences, Leadership Conferences, and Inspiration Youth Rallies we offer teens throughout the year.

Camps

Life Teen offers premier Catholic camping for high school teens and middle school youth at three Life Teen Camps around the country. Through outdoor adventure and community- building challenges, campers experience Christ in new ways, bringing spirit and joy back to your parish. The weeklong camping excursion brings a whole new light on evangelization to your teens. Visit: lifeteen.com/camps/

PRAYER

Our staff is committed to praying a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday at 2pm EST for and your parish. Please join us in prayer at the same time wherever you are located and visit our Life Teen page on Facebook to share your prayer intentions. We will take your intentions before the Blessed Sacrament.



SIX-MONTH PLAN

The following schedule is meant to serve as a guideline as you begin to implement Life Teen at your parish. This plan is for a parish that is:

- Implementing a youth Mass from scratch
- Implementing a Life Teen program (no pre-existing youth ministry program exists)
- Recruiting an entirely new Core Team (no pre-existing catechist or volunteers exist)

If your parish has an existing youth ministry program, has a youth Mass or is not planning on starting a youth Mass or has an existing Core Team in place, the timetable can be adjusted. Please use the Live Chat feature on lifeteen.com/cym to connect with the Parish Support Team to talk about the necessary steps to starting Life Teen and how we can best serve you.

We always suggest visiting a parish in your area that implements Life Teen. Experiencing a Life Night and Youth Mass first hand is beneficial. Perhaps you will take a few teens, Core Members and parish staff with you for this visit. To find a parish near you, contact our staff and they can assist you.

Regional Directors are available to answer all your questions about starting Life Teen. They will guide you through the very important startup phase, your first year, and throughout your years with Life Teen. They will also connect you with other pertinent Life Teen staff and Area Contacts who can assist you.

When you registered for Life Teen, your parish was provided with a username and password to access Life Teen resources and downloadable videos at lifeteen.com/cym. Please login and take some time to review our vast library of Life Nights, retreats, Summit lectionary resource, Unleashed discipleship series, and liturgy planning guides in the Youth Ministry section. This is where you will find everything you need to plan your semesters.

Ask the parish staff and other parishioners to pray with you as you begin to implement Life Teen. Make sure that you are keeping your pastor informed, and have frequent dialogue with him about the plans to start Life Teen. In addition, be sure to watch the Starting Life Teen training video on lifeteen.com/cym (lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/steps-starting-life-teen/) to get a great play by play on what you should do as you get started.

SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

PRAY!

Spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and through daily Mass to center yourself on Christ. The key to a successful, Christ-centered youth ministry program is to pray more than you plan or prepare.

CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR

They are available to assist you and guide you through the entire startup process as well as support you in prayer. There is no question too big or small for them. Consider your Regional Director as a member of your parish staff and your brother or sister in the Life Teen family.

ATTEND LIFE TEEN TRAINING

Check out our training conferences and conventions on lifeteen.com/events/. Our Training Conferences are truly the best way to catch the vision of Life Teen.

In addition, we have some basic training videos available on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/ to assist you with the startup phase as well as Core Training and Liturgy planning.

Our staff and Area Contacts are also trained and available for parish trainings if that is something you feel your parish needs. Parish trainings come at an additional cost, but are valuable and customizable to your parish needs. For more details: lifeteen.com/events

SUBSCRIBE TO LIFE SUPPORT

This is a good time to subscribe to Life Support in order to access training videos, resources and our staff's support and prayers. If you have not already purchased Life Support, please contact a Regional Director via the Live Chat feature on lifeteen.com/cym or visit lifeteen.com/cym/subscribe/.

GAIN PRAYER SUPPORT

Meet with different groups within your parish and ask them to begin praying for the teens and for the program.

Give these groups specific intentions to be offered depending upon the needs of your parish. For example, if you are looking for a youth minister or a music minister, ask parishioners to pray specifically for that intention.

Add special prayers to the petitions at Mass for Life Teen to help raise awareness and advocate for the ministry.

Attend daily Mass. This is also a great place to meet potential Core Members!

DEVELOP A YOUTH MINISTRY VISION

It is important that you pray and prepare a youth ministry vision that will allow you to communicate to the parish and the staff the purpose of your ministry.

Our Life Teen mission statement is "Leading Teens Closer to Christ", and for many of our parishes this is the mission statement they will share with their parish community. However, a youth ministry vision will share WHY your ministry is important to you and your parish and WHAT your ministry will entail. Check out the Creating a Youth Ministry Vision training video on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/ for more on developing your parish youth ministry vision.

FIVE MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

SHARE THE EXCITEMENT AND VISION

Begin meeting with your pastoral council, finance council, faith formation/education board, and any other groups in your parish that will be needed to support Life Teen. Share the Life Teen Promotional Video and the Why Life Teen? video from lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos with everyone so that they are equally as excited to start this ministry at your parish.

Make sure that someone is designated as the Life Teen coordinator or Youth Minister (paid or volunteer). It helps to have one person that parishioners, staff, parents and teens can turn to with questions and concerns as well as one person to help coordinate the Core Team.

BEGIN PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Ask your pastor if he will allow you to make a short announcement before the final blessing at all Masses on a particular Sunday. A short summary of the youth ministry vision and volunteer needs can be shared at this time. Be sure to have an information table outside of Mass, with flyers about the upcoming Life Teen Information Night. Hopefully some of your new volunteers (and teens) will be available to share their enthusiasm with the rest of the parish.

HOST A LIFE TEEN INFORMATION NIGHT

After speaking at all the Masses, host a 1-hour Life Teen Information Night with parents, teens, potential Core and other interested parishioners to share the entire vision of the ministry and start creating excitement for the Kickoff. Share the Life Teen Promotional Video. The atmosphere for this meeting should be fun and energetic. Perhaps a youth minister or a Core Member from a neighboring parish that implements Life Teen could speak at this meeting. Have Core Member applications available for those expressing interest in serving the teens as Core.

Gather information on teens who would like to be a part of the visioning process and provide input on the Kickoff and the ministry in general. Make sure to keep the teens in the loop! Ask for their input, making sure that they know this program is God's first, then theirs. Host pizza gatherings for the teens to specifically talk about this new program coming to their parish.

FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CREATE A CORE RECRUITMENT PLAN

Create a strategy for recruiting a Core Team that has multiple staff and parishioners involved. Check out the Core Recruitment training videos to understand the role of a Core Member, who you are looking for to be on Core, and how to recruit for Core.

Do not be afraid to approach people that you think would make great Core Members; ask them to discern the ministry. Ask your pastor and parish staff for suggestions. Be sure to involve teens in this search; they know who they would want to lead them spiritually. The teens will give you honest suggestions. Personal invitation is always best. Come up with some fun ways to invite people into your Life Teen Core Team.

Consider adults from every generation, as this will bring a variety of life experiences to your Core Team that will serve your ministry well. Parents are always welcome to serve as Core Members – whether they are single or married. The main requirement is that the Core Member is a practicing Catholic, and has a healthy love for teens and is willing to share their faith through their time, talent and treasure.

Make sure you go to all Masses and begin meeting parishioners in various ministries, of different ages and backgrounds. The more people you know, the better your chances of finding those that God has selected for this ministry. If you are new to the parish, ask others to help you in this area. A healthy Core Team is diverse, just as our teens are diverse.

Advertise at your local college Newman Centers, with FOCUS missionaries, and diocesan young adult ministries.

CORE INFORMATION NIGHT

Following the Life Teen Information Night and implanting some specific Core recruitment strategies, host a Core Information Night that helps explain what a Core Member is and what commitment you are looking for from them. Have copies of the Core Application available for interested Core Members to fill out and turn in. Share the “A Core Member Is...” video on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos

CORE INTERVIEWS

Begin scheduling one-on-one appointments with the potential Core Members. Take them to coffee or dinner and get to know them to see if this is the right ministry for them. Taking the time to have them share their gifts and talents will go far in his or her involvement in the ministry and will lead to God being fully glorified through their service.

Not every person is called to youth ministry; do not be afraid to charitably re-direct an interested adult to another ministry and say no to some people who apply to be a Core Member, especially if you have doubts.

Be sure that you are complying with your diocesan guidelines for volunteers who work with adolescents.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

This is a critical time to finalize your music director for your youth Mass if you are not using your parish music director. Most youth Mass directors are stipend musicians who are able to run weekly rehearsals, your youth Mass, as well as additional events such as Life Nights and Life Teen Retreats. Remember you are seeking a humble, dedicated worship leader, not necessarily a “band” leader. Contact your Regional Director for job descriptions, if you are in need of one.

SCHEDULE AND PLAN OUT YOUR CORE TEAM TRAINING AND RETREAT

One month prior to Kickoff, it is a great idea to either plan a one-day training with your Core Team or spread out your Core Training to a once a week for a 1.5 to 2 hour training when you will normally gather for Life Nights. Spreading out the training at the same time as your Life Nights firmly cements Life Nights as a habit for your Core Team’s regular schedule prior to Kickoff. Be sure to balance prayer and training on either the full day training or the weekly spread out format. At this time, you are simply scheduling out what you will do, not actually doing it.

In addition, schedule a site for a Core team retreat (weekend) to be held at least one to two months before kick-off. Check with your diocese or ask around for a cabin or retreat center where you all can get away for an overnight if possible. Hotels are also a great option. We have a great sampling of past and current Core Retreats online at lifeteen.com/cym, search “Core Retreats”. Once you have created a Core Team, provide the date and make sure that every Core Member is able to attend this retreat.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

As you get new Core Members, make sure that they complete any and all safe environment diocesan training (and possibly fingerprinting) for those who work with children. Contact your Diocesan or Archdiocesan office for specific requirements and training dates and locations.

THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

RECRUIT AND AUDITION YOUTH CHOIR/BAND

At this time, your music director should begin recruiting and auditioning potential choir and band members. Review the Worship Ministry Audition and Application Packet (available from your Regional Director) and present it to potential choir and band members. At the time of the audition, take time to get to know them as well as understand their music and/or vocal giftedness.

RECRUIT LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Designate someone to coordinate the youth Liturgy. Begin asking teens to serve as ushers, altar servers, lectors, etc. Remember that the lectors are not just “readers”, but rather, they proclaim the Word of God. Plug them into regular parish lector training and Bible studies.

SECURE MUSIC COPYRIGHTS

The coordinator of music for the teen liturgy will need to work with the parish in making sure that all the proper music copyrights are secured. Check with your Liturgy director for your parish musical license. CCLI is the most standard parish license. When your parish is a registered user of a database like CCLI, you pay your annual registration fee, and CCLI makes sure the artist gets paid for his/her work.

FINALIZE CORE TEAM

Once you have recruited and interviewed your Core Team, finalize who you will ask to be on Core and ask them to make a one-year commitment to God and the teens. Be sure to share with them any and all dates that are important, including the Core Retreat, Core Training and Life Teen Kickoff date.

TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CORE RETREAT

Take Core on retreat. A final commitment time for the Core - not designed to be a training, but completely spiritual in nature. Some parishes may want to take time at the end to briefly review the upcoming semester. After this retreat, continue the weekly Core meetings to complete preparations for kick-off and for continuing training.

RELATIONAL MINISTRY (IN-REACH AND OUTREACH)

Begin working with Core to do some relational ministry on high school campuses, in the community, and at your parish. Meet the administrators of the different schools and begin to build relationships with them. Attend sporting events, concerts, plays, coffee houses - any places and/or activities where you can meet teens.

Schedule to have lunch at different schools. Bring Core Members with you and meet as many teens during lunch as possible. Maybe bring some free pizza and t-shirts, and tell them about Life Teen. Invite, invite, invite!

Watch these three Relational Ministry videos to brush up on your ministry skills on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos:

- Relational Ministry Part 1: Basics
- Relational Ministry Part 2: Core Team
- Relational Ministry Part 3: Beyond Basics

TRAIN LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Take time to train all liturgical ministers for your youth Mass including Lectors, Ushers, Hospitality, and music ministers (vocalists and musicians).

SONG SELECTION

The music director should work with your priest and youth minister on selecting the Mass parts and music for the first month of your youth Mass. It is always good to share expectations and be very clear from the start on the direction you want the music to go prior to song selection. Pastors have strong opinions on music, so be obedient to the direction he has for this Mass and be open to compromise. Look for a nice balance between new and familiar music for the parish. As much as possible, bring a contemporary sound to already familiar and liturgical music that the parish has responded well to.

REHEARSE, REHEARSE, AND REHEARSE

This is the time that your band/choir needs to be rehearsing Mass parts and songs for the first few weeks of your youth Mass. Don't just rehearse for the first Sunday; rehearse at least 3 weeks out the music you will be presenting to the parish community.

KEEP PARENTS IN THE LOOP

Invite parents to a meeting where you can give them more information about Life Teen and the topics that will be covered with their teens. Introduce Parent Life, a ministry to, for and by parents whose mission is to solidify and strengthen the family structure. This ministry is facilitated by parents, and under the direction of the youth minister and pastor. Encourage them to be part of the program and to help you in the mission of drawing teens closer to Christ, by sharing different aspects of the program with them.

Express the need for volunteers at Life Nights, including food prep and cleanup. Ask volunteers to send birthday cards, help with fundraisers, pray for teens, and support events outside the church (i.e. retreats and service projects).

Be sure to keep parents in the loop. As youth leader, be sure to inform the parents of your office hours. If you do not have an office at the parish and work from home, make sure you are accessible via email or phone so parents can reach you.

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Begin publicizing your Kickoff Event date as an event that will be like no other! This is something new and exciting for your parish. Use social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to announce your kickoff. Bulletin and pulpit announcements, flyers and posters are helpful, but nothing is as effective as a personal invitation!

CREATE YOUR ANNUAL & FIRST SEMESTER CALENDAR

Contact your Life Teen Regional Director to calendar your first Life Teen semester calendar and if necessary, aid you in planning your Annual Calendar.

Your Regional Director can help you select the best Kickoff night, semester curriculum, issue and social Life Nights for the first 3-4 months in preparation for your upcoming Core meeting. With the vast archive of past and current resources, you will be sure to have the best first semester with your teens and Core Team.

Three great videos to check out are:

- Annual Calendaring
- Planning your Semester Calendar
- Budgeting Your Ministry

All three will help you with planning out your year and semesters (3-4 months) easily and with purposeful vision.

In addition, if you need to fundraise for your ministry, you might want to check out the Development and Fundraising training video for a great strategy for ongoing fundraising and development.

CORE TRAINING

Hold your Core Training Day or spread out your Core Training over the next few weeks prior to kickoff. Be sure you are covering the basic training topics, including:

- Life Nights
- Relational Ministry
- Small Groups

This will ensure that your Core Team is confident in some basic ministry skills as they kick off Life Teen at your parish. Videos available on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

BRAINSTORMING AND PLANNING KICKOFF AND LIFE NIGHTS

One month out, hold a meeting with Core to go over the first semester (3-4 months) of Life Night, starting with the Kickoff. At this meeting you will plan out your Kickoff and delegate the following 2 weeks of Life Nights after Kickoff. You want to be ahead of the curve and not put all your energy into the Kickoff. You want the second Life Night to be as strong, if not stronger than your Kickoff and that will only happen if you are doing advance planning.

When delegating Life Nights, put 2-3 Core Members on each night to work together on planning out the entire night from Gather to Send. Additional Core Members and sometimes teens will be involved in the implementation of the Life Night in skits and other aspects of the night, however, these 2-3 Core Members will assign those tasks and communicate any needs to the youth minister.

Most importantly, have fun with the brainstorming and planning of the Life Nights. The more you pray, the better the night will be and the more fun you will have overall.

DIOCESAN GUIDELINES

Meet with your Diocesan Office to cover any Safe Environment training and/or fingerprinting that needs to be done on Core and Parent volunteers. Put all Adult Volunteers through necessary Safe Environment Diocesan training if you have not already done so.

LITURGY PLANNING

Meet with the celebrant of the Kickoff Mass, the music minister, and the parish liturgist to plan the liturgy for the kick-off. Refer to the liturgical planning guides for help. It is best to start holding weekly Liturgy Meetings to prepare for the youth Mass.

THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CORE MEETING

Start every Core Team meeting in prayer and not just an Our Father. Take some serious time in prayer and offer up your planning to the Lord. Go over the details of the Kickoff night and the first Life Night following the Kickoff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Put an announcement into your church bulletin announcing the Kickoff Mass and Life Night. Be sure to include clear times and location.

Prominently display signs and banners announcing the Life Teen kickoff date. Distribute flyers to various ministries and, if applicable, the parish SRE classes and/ or school. Invite your diocesan youth office and other diocesan staff to the kickoff, as well as surrounding parishes. Use all forms of allowable media to inform: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CORE MEETING

Pray! Review the Kickoff as well as the following two weeks of Life nights. Make sure everyone is on the same page.

PREPARATIONS

Be sure to meet with pastor, or celebrant for the youth liturgy (this should be a regular weekly meeting if possible!).

Get payment prepared to pay for food and/or special guests, sound equipment, giveaways, door prizes, etc.

Make sure the lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, ushers and hospitality ministers are assigned, trained and ready! Prepare and copy song sheets for Mass or prepare projected lyrics.

Create a calendar of your first semester's events. Include all of your Life Nights, titles and a one- line description, any retreats, service opportunities or other functions. Make lots of copies.

WEEK OF KICK-OFF

CORE MEETING

Pray! Review the logistics of the Kickoff. Walk through the Life Night, check and double check to make sure each Core Member understands his/her responsibility for that night. Thank them for all they do for the teens! If possible, have a teen make an announcement at each Mass, inviting teens to the Kickoff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prepare announcements to make at the end of the Mass about Life Night. Set up the room and environment as previously decided at Core meetings. Have teens, Core, youth leader, parents at every Mass, creating a buzz, and inviting all teens to come back that evening for the Kickoff. Pray and Have Fun!!!



EUCHARIST AND YOUTH-FOCUSED LITURGY

EUCHARIST DEFINED

The word comes from the Greek word “eucharistos,” which means “grateful” and is usually translated as “thanksgiving.” It now refers to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, in which bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Christ. Eucharist has become essentially synonymous with “Communion” or “Holy Communion.” The earliest written account of the institution of the Eucharist is contained in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, written in the spring of the year 55 AD. The Didache, a church document from the end of the first century refers to the Eucharist by name, gives explicit instructions for the form of the prayers, and cautions, “Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those baptized in the name of the Lord.” The earliest complete Eucharistic prayer is in a document from 225 AD identified with Hippolytus. It is identical (almost word for word) to the Eucharistic prayer used today by nearly all Catholic and orthodox churches.

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON THE EUCHARIST

Traditional Roman Catholic teaching on the Eucharist teaches that the Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

At the Last Supper, on the night He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This He did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’

THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’ The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself. The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God’s action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men offer to Christ and through Him to the Father in the Holy Spirit.”

-Catechism of the Catholic Church #1324-1325

“I would like to add a word about the Eucharist. In order to grow in our Christian life, we need to be nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. In fact, we are baptized and confirmed with a view to the Eucharist as the “Source and summit” of the Church’s life, the Eucharist is a “perpetual Pentecost” since every time we celebrate Mass we receive the Holy Spirit who unites us more deeply with Christ and transforms us into Him. My dear young friends, if you take part frequently in the Eucharistic celebration, if you dedicate some of your time to adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Source of love which is the Eucharist, you will acquire that joyful determination to dedicate your lives to following the Gospel. At the same time it will be your experience that whenever our strength is not enough, it is the Holy Spirit who transforms us, filling us with his strength and making us witnesses suffused by the missionary fervor of the risen Christ.”

- Message of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to the Young People of the World on the Occasion of the XXIII World Youth Day, 2008

TEENS AND THE EUCHARIST

Our young people and our world are filled with what the Pope St. John Paul II called “the culture of death”. We have the bread of life; we have what can transform that death into life itself. We have the Bread of Hope in the Eucharist.

It is time for us to understand the gift of the Eucharist and pass that precious gift to the next generation. It is Jesus in the Eucharist that will transform hearts and lives. It is Jesus in the Eucharist that will lead teens to their vocation. It is Jesus in the Eucharist that will convert the world. Teens do not need us – they do need Jesus.

“Bring them to the Eucharist” said Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in response to the question - “What should we do for our young people?” It almost sounds too simplistic. Of all the responses Blessed Mother Teresa could have given, as usual, she went right to the heart of it all - the Eucharist. The Eucharist is why we are Catholic. It is vital to our ministering to teens in the Catholic Church that we have a full understanding of what the Eucharist is and what it means for our lives.

We must not let ourselves become numb to the “Real Presence” of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. At no other time have teens been so drawn to the Eucharist. Summer youth conferences, retreats and Life Nights are experiencing the awesome power of the Eucharist. Teens are attending daily Mass and visiting Eucharistic Adoration Chapels before they head out to the prom on Prom Night. Why? Because youth leaders have had the courage to dedicate themselves to “Bringing them to the Eucharist.” This is done primarily through a vibrant youth-focused Liturgy.

WHAT IS A YOUTH-FOCUSED MASS?

A Youth-focused Mass is nothing more than a vibrant liturgy that speaks to young people and challenges them to live as Disciples of Christ. It is not limited to just teenagers, people of all ages can attend youth Mass.

The music, homilies and environment are set for youth and their families. There is an energy that teens bring to the celebration that is contagious.

MUSIC

Teens listen to a great deal of music everyday. Although some of it may be objectionable, it is all produced very well and has incredible sound quality. To inculturate the liturgy for teens, a youth Mass uses musical instruments that teens are used to hearing on a daily basis. The tone is still prayerful as teens respond by participating and actually singing at Mass.

HOMILY

The teens are addressed directly at the homily. The Scripture readings are broken open for the teens and show how relevant it is for their lives. Teens are drawn to the truth as the homily gives them the truth of our faith.

ENVIRONMENT

Teens know from the first time they attend a youth Mass that they are welcome there and that this is the place for them. They are greeted, embraced and encouraged. The teens are encouraged to serve in the various liturgical ministries. A community forms that supports the teens in their journey.

LIFE TEEN LITURGY PLANNING GUIDE

The Mass and the Eucharist is the center of the Life Teen ministry. We are committed to helping parishes develop dynamic youth-focused Masses. As part of Life Support we provide Liturgy Planning Guides. These books are filled with ideas on how to implement a successful youth- focused

Mass. Liturgy Planning Guides include:

- Key Words and Key Themes
- Song Suggestions for Music Ministers
- Homily Suggestions specific to teens
- Psalm Responses with sheet music

A Summit Discipleship Resource for teenagers is also included as part of the Liturgy Planning Guide. Summit invites small groups to dive into the Sunday readings while forming teenagers as disciples. These are discipleship gatherings designed around themes from the Sunday readings hosted by the Youth Ministers and Core Team Members.

LITURGY AND TEENS

You must believe that liturgy can speak to teens. And you must believe that teens are worth speaking and listening to. They are not the Church of tomorrow; they are the Church of today. We must talk openly with them about the issues that touch their lives. We cannot beat around the bush or have hidden agendas in these discussions. We must proclaim the truth with love to the teens. Good Liturgy can and will transform the youth of your parish. Here are some important reminders when building a solid Youth-focused Liturgy:

THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH IS RICH

Don't mess with the ritual. You do a disservice to the community by breaking the unity of the universal experience of the order and flow of the liturgy. Work at helping teens understand the central elements of liturgy. Try to do what you do with excellence, style and grace. Bring out the real elements of the liturgy and place emphasis where it belongs - on the Community, the Word, and the Eucharist.

TALK TO THE TEENS

In the homily, speak about morality, relationships, families, dating, etc. It's wrong for us not to speak about these facets of daily life because teens talk often about them.

Teens don't like to be preached at. Nobody does. It is never effective to come across sounding condescending. Speaking directly to the teens is an effective way to let young people know they are important and valued. While the entire homily does not have to be directed to the teens, it is vital that the homilist acknowledges their presence.

DON'T EVER WATER DOWN THE GOSPEL TEACHINGS

The way to the teens is not to say what you think they want to hear. Most teens have not been taught the teachings of the Church. They want to know what the Church stands for and what it is exactly that they belong to. We must talk honestly about doctrine, moral issues and relationships.

MUSIC IS ESSENTIAL

Music is essential; it can draw teens into an experience of true worship. Good liturgical music (simple, sing-able, and scriptural) should be chosen. It is essential, however, that the music be enriched with instruments, sparked with life and involve the community, not just the musicians.

CALL THE TEENS FORTH TO MINISTRY

Involvement is the key to the teens taking ownership of the liturgy. Give them clear directions, make them practice their ministries, and help them handle their mistakes calmly.

PARISH UNDERSTANDING

Make certain that everybody in the parish understands what the youth Mass is. Gently but firmly encourage those who disagree with its format to attend a different Sunday liturgy. We have found Sunday night to be an ideal time for the youth liturgy.

HOSPITALITY IS KEY

Think about the first time you attended your parish or visited another out of town. How welcoming was the community to you, a stranger? Was it what you expected? Did it exceed your expectations? The first impression a newcomer has can have lasting effects.

A study was conducted that shows when people visit a parish for the first time, they will decide within twenty minutes whether they'll come back or not. So treat everybody like it's their first twenty minutes at the parish. It'll go a long way to creating a warm, hospitable community.

Another sign of a hospitable community is the teens. A warm, welcoming environment is quick to acknowledge the presence and gifts of their youth. Many youth and young adults hold the stereotype that congregations are unfriendly. They may go so far as to say "rude." In a study by the Search Institute, the number one reason a young person would leave a church community is "not being made to feel welcome." To fight these bad feelings, a parish should focus on a spirit of hospitality in everything they do.

TEEN INVOLVEMENT IN LITURGY

We need to put the teens in position to be successful, as the people of God deserve the highest quality.

HOSPITALITY – Have teens greet parishioners and hand out song sheets. The goal is to make every person feel welcomed.

ALTAR SERVERS – Invite teens to become altar servers and include them in the parish training.

LECTORS – Have a training session for teen lectors. Talk about the Mass, why lay people have the dignity to lector, and practice reading to go over the technical aspects of reading at the parish. Assign 3 teen lectors for each Youth Mass - 1st and 2nd readers and an alternate, who could proclaim either reading in an emergency, but who is assigned to read the Prayers of the Faithful. If a Deacon is present, have him read the Prayers of the Faithful. Meet prior to Mass to discuss the readings and to practice them each Sunday. This is a great ministry for someone to coordinate who cannot make the time commitment for Core.

HOMILY INVOLVEMENT – Plan how the Liturgy can involve teens. Have the youth minister or liturgist be responsible for organizing. The teens can hold up signs, answer questions, etc.

GIFT PRESENTERS – Ask teens before Mass to present the gifts at Mass. Walk them through the responsibility. Try to get different teens or families with teens to bring forward the gifts every week.

USHERS – Have a group of teens who are trained in the duties of an usher. One teen or adult can organize the usher ministry each week.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION (check your diocesan requirements for teenagers) - Invite the teens who are eligible to participate in parish training.

MUSIC MINISTRY – This is at the discretion of the Music Minister. Most teens (even the musically gifted ones) are not spiritually mature enough to lead worship, but there are numerous exceptions. Quality and commitment are essential for this ministry so be sure that teens and adults are prepared to commit to the ministry.

MUSIC LICENSING AND RESOURCES

When planning the music for your youth Mass, you may want to seek out resources outside your church's current hymnal. Whether you purchase separate songbooks with contemporary music, prepare worship aids or project lyrics for your congregations use at mass, you'll need to observe copyright laws as they pertain to the reproduction of music and lyrics. Songs are the personal property of the composer/artist. The artists receive royalties based on the use of their songs. To use a song without permission is to rob the artist of what is rightfully theirs. And the 7th commandment says "You shall not steal."

CONTEMPORARY HYMNALS

One easy way around the copyright question is to purchase a contemporary hymnal to use at your Youth Mass. This gives you access to and permission to sing all of the songs within a particular collection with your congregation. Most of the major publishing companies have a contemporary music collection. Particularly noteworthy are the following hymnals that incorporate music from some of the best new Catholic artists as well as popular worship music from other denominations:

Spiritandsong.com, a division of OCP - Spirit and Song (Volumes 1 & 2) www.spiritandsong.com

WORLD LIBRARY PUBLICATIONS – Voices as One (Volumes 1 & 2) www.wlp.jspaluch.com

WORSHIP AIDS: SONG SHEETS AND PROJECTED LYRICS

While contemporary hymnals give you easy access to music, you are limited to using the songs in that particular collection. Making your own worship aid or projecting lyrics onto a screen can open up the possibilities of potential songs that can be used.

The copyright law is very clear on copying and projecting music and lyrics. If you do not have express permission from the composer of the song or someone who has derived rights through the composer (such as the publisher or copyright license holder), you cannot reproduce or project the song.

Fortunately, permission to reproduce or project song lyrics is fairly easy to attain by purchasing a comprehensive copyright license. The cost for purchasing a copyright license is usually based on the average weekly attendance of your congregation, or the number of copies you will be making. Various types of licenses can be purchased which include: Annual Reprint Licenses, Permanent Hymnal/Songbook Reprint Licenses, and One-Time Reprint Licenses. You will need to access what type of license best suits your needs.

Any time you reproduce or project lyrics to a song, you must site the composer, copyright year, publishing company and your church's copyright license number.

Example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe, ©2000 Good Music Co., License #0000.

Christian Copyright Licensing International (www.CCLI.com) is probably the most comprehensive, covering over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing.

If you can only purchase one copyright license, this is the one. All of today's most popular Christian worship songs are covered by CCLI, including songs by popular Catholic artists under

the spiritandsong.com label. Since not all of the songs in the CCLI library are appropriate for the Catholic mass, you will need to use good liturgical judgment when selecting songs.

Because of the richness of the Catholic liturgy, you may at times want to incorporate songs of a more “Catholic” nature or songs from your current hymnal, particularly during special liturgical seasons like Advent, Lent and Easter. You might consider purchasing a secondary copyright license for this purpose. Most of the major Catholic publishing companies also have reprint licenses with purchase costs based on the size of your worshiping community. You might want to check with the publisher of your current hymnal for the types of reprint licenses they offer.

OCP - www.ocp.org

GIA - www.giamusic.com

WLP - www.wlp.jspaluch.com

CCLI - www.ccli.com

MUSICIAN RESOURCES

Sheet music for your musicians can be obtained a number of ways, but keep in mind that similar copyright laws apply to the copying of sheet music. Express permission is required from the artist, publisher or copyright holder to make copies of sheet music. Purchasing a single copy of an accompaniment book for your music ministry does not give you permission to run multiple copies of songs within that book for everyone in your ministry.

If you go with a CCLI Church License, this is a great resource. For under \$200/year, Song Select gives you online access to transposable Lead Sheets, Chord Sheets and Vocal/Hymn Sheets. You can print up to 200 unique lead sheets per year.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FORMING A SOLID MUSIC MINISTRY

Here are some thoughts for you to consider as you begin to form your music ministry or as you seek to take the existing music ministry to the next level:

We are after true talent and true prayerfulness:

- Auditions for music ministry are a must. Hold an evening or two of auditions to find the group that you can really work and pray with. It is impossible to assemble an effective ministry if your motto is “Come one, Come all!” Not everyone is called to join a parish’s team of music ministers. Utilize the “Worship Ministry Audition and Application Packet” available from your Regional Director.
- The best music ministry comes from people whose hearts are hungry for the Lord. When everyone understands why you are there, it’s easier to make those tough decisions along the way to create a solid music ministry for your parish. The most talented musician can destroy the integrity of a music ministry with arrogance and pride. Yet a faithful person with lesser talent can contribute much more to your music ministry.

Once you have the pieces assembled in your music ministry, it’s time to move forward.

PLAN WITH A LITURGY TEAM

Initiate a Liturgy planning meeting, if there is not already one in place. Your Pastor, youth minister and Liturgist should all be there along with the music minister. Some parishes meet weekly, bi-weekly, even monthly. As long as you are getting together to pray about and for the Sunday Liturgy, you are taking a great step in improving the celebration of the liturgy. Remember that music has never been, and will never be the central focus of the Mass. Mass is

not good because the music is good, Mass is good because of the Eucharistic presence of Jesus. Utilize the “Sample Liturgy Planning Meeting Agenda” as well as the “Liturgy Planning Guide.”

PICK APPROPRIATE SONGS

Spend more time and thought into your song selections. The Life Teen Liturgy Planning Guides are great tools to get you started. The best Liturgies are those that celebrate our rich musical tradition as well as artists’ recent songs for worship.

It does a teen well to see that the Church has been alive and well for some time, and that it continues to flourish. Teens want to be a part of a larger story. Remember, songs that “worked” a couple of years ago may not be successful now. Choose music that is sing-able and well known, but intersperse some new music too! Don’t choose what you want, but what works and is liturgically correct!

THE “KEY” IS KEY

Just because the sheet music is written in G major doesn’t mean you have to do it in that key. Lower it, raise it, or do whatever it takes to insure your assembly can sing it.

REHEARSE

Don’t just stop rehearsing when the song sounds good. Work a bit more on the instrumentalists’ arrangements or the vocal performance. Work on your harmonies and dynamics throughout each of the songs. Practically speaking, it takes a long time for a group to begin to feel “tight.”

PRAY.

Pray before every practice and every Mass. Pray for each other, offer intentions, pray for the community and burdens among your brethren, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you through each Liturgy, laying aside all ego and pride for the sake of the Body of Christ.

QUALITY

Three well-prepared musicians are always better than eight or ten well-meaning yet musically questionable “ministers.” Start small and strong, and build from there.

GET OUT OF THE WAY

Once you have picked solid music (and solid musicians), chosen the appropriate key, tuned your instruments and yourself... then get out of the way. Encourage the assembly to sing in such a way that you are “drowned out” by their singing. When this happens you have done your job well.

GO WITH THE FLOW

The liturgy has a powerful “ebb and flow.” The celebrant most influences this flow; work as a team. A good celebrant can sense the need for more reverence, more “spiritedness” or whatever. Listen and watch! You are providing the “music score” for a holy, ancient and beautiful rite.



CATECHESIS

PRINCIPALS OF CATECHESIS

A MOMENT WITHIN EVANGELIZATION

Catechesis is a point, a “moment” WITHIN evangelization. In order to understand it more clearly, we must see the whole process of evangelization. Life Teen seeks to introduce teens into a relationship with Christ (evangelization) while educating them on the truths of His Church (catechesis).

“The Apostolic Exhortation, Catechesi Tradendae, places catechesis firmly within the Church’s mission and notes that evangelization is a rich, complex and dynamic reality which comprises essential but different “moments”. “Catechesis”, is one of these moments—a very remarkable one—in the whole process of evangelization”. This is to say that there are activities which “prepare” for catechesis and activities which “derive” from it. The “moment” of catechesis is that which corresponds to the period in which conversion to Jesus Christ is formalized, and provides a basis for first adhering to him.”

- General Directory for Catechesis, #63

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Our goal with Catechesis is to lead a person more deeply into the mystery of Christ. Catechesis is about JESUS, the person of Christ and a personal relationship with Him.

“To put it more precisely: within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know His “mystery,” the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him.”

- Catechesi Tradendae, #20

CATECHIZING TODAY’S TEENS

These principles of Catechesis are even more challenging when we consider the teen generation. There are unique challenges in passing on the Deposit of Faith to young people. The Church provides great wisdom for us in approaching this daunting task.

“Genuine catechists know that catechesis “takes flesh” in the various cultures and milieu: one has only to think of the peoples with their great differences, of modern youth, of the great variety of circumstances in which people find themselves today . . . true catechesis eventually enriches these cultures by helping them to go beyond the defective or even inhuman features in them . . .”

- Catechesi Tradendae, #53

CATECHESIS TO ADOLESCENTS NEEDS TO:

- Give teenagers roots to their faith - roots to the message they heard when they were first evangelized.
- Be inculturated into the very fabric a teenager’s life - so that it connects faith to the way a teen lives!
- Provide the answers to the fundamental life questions that a teen is asking and searching for.

Catechesi Tradendae outlines the following essential conditions in order for Catechetical work with teenagers to be successful:

- It must be linked with the real life of the generation to which they are addressed, showing close acquaintance with its anxieties and struggles.
- It must cause a young person to re-examine their life and engage in dialogue.
- It must address life's great questions for them.
- It must reveal Christ as a friend, a guide and a model for life.
- It must reveal Christ as humanity's only answer.

"We must translate the message of Jesus into their language with patience and wisdom, without betrayal. Remember that these young people have within them, even though in a confused way, not just a readiness or openness, but a rather a real desire to know Jesus...who is called Christ."

- Catechesi Tradendae, #40

LIFE TEEN'S APPROACH TO CATECHESIS

Life Teen utilizes two primary sources for its Catechetical Curriculum:

- The Sacred Scriptures
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church

We do not use a textbook, but rather draw from these rich sources in the Church and provide periodical materials that assist with presenting the faith of the Church in a very dynamic and relevant way.

Our greatest desire is to meet a young person where they are at, connect with them and then lead them to meet the person of Jesus. A Scriptural image that can be used here is the Road to Emmaus. Jesus met the disciples on the road, He walked with them, and He listened to their doubts and struggles.

Then He taught them, He broke open the Scriptures for them, and He did it so powerfully that their hearts were burning inside them! And then they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread - the Eucharist. If we could provide a catechetical vision for the ministry of Life Teen, this Scriptural image would capture it.

OUR "VEHICLES" FOR CATECHESIS

The Life Teen model of ministry can be broken down into a number of facets, always remembering that our primary aim of Catechesis is to introduce a young person to the person of Jesus Christ. This is a relationship, not a program. It's a way to live, not a class or a Life Night. That being said, the Life Teen model provides a number of "connecting" points where the rich deposit of faith can be passed on.

MASS

Through their involvement in and during the Liturgy, teens are drawn into the Sacramental and Liturgical life of the Church and the faith community.

"Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings."

- Catechesi Tradendae, #23

LIFE NIGHTS - These evangelistic and catechetical nights are typically offered on Sunday evenings after the youth Mass. It is open to all high school teenagers. These nights are designed to replace traditional religious education classes for high school students.

SUMMIT DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCE - Dive into the Sunday readings while forming teenagers as disciples. Weekly small group gatherings designed around themes from the Sunday readings.

UNLEASHED MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCE - Take teenagers deeper as disciples and prepare them to be sent out as missionaries. Each small group gathering is focused on an apologetic and formational theme, perfect for evangelized teenagers desiring to learn how to share and defend their faith.

OTHER WEEKLY ACTIVITIES - Prayer meetings, XLT, and seasonal activities all could be potential offerings in a parish Life Teen ministry. The type of weekly events offered in a parish is at the discretion of the youth minister and should be tailored to meet the needs of the teens at the parish.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION - The Sacrament of Confirmation, placed in the high school years in many areas, allows for a very concentrated evangelistic and Catechetical offering for teens. Life Teen offers a Confirmation Preparation Program called One 8. This dynamic program is easily adapted into a variety of parish settings.

RETREATS - A Life Teen ministry should offer one if not more retreats per year, depending on the needs of the group. A typical retreat weekend may encompass as many as four or five catechetical sessions on various topics of faith. Life Teen offers a variety of teen retreat resources for your parishes.

SERVICE - The Life Teen model strongly encourages offering opportunities to teens for apostolic ministry or pastoral activity as the General Directory for Catechesis refers to it (#49). This is one of the essential “moments” of the process of evangelization. Various service opportunities and mission trips provide the teens a chance to put their faith into action. We offer the #SHIFT Service week resources, in a partnership with Catholic Relief Services, as an opportunity for teens to get involved in their community.

OUR CURRICULUM

In November 2007, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a national framework for high school catechesis called “Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age.” This document was created to establish national standards for publishers of catechetical materials. We at Life Teen have used this document as the framework and basis of our “Golden Semesters” curriculum.

Our new curriculum, starting with the September 2015 Life Support shipment, now includes:

- 2 Series Curriculum Guides
- Liturgy Planning Guide
- Summit Discipleship Resource
- Unleashed Missionary Discipleship Resource
- Core Formation
- Teen Retreat
- Video Support
- Social Media Support
- Extra Resources
- Online Access

In each Life Support shipment, we send a Curriculum Guide. This book is filled with Life Night outlines that break open the semester topic in dynamic and relevant ways. While we do not have a textbook for teens, the Curriculum Guides serve as leader manuals that can be used to form and catechize young people.

We strongly recommend that each parish work to create a systematic and complete high school curriculum. The youth minister should work in conjunction with the pastor and the parish director of religious education to form a curriculum that meets the needs of the teens. It should be noted that the Life Teen curriculum is not designed to override directives or materials given by the individual diocese, but is meant to help ensure full and complete catechesis for young people.

A NEW DIRECTION FOR CATECHESIS

We are fortunate as Catholics to live in these times, and to be the recipients of the work of many over the past couple decades to provide the Church with a new Catechism. The last was given to the Church in 1566 following the Council of Trent. The process to develop the new Catechism began in 1985 and concluded in June of 1992 when Pope John Paul II gave his official approval of the new Catechism, an English copy of which was released in 1994.

The Bishops of the United States established an Ad Hoc Committee to oversee the use of the Catechism to help direct the use of this new resource in the life of the Church in the United States. Since its inception the Committee has made a number of contributions including the development of a process to review catechetical materials and the creation of an instrument called the Protocol to aid in these reviews. On a quarterly basis a list of materials found to be in conformity to the Catechism of the Catholic Church are published in a newsletter for the US Bishops called Catechism Update.

Through the help being provided by this committee, and the work of the new USCCB Committee on Catechesis we have more direction and information at our disposal about Catechesis than we ever have had in the history of the Church. The age-old question of “What should we teach?” is almost a mute point as we have very clear and specific answers to that question now.

A common question that we receive is why Life Teen does not have any resources on the conformity list. The reasons for that are simple; Life Teen right now provides materials designed for the catechist and not for the student. Our resources can also be considered to be more periodic in nature. These two traits put our resources into a category that the Bishop’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Catechism does not accept for conformity review (see Catechism Update, Summer 2004, “Some Parameters of Conformity Reviews”).

However, Life Teen has been following the work of this Ad Hoc Committee for several years now and we have been revitalizing our Catechetical materials.

We also have been working very closely with the USCCB staff and the Catechism Committee. We are extremely excited to have the detailed direction and shepherding coming from the Bishops in this area of catechesis, allowing us as an organization to ensure that our resources are sound and complete.

The Golden Semesters eight-semester curriculum and the new Life Teen Series curriculum directly models the Doctrinal Guidelines for Catholic High School from the Committee on Catechesis. As more information is made available through the work of the Catechism Committee and the Committee on Catechesis, Life Teen will adapt our resources accordingly. It is our intention and desire to be in full and complete compliance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church with all of our Catechetical resources.

LIFE NIGHTS: GATHER, PROCLAIM, BREAK, AND SEND

TYPES OF LIFE NIGHTS

There are three basic types of Life Nights: Doctrinal (a.k.a. Catechetical), Issue and Social. Doctrinal nights follow the semester theme and break open a particular tenant of the faith. Issue nights deal with specific “real-world issues” that teens deal with (i.e. drinking, gossip, chastity, etc.). These nights help the teens see how their Catholic faith is relevant to every aspect of their lives. Finally, social nights build Christian community and friendships.

When planning your semester on Scripture, it is recommended that you combine doctrinal Life Nights with issue and social Life Nights as well. Typically, a Life Teen parish doing Life Nights every week will have 2 doctrinal, 1 issue, and 1 social night during the course of a month.

It is important to pay attention to the calendar when planning out your semester. Be sure to connect the Life Nights with what is going on in the teen’s life as well as the life of the Church. For example, if there is Homecoming or Prom during the semester have a night addressing morality or modesty. Similarly, if Advent or Lent begins during the semester, have a night helping teens enter into the liturgical season.

The Life Nights that come from the Life Support Shipment are not designed to work “straight out of the box.” These are planning guides that can serve as starting points in the planning of your Life Nights. In your planning, you must always take into consideration the needs of your teens and the resources of your parish.

FLOW OF AN INDIVIDUAL LIFE NIGHT

GATHER

This part of the Life Night welcomes the teens, captures their attention and interest, and sets the tone for the night. It is important that the Gather is varied from week to week. The environment of the room is also very important in setting the tone and theme of the night.

Examples of Gathers:

- Video
- Skit
- Game
- Contest

PROCLAIM

This is the teaching portion of the night, making the Word of God relevant to teens. It should not always just be one person standing up and talking.

Studies show that when teens process and present to their peers, they are more likely to remember the content. A teaching for teens should be no longer than 15 minutes - any longer than that, and you WILL lose their attention.

Examples of Proclaims:

- Tag team talk
- Debate
- Video
- Skit
- Witness / testimony

Check out the Presenting to Teens training: lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/presenting-teens/

BREAK

This is the opportunity for the teens to process the topic of the nights. It gives them a voice and allows them to explore how the topic applies to their lives.

- Examples of Breaks:
- Small Groups
- Partners
- Silence
- Questionnaire
- Journaling

Check out the Small Group Facilitation training on [lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos:](http://lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/)

- Small Groups Part 1: Basics
- Small Groups Part 2: Example
- Small Groups Part 3: Going Deeper

SEND

This is the wrap-up of the night. It usually gives the teens practical, concrete ways to live out the message of the night. It always brings the teens into a time of prayer and an encounter with Christ. It is important that we use this time to expose teens to many different types and forms of prayer.

Examples of Sends:

- Accountability
- Challenge for the week
- Intercession, Petition, Adoration and Praise
- Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, etc.
- Something to take home

CALENDARING A LIFE TEEN SEMESTER

When it comes to calendaring your first Life Night Semester, we often ask, “Where do I start?” While our eight-semester curriculum gives a solid framework, each individual semester still needs to be planned out. It is important that you ask some important questions of your current, or sometimes non-existing, youth ministry program when planning your semester calendar. Each question has a purpose and should be discussed with your Core team and, at times, your teens.

WHAT FORMATION HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY COVERED AND WHAT IS LACKING IN THEIR FORMATION?

You need to recognize how your teens have been formed and what formation needs to be provided. If the majority of your teens have not been catechized since preparation for second grade First Communion, your needs will be different from a parish that has had continual catechesis for their

teens in the middle school years. This question will help you determine which catechetical semester you would like to start with and where you want to go.

WHAT WILL BE THE OVERALL SEMESTER GOAL?

What is the goal of the semester, or possibly the year, of formation you are planning for your teens? If your goal is to help them know Christ and begin to have a personal relationship with Him, you would select the Person of Christ semester. If your goal is to help them dive into Scripture, you would want to start with the Scripture semester. Or mix in a few of the new series to fit the needs of your teenagers.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE LIFE OF YOUR TEENS (DURING THE MONTHS YOU ARE CALENDARING)?

This question will help you select the “Issue” Life Nights you will cover. Determining what is going on in their lives will help you address issues and topics that are relevant and important to your teens. Think about sports, school midterms and finals, dances, college applications and acceptances, anything that would be considered “big” in a teen’s life.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE LITURGICAL AND COMMUNITY CALENDAR (DURING THE MONTHS YOU ARE CALENDARING)?

This question will help you think ahead to special seasons in the Church year and prepare your teens for each season. Is your semester during Advent, Lent, Christmas, Easter or Ordinary Time? What about national holidays? What about cultural celebrations that your community celebrates like Our Lady of Guadalupe? We have Life Nights to help you celebrate all these special times of the liturgical year.

CREATING YOUR SEMESTER CALENDAR

Once you have asked these important questions, it is as simple as 1-2-3:

1. Get a blank calendar and write out which nights you are holding a Life Night. Cross out the Sunday’s you are not having a regular Life Night because of holidays, Super Bowl, retreats or parish celebrations that conflict.
2. Pick two series or a Catechetical Semester to follow such as Person of Christ or Vocations. If you are having weekly Life Nights, you will select the following monthly:
 - a. 2 Catechetical Life Nights
 - b. 1 Social Life Night
 - c. 1 Issue Life Night
3. All Life Nights are listed online by Life Support Shipments. Based on the time you have for any given semester (typically 3-4 months for each semester) you will select various Life Nights that help you achieve your goal for the semester. You will not use all the Life Nights listed. Typically, you will select between 5-8 nights in any given semester curriculum or use an entire series.
4. Download individual PDF files for each Life Night. You can then either:
 - a. Print, copy and place them in a binder for your Core Members
 - b. Email downloaded PDF file copies to your Core Members
 - c. Provide Core Members with a calendar listing all the Life Nights in the semester and then provide them with your parish username and password so they can access the resources online.

5. Hold a Core meeting to discuss the semester. Assign 2-3 Core Members to each night and maintain contact with them in their preparations.

It is important to sit down and plan out your semester with a Core team so everyone is able to share the gifts and talents that God has given them with the teens of your parish. In addition, it ensures that each week, the teens are growing in their understanding of Christ and His Church in a systematic, intentional way.

PLANNING A LIFE NIGHT

Below is a “checklist” that can be used when adapting Life Nights for your parish. This helps the youth minister and Core team work together to plan educational and transformational Life Nights for the teens.

Share the Life Night training videos with your Core Team to help them in the planning process.

- Life Nights Part 1: Planning
- Life Nights Part 2: Great Life Nights • Life Nights Part 3: Feedback
- Life Night INGs
- Presenting to Teens

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE NIGHT

Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

Assign a person or group of people to be responsible for each part of the Life Night.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO LIFE NIGHT

Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person responsible for collecting and/ or purchasing the materials needed.

Decide the people that will be doing the individual parts of the Life Night (i.e. skit, video, etc.). Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines. Be sure to involve teens whenever possible.

WEEK OF THE LIFE NIGHT

Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night. Youth Minister gives feedback.

Create environment and collect needed supplies.

Email entire Core team an overview of the night.

DAY OF THE LIFE NIGHT

Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

Set up audio and video. Test any video clips to make sure both picture and sound work.

Walk the entire Core team through the Life Night Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved

LIFETEEN.COM/CYM

Lifeteen.com/cym is a very helpful resource for planning your semester and finding the right Life Nights and Edge Nights for your teens. Life Teen and Edge subscribing parishes have access to thousands of pages of resources with just a few clicks of a mouse.

Here is a brief description of all the search features found on the "Youth Ministry" page (you must use your parish's username and password to access this part of the website).

LITURGY PLANNING GUIDES - Written to help priests, musicians, lectors, and liturgists bring the Mass to life for teenagers. You can download the individual guide for each Sunday.

LIFE NIGHT PLANNING GUIDES - Provide a great starting point for planning Life Nights. On this website there are over 15 years worth of Life Night ideas! All three varieties of Life Nights are available including Catechetical, Issue and Social Life Nights.

DOWNLOADABLE VIDEOS - Past Life Support Video resources are available for download and can be accessed with your Life Teen user name and login.

RETREAT PLANNING GUIDES - Made to help your ministry team plan for a weekend long retreat with a central spiritual theme. Inside you'll find talk outlines, skits, small group discussion questions, and prayer guides.

GRAPHICS AND LOGOS - Available for use in your parish bulletins, newsletters, banners, letterhead, and for printing on T-shirts.

YOUTH MINISTER AND CORE TRAINING VIDEOS AND RESOURCES - Quick, easy, professional training resources are at the click of a button for youth ministers, priests, Core Members, music ministers and liturgical ministers on a variety of topics from how to lead a small group, to creating a youth ministry vision, to training your lectors for your youth Mass. New trainings are being developed on a continual basis and uploaded monthly.



RELATIONAL MINISTRY

Relational Ministry is the bedrock of quality, transformational youth ministry. The concept of relational ministry is simple: relationships are at the heart of true conversion. In order to bring teens to a relationship with Christ, we must be willing to engage in relationship with them ourselves. The mission of Life Teen is to lead teens closer to Christ. We cannot do this unless we are willing to meet the teens where they are, develop healthy relationships, and walk with them closer to Christ. It is possibly the most important, and most difficult, aspect of youth ministry.

Being convinced of the need for relational ministry and actually doing it are two completely different things. Many youth ministers sit in their offices in front of a large pile of paperwork and wish that their ministry could be more relational. But let's be realistic – who has time to seek out teens on their turf and develop real relationships with them? First, it is important to understand that this is not a one-person job. It is vital that the youth minister model and empower the Core to engage in relational ministry. Second, relational ministry does not mean that you have a deep, life-changing relationship with every teen you encounter. There are four natural levels that our relationships with teens can be divided into: contact, connect, care, and challenge.

LEVEL 1: CONTACT (EVERYONE)

We can engage every teen at this level, regardless of who they are or how you know them. At this level, we let the teens know that we are interested in them and see them as a person of worth and importance. Some hints for making contact with teens:

- Introduce yourself. Don't wait for them to initiate the conversation.
- Make eye contact.
- Ask their name and remember it!
- Reach out to all teens, not just the ones who dress and act in "appropriate" ways.
- Be yourself.

LEVEL 2: CONNECT (MOST)

Although we can make contact with all teens, we will connect with a smaller group. At this level, we look for a common basis on which a relationship can grow. The reality is that we cannot and will not connect with every teen in our program. But hopefully there is someone that every teen can connect with. Some hints for connecting with teens:

- Ask questions. This shows interest in their lives and helps you know what you have in common.
- Meet them where they are. Take another Core and go to their games, plays, lunches, workplaces, etc.
- Involve them in the planning and execution of Life Nights, skits, videos, etc.
- Be available. Never be too busy to take time to connect with a teen.

LEVEL 3: CARE (SOME)

At this level, we know about the teens and we begin to give specific and individual attention. You know something about their lives, and there is trust and respect between you and these teens. Again, we will not be able to reach this level with all teens, but it is important that all the teens in our program are cared for by someone. Some hints for relating to teens in this level:

- Actively listen to them. When they talk, give them your undivided attention. Listen to what is being said beyond the words.
- Ask open-ended questions that draw the conversation to a more real level.

- Earn the right to be heard. Your good advice and preaching will not be accepted if you have not gained their trust and respect.
- If possible, meet their parents.
- Be willing to share your experience, your faith, and even some of your mistakes with the teens.
- Ask for their prayer requests and let them
- know that you are specifically praying for them.

LEVEL 4: CHALLENGE (A FEW)

Our ministry may only reach this level with a couple of teens, but it is here that we have the potential to directly influence a life. It is these relationships that give our ministry purpose and life. At this level we have gained the trust of the teens and have earned the right to be heard. It is a privilege and honor that demands an investment of our time and energy. Some hints for working with teens at this level:

- Ask questions that challenge assumptions and behaviors.
- Be ready for their questions. If you don't know the answer, learn it together.
- Speak the truth even when it is difficult. Don't sugarcoat it.
- Pray with them.
- Challenge them in leadership roles.
- Provide opportunities for them to step up as leaders in the program.

THE HEART OF LIFE TEEN

With total love, let's get one thing straight before we go any further...relational ministry, entering into the teens' lives and meeting them where they are on their faith walk, is one of most important thing we do. It's what we're all about in Life Teen, and it's what we should be about at Church, because relational ministry is of Christ, it was modeled by Christ and, in an apostolic Church, it is what we are called to by Christ Himself.

At the end of the day, what we do is not about a program or event. Those things are great but they are meaningless if teens are not engaged in relationships that ultimately lead them to a relationship with Christ. This is what we mean when we talk about deep, meaningful relational ministry.

It is an investment in the lives of the young people. We're talking about knowing where they are and where they're not, spiritually and socially. We're talking about a willingness to meet them there and walk with them closer to Christ. Building real relationships must be the goal of every Life Night, retreat, event, and trip. We must be purposeful in our interaction with teens and in our planning.

As youth ministers, we must make relational ministry our priority and ensure ample opportunities for teens to be transformed through meaningful relationships.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Dealing with people (especially teenage people) is not always easy or pretty. When we make a conscious effort to engage in relational ministry, it is important that we are aware of some of the dangers and work to avoid them.

DIOCESAN POLICIES

Every person who works with youth must know and follow their diocese's sexual misconduct policy as well as any other guidelines for working with youth. These policies are meant for the protection of both the youth and the youth worker.

CORE = C²

Within Life Teen, this C² model rule states that youth ministers or Core Members are never to be one-on-one with a teen. There should always be two adults attending a teen event together, going to a graduation party for a teen, meeting a teen off the church grounds or waiting for a parent to pick them up from life night. Following this rule will keep both you, the core, and the teen safe at all times and free from accusations of any kind. In addition, it will lead to teens entering into communal relationship with Christ, not just one-on-one.

BALANCE

As adult ministers, we are not simply their buddy, nor are we just an authority figure. Our role is distinct and different - we must work to maintain that balance and, if necessary, remind the teen of our role. We must take time for our families and personal lives.

GENDER TO GENDER

Do not allow yourself to enter into an intimate relationship with a teen of the opposite gender that might lead to one-on-one time together, texts, emails or online conversations through various social medias. Not having opposite gender relationships will keep you and your teens safe from unnecessary allegations. It is one thing to listen to a teen of the opposite gender in small group or at the end of a life night with a crowd of people in the background. It is something very different when it becomes one-on-one in a coffee shop; you must live above reproach.

ARE YOU FRIENDS, “Friends” OR friends?

One of the best marketing campaigns I have seen lately asked the question, “are you Friends, “friends” or friends?” This is a great question to keep in mind with teens in your youth group. Now, the word “friend” has levels attached to it in this world of social media. Let’s explore a teen’s idea of the word friend.

- Friends are peers that teens are in an intimate one-on-one relationship. These are their true friends who they hang out with on the weekends, eat lunch with at school and spend social time with on a daily/weekly basis
- “Friends” are typically peers with a romantic attachment or desire of a romantic attachment.

Friends with a small “f” are casual acquaintances or surface friendships. They are not a part of the inner circle and often are people that teens know, but don’t really know well. As core and youth ministers we are called to be a mentor, not just a friend or buddy. You should never be a “friend” or person a teen would consider for a romantic, intimate relationship.

You are also called to go deeper than a surface, “how was your week” relationship in order for teens to nurture a relationship with Christ. In addition, we should never be a friend since they are more one-on-one relationships that the teens develop with peers, not adult mentors.

How do we dance on this line? Simple - keep the relationship in the public eye at all times and centered on Christ.

If parts of your relationship with a teen need to be hidden—it is not of God and not a safe environment for you or the teen. Every conversation, text, email or encounter must be something you would share with your youth minister with full knowledge that it will be confidential unless the teens’ safety is at risk. This is the difference between gossip and protection of minors. This is also a fine line but one that is absolutely necessary to ensure safe, Christ centered relationships.

THE FUN FACTOR

Sometimes it is easiest to be the “fun” core and not really lead the teens to anything more than yourself. Make more than memories with your teens. Mentor them into a relationship that lasts a lifetime, a relationship with Christ. Be willing to discuss difficult and serious subjects with the teens. Everyone wants to have a good time, but teens should know that you can be taken seriously and will help them if they ever need help or are facing a situation they cannot handle on their own.

FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Media can be a blessing or a crutch when it comes to relational ministry. Recently, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminded us that “If your mission is to be truly effective -- if the words you proclaim are to touch hearts, engage people’s freedom and change their lives -- you must draw them into an encounter with persons and communities who witness to the grace of Christ by their faith and their lives.” these are wise words to remember as we address social media in relational ministry.

Unless the use of technology brings teens into a personal, face-to-face encounter with “persons and communities who witness to the grace of Christ by their faith and their lives,” the use of these forms of technology will be ineffective. Social media such as Facebook and text messaging is great for ongoing relationships that have already been developed, but lack the depth that teens truly seek.

They are wonderful for event and birthday reminders, checking in to see what your teens are up to during the week and great for accountability safeguards when viewing what teens post (both picture and wall posts). But when you feel you truly know a teen from this information, you miss an opportunity for real relationship depth.

Archbishop Celli described this well, “we are called, rather, to leave a visible imprint-- recognizable imprints that make one think because of the marks we have in fact left by our presence.”

At the 44th World Communications Day, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called for “authentic and courageous witnesses,” that will “smooth the way for new encounters, always ensuring the quality of the human contact and care for persons and their real spiritual needs.”

We must go deeper than a tweet or text, we must seek the face of Christ in person and enter into relationships that go beyond what they post on their Facebook wall.

PRAYER

All too often we get so busy working for God that we forget to speak or listen to Him. We must take time for prayer, silence, Scripture, and Sacraments. It is only in doing this can we effectively serve the teens.

OUTREACH

It is an easy trap to fall into... we get comfortable in just ministering to the teens who come to us rather than going out and seeking teens who might never come to a church event. In a recent study, only 11% of American Catholic teenagers are involved of some kind of youth ministry. What are we doing to reach out to the other 89%? This is why outreach is so vital to solid youth ministry.

Jesus did not just sit back and wait for people to come to him; he sought out the lost and then he sent his disciples out in the same manner. As Disciples of Christ, we must be willing to seek out the teens wherever they are.

As youth ministers, we must set a standard of outreach for ourselves and for our Core. Just a reminder: all outreach must be done in the C² model – take another Core Member with you when doing any outreach work. Below are just a few ideas for outreach:

CAMPUS VISITS - Schedule one or two days a week to visit a different high school campus. Check with each high school for their visitor policy before you attend. Let teens know when you are coming and arrange a place to meet with a few of them to show you around. Bringing food always helps.

SPORT/TOURNAMENTS - Attend a variety of sporting events or weekend tournaments including JV and varsity games. Most of the time JV games are during the afternoon and a lot of parents work, so having their youth minister or core cheering them on is a big deal. Collect sports calendars from teens at the beginning of the season and share them with your core to pick the ones you will attend together.

MUSICALS/PLAYS - Attending musicals or plays is both entertaining and ministerial. Including a shout out in the playbill from the parish is an even more powerful form of affirmation. Bringing a single flower and seeing your teens and their friends you have been introduced to throughout the year is a great way to show your love and support.

CHORAL OR BAND CONCERTS - With singing and talent competitions being some of the highest rated shows on tv, choral groups and bands are popping up everywhere. Just like musicals and plays, attending a choral or band concert is an amazing night out for Core. Teens who are in parish choir or band are usually very involved in choral or band groups at their school. Who knows, you might recruit a new member by the end of the night.

DANCE PERFORMANCES/CHEER OR DRILL COMPETITION - With So You Think You Can Dance on Fox and numerous talent competitions on tv, teens are dancing and for the first time in a long time you can watch with amazement and not horror. If there is a talent show, dance performance or cheer competition happening on an evening or weekend, get to it. They can be long, but your teens will amaze you with their talent.

LIFE TEEN CLUB OR CATHOLIC/CHRISTIAN CLUBS ON CAMPUS - Encourage your teens to start a Life Teen club on their campus and offer to be a guest speaker on a monthly or weekly basis. This is a great way for teens to grow in their faith as well as be a part of your teen's life on campus.

PEP-RALLIES - A lot of your teens are on student government. They are busy putting on pep-rallies for their school where various dance, band and sports teams are highlighted. Attending the homecoming rally or other pep-rally throughout the year is a great show of support and a great way to meet teens and administration.

DANCE CHAPERONE - Offer to be a chaperone at a dance such as Homecoming, winter formal or prom. Seeing you just might be the reminder they need on big nights like that to remain pure or stay away from drinking and drugs at the after parties.

QUINCEÑERA - Attending a Quinceñera Mass for the young Hispanic ladies of your parish is a great sign of support for a cultural tradition that is very important to the Hispanic community. Often times, three or four girls at a time will have a Quinceñera Mass, so go and support of all of them.

MULTI-CULTURAL EVENTS - Participating in various cultural events at your parish is a great way to show unity and support. Some are religiously cultural and some are not so be sure to ask the participating teens about the events happening and attend them. If possible, have core that are of the same ethnicity as the event attend with you.

GRADUATIONS (8TH AND 12TH GRADE) - If you are not attending 8th and 12th grade graduations, find a ticket and get to them. Bring a gift or card to give to them to show your excitement for this milestone achievement. Be sure to meet the parents and take photos that you can place on your parish website of all your graduates (with proper permission).

GO WHERE THEY ARE - Have a couple of Core meet teens to the movies (with proper permission forms of course) or meet up at a Starbucks or place where teens hang out on the weekends. This way, core can meet their friends as they bump into one another or get a cup of coffee. Some of the best relational ministry opportunities happen in a casual setting such as this.

BOOKSTORE BIBLE STUDY - Have your Summit or Unleashed Bible study at the local bookstore on a Friday or Saturday night instead of the church. You will meet a lot of teens' friends in a setting like this; you might even meet some future Core.

BIRTHDAY LUNCH - Invite teens that celebrate birthdays in a certain month for lunch and ask them to invite 2 friends that you have never had a chance to meet. You will pay for the teen (or maybe everyone if you do pizza and have the budget) but typically the friends pay for themselves. It is a great way to celebrate birthdays and a great way to meet their friends and invite them to your ministry.

COACH JUNIOR VARSITY OR VARSITY SPORTS - If a school allows it and you have the gifts and time to do it, be an assistant coach for a Junior varsity or varsity sport. This is a great way to get on campus, meet teens and help them grow spiritually while they grow in their sporting skills.

VISIT TEENS AT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT - Find out from the teens where they work and visit them in the evenings and weekends. During the summer this is a huge way to stay connected to teens since you do not have a campus to visit at lunchtime. If possible, take their 15-minute break with them (remember C²).

SHOOT HOOPS AT LOCAL COURTS - Get a couple Core together and shoot hoops, play volleyball, Frisbee golf, or whatever sport with teens. Let teens know you will be doing this and have them meet you with some friends to play. It is great relational ministry time and a lot of fun.

When it is all said and done, relational ministry must be at the heart of any ministry we do. We must evaluate every program, event, retreat, and trip by its ability to engage teens in real relationships - both with us and with Christ. It is not only important for the teens, but it is vital for us to stay plugged into the lives of the teens we serve. Events that support relational ministry will keep us and our Core teams from burn out and continually remind us of the importance of this ministry.



KEY PLAYERS IN LIFE TEEN

“As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

Just as in the larger Church, there are many important, yet distinct, roles that need to be filled to create a healthy and vibrant youth ministry program. Each role requires different skills and gifts, and each uniquely contributes to the building up of the body of Christ. No role is better than another, just as no role deserves more honor than another. In this chapter, we will look at the roles and responsibilities of the key players in a Life Teen program.

PRIESTS

Above all else, the role of the priest in your ministry is support. The priest is vital to youth ministry, but that doesn't mean he has to be present at every function. It should be understood that he is an advocate for the youth of the parish, and he actively supports the efforts of all who are implementing a quality youth program in the parish.

What is the role of a priest in regard to Life Teen and Edge? Sacraments play an integral role in this ministry and the priest leads the way for us all. Making sure that the teens and all parishioners are fully and actively participating at your Youth Mass or Mass in general is a key role for the priest. To help plan youth-friendly homilies, Life Teen provides Liturgy Planning Guides with homily ideas to help you break open the message for teens.

Over and over again we hear about the breath of fresh air that Life Teen brings to the parish, and how priestly vocations have been renewed and refreshed through their involvement in Life Teen. The most effective priests with teens do not have to be the most dynamic. Young people are hard to fool if they sense they are cared for, and then they will respond. One of the main reasons that Life Teen has generated so many priestly vocations over the years is the positive interaction teens have with priests. Many priests go along on teen retreats and trips. Many priests attend the Life Nights following Mass and at times give testimonies, teachings and lead Eucharistic Adoration for the teens.

YOUTH MINISTER

What makes a good youth minister? They should have a love for God and a love for teens. It doesn't matter what gender they are or what age group they fall into, what matters most is their ability to relate to young people and their commitment to the spiritual development of those they serve. The best youth minister is the one who is willing to dedicate himself or herself to the mission of Life Teen: leading teens closer to Christ.

What is the role of the youth minister? Truly the youth minister is a jack-of-all-trades. He or she is a mentor, administrator, event planner, janitor, speaker, nurse, entertainer, and so much more. It is the role of the youth minister to create and maintain a working vision of youth ministry for the parish. In doing so, the youth minister coordinates and delegates responsibility for all aspects of the youth ministry program from teen liturgy to Life Nights to retreats to weekly outreach.

One of the most important roles of the youth minister is to recruit, train, and maintain a healthy and

active Core team. These are the adults that will work most closely with the youth. The youth minister is a disciple, and knows how to find more disciples. The youth minister must be a team player, able to tap into the culture of teenagers and relate that knowledge to the pastor and the Core team. Within the parish context, the youth minister is an advocate for the youth, ensuring that the parish community meets the needs of the young people.

CORE

One passionate youth minister is great, but one person cannot minister to an entire youth group. That is where the Core team comes in. Core Members are adults who choose to respond to their baptismal call by serving young people. The Life Teen Program relies heavily on the time and talents of adults within the parish community, men and women who truly care about our youth, and who are selfless enough to make sacrifices that ensure that our young people come to know God through the love of Christ and the truth of the Sacraments.

One question you have to ask yourself is, “Who can serve as a Core Member?” If you have that image in your head of what the perfect Core Member looks and acts like, get rid of it. There is no “one perfect” look.

One of the things that make a strong Core team is diversity. In fact, if all of the Core Members look and act “too similar” the lack of diversity can actually lead to adversity. Younger adults are great to have around for their proximity in age and their energy, but married couples are great to have also, as are older adults who bring forth a life experience that is sometimes lacking in some of the younger Core.

We’re looking for servant hearts, hearts that are form-able, not just the “perfect-looking” or the “perfectly formed” Core.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

The role of a music director or worship leader both in Mass and Life Teen events is vital. A good leader is one who can lead prayer, one who can usher others into the presence of God. He or she is one who can develop a music ministry.

They should be trained and know how to present sing-able and appropriate liturgical music. He or she should attend the Catholic Youth Ministry Training Convention and other opportunities to learn more about youth-focused liturgy. The music at the youth Mass is to enhance the liturgy, not presented as a “show”. The leader should be humble, and dedicated to the mission of Life Teen. Many parishes look to their own parishioners or the local university’s music departments to enlist good musicians.

PARENTS

Pope St. John Paul II called the family the “domestic Church”, and so it is. The first youth ministers for teens are their mothers and fathers. Parents are the first teachers of the faith to their children. So youth ministers must work in union with parents to provide an environment where young people’s social, emotional, and spiritual growth is nurtured.

Out of the parent/youth minister relationship often develops a need to minister to the parents. It was out of this need that Life Teen developed Parent Life. The Parent Life group strives to present parents opportunities to not only draw closer to Christ but also to support youth ministry in the parish.

Teens, parents, the Life Teen program, and the parish at large benefit greatly from this ministry. The parents’ ministry can assist the youth minister and core with time consuming administrative work.

This enables the Life Teen program to grow because the core and youth minister can spend more time in relational ministry with the teens.

By helping with the program, the adult community gains a broader understanding of the goals of Life Teen and how it works. And, of course, this ministry provides adult fellowship and develops parents' spiritually.

TEEN LEADERS

You know who they are. They have the respect of their peers. They have a heart for God, not only in Church and at life nights, but also on their school campuses, in the locker rooms and at their work. They are the more mature teens who understand a little bit more about what it means to have the heart of a servant.

It is important to develop leaders among the teens and give them opportunities to use their leadership skills within the program. These teens are not necessarily set apart with the title of "teen leader," but the youth minister and the Core know that they can rely on these teens to help with liturgical ministries, Life Nights, skits, videos, and other events.

Meet with them weekly utilizing the Unleashed Missionary Discipleship resource. Life Teen provides a weeklong leadership conference for Junior and Senior called Life Teen Leadership Conference. This is a great way to train and encourage teens to step up as a leader in the parish.

DELEGATING ADDITIONAL ROLES

The key to a successful youth ministry, actually, a successful parish is to take the gifts and talents parishioners have and use them for God's glory. If you are new to your parish, ask around for who is good at these jobs and invite them to be a part of your ministry. Think outside the box and don't limit the commitment people make to your Life Teen ministry just to the Core Team.

A true ministry that advocates for its teens is a ministry that has the entire parish involved in reaching out to the youth. Here are some ideas on how to break down the volunteer commitments your ministry needs.

INTERCESSORY TEAM – It is vital to have a group of people committed to supporting youth ministry through prayer. This group should specifically be praying for the Core team by name. Take time to update this group on the prayer needs of the Core and the teens.

ENVIRONMENT TEAM – This is a group of teens, young adults or adults who are artistically talented and good with tools. Dads can build some of the best Life Night and Retreat environments in the world. So can teens. Having an environment team takes a lot of work off the Core and gives them more time in the week for relational ministry.

WEB SITE DESIGNER/UPDATER – If your ministry doesn't have a web site you can always ask for someone to design one for you. There are so many talented teens, young adults and adults who can do web design and it will make your life so much easier when it comes to promoting your events and getting information and forms out to your teens.

MARKETING – This may seem a bit corporate, but if you can find someone who is great with marketing, you will never have to spend time at your computer designing a flyer for your youth group. If you find this person invite them to create flyers and newsletters, email blasts to teens, Facebook and MySpace event invitations, etc. Get creative and text, IM and reach your teens in any way you can.

Graphic Design – Again, if you can find a graphic designer for your ministry, you will never have to pay someone to design a t-shirt for retreat or a flyer for an event. This is a small commitment someone with this talent can offer your ministry.

PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER - At each Life Night or youth event you will want someone to photograph and/or videotape the night and post photos to the parish or youth ministry website. Teens love to see YouTube videos of skits from the Life Night and photos they can share online. Having a few photographers and/or videographers for Life Nights, events and retreats is a blessing for your ministry. You can even use the footage for an end of the year video or slideshow.

OFFICE HELP - There is always a newsletter, mailing, retreat form, letter or some other important office job that needs to get done. Create a list of adults and/or teens who are willing to do some basic office work that involves labels, stamps and bulk mail.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH - Having some adults (depending on diocesan guidelines the age will vary) to coordinate service projects such as visits to the homeless shelter, mission trips, Food Fasts, and other service projects is a very important piece of a comprehensive youth ministry program. Look for parents and adults who will assist you with the monthly, quarterly or annual service projects. Safe Environment training and fingerprinting are mandatory for this ministry.

COOKS & FOOD SERVERS - Food will always be a huge part of youth ministry so you must find parents to cook for you. Parents can sign up on a rotating basis to cook and serve snacks at Life Nights or meals on retreats.

DEVELOPMENT/FUNDRAISING TEAM - Create a team to handle all fundraising events for your parish. This will prove to be a great service for you in the long run.

LITURGY COORDINATOR - Find one person who can help coordinate the teens who will serve as the various liturgical ministers. This person can schedule the necessary training and create schedules of the teen lectors, altar servers, etc.



CORE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

CORE INVITATION (AKA RECRUITMENT)

Once you know what you are looking for in a Core Member, how do you find them? Core invitation is a vital (and often challenging) part of establishing and maintaining a healthy Life Teen program. The first thing we need to remember when finding and inviting Core Members is that enthusiasm is contagious.

While you do not want to come off as “too” overzealous, you do want to share with others the importance of the ministry. So, before you approach a single person, be aware of your goal... to utilize other people’s time and talents in such a way that they will help walk our young people closer to Christ. Let that goal dictate your attitude, your message and your strategy. Below is a basic Core recruitment plan that can be adapted to meet the needs of your parish.

lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/core-recruitment-part-2-recruit-core-members/

“COME AND SEE” - CORE RECRUITMENT PLAN

PHASE 1 - POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

The goal of this phase is to gather names of people who may be good working with teenagers. The only qualifications are this people need to be Catholic, be 21 or over, and have a love for Christ and young people. Gathering of names could happen over a two month period.

Ask the question, “who do you think would be good working with teenagers?”

- Ask for names from the Parish priests, staff and other ministries.
- Youth Minister asks anyone who might be called to this ministry. For example high school teachers, Confirmation sponsors, daily Mass attendees, etc.
- Youth Minister asks teens for names of people that they think would be good Core Members.

After the 4-6 week period, the Youth Minister (and/or possibly current Core Members) would speak at each Mass for that weekend.

- They would describe where Youth Ministry has been and where it is going. The goal of this would be to get people excited about the future of Youth Ministry.
- The speaker would also announce that teens and adults from Life Teen will be outside the church with all the (first) names of the teenagers in the parish in baskets. The speaker would encourage each person or family to take a name or two out of the baskets and pray for the teenager this week. Also, the speaker would ask them to bring to prayer how they can be involved in Life Teen.

PHASE 2 - COME AND SEE

The goal of this phase is to bring those who are seriously discerning the call to work in Life Teen together for further prayer, information, and fellowship.

Invite the list of people gather from phase 1 to a BBQ/potluck.

- This would be a time for informal gathering, fellowship, with a short presentation about Life Teen.

- Parish priests and Core Members would be present to answer any questions that potential core may have.
- Also, this potential Core would be invited to a Life Night where they would shadow a Core Member.

PHASE 3 - DISCERNMENT

The goal of this phase would be to finalize discernment as an active core team member for one school year.

The Youth Minister would call each person that was involved in phase 2, as well as those who may still be on the list from phase 1, to see where they are at in their discernment.

- During this conversation, an informal interview would be set up with each person and the Youth Minister. Here is where the potential Core Member and the Youth Minister would sit down and talk about the Core commitments, as well as any question the potential Core Member may have. Most importantly, they would pray together about the potential Core Member's involvement in Life Teen.

Those who have responded positively to core team involvement would be invited to a one-day Core team training/retreat where they would be trained on relational ministry with teenagers.

- Also during this retreat, the core values and commitments would be outlined and signed. The commitment would be for one year and each year, there would be a core retreat for recommitment for the core team for one year.

MORE CORE INVITATION IDEAS

PRAY - Before you do anything else, you must begin in prayer. Involve others by asking other ministries in your parish to pray for the teens and for the youth ministry program.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PARISH COMMUNITY - Become visible within your Church beyond the parish office and youth ministry gatherings. Get out to those morning Masses, stand outside as people exit and introduce yourself. Be visible at other parish events, make your way by the coffee and donut table and get to know parishioners and their families by name.

HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE THEM - A business card, a sample semester calendar, some statistics on youth or a bulletin with your contact information all can work well.

GET INFORMATION FROM POTENTIAL CORE MEMBERS - Get an email address or a phone number, and follow up with them quickly. Don't wait a week or two to call. They will think you are uninterested.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK PEOPLE FOR HELP OR TO CALL THEM TO SERVICE - Many people are willing to help but are waiting to be invited. Remain positive and enthusiastic about the direction the ministry is headed and how you're going to get there. Have courage!

RCIA - Some of the most on fire Catholics around are the newly initiated. Offer to do a teaching with the RCIA candidates of your parish during the year and continue to support them on their journey towards Easter. Invite them to be a part of your ministry during and after their Sacramental initiation. They make amazing Core Members.

INVITE ANOTHER MINISTRY OR GROUP TO PRAY - Ask them to pray for the Lord to provide workers to serve in the field of youth ministry. The other groups could be a rosary prayer group, men's group, mom's group, Knights of Columbus, etc.

LIFE TEEN PROMOTIONAL VIDEO - If you have the technology (video projectors and sound hook-up) and your pastor allows, show the Life Teen Promotional Video at Mass. It will get the parishioners and teens excited about Life Teen coming to the parish and will help recruit Core Members.

CREATE A VIDEO WITH YOUR TEENS - You can use photos from past events, write a script and have teens act it out of something else. Get creative and in the end have the teens ask for people to say yes to serve on the Core Team.

LOOK OUTSIDE THE PARISH - Advertise in the local college with flyers on campus or the campus paper. If you notice someone outside Church, teens and adults, approach them and invite them to Life Teen.

PROTECTING THE MINISTRY

Just because someone says they are interested in being on the Core team or involved in Life Teen doesn't mean you have to take every last applicant. You know the saying, "beggars can't be choosers"? Well then don't be a beggar, and then you can be choosy!

- Be clear and choosy before making anyone official
- Have all potential Core team members fill out a Core Application.
- Interview each candidate face-to-face.
- Explain Diocesan Safe Environment Training and fingerprinting policies.
- Provide them with a calendar to make sure they can commit to training, meetings, and your Life Teen schedule.
- Check out Facebook and Twitter pages to see if they are projecting the lifestyle of a Catholic Christian.
- Ask them to prayerfully consider being on the Core team.
- Be very clear about expectations and commitment level.

TRAINING YOUR CORE TEAM

A Life Teen program is only as strong as its Core Team, which makes training and maintaining a Core Team an important role of the youth minister. The youth minister is called to minister and support a Core Team so that they in turn can effectively minister to teens.

Modeling ministry is the easiest and most effective way to properly train Core Members. It has to come from the "top" so to speak. This applies to appropriate behavior, punctuality, relational ministry, and even spiritual growth. A holy example goes much further than words. Model holiness in your own prayer, posture and humility, and realize that the most effective training can be through simple daily example, like attending daily Mass, spending time in Adoration, spending significant time daily in the Sacred Scriptures, reciting the Liturgy of the Hours, or renewing your rosary devotion. The Core cannot be expected to go where the youth minister is not willing to go himself or herself.

The Core requires ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation and ministry training. To pull this off without going crazy, it is important to have an intentional and systematic plan in place, to be sure that the Core is being given what they need to grow in knowledge, and challenged effectively to grow in holiness. While the youth minister cannot, and should not, act as the spiritual director for each and every Core Member, they can offer some practical ongoing opportunities for the Core to continue to grow.

Ideas to Strengthen a Core Team

- Hold a Core retreat once or twice a year. Bring in someone outside your parish community to give the retreat for the team.
- Have regularly scheduled one-on-one “check-ups” with each Core Member at least once a semester to pray and refocus. Help the Core Member set attainable goals both personally and in ministry.
- Seek out training opportunities for the Core team. Life Teen offers one-day trainings called Empower that are hosted in several cities every year. Check out lifeteen.com/cym/events for a list of locations and dates.
- Encourage your Core Members to watch the online Core Training streaming videos on lifeteen.com/cym together or at home and have a discussion as a team or individually as new members join Core.
- Find someone in the parish who can offer some Core enrichment sessions. Try one every couple of months. Nothing too extravagant or time-consuming, just an hour, maybe, on an off-night, when the Core can go, listen and learn about some tenet of the faith, not just about youth ministry.
- Seek out opportunities to affirm the Core, especially in front of the teens and parish community. Let them know that their role is important and appreciated.
- Encourage Core Members to have a spiritual director.
- Have fun as a team! Plan a surprise social night for the Core.

Balancing the time between ministering to teens and ministering to the Core can be difficult, to say the least. We must also realize, however, that the stronger the Core is, the more teens will be reached, so in essence when we strengthen our Core ...we ARE strengthening our teenagers.

“The central point of the great challenge of the transmission of the faith to young generations is to offer them the Lord’s friendship and love that He has for them, in the church.”

– Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

BASIC CORE TRAINING TOPICS

Whether it happens at a national Life Teen training, a Empower Training for Core Members, or on a parish level, there are four basic topics that all Core Members need training in. Below is an overview of these four topics:

WHAT IS LIFE TEEN

This session will address the mission of Life Teen as well as your personal mission for your youth ministry program. We have a variety of tools for you to use to share the mission of Life Teen:

- Check out Why Life Teen? (lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/why-life-teen/)
- Core Handbook: 10 Things Every Core Member Should Know – We strongly suggest purchasing one book for every Core Member so that they are able to understand the fullness of Life Teen at their parish and as a movement of the Holy Spirit
- Encourage your Core to read chapter 1 “About Life Teen” to understand the 5 pillars of the Life Teen movement

WHAT IS CORE?

- Check out the “A Core Member Is...” lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/core-member-core-recruitment-video/
- Encourage Core to read chapter 3 “Core Identity” in Core Handbook: 10 Things Every Core Member Should Know

- Life Teen Core Values Retreat - This is a great retreat to help Core Members understand fully the core values of the Life Teen movement

WHAT IS A LIFE NIGHT?

This session will cover the basics of a Life Night: Gather, Proclaim, Break and Send.

- Check out the Life Night: Gather, Proclaim, Break, and Send training video in the Training page on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos
- Encourage your Core Members to reach Chapter 8: Core Skills in Core Handbook: 10 Things Every Core Member Should Know. This helps explain the breakdown of a Life Night from Gather to Proclaim and from Break to Send

RELATIONAL MINISTRY

This session should cover the importance of relational ministry, how to do it and safe environment training for your diocese. Have the Core come up with creative ways to reach out to the teens of the community.

- Encourage your Core Members to reach Chapter 9: Core Outreach in Core Handbook: 10 Things Every Core Member Should Know. This helps explain the importance of Relational Ministry in a Life Teen ministry
- Check out the Relational Ministry training video lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos

SMALL GROUP FACILITATION

This session should explain the importance of small groups in Life Nights and retreats. It should also give practical tools to help facilitate small groups.

- Check out the Small Group Facilitation training video on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos

Additional training videos are online to help train your Core Team on a variety of topics ranging from pastoral care to understanding youth culture to presenting to teens.

Check out lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos for some fantastic training videos to keep your Core Team trained and empowered to minister to your high school teens.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the most common questions is what are the responsibilities and time commitment required to be on Core. Youth ministry is a demanding ministry and it is important that the responsibilities of a Core team member are clearly defined.

The responsibilities of a Core Member will be different in each parish, but generally there are three areas of commitment: to God, to the teens, and to the program.

COMMITMENT TO GOD - A Core Member must first and foremost have a commitment to God, the Church, and their spiritual growth. They need to have an active prayer life, frequent the Sacraments, and continue to grow in their understanding of the Church and her teachings. People serving as Core Members must be willing to live in accord with the teachings of the Church. Core Members do not need to be perfect, but they do need to be striving for holiness.

COMMITMENT TO THE TEENS - This ministry demands a willingness to dive into the lives of young people. A Core team member must be involved in relational ministry with the teens - willing to connect with teens not only socially but spiritually as well. This commitment lies at the heart of everything we are at Life Teen.

COMMITMENT TO THE LIFE TEEN MINISTRY - Finally it is important that Core Members work as a team with the youth minister to provide quality ministry to teens. This includes being present every Sunday, helping to plan Life nights and retreats, and being present and involved with other weekly activities. Although there are significant time commitments, this ministry should never supersede a Core Member's primary vocation to family.

Core Covenants are an effective way to hold Core Members accountable to these commitments. Allow them to have a copy of a Core Covenant and to take time praying about it before they sign and return it. It is a good idea to have Core Members renew their commitment to the ministry each year. See the appendix for a sample "Core Covenant".

RUNNING CORE MEETINGS

As a general rule of thumb, a Core Team that prays as long as they plan is stronger. We encourage that if you are holding an hour long meeting every week that you pray before the Blessed Sacrament for 30 minutes and then plan for 30 minutes. When your entire Core Team is discerning of the same Spirit, planning runs smoother and your time doubles in its effectiveness.

If you have an hour and a half meeting, spend 45 minutes in prayer and 45 minutes planning. Take the Life Night that you are planning before the Lord and ask Him to clarify what He desires of this night for your teens. We must remember that, "I can do all things through God who strengthens me." Phil 4:13.

Prior to any Core Meeting you have with your team, do the following:

- Confirm meeting 3 days prior with your Core team via phone calls, email, text message or Facebook message
- Copy Life Night planning guide to hand out to your Core team
- Read through the entire Life Night so you are familiar with it
- Create an agenda

Life Teen advises holding weekly Core meetings to evaluate, plan and prepare for your Life Nights. When you hold Core meetings less often, your evaluation of previous Life Nights will become less effective and honest.

You will forget situations from week to week and the nights will grow stagnant verses strengthen and improve. If weekly meetings are not possible, monthly or bi-monthly Core meetings can work as well (you might just need to rely more on emails and other means of communication).

Many youth ministers gather with their Core prior to the Life Night to review future and current Life Nights. At the close of the Life Night they gather to clean up, evaluate and then pray. Whatever works for your teams schedule is what you need to do. Be flexible for your Core.

Please utilize the "Sample Core Team Meeting Agenda" available from your Regional Director.

At your weekly Core Meeting you will want to:

- Pray
- Evaluate the past Sunday's Life Night
- Review the upcoming Sunday's Life Night schedule and plan
- Plan the Life Night 2 weeks ahead
- Review any other calendar items

By planning your Life Nights 2 weeks ahead you will have more time to pray and make necessary preparations such as teen witness talks, promotion, skits, props, decorations, food and video. The more time you have to prepare, the more participation and enthusiasm you will see in your teens.

MAINTAINING AND SUSTAINING CORE

Once you have a Core team established, you want to do certain things to maintain and sustain them in the ministry. Here are a few suggestions on what you can do to communicate, affirm and support your Core team over time.

BE GENEROUS WITH ENCOURAGEMENT

Recognize the ordinary things your Core Members do.

FACILITATE “OUTSIDE” ENCOURAGEMENT

When someone compliments a Core Member, ask them to write a letter of encouragement to the Core Member and/or the Pastor.

GIVE AWAY PRAISE

Give “minister of the month” awards. Find out how leaders are ministering and highlight “I overheard” awards. Mail hand written notes to Core Members highlighting their strengths and their spirit.

DESIGN ENJOYABLE LEADER MEETINGS

Begin with a positive atmosphere. Keep it moving. Delegate responsibilities. Make faith development a priority over training (but still train).

CREATE TIME TO PLAY!

Create a play day for your Core team. Take a Life Night off or do a Core appreciation Life Night that the teens help create and put on.

COMMUNICATE WELL

Email details about upcoming Life Nights and events. Remind them of any meetings or rehearsals that are coming up. Include the evaluation of the past Life Night. Announce any birthdays of teens or Core Members coming up. Affirm and communicate!

CORE SUPPORT

This is usually a married couple who will support the Core Members by having a once a month dinner or prayer night at their home for the Core team. They will, in a sense, be spiritual support for the Core and take part of the burden off of you as the youth minister. Core Support needs to be willing to minister to the Core and offer support beyond the once a month gathering.

CORE RETREAT

Life Teen provides an annual Core retreat resource for a reason. Use it to keep your Core personally and spiritually on the path God has for them. Remember, they can't give to the teens what they don't have themselves.

COMMUNICATE CHANGING EXPECTATIONS

Surprised people aren't always happy people. As things change (and they will) make them clear and known

GIVE THEM ACCESS TO YOUR LIFE

Relationships are the number one way to keep people involved. Be vulnerable and be able to be honest when things are hard and you need them. Remember, you must lean on your Core if you want them to lean on you.



PLANNING YOUR LIFE TEEN CALENDAR (USING NEW AND PREVIOUS LIFE TEEN RESOURCES)

We are hearing the buzz and seeing Instagram explode with *Merciful, Alive and Dangerous*, and, for some youth groups that move faster than a speeding bullet, the *(Censored)* images. Nevertheless, some of you are taking it slow, using the Life Night Curriculum that is familiar to you, enjoying a little Paschal Mystery here and tossing some Issue and Social Nights in between. Both are great options. But I bet you want to know the best way to plan your calendar using the latest Life Night Series model that we introduced in September 2015. Allow me to be your guide.

CALENDARING THE SERIES MODEL

All our Life Night Series are written in four-parts and are best executed in order. It is encouraged to do all four Life Nights consecutively for four-weeks in a row. This will allow the nights to gain momentum and flow from one to the next with ease and increased understanding.

Prior to starting a Series we encourage you to do Kick-Off Social Night to have some fun and build community. Then break open the Series you have planned for four-weeks straight. Following the fourth Life Night of the Series, do an Issue Night that can take the topic deeper or address an Issue that teens are facing in your community. If a Liturgical season is approaching, use the Life Night Search feature to look up Life Nights on Lent, Passion Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, or the Triduum.

The most important thing to do is understand where your teens are catechetically, emotionally, and spiritually and what they are capable of handling. If this is your first time using Life Teen and you have never had a youth group at your parish, you might not start with the Sex Positive series. You might choose to start with *Merciful* or *(Censored)* to introduce them to the Person of Christ and Scripture.

USING SUMMIT

Summit, Life Teen's lectionary-based discipleship group, is one of our newest resources and for some brand new ministries, might be a nice starting point for your youth group as you build your Core Team. It will allow you to meet your teens, start to get to know them in a smaller group, and break open the Sunday readings with a little less planning than a full Life Night Series Model will take.

We have seen some parishes doing one to two weeks of Summit in between a Life Night Series to introduce small Discipleship groups in sizes of 8-10 teens to their parish. This can help break up the typical Life Night routine. Most parishes have gone on to start a weekly mid-week Summit Discipleship Group to strengthen their weekly Life Teen Ministry.

Summit is a powerful resource to connect your teens to Scripture as well as the Mass, making them more engaged and fully participative in the Liturgy.

USING PAST LIFE NIGHT CURRICULUM GUIDES

All our previous Life Night Curriculum Guides based on the USCCB Curriculum Framework for High School Catechesis are excellent and can and should still be used to catechize your high school teens. There are three types of Life Nights that Life Teen offers:

CATECHETICAL – Our Catechetical Life Night consist of Curriculum Guides and Series and cover the USCCB Catechetical Framework for High School Catechesis.

ISSUE – Our Issue Life Nights address a variety of issues that teens encounter in high school and puts a Catholic perspective on how to address the issue they face.

SOCIAL – Our Social Nights help build community and provide pre-evangelization opportunities for teens to gather, play, and pray.

The previous Curriculum Guides are best used when they are spread out over a two to three month timeframe. Typically you will have a combination of two-Catechetical, one Issue and one Social Life Night in a month. We encourage that ministries meets weekly to create consistence, foster trust, and build community.

Please keep in mind that all our new Life Night Series continue to be based on the USCCB Curriculum Framework and are color coded on each Series book binding so we have not departed from this important catechetical framework.

IMPLEMENTING UNLEASHED

Finally, if your Life Teen ministry has been around for a while, you are sure to have some upper classmen who have already shown their commitment to following Christ as His disciple. More than likely, they also want to be challenge in their understanding of the Catholic Faith. Unleashed was created exactly for this group of teens.

The discussions and activities found in Unleashed are written for small groups of between 6-8 teens. Each small group should have two facilitators to lead assigned groups and not change throughout the year, or, ideally, the life of the Unleashed Group. It is highly recommended that teenagers either request to be involved or are invited to be involved. Utilizing Unleashed for teenagers that are not yet evangelized will render the resource ineffective.

Unleashed works best in conjunction with a weekly large group like Life Nights as well as Life Teen’s Summit lectionary-based discipleship group. Unleashed groups can meet at coffee shops, at restaurants during lunch hours, or even at a high school (if your school will permit the group to meet and adults from the parish to be present). Basically, we recommend gathering outside homes, as this resource will encourage your upperclassmen to live their faith in a more dynamic way.

YOU CAN DO IT - WE CAN HELP

No matter which resources you plan on implementing in your ministry, Life Teen Regional Directors are here to assist you in planning your calendar. Please let us know if you need any help and we will happily schedule a time to calendar your Life Teen or Edge semester with you. We know we have a lot of resources for you to use and that can feel overwhelming as you get started. Allow us to simplify your life and give us a call (or email). Like Home Depot’s motto, “You Can Do It - We Can Help!”

SAMPLE CALENDARS

SEX POSITIVE AND MORALITY SEMESTER SAMPLE CALENDAR

Week 1: A Kick Off Life Night

Week 2: Freedom and Failure: God's Plan for Happiness

Week 3: Pathways and Providence: The Beatitudes

Week 4: Do's and Don'ts: 10 Commandments

Week 5: Keys and Knots: Church Teaching and Authority

Week 6: A Social Life Night

Week 7: Holy Desire: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in Sexuality

Week 8: Sex Is More: The Fullness of Sexuality

Week 9: Distorted: Distortions of Sexuality

Week 10: Live Love Now: Self-Giving Love and Chastity

Week 11: A Social Life Night

Week 12: Discipline and Disaster: Virtue and Holiness

Week 13: An Issue or Safe Environment Life Night

Week 14: A Social Life Night

(CENSORED) AND PASCHAL MYSTERY SEMESTER SAMPLE CALENDAR

Week 1: A Kick Off Life Night

Week 2: How It Starts: Creation and the Creator

Week 3: Meet The Parents: Adam, Eve, and Original Sin

Week 4: Secure Promise: Covenants and God's Promise

Week 5: A Social Life Night

Week 6: Beggar: Jesus and the Poor

Week 7: Exorcist: Jesus As Healer

Week 8: Criminal: The Persecuted Christ

Week 9: King: Christ The King

Week 10: A Social Life Night

Week 11: An Issue or Safe Environment Life Night

Week 12: Not So Surprise Ending: The Resurrection of Christ

Week 13: The Sequel: Discipleship and Holiness

Week 14: A Social Life Night

ALIVE AND DANGEROUS AND SCRIPTURE SEMESTER SAMPLE CALENDAR

Week 1: A Kick Off Life Night

Week 2: Alive: Our Call Towards Love

Week 3: Overfed Yet Starving: Substitutes to God's Love

Week 4: Counterfeit: Counterfeits to God's Love

Week 5: Dangerous: Our Call to Holiness

Week 6: A Social Life Night

Week 7: Word of Mouth: Origins of the Bible

Week 8: The Family Bible: Catholics and the Bible

Week 9: Vacation Bible School: The Pentateuch
Week 10: A Social Life Night
Week 11: An Issue or Safe Environment Life Night
Week 12: Divine Music: The Psalms

Week 13: Tweeting #Jesus: The New Testament Epistles
Week 14: A Social Life Night

MERCIFUL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE SEMESTER SAMPLE CALENDAR

Week 1: A Kick Off Life Night
Week 2: Misericordia: Forgiveness and Mercy
Week 3: Work The Work: Living the Works of Mercy
Week 4: Filled First: Receiving Mercy

Week 5: Trust: Trusting in God's Mercy
Week 6: A Social Life Night
Week 7: Social - Light: Social Nature of Humanity
Week 8: Protect This House: Dignity, Rights, and Responsibilities

Week 9: Free!: Freedom of Religion
Week 10: A Social Life Night
Week 11: So Much More: Wealth and Materialism
Week 12: God Save The Queen: Government and Social Justice

Week 13: Brother's Keeper: Solidarity and Common Good
Week 14: A Social Life Night



LIFE NIGHT SERIES INTERGRATION WITH USCCB FRAMEWORK FOR HIGH SCHOOL CATECHESIS

SEX POSITIVE

THE POWER OF HOLY DESIRE

The thirst and desire for God (CCC, nos. 27-30, 44-45, 1718).

- Within all people there is a longing for God.
- That longing itself is from God, who desires and initiates a relationship with each person.
- Only in God can lasting joy and peace be found in this life and in the next.

The Trinitarian God is the Creator of all; all creation reflects the glory of God (CCC, nos. 290-295, 301).

- Human beings as the summit of creation.
 - Created in the image and likeness of God (CCC, nos. 356-359, 1700-1706).
 - > God made them male and female (CCC, nos. 369-373, 1605, 1702, 2331).
 - > Dignity of both men and women: similarities and differences (CCC, nos. 2333-2336).
 - > We are made in the image of God: intellect and free will (CCC, nos. 1703-1706).

The rebellion of Adam and Eve was a sin of disobedience toward God, a rejection of a God-centered life and the choice of a self-centered life (CCC, nos. 396-398).

- The consequences of Adam and Eve's sin: loss of paradise, original grace, original holiness, and original justice (CCC, nos. 399-401).
- Original Sin and its consequences for all: suffering, death, a tendency toward sin, need for salvation (CCC, nos. 402-409).

Christ was put to death for our sins and was raised for our justification (Rom 4:25; CCC, no. 598).

- Eternal life with God in heaven is God's desire for us (CCC, nos. 1691-1698).
- We need to accept and live the grace of redemption (CCC, no. 1803).

Personal response to God's call is shown in our way of life (CCC, no. 2002).

- Holy Spirit and grace enable us to live holiness of life (CCC, no. 1704).
- Essential elements of a life growing in holiness: interiority or reflection, self-examination, and introspection (CCC, no. 1779).
- We grow in holiness of life in and through God calls every individual to a vital relationship with him experienced in prayer (CCC, no. 2558).
- Developing intimacy and communion with Jesus Christ through prayer is an essential aspect in the life of a believer or disciple (CT, no. 5; GDC, no. 80; NDC, §19B; CCC, no. 2560).

The Sacrament of Marriage

- Need for healthy self-understanding including sexuality.
- Sexuality part of our being; we relate through personhood that includes sexuality.
- God made man and woman with a natural complementarity (see Genesis: both creation accounts).
- God decreed that sexual intimacy be reserved for marriage.
- Marriage involves a total self-giving of the spouses; requires a sense of discipline, generosity, and an understanding of true love.
- Expressions of healthy sexual relations in marriage.
 - Natural family planning.
 - Arguments against contraception.
- Healthy personal and dating habits as a highschool-aged person.
- Marriage reflects Christ's relationship to the Church (Eph 5:21-33; CCC, no. 1642).
- Develop skills for living a lifelong commitment.

Focus on the couples' promises.

- Lifelong union.
- Exclusive and faithful union.
- Openness to children.

Effects of the sacrament (CCC, nos. 1638-1642).

- Married couples are given the grace to love unselfishly.
- Also the grace to strengthen the permanent nature of their union and to appreciate the joy their union can bring (CCC, no. 1615).
- Couples are given the grace which strengthens them to attain eternal life (CCC, nos. 1617, 1639, 1641).
- When blessed with children, parents are helped to raise them in faith and love (CCC, nos. 1652-1654).
- Witness of faithful couples strengthens church community and the fabric of society (CCC, nos. 1655-1658).

DISTORTED

Sixth Commandment: You shall not commit adultery.

- Vocation to chastity (CCC, nos. 2337-2350).
- Offenses against chastity (CCC, nos. 2351-2359).
- Christian vision of marriage—theology of the body (CCC, nos. 2360-2379).
- Offenses against the dignity of marriage (CCC, nos. 2380-2391).

Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- Respect the sanctity of marriage vows (CCC, nos. 2364-2365).
- Practice modesty and purity of heart in thought, words, actions, and appearance (CCC, nos. 2517-2527).
- Sins to avoid: lust and pornography (CCC, nos. 2351, 2354).

Appropriating and living the moral teaching of Jesus Christ and his Church (CCC, no. 1694).

- The importance of regular participation in Mass (CCC, nos. 1742, 2011, 2014, 2016).
- The importance of personal prayer on Jesus Christ's teachings (CCC, nos. 2014-2016).

LIVE LOVE NOW

Adherence to Jesus and acceptance of his teaching (CCC, nos. 520, 618, 767, 1693).

- Conversion of heart and life, and the formation of conscience (CCC, no. 1248).
- Worshiping and loving God as Jesus taught (CCC, nos. 618, 767).
- Living a sacramental life and a life of prayer (CCC, nos. 562, 915, 1816, 1823, 1986, 2262, 2347, 2427, 2466, 2612).

Our vocation—a universal call to holiness as disciples of Jesus Christ.

- Discipleship (CCC, nos. 520-521, 901-913).
 - "Love one another as I have loved you."
 - Discipleship—lived witness.
 - > Daily life and work.
 - > Married and unmarried.
 - > Service to the Church (CCC, no. 898).
 - > Missionary activity (CCC, nos. 904-907, 931).

Virtue (CCC, no. 1803).

- Definition of virtue (CCC, no. 1803).
- Types of virtue (CCC, nos. 1804-1832).
 - Theological virtues (CCC, nos. 1812-1829).
 - Cardinal virtues (CCC, nos. 1804, 1810-1811).

CENSORED

BEGGAR

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man (CCC, nos. 464-469).

- Jesus Christ, a Divine Person, is truly the Son of God, who, without ceasing to be God and Lord, became man and our brother (CCC, no. 469).
- Jesus Christ took on a human nature. The eternal Son of God incarnate worked with human hands; he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. He was like us in all things except sin (CCC, no. 470).
- Man's creator has become man (CCC, no. 526).
 - Jesus showed his humanity in every event of his human life (CCC, nos. 512-534):
 - > In his family life, his friendships, and his socialization with others we see him experience human joy and happiness and demonstrate human virtues.
 - > Through things such as hunger and thirst in the desert, temptation by the Devil, grief at the death of Lazarus, agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and his Death on the Cross, we know that he also experienced pain, suffering, and sorrow. In his human encounter with the sick and the outcast, he personified compassion (CCC, no. 538).

Christ's whole life was a mystery of redemption (CCC, nos. 535-618).

- By becoming poor he enriched us with his poverty.

Living as a disciple of Jesus.

- Putting Jesus' moral and spiritual teaching into practice.
- Serving the poor and marginalized.
- Fulfilling responsibility for the mission of evangelization.
- Fulfilling responsibility for stewardship.

EXORCIST

Jesus Christ redeems us and gives us his grace so that we can choose the good according to God's will and resist sin and its effects (CCC, nos. 1705, 1708-1709).

- Jesus invites us to believe in him, to invite him into our hearts, and to follow him and his teaching as the path that leads to life, for he is "the way, the truth, and the life" and is worthy of our belief, adoration, and love (CCC, nos. 1741-1742).
- He reveals the way to repentance and conversion, teaching us to leave sin behind and to live a new life in him; he gives us the spiritual power and grace to overcome evil; he also teaches us about God's forgiveness (CCC, nos. 1847-1848).
- He teaches us how to be single-hearted in our desire for God, to offset the disordered affections and divided hearts with which we live (CCC, nos. 1716-1717).

Suffering that exists in the world is not something caused by God or sent by God; God only brings about what is good for he is goodness itself. When there is evil and suffering, God does not cause it, but sometimes he does permit it for reasons we cannot now know or understand (CCC, nos. 1500-1501).

- Evil is a reality and a mystery, that is, it is hard to understand the why of it (CCC, nos. 309-314). Some evil and suffering are a result of the work of the Devil or Satan (CCC, no. 395).

Christ's whole life was a mystery of redemption (CCC, nos. 535-618).

- In his compassion and in his healings and exorcisms he bore our infirmities.

Why the Word became flesh (the Incarnation) (CCC, nos. 525-528, 456-478).

- To destroy the power of the Devil (1 Jn 3:8).

CRIMINAL

The Passion and Death of Jesus (CCC, nos. 595-618).

- The mystery of redemptive love and suffering on the cross.
 - Overcoming temptation by Satan.
 - Events of the Passion . . . the Suffering Servant.
 - The Kenosis: Philippians 2:5-11.

Christ's whole life was a mystery of redemption (CCC, nos. 535-618).

- In his Cross and Resurrection he justified us (CCC, no. 517).

Why the Word became flesh (the Incarnation) (CCC, nos. 525-528, 456-478).

- To save us by reconciling us with God, who loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins (CCC, no. 457).
- That we might come to know the depth of God's love for us (CCC, no. 458).

KING

The announcement of the Kingdom of God through parables and miracles (CCC, nos 541-556).

The Resurrection of Jesus: redemption accomplished and the promise fulfilled (CCC, nos. 631-658).

- A historical event involving Christ's physical body.
 - Testified to by those who saw the Risen Jesus.
 - Verified by the empty tomb.
- The significance of Christ's Resurrection.
 - Confirmation of Jesus' divinity and of his words and teachings (CCC, nos 651, 653).
- A promise of our own resurrection (1 Cor 15).
- We participate in the mystery of redemption through the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Holy Eucharist.

