

LIFE TEEN
CORE TRAINING
RELATIONAL MINISTRY



Unless otherwise noted, Scripture passages have been taken from the *Revised Standard Version*, Catholic edition. Copyright ©1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotes are taken from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America (indicated as CCC), 2nd ed. Copyright ©1997 by United States Catholic Conference – Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

© 2010 Life Teen, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this book, including interior design, cover design, and/ or icons, may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without prior written permission from the publisher.

The information contained herein is published and produced by Life Teen, Inc. The resources and practices are in full accordance with the Roman Catholic Church. The Life Teen® name and associated logos are trademarks registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Use of the Life Teen® trademarks without prior permission is forbidden. Permission may be requested by contacting Life Teen, Inc. at (480) 820-7001.

A special thanks to Tricia Tembreull, Lisa Epperson, and Katie Heller.

Cover design by Laura Womack

For more information about Life Teen or to order additional copies, go online to www.lifeteen.com or call us at 1-800-809-3902

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	INTRODUCTION
7	RELATIONAL MINISTRY: WHAT & WHY
9	REALITY CHECK!
11	DANGERS OF RELATIONAL MINISTRY
14	MAKING A PLAN
16	OUTREACH IDEAS
19	INREACH IDEAS
22	TYPES OF TEENS
26	CONVERSATION STARTER
28	RELATIONAL MINISTRY EVALUATION
31	SAMPLE TRAINING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

We are ecstatic to bring you *Life Teen Core Training*. Through both written and video resources, we will help you train your Core Members whenever they join your team. This will hopefully allow you more time with your teens and Core and less time behind a desk.

Building relationships with teens is foundational in their developing a relationship with Christ. Far too often we find ourselves behind our desks planning verses being in the lives of our teens. This will burn us out and make our ministry ineffective. This resource is designed to get you out to a football game, visiting the teens on campus for lunch and getting an ice cream at a place of their employment. This resource will get you motivated to be in the lives of your teens and develop deeper relationships with them that lead each of them closer to Christ.

At first we will ask the question many of you are already asking, "what is relational ministry?" and "why do we do it?" Next we will explore the realities and some of the dangers of relational ministry and how we can embrace and avoid them. We will create a relational ministry plan that will look at some great "Outreach" and "Inreach" ideas that you can put into practice immediately. Of course, in order to approach teens, we need to know the types of teens we might encounter and how to love them as they are. We will also give you a few conversation starters to get the discussion going with teens. Finally, we have a great relational ministry evaluation and training outline for your Core Team.

Even if you think you are doing amazing relational ministry with your teens, check this resource out. we all know how easy it is to become complacent in relational ministry. yet, this is one area in which we cannot get lazy since its lack will have definite impact on your ministry. challenge yourself and your core to make a plan and hold one another accountable for this plan. whether you are new to life teen or have been doing ministry for years, now is the time to step up and focus on your teen relationships. keep the relationships centered on christ and seek to find christ in every teen you meet.

RELATIONAL MINISTRY

WHAT & WHY

A year after I left my first youth ministry position I was invited to a debutant ball for a former teen. When I arrived teen after teen came up to me and asked me if I was the “licorice lady” and why had I not been on campus for lunch. Some I knew well and others I didn’t even recognize, but it was a confirmation to me that I had developed a relationship with many of them. Before starting Life Teen I had never heard the term “relational ministry” but that is what I was doing every Wednesday for three years by going on campus with a bucket of licorice to visit, pray, feed and listen to teens from my youth group and their friends. Many never came to the Church, but whether they realized it or not, the Church came to them.

At its simplest form, relational ministry is building Christ centered relationships with teenagers by going where they are: school, work and play. Relationships are at the heart of true conversion. In order to bring teens into a relationship with Christ, we must be willing to engage in relationship with them. Only then can they experience the love of Christ through adult Core Members who themselves are in love with Christ. Relational ministry is all about “outreach” and “inreach” to teens, both the church and un-church.

Life Teen didn’t create the concept of relational ministry; God our Father created it. Genesis 2:18 says, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.” What did God do? He gave Adam a companion, Eve. God desires us to be in relationship with one another and with Him.

Have you ever heard of a little mystery called the Incarnation? I thought you might have. To quote the creed: “For us and our salvation, He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” God wanted an intimate relationship with us, so intimate that He sent His only Son to us. He wanted to go where we were so we might know Him fully. He also sent us His Spirit to remain with us every moment of our lives here on earth.

At the end of every Mass we are reminded to do relational ministry when the deacon or priest sends us forth, “to go in peace to love and serve the Lord, and one another.” Thanks be to God we have this reminder every time we celebrate the Sacred Liturgy. We are all called to evangelize and love one another in Christ centered relationships.

Throughout the Gospels and in the lives of the Saints we continually see this modeled. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus journeys from Jerusalem to Emmaus with Cleopas and another apostle. While walking, the two shared what transpired from his presentation to Pilot, then his death on the cross and finally what some of the woman shared after visiting the empty tomb. "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he (Jesus) interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27). Even though their hearts were burning inside them on the road to Emmaus, they didn't recognize Jesus until the breaking of the bread.

St. John Bosco's ministry to youth began as a priest in 1841 when he helped a poor orphan prepare for his first Holy Communion. From there, he gathered young apprentices and taught them specific trades and the catechism. At the same time he offered fatherly guidance, uniting their spiritual life with work, study and play. He, just like Jesus, entered into relationship by meeting individuals where they were in their personal and spiritual walk. Christ through St. John Bosco accepted people as they were: good or bad, sinful or converted. He took an everyday encounter with a human soul and built a relationship that led to conversion. This is the goal of relational ministry, to enter into relationship with teens that will lead teens closer to Christ, not us.

Too often we make our ministry about programming, not relationships. Before Christ performed a single miracle, before He healed anyone, before He gave us his Body and Blood, He built relationships with His disciples and with those who loved Him and hated Him. He knew that if he performed grand signs and miracles without relationships, no one would truly understand his mission.

It holds true for us in our relationships with teens. Before we can share truth, trust must be established. Before they will be open and honest about where they are in their personal life and relationship with Christ, we need to build a healthy relationship with them that lets them know we care enough to listen. This can only happen through an ongoing relationship. This is why we do relational ministry. Now the question is, how do we do it?

REALITY CHECK!

There are plenty of people and things reaching out to our teens today via the media, schools, social networking, Internet, popular culture and peers. Building relationships with teens beyond a Facebook “friend request” is often challenging. Walls used to refer to the boundaries of protection around a teen’s heart; now they refer to their Facebook wall status and what they choose to share and convey about their life. Reaching out to teens beyond the walls of the Church requires an understanding of teen culture and a desire to meet them where they are socially. Thus we enter the uncomfortable zone.

In the uncomfortable zone there are truths we must accept and overcome in order to start to get to know teens:

Truth #1 – Rejection Will Happen

Teens will reject you when you introduce yourself and attempt to get to know them. Not every teen, but some. If possible, approach teens with another teen that they already know. This makes the introduction less awkward and more comfortable for everyone involved.

Truth #2 - Every High School Insecurity Will Surface


When visiting a High School campus for lunch, sporting event, play or pep-rally your High School insecurities will come to the surface. If you were popular, you will notice the popular teens first. If you were the athlete, you will approach them more than you will approach another kid. If you were a “loner” you will be aware of teens sitting alone. Know your niche and know yourself as you are now and approach each teen as a child of God. Whatever insecurity you have, let it go and focus on the teens God is calling you to meet face-to-face.

Truth #3 – Relational Ministry Is Hard

If you ever moved as a child or even an adult, you know how hard it is to make new friends. People tend to stay in relationship with those they are most comfortable with. Therefore, building new relationships, especially with teens, will be hard. No matter how hard it is relational ministry is worth it. Don’t give up!

Truth #4 – Teens Just Want To Be Loved

Everyone wants to be loved, especially teens. The difference with you and most other adults in their lives is that you are not *required* to be in their life, you *choose* to be. You are not a teacher, parents, aunt, uncle, boss or coach. Because of their desire or need to be loved, you need to adhere to the C² (Core squared) model of ministry and avoid the dangers of relational ministry (see page 11). We must love them closer to Christ and not ourselves.



In every *Life Night Planning Guide*, we provide a variety of ideas for gathering activities. The point of these activities are to draw teens into the focus of the night, break them out of their comfort zones, build community and allow them to have fun.

DANGERS OF RELATIONAL MINISTRY

We have all been to safe environment courses to know the policies in place to protect our teens from predators. What we will discuss here is what needs to be in place for effective and safe relational ministry to happen.

C² Model

Within Life Teen and Edge, 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.

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 teens 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 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 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.



**Know and follow your
diocesan policies
in regards to social media.**

MAKING A PLAN

Every youth ministry should make relational ministry a priority over planning events and programming. Without relationships, you will have no one at anything you plan in the first place. When creating a relational ministry plan, follow these steps:

1. Evaluate your current relational ministry plan

Take some time and evaluate your current relational ministry plan (see page 28). This will allow you to see where you are succeeding and lacking in your execution.

2. Relationships first, promotion second

Always remember that you are trying to build relationships first and promote ministry opportunities last. Of course you want to invite teens to your Mass and Life Teen program, but you don't want to feel like an infomercial. Get to know the teens and if they are comfortable with you, invite them to your ministry.

3. Gather calendars

Gather all the sports and school calendars at the beginning of the school year and sport seasons. This will allow you to plan your overall calendar around Homecomings, Proms, Finals and SAT tests as well as plan your relational ministry calendar.

4. Create a relational ministry calendar


Once you have all the calendars collected, on a monthly basis have each Core pick the two or more outreach events they will attend (see outreach ideas). Remember to have all Core attend events in the C² (Core squared) method. Never have Core go alone to any events or teen gatherings.

5. Create an in-reach plan

Create a plan for how you will reach out to the teens in the pews and on the parish database. Have the entire Core a part of this plan so that teens are invited and encouraged to be an active part of the youth ministry and parish life. Delegate responsibility to Core for specific tasks.

6. Hold one another accountable

At weekly Core meetings or at the end of Life Night evaluations share the relational ministry that everyone did during the week to hold one another accountable. Also, ask Core what they are doing for the week to come, verify that they are doing relational ministry in the C² format and see if anyone else wants to join them.



**Be sure to inform parents,
priests, and parish staff of your
relational ministry plan.**

OUTREACH IDEAS

Whenever I hear a youth minister say that things are not going well in their ministry and attendance is down, I always ask two questions; how much time are you spending at the Church and how much relational ministry are you doing? I'm sure you can guess the answer. Scheduling relational ministry to your teens is the most important time you can spend in your week, and it will continually give you energy and a renewed passion for your ministry.

When it comes to relational ministry there are two places we will create relationships: at church (inreach) and outside church (outreach). We are called to step outside our comfort zones and minister to the teens where they are as much as we are called to reach the teens registered in the church and attending Mass on a weekly basis.

Here are a few outreach ideas that have worked well for youth ministers and Core Teams:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. Choral or Band Concerts

With *Glee* and *American Idol* being two 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.

5. Dance Performances/Cheer or Drill Competition

With *America's Best Dance Crew* (ABDC) on MTV and *So You Think You Can Dance* on Fox, 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Dance Chaperone

Offer to be a chaperone at a dance such as Homecoming, Winter Formal or Prom. Seeing your teens all dressed up is always fun, but being a watchful eye is even better. 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.

9. 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 in support of all of them.

10. 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 who are of the same ethnicity as the event attend with you.

11. Graduations (8th and 12th grade)

If you are not attending 8th grade or 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).

12. Go where they are

Have a couple Core take 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.

13. Barnes and Nobel Bible Study

Have your 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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).

17. 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.

INREACH IDEAS

INREACH: HOW TO REACH OUT TO TEENS WITHIN THE CHURCH WALLS

Sometimes the hardest teens to reach are the teens that are sitting in the pews of your church every Sunday. They have grown bored with church and want nothing to do with the “Jesus freaks” in the youth group. They don’t want the priest, youth minister, parents or anyone to tell them how to live their life and they definitely don’t have time for anything more in their personal calendar. Sometimes the teens are not the issue at all. Many times, it is the parents who have their teens so over programmed that they barely have time to sleep, let alone come to a Life Night. So how can you reach out to the teens of your own parish?

1. Youth Ministry Website

If you do not have one, get one. This is a great way to inform your teens of all your upcoming events and communicate anything you need with them and their parents.

2. Youth Ministry Social Media

Creating social media accounts for your youth groups is a great way to stay connected with your teens. You can advertise events, Life Nights and even gather prayer intentions from the teens. Check with your diocesan office to see if you have permission first.

3. Door-to-door Invitation

At the end of every school year create a movie or slide show that is in a movie format that you can share and take door-to-door to invite your 8th grade graduates to Life Teen. Have 11th and 12th grade teens or two adults Core go door-to-door to make the invitation personal.

4. Birthday Cards/Postcards

Mail birthday cards or postcards signed by the entire Core to the teens on their birthday. Often this is a ministry that a parent can oversee. At the beginning of every month, have the Core sit down and sign them and then mail them off.

5. Notes of Encouragement

Sending teens a note of encouragement prior to a school play or finals or just affirming them for being themselves is a great way to maintain a relationship with teens. Everyone enjoys receiving a card for no reason in the mail, but know this can be done in a social media message, email, text or USPS.

6. Teen section at Mass

If you do not have a teen section at Mass, create one where the teens are invited to sit together. This way, you can see visually who feels they are a part of the ministry and who doesn't. You can then have Core go out and reach out to the teens and their families on a weekly basis and invite them into the ministry. While not all teens have to sit in this section, it gives those who are not with their families a place to belong.

7. Time-Talent-Treasure

Create tithing envelopes for teens to fill out that ask them to write out their time, talent and treasure each week along with their name. This is great for Confirmation programs to keep track of their Mass attendance. It is even better when you contact the teens the following week to discuss the envelopes' information and hear the full story of how they are using God's gifts for God's glory.

8. Life Teen Office Hours

Be sure to let the teens know when the office will be open to allow them to hang out at the end of a school day. Create an atmosphere where teens can drop in, get a snack, play some games and talk if they need to.

9. Free Lessons or Tutoring

If your Core has specific gifts like playing guitar or teaching Math or Spanish, ask them to share their gifts on a weekly basis with the teens. Hold Guitar lessons or tutorial times in the office so that they are growing in knowledge and relationship.

10. Phone Tree


There are a variety of phone messaging systems out on the market. Look into them so you can send recorded or text messages to your teens reminding them of events or sending them scripture quotes weekly or daily.

11. Publicity Team

Have a team of teens and Core be in charge of all publicity for your events. They will be in charge of creating and developing all your marketing for events. You will just give the green light.

12. Core Divided

Core at most parishes choose to hang out with one another. If necessary divide them into pairs during Life Night set up and before Mass to go out 2-by-2 prior to and at the end of Mass to meet and greet the teens. Never let them sit in a clump at Mass and weekly, have a few Core not sit in the teen section. Instead have them sit where outside teens are (typically in the back pews).



**Sit down with Core and
brainstorm your own outreach
and inreach ideas. Have fun and
be creative!**

TYPES OF TEENS

If you have been watching any teen drama or comedy on TV right now, you will notice that every one of them feeds into the teen stereotypes in a heightened fashion. Currently *Glee* is one of the most popular shows with teens and it showcases every stereotype out there today. In case you haven't been at a local mall, movie theater or Starbucks lately, it is important to know the types of teens you will be meeting. The thing we are trying to do is look past the surface image teens put on and instead, see the face of Christ. That, after all, is what we are looking to find so they can discover whose they are and how He created them to be.

LABEL QUEENS AND KINGS

You may think that the labels are important to only the girls, but if you look at the shoes, phones and MP3 player's teens own, you will see that both male and female care equally. Image is everything to teens and that means their clothing, technology, makeup and more.

FTC (For the Core): Look for the inner beauty and work to develop the teens' individual character. As Core, don't be showing off your newest toys in an effort to look cool. Everything you do should draw teens to Christ, not your image.

THE DATING GAME

Flirts are typically female and easy to recognize. However, Casanova's have stepped it up recently. These teens can be the biggest problem for your youth group since they have little intention of being in a relationship and often leave people hurt and confused.

FTC: You might want to have a policy for Life Nights that helps lessen the flirtatious atmosphere. Something as simple as a modesty code or even not having teens who are dating in small groups together can help keep the focus on Christ and not the dating game.

DRAMA

You can name these teens in your head right now. They come to your group each week with a new drama that draws attention to them in a HUGE way. It could be a death of a gold fish or a broken nail. Drama usually exists because of a lack of love and attention in the family, so the best thing to do is love this teen and help them realize that God is in control.

FTC: Pray with this teen a lot and continue to remind them that they need to turn their worries over to God. Also, recognize that drama queens and kings require more one-on-one, so be safe. Often time's teens like this will do whatever it takes to be loved, often leading to unholy relationships. We need to teach them the truth of what love is and hold them lovingly accountable for their actions.

ATHLETES

Every school has them: girls and boys whose lives revolve around one or more sports. These are often the most over programmed teens on the planet and their parents will remind you of this more than the teens ever will. Nothing can stand in the way of a college football scholarship, especially not God.

FTC: Our job is to help teens and parents realize there are other things in the world besides sport. We need to teach our jocks that eyes are watching them and they have the ability to lead their peers to closer to or away from Christ through their actions and words. Support them in their goals, but invite them to be a part of something that will never fade; invite them into a relationship with Christ.

JESUS FREAKS

These are the teens that will not only do whatever it is you ask them to do; they will be at everything you put on the calendar, even if it is to clean the restrooms. They are the teens we get complacent ministering to and often fail to go deeper or reach out beyond them. As long as these five or ten are coming, you must be doing something right, right?

FTC: These teens will be the teens that we must take to a deeper spiritual depth, but these are *not the only* teens God wants us to reach out to. These are your leaders, but even with them, you must challenge yourself to do more and never be complacent in how you serve them.

EMOS

You know them and you've seen the dress code: tight black jeans and T-shirts, studded belts and dark hair worn over one eye. Short for emotional, these teens are into deep feelings and are some of the most misunderstood teens we minister to.

FTC: Don't buy the lie that they don't want to be approached. Remember that they are a bit shyer than most, so make your approach soft and subtle and if possible approach them with a teen they know already.

HEALTH NUTS

Unless you are serving Jamba Juice at Life Night instead of pizza, you won't see these teens entering the door. These teens live for diet and exercise. A fun weekend includes the gym, protein shake and a marathon. They have a lot of energy and are a lot of fun at sports nights and competitions.

FTC: Help these teens understand that an ice cream eating contest is not a sin. Having two Core take an early morning jog on retreat is a great way to build relationships with these teens.

NERDS

Stereotypical nerds are skinny and wear glasses. Modern day nerds often look normal (maybe just a little pale from extended periods in libraries and laboratories). Often they use social networks to build friendships and have a hard time with face-to-face contact. Also, many of them are into online or video gaming. Sometimes their intelligence can be threatening to a Core who doesn't feel smart.

FTC: Get these teens to talk about normal things and if that doesn't work, find some nerdy Core to put on gaming nights and help increase their self-confidence from the inside out. There is much more to them than meets the eye.

PERFECTIONISTS

I love these teens because they always help clean up at the end of a Life Night! They come to Mass looking perfect, their car has an air freshener in it, they hate sitting on the gym floor. Everything about them is perfect from their hair to their grades, everything!

FTC: This teen is one good messy icebreaker away from reality. Try and get this teen to do normal things and realize it is not about what they do that makes God love them, his love is unconditionally.

GOSSIPS

Gossips are why we write Life Nights on the issue of gossiping. If you ever want to know anything about what is really going on outside of youth group, check out their Facebook wall. Sometimes the gossiping goes beyond words and can become public on websites, texting (sexting) and other forms of social networking. Know that teens like this are not trusted much and you might have trouble with teens really opening up out of fear in small group.

FTC: Minister to gossips in a special way, helping them understand how their words and actions can be hurtful. Also, if there are broken relationships within the youth group because of their actions, you will need to be aware of it and work to repair the damage caused.

The teen years are some of the most difficult years. These are just a few examples of the teens you will be ministering to. How we minister to them during these formative years is very important. We must look beyond the surface and see the woman or man of Christ God is calling them to be. We cannot get sucked into thinking that the stereotypes they place on themselves or that society has placed on them is the reality of who they are. We must learn to communicate and pray with them as they discover who they really are. Most importantly, we must remember their names and love them exactly as they are.



**What kind of teen were you
in high school?**

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Starting a conversation with a teen you don't know can sometimes be awkward... let's be honest, it's always awkward. You say hi, you introduce yourself and suddenly your heartbeat is louder than any other noise in the room! Before you realize it, your own high school insecurities return and all you can see in your mind's eye are teens rejecting and laughing at you.

As awkward and uncomfortable as meeting a new teen can be, if we are going to do relational ministry, we have to face our fear. I have always approached teens with the mentality that "you always miss 100% of the shots you never take." If you don't even say hello, you may very well have missed a teen that the Lord wanted you reach. The other thing to remember is that they usually are just as uncomfortable as you are, so at the moment of your "hello" you have more in common than you think.

Here are some questions you can ask to get the conversation started and allow you to get to know the teen or teens better. Generally, start with easy to answer surface questions before you start asking the deep ones. Try to avoid questions that can be answered with just a yes or a no. Remember, trust takes time.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how is your day going? (Follow it up with the, "why that number" question.)
2. Have you seen any good movies lately?
3. What did you do this past weekend?
4. If you could be a famous athlete, actor, writer or musician which would you choose and why? (It is fun to guess what the other people in the group will say before divulging answers)!
5. If you were invisible where would you go and what would you do?
6. If your life was made into a movie, who would play you? Why?
7. If you could invent one thing what would it be?

8. What type of music do you like to listen to?
9. What is the greatest song ever written?
10. What is your favorite subject this year in school?
11. Do you believe in heaven? What does it look like? Is it different for everyone?
12. What is the most important quality for a friend to have?
13. What is your favorite food?
14. How do you choose your friends?
15. What is the first thing you notice about a person? (This is especially funny cause they are usually meeting you for the first time so you can follow it up with, "is that what you noticed about me?")
16. Describe the most beautiful thing you have ever seen.
17. If you could trade places with anyone in the world who would it be and why? How about someone in your family?
18. Do you ever talk to yourself? When and what do you say?
19. What is your relationship like with your parents or siblings?
20. What are some of your favorite TV shows?

RELATIONAL MINISTRY EVALUATION

FOR THE YOUTH MINISTER

1. What days are most available to do relational ministry?

2. What are some places where you and the Core can make "contact" with the teens?

3. What events are going on at the local high schools or in the community that teens will attend?

4. Where do you spend the majority of your time in ministry (write % of time)?

_____% Planning/Preparation

_____% Office work/Administration

_____% Meetings

_____% Relational Ministry

FOR THE CORE TEAM

5. How would you rate your Core Team's relational ministry skills?

1 2 3 4 5

Why did you give this rating?

6. How often do you do relational ministry?

7. How are you visible to teens outside of the church walls?

8. Do you and the Core attend the following events to outreach to your teens?

Campus visits	Yes	No	I don't know
Sport/Tournaments	Yes	No	I don't know
Musicals/Plays	Yes	No	I don't know
Choral or Band Concerts	Yes	No	I don't know
Dance Performances/Competitions	Yes	No	I don't know
Catholic/Christian Clubs on campus	Yes	No	I don't know
Pep-Rallies	Yes	No	I don't know
Dances/Chaperone	Yes	No	I don't know
Quinceñeras	Yes	No	I don't know

Multi-cultural events	Yes	No	I don't know
Graduations (8 th and 12 th grade)	Yes	No	I don't know

9. What youth ministry events allow for relationships to be built?

10. What teens are you in close relationship with right now?

11. What is the hardest thing about relational ministry for you?

12. List the last three high school events that you attended?

13. How can the Core Team improve in relational ministry?

SAMPLE TRAINING OUTLINE

RELATIONAL MINISTRY TRAINING

This two hour training will give the Core the basics of relational ministry and help the Team work together to create a plan.

GATHER - 60 minutes

Hit the Streets (60 min)

It's time to stop talking about relational ministry and actually do it! This exercise will stretch and challenge most of the Core Team. Have the Core get into groups of three or four people. Each group will have 60 minutes to go out into the community and gather prayer requests from random strangers. Be sure to give them a small pad of paper and a pen so they can write the prayer requests down. It is up to each group where they want to go (for example – grocery store, parking lot, mall, etc.). Once they group has arrived at the location, they will approach people and ask if there is anything they can pray for. Explain that we might be nervous about how people will react to us – but that's OK, we are called to be bold for the Gospel. Have the Core Members tell the people they approach where they are from and what they are doing. The Core should simply ask for one or two prayer intentions and write them down. Finally, tell the people that you will be praying for these intentions as a group. Challenge every Core Member to take a turn approaching someone. Some people might reject you, but that's fine. There might be some people you ask who are unwilling, don't force them. Set a time when the entire group needs to be back.

PROCLAIM - 20 minutes

Tell Me Something Good (10 min)

Invite the Core to share their experience with one another of their time hitting the streets.

What is Relational Ministry? (10 min)

Give a short talk on what relational ministry is and why it is important. (see PowerPoint on www.catholicyouthministry.com and all the information in this resource).

BREAK - 20 minutes

Creating a Relational Ministry Plan (20 min)

Have the calendars mentioned on page 14 so you are able to start calendaring a relational ministry calendar for the coming month. Assign Core to various Outreach opportunities. In addition, delegate responsibility and encourage full participation in the inreach opportunities that you decide upon as a Core Team.

SEND - 10 minutes

Closing Prayer

Close the training in a time of intercessory prayer. This will be the opportunity for the Core to pray for the prayer requests they collected at the beginning of the session. Set an atmosphere of prayer and allow the Core to pray for the people they talked to and add their own prayer intentions. If there is time, have the Core partner up with someone they will be doing outreach for in your relational ministry plan and have them pray over one another.

Close the time of prayer asking the intercession of Mary by praying the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.