

Introduction

“God is love.” - 1 John 4:16

“It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.” - Romans 13:11-14

The purpose of this rule of life is to root our lives in Christ Jesus. A life in Christ calls for dying to self and living in the Spirit. St. Paul exhorts us to put on the Lord Christ Jesus. Obedience to this rule of life leads us to form certain Christ-like habits, transforming us into witnesses of the Gospel, regardless of our age, location, or state in life. As summer missionaries, we are committed to Christ and His mission through the movement of Life Teen. We are committed to living out the Core Values of Life Teen: **Love, Joy, Eucharistic Spirituality, Primary Vocation, Affirmation, Evangelization** and **Authenticity**. These values serve to guide our response to the Holy Spirit.

Glorify God in Prayer

(I) Prayer— remaining in Christ and in His love—is non-negotiable. This entire rule, or way of life, depends on prayer. We can do nothing if we do not remain in His love.

“Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me, you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.” - John 15:4-9.

The spirituality of the rule can be defined as “dynamic orthodoxy”—fully in line with the Roman Catholic Church, which includes an openness to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Our Rhythm of Prayer is the heartbeat of our community. Specifically our commitment includes:

- Daily holy half-hour (30 minutes personal prayer time) before the Blessed Sacrament guided by the use of:

- Scripture: “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” - John 8:31-32.

- Spiritual reading: “It is the great multitude of the saints – both known and unknown – in whose lives the Lord has opened up the Gospel before us and turned over the pages; He has done this throughout history and He still does so today. In their lives, as if in a great picture-book, the riches of the Gospel are revealed.” - Pope St. John Paul II

- Morning and night community prayer (Liturgy of the Hours)

- Weekday and Sunday Mass

- Sacrament of Reconciliation at least every two weeks: “Jesus said to them, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when He said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’” - John 20:21-23

By living this rule fully and freely, we embrace the Life Teen Core Value of **Eucharistic Spirituality**.

(II) Worship as a lifestyle: We strive to mold every aspect of our lives into acts of worship, where our thoughts and actions are driven not by us but by the love of God.

Our Blessed Mother Mary is the best example of living every moment as worship. We will follow in the guidance of Life Teen to develop a personal and communal devotion to Mary.

- “The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.” - CCC 971

As a community, we will pray the Rosary (an “epitome of the whole Gospel” CCC 971) once a week and seek a deeper devotion to our Blessed Mother Mary.

We will fast as a community. In order to help missionaries freely embrace fasting and the grace that comes from choosing it, each mission team will discuss and commit to how they will fast as a community.

"Fasting represents an important ascetical practice, a spiritual arm to do battle against every possible disordered attachment to ourselves. Freely chosen detachment from the pleasure of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of nature, weakened by original sin, whose negative effects impact the entire human person... The ultimate goal of fasting is to help each one of us to make a complete gift of self to God." - Pope Benedict XVI

Praying in the Spirit using the gifts of the Holy Spirit: we will live into the charisms of the Holy Spirit - personally and communally.

- "With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit." - Ephesians 6:18

- "The Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groaning." - Romans 8:26

Glorify God in Community

(I) Life Teen summer mission bases are Catholic communities, fully in line with the Roman Catholic Church, striving for the communal life described in Acts 2:42: "They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers."

Life Teen summer mission bases are welcome places where people are refreshed, restored, and revived, where the focus is not to escape "normal life," but to pursue the face of God and encounter Him personally.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." - Matthew 11:28.

"As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." - John 13:34-35

Life Teen summer mission bases are mission schools. We strive to conform our lives to the ultimate mission of the Church, the Great Commission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." - Matthew 28:19-20

The three poisons of community life are complaining, sarcasm, and gossip. We strive to use our speech to encourage, affirm, and show gratitude.

By living this rule fully and freely, we embrace the Life Teen Core Value of **Love**.

(II) Trust and Trustworthiness

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6

Healthy community life is built on a foundation of trust. Often times, there are unexplainable gaps between what we expect people to do and what they actually do. We can choose to fill the gap with trust or suspicion. As Christians, we have been called to trust; anything else erodes our team.

Promise #1: I choose to trust you.

Three commitments I need to make to embrace trust:

1. When there is a gap between what I expect and what I experience, I will fill it with trust. I am choosing to believe the best in you.
2. When I experience others filling that gap with suspicion, I will come to your defense.
3. If what I experience or see begins to erode my trust, I am committed to come directly to you about it.

Promise #2: I will be trustworthy.

Being trustworthy is not equivalent to being flawless in character or performance. It simply means being worthy of trust. A trustworthy person addresses the gaps they have created. When I create a gap, when I don't come through on a promise or commitment, I own the gap and address it.

Three commitments to trustworthiness:

1. I commit to do what I say I will do, and if I don't, I will tell you (before you hear it from someone else).
2. I commit not to over-promise and under-deliver, but if it looks like this will happen, I will let you know about it. Preventing surprises is trustworthiness.
3. If you confront me about the gaps I have created, I will tell you the truth.

By living this rule fully and freely, we embrace the Life Teen Core Values of **Affirmation** and **Authenticity**.

Glorify God in Hospitality

"Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." - John 13:12-15

We are foot-washers. We will humbly love each other and all our guests sacrificially.

"Hospitality requires not grand gestures, but open hearts. Hospitality is not necessarily keeping guests occupied or entertained. Instead, Benedict tells us to offer an open heart, a stance of availability, and to look for God in every single person who comes through the door. Little acts of giving, one upon another, pile up to create a huge force capable of repelling the darkness and transforming the world. Your life is not personal property; you belong to God. We are simply stewards of what God has given us. We are to serve one another in love. Everyone is a guest - even those of us who live here. Hospitality, rather than being something you achieve, is something that you enter. It is not something you do, but something you become. You try. You fail. You try again. You make room for one person at a time. We become more hospitable by welcoming one person when the opportunity arises. Receive every person as if you are receiving Christ himself." (As found in Lonni Collins Pratt's "Radical Hospitality: Benedict's Way of Love")

By living this rule fully and freely, we embrace the Life Teen Core Value of **Joy**.

Glorify God in Discipleship

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." - John 17:20-21

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." - Matthew 28:19

To be a disciple requires a total commitment to Christ. The goal of discipleship is to journey together and help one another live our faith in the everyday routine of life. Christ spoke to thousands while truly investing in twelve through personal relationships. Each of these twelve invested in a few others and so on. This discipleship model that helped the Church grow depends on soul-to-soul personal investment. As Life Teen Summer Missionaries we will serve the New Evangelization on the foundation of the six 'C's of discipleship:

1. Contact (all) - Reach out to all people the Lord puts in our path and show interest in them.
2. Connect (most) - Ask questions, get to know them, and find connections we have with them.
3. Care (many) - Show we care for them.
4. Challenge (some) - A call to action - give them a specific prayer challenge or relational challenge that we will follow up on the next time we see them.
5. Commitment (few) - Enter into committed discipleship relationships with a few teens. Journey with them. The goal is to disciple and evangelize them into disciplers and evangelizers.
6. Co-worker in the Vineyard - Support them as they go out as evangelizers and disciplers.

In relational ministry, we identify where we are with each teen and intentionally move deeper into the C's. In this way, we will make disciples and build the Kingdom of God.

By living this rule fully and freely, we embrace the Life Teen Core Value of **Evangelization**.

Glorify God In Our Person

“So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” - 1 Corinthians 10:31

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.” - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The Holy Spirit is alive in us and empowers us not only to be holy, but also to be whole. Through the Holy Spirit, we have everything we need to walk in complete freedom – spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally. What is required of us is discipline: “Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.” - 1 Corinthians 9:25-27

Within our personal rule, we will schedule time, energy, and resources to be our best for Christ and His mission:

- Exercise: make time for some physical activity that helps us be our best.
- Rest well: find what works for us within the context of the rule and live into it.
- Eat well: Glorify God in what we eat and how much we eat: treat food and drink as a blessing, a gift, and do not waste it.
- Alcohol: All Life Teen summer missionaries will not drink alcohol on camp property. Those who are 21 may drink alcohol off camp property at a restaurant or communal meal but will limit themselves to two drinks.
- Relationships: Out of respect for the unique opportunity to truly focus on our personal relationship with the Triune God and to develop healthy relationships between men and women, summer missionaries commit to not pursuing new romantic relationships as a Life Teen summer missionary. Relationships with one another are to flow out of our love for God and more importantly, His love for us. All community members are committed to engage only in chaste relationships centered on Christ.

“Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.” - Hebrews 12:1-2a

By living this rule fully and freely, we embrace the Life Teen Core Value of **Primary Vocation**.

Glorify God Away From Mission Base

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” - Acts 1:8.

We are witnesses of the love of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit at all times. A life committed to Christ is prophetic. This is especially difficult when we return home, or journey to another place outside of our regular mission base.

“For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his native place.” - John 4:44.

We are committed to sending out missionaries with prayer.

Conclusion

Following this rule is a great way to live out our loving relationship with God, built on the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. May it be a blessing. Since God called us to Life Teen Summer Missions, we are committed to live this Rule of Life. We will be aware of anything that may distract us from our yes to this life. And in the words of St. Benedict, “may the strong have something to strive for and the weak have nothing to run from.” (Rule of St. Benedict Ch.64, 19)

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

After all, “God is love.” - 1 John 4:16