



# Life Teen Summer Missions Rule of Life

## Introduction

*“God is love.” - 1 John 4:16*

*“Father, this is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” - John 17:3*

*“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, to the end of the age.” - Matthew 28:18-20*

*“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. By providing the foundational pillars for a culture of “missionary discipleship” this rule of life will allow our communities to embrace a lifestyle of dying to self and living in the Spirit. Obedience to this rule of life leads us to form certain Christ-like habits, transforming us into witnesses of the Gospel regardless of age, location, or state in life.

## Glorify God in Prayer

**(I)** *“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*

Prayer—remaining in Christ and in his love—is non-negotiable. Our entire culture, depends on prayer, for we can do nothing if we do not remain in His love. 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. By fostering a communal culture of ongoing prayer, Life Teen Missions Communities will be filled with people striving to make worship a lifestyle.

**(II)** Our **Rhythm of Prayer** is the heartbeat of our community. We commit to a consistent prayer routine trusting that God awaits us and we are confident that he will be present. Our rhythm of prayer is both personal and communal – fostering an openness to God’s voice as He speaks uniquely to each individual while conforming our community to the liturgical seasons.

Specifically our commitment includes:

- Daily personal holy half hour ideally before the Blessed Sacrament guided by:
  - 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 Liturgy of the Hours
- Daily Mass as often as possible
- Sacrament of Reconciliation at least every other week.
  - *“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*

**(III)** *“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*  
 Our spirituality emphasizes developing a personal relationship with the **Holy Spirit** who is the “principal agent of mission”. 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 complete docility to the Holy Spirit.

*“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’” - John 19:26-27*  
*“The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship.” - CCC 971*

Our **Blessed Mother Mary** is the best example of living every moment as worship, so as a community, we will seek to develop a personal and communal devotion to Mary. As a community, we will pray the Rosary (an “epitome of the whole Gospel” CCC 971) and seek a deeper devotion to our Blessed Mother.

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

We will **fast** as a community. In order for us to freely embrace fasting and the grace that comes from choosing it, each community will discuss and commit to how they will fast.

### **Glorify God in Community**

*If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.” - Philippians 2:1-2*

*“Encourage one another and build one another up.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Life Teen Missions Communities are Apostolic, striving to imitate communal life described in Acts 2: 42-47. Life Teen Mission Communities 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*

Life Teen mission bases are **mission schools**. We strive to conform our lives to the ultimate mission of the Church, the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Fueled by the Holy Spirit, we are committed to teaching God’s loving plan of salvation, empowering missionaries with prayer and the truths of the Church, and launching them into God’s mission.

Three poisons of community life are complaining, sarcasm, and gossip. We strive to use our speech to encourage, affirm, and show gratitude. In addition, we seek to rid our speech of all profanity.

We are committed to living out the core values of Life Teen: Love, Joy, Eucharistic, Vocation, Affirmation, Evangelization, and Authenticity. These values serve to guide our response to the Holy Spirit.

### **Glorify God in Discipleship**

*“Go, therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations...” - Matthew 28:19*

To be a disciple requires a commitment to Christ which embraces the entirety of one’s life. True discipleship involves a personal investment which seeks to usher another into an intimacy with Christ that permeates each moment of the day. While ministering to thousands, Christ shared life with twelve, turning investment into a lifestyle. Our communal life is organizationally structured for the sake of creating a lifestyle of discipleship – a personal investment model of shared life which leaves no part of the day or year unaffected.

### **Glorify God in Building Relationships**

#### **(I) Building Chaste Friendships**

*“A clean heart create for me, God, renew a steadfast spirit within me.” - Psalm 51:12*

*“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*

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, missionaries commit to not pursuing new romantic relationships during their missionary commitment. 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.

## **(II) Through Reconciling with One Another**

*“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that ‘every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church.” – Matthew 18:15-17*

We are committed to intentionally loving all people in our community, to reconciling quickly, and to forgiving as often as God forgives us. We will hurt one another, but God can build relationships even through these challenging situations.

Steps to healthy conflict resolution:

1. Pray about the situation. Ask God to reveal His truth.
2. Take responsibility for our part in the conflict/situation.
3. Commit to loving the person before talking to the person.
4. Address the issue one-on-one and focus on the issue, not the person.
5. Person who is approached: accept responsibility for the sin/offense and commit to making the situation right. Thank the person who approached you for caring enough to approach you lovingly.
6. Pray together that God may be glorified as both people move forward.

## **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*

Since the human person is a body-soul composite, everything we do physically affects us spiritually, and vice versa. By empowering us to be holy, the Holy Spirit also empowers us to be whole. Through the Holy Spirit, we have everything we need to walk in complete freedom – spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally. Spiritually, we pray and worship. Intellectually, we read and study. Emotionally, we practice forgiveness, trust, and healthy interactions with others. Physically, we exercise and enjoy recreation. 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 for physical activity and rest:

- Exercise: make time for some physical activity that helps us be our best.
- Rest well: as the Lord commands we keep holy the Sabbath, we 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.

- “For nothing is so inconsistent with the life of any Christian as overindulgence. “Our Lord says: ‘Take care that your hearts are not weighed down with overindulgence’ Luke 21:34.” (Rule of St. Benedict, Ch. 39, 9)
- 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 but will limit themselves to two drinks, keeping in mind that we are witnesses of Christ at every moment of our lives.
- Free Time: we Glorify God in our free time by embracing a healthy sense of leisure and creativity.

### **Glorify God in Hospitality**

*“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*

*“Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” - 1 Peter 4:7-11*

*“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 lurking 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...Receive every person as if you are receiving Christ himself.” (As found in Lonni Collins Pratt’s “Radical Hospitality: Benedict’s Way of Love”)

St. Benedict teaches us that if we close ourselves to the stranger, we close ourselves to the sacred.

### **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*

*"Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves." -Matthew 10:16*

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; therefore, we are committed to sending out missionaries in prayer.

### **Conclusion**

Since God has called us to be a part of Life Teen Mission Communities, we are committed to this Rule of Life. By following it, we embrace our communal way of living out our loving relationship with God, built on the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. May it be a blessing. 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