



SUMMIT



A Lectionary Discipleship Group

*19th Sunday in Ordinary Time to the
Solemnity of Christ the King Year A*

 LIFE TEEN



LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ
www.LifeTeen.com

 LIFE TEEN

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.

Design: Ryan McQuade
Interior Design: Selina Nuñez

Copy Edit: Elizabeth Bayardi

©2020 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	pg 4
Walking With God – 19th Sunday in OT	pg 8
Culture Clash – 20th Sunday in OT	pg 12
The Key Chain – 21st Sunday in OT	pg 16
Seriously?!? – 22nd Sunday in OT	pg 20
Do-gooder – 23rd Sunday in OT	pg 24
Lord, Have Mercy – 24th Sunday in OT	pg 28
Look at It This Way – 25th Sunday in OT	pg 32
Actions Speak Louder – 26th Sunday in OT	pg 36
All in Good Time – 27th Sunday in OT	pg 40
And Then Some – 28th Sunday in OT	pg 44
In God We Trust – 29th Sunday in OT	pg 48
All Yours – 30th Sunday in OT	pg 52
Till the Ends of the Earth – The Feast of All Saints	pg 56
Christ Before Me – 32nd Sunday in OT	pg 60
Sooner or Later – 33rd Sunday in OT	pg 64
Royal Roundup – The Solemnity of Christ the King	pg 68

WELCOME TO SUMMIT

Welcome to Life Teen's resource for high school teenagers, *Summit*. This Lectionary-based discipleship group is designed to help teenagers gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Sacred Scripture and the Holy Mass.

SETTING UP SUMMIT SMALL GROUPS

Summit is designed to be used with small groups of six to eight teenagers. The discussions and activities are written for small group discipleship. Each small group should have two adult facilitators (called Core Members) there to lead, mentor, and guide the teenagers. These adults should be assigned to groups and not change throughout the course of the year (or, ideally, the life of the *Summit* group). Place six to eight teenagers in each small group. There are several ways that your parish youth group can organize small groups:

Teens Sign Up - At the beginning of the year, invite teenagers to sign up for small group communities with their friends. Assign two Core Members to lead each small group (if groups are mixed genders, be sure to assign one male and one female Core Member to each group). Groups are responsible for establishing their own meeting times and days. As more teenagers sign up for groups, new groups form.

Large Group to Small Group - One night each week, gather all *Summit* groups at the parish for a social time. Then, divide into small groups for the discussion. This allows teens to all gather at the same time, but grow in a set community.

Post-Retreat - *Summit* is a great resource to implement with small groups after a weekend retreat. Set small groups prior to the weekend, then continue to meet after the retreat in the same small groups for *Summit* sessions.

Invitation - Core Members build relationships with teenagers at Life Nights and invite six to eight to join their *Summit*

group. These pre-existing relationships can allow the group to go deeper quickly.

Summit works best in conjunction with a weekly large group gathering like Life Teen's Life Nights. The large group gathering allows teenagers a safe place to meet other teens and adults prior to getting involved with a *Summit* group.

MEETING IN SUMMIT GROUPS

Summit groups allow flexibility to meet in a variety of places that may be more comfortable for teenagers, in addition to your parish youth room. *Summit* 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). Gather teenagers at parks or other public spaces, or even meet at your parish office. *We do not recommend meeting at the homes of Core Members or host families, as it presents challenges for maintaining a safe environment and may violate child safety guidelines in many dioceses.*

HOW SUMMIT WORKS

Every *Summit* session is modeled after key themes from the readings of the lectionary. There is a *Summit* session for every Sunday of the liturgical year, so groups can choose to meet once each week to prepare for the upcoming Sunday readings or to process the readings from the previous Sunday. Additionally, if groups choose not to meet each week they can still reflect on the readings or dive deeper using *Ascend - A Companion to the Sunday Mass Readings*. You can purchase copies of *Ascend* online at the Life Teen store (shop.lifeteen.com).

Each *Summit* session is designed around the four movements of *lectio divina*. This intentional design helps teach the invaluable prayer of *lectio divina* each week so teenagers can continue to meditate and reflect on Sacred Scripture long after they move on from their *Summit* group.

There are five parts to each *Summit* session:

The Ascent

The Ascent helps the *Summit* group gather and introduces the theme for the session. It includes a welcome and game or activity to help the teenagers begin to focus on the main theme of the week while building community.

Lectio

During the *Lectio*, teenagers are presented with an opportunity to discuss questions relevant to the theme before watching a short *Summit* reflection video. These videos can be found online at lifeteen.com or on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Each video is short but challenging and offers content for continued discussion. Teenagers are given an opportunity to listen to one of the readings of the week proclaimed three times as they listen for God's voice resonating through Sacred Scripture.

Meditatio

After discussing a key theme and listening to the *Summit* reflection and one of the readings, teenagers have an opportunity to silently journal and reflect. There is at least one journaling question found in every *Summit* session to help teenagers guide their reflection. This time of introspection allows for deeper small group discussion later in the session.

Oratio

The bulk of the session is spent in discussion during the *Oratio*. Teenagers break open key themes of the Sunday readings, share their *Meditatio* reflection, and are challenged to connect the Word of God to their daily lives during a discussion facilitated by the Core Members.

Contemplatio

The session closes in prayer. Sometimes this prayer is short, and other times it is longer and more involved. Sometimes

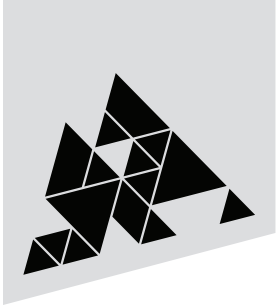
the group will pray together out loud, and other times they may pray silently. A variety of prayer forms are provided so teenagers can grow in their relationship with Christ while still growing as a community. Each session ends with a challenge for the next week. These challenges are important as they provide opportunities for teenagers to live out their faith during the week. It is advised that you follow up on each challenge during the opening of the next *Summit* session.

FORMING TEEN DISCIPLES

The goal of *Summit*, as is the goal of every Life Teen resource, is to help form teenagers as disciples of Christ. This is done primarily through intentional, Christ-centered relationships. *Summit* provides a context for evangelization and catechesis while growing in relationship with a teenager's peers and adult mentors. It is important that Core Members invest in the lives of young people outside of *Summit* groups by attending sporting events, musicals, extra-curricular activities, and by meeting parents and praying for teenagers whenever possible. Forming Christ-centered relationships provides teenagers with adult faith role models, as well as a safe community where their faith can develop. It is important to always attend teen events with another Safe Environment trained adult or Core Member. Not only does this promote healthy relationships and a safe environment, but allows Core Members to form friendships with each other.

SUPPORT FROM LIFE TEEN

Know that our staff at Life Teen is continually supporting your parish in prayer and is available to help you anytime. You can contact us via e-mail, phone, or by using the "Live Chat" feature on lifeteen.com. If you need ideas for forming *Summit* groups, building your youth ministry, or just need prayer, we are waiting to hear from you. We pray that *Summit* blesses your parish and helps you lead teenagers closer to Christ!

**WEEK:**

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 9, 2020)

THEME:

Walking With God

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-14

SECOND READING:

Romans 9:1-5

GOSPEL:

Matthew 14:22-33

KEY WORDS:

Truth, Silence, Family, Trust, Adoption, Salvation

KEY THEMES:

1. God speaks to us in the silence. God comes in the silence of our hearts and speaks clearly.
2. Jesus Christ is over all; through Him we are God's adopted children.
3. Trust in Christ to calm our storms.
4. Sometimes we need to step out of the chaos, grab onto Christ, and trust in Him. We can conquer all things when we trust in Christ.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Camping Supplies (10 min)

Have the teens sit in a circle and ask for a volunteer to begin the game. This teen states one item that is needed for a camping trip. The teen who is sitting to their left adds one more item, being sure not to repeat an item that was already stated. Write down the items as the teens state them. If a teen repeats an item, they are out. Continue playing the game until one teen remains. If time allows, play another round with a new category that relates to nature.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, there are times in our lives when the world drowns out your voice. Help us be more attentive to your voice and recognize your presence in our lives. Fill us with your peace as we grow in our relationship with you. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Have you ever experienced a time when it was difficult for you to hear the Lord speak? Why was it difficult to hear Him?
- Have you ever experienced a moment when you knew the Lord was present, either through an answered prayer or an instance of peace? Explain.

Reflection: Walking With God (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Walking With God,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO ---

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- What “noise” do you allow in your life daily?
- Does silence make you comfortable or uncomfortable? Why?
- How can you shut out the unnecessary noise and become more comfortable with silence?

ORATIO ---

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- The Lord commanded Elijah to stand outside because He was going to pass by. Elijah obeyed and encountered many different events. What do you think was going through his head while he was experiencing all of these things?

- Do you think Elijah expected to hear the Lord in the silence instead of in the monumental events?
- Have you ever experienced a similar encounter with the Lord where you heard Him speak to you in a less obvious way than you expected?
- Why does God speak to us in ways we do not expect? What does this teach us about Him?
- Why is it so important to foster silence in our lives?
- How can you allow for more silence in your daily life?

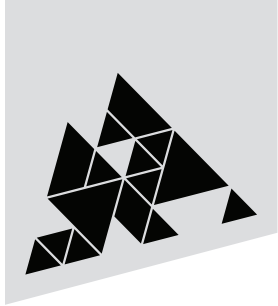
CONTEMPLATIO ---

With the Lord (10 min)

Close the session with ten minutes of silent prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament or tabernacle. Encourage the teens to sit in a comfortable position and think about nothing else except encountering the Lord in the silence. End the time of silent Adoration with a simple prayer.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to intentionally carve out a few minutes each day to simply be silent and listen to the Lord. This can be time spent in the car, in a chapel, brushing their teeth, or out on a walk. Regardless of where this silence happens, encourage them to embrace it as time spent in the Lord’s presence.

**WEEK:**

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 16, 2020)

THEME:

Culture Clash

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8

SECOND READING:

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

GOSPEL:

Matthew 15:21-28

KEY WORDS:

Observe, Right, Good, Reconciliation, Acceptance, Obedience, Mercy, Healing, Pity, Faith

KEY THEMES:

1. Do good; avoid evil.
2. All are invited to pray and rejoice in God our Savior.
3. God is all merciful to those who repent from their disobedience.
4. God's gifts are irrevocable.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Ninja (10 min)

Have the teens stand in a circle and explain the game, highlighting the following rules:

- On "ninja," the teens jump back and strike a ninja pose.
- Going clockwise, each teen attacks and tries to strike another person's arm.
- The teens can take one step to dodge the attack.
- If a teen is hit, that arm is out and can no longer be used.
- Once a teen has been hit on both arms, they are out.
- The last teen remaining wins.

At the end of the game, give everyone the same prize, regardless of who won.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, you teach us what is right and wrong through your teachings and commandments. Help us grow in our obedience of your commandments, especially the ones we struggle with. May we always remember to turn to you when we fail to do what is right. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- In general, do you think most people do what is right?
- Do you think people do what is right according to their standards or God's standards?

Reflection: Culture Clash (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Culture Clash,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Isaiah 56:1, 6-7 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Are you willing to make sacrifices in order to follow God and do what is good? Why or why not? What would you sacrifice?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Why should we do what is right and avoid what is evil? How does it benefit us?
- Is it always easy to do what is right? Why or why not?
- What does God offer to us when we fail to do what is right?
- Do you take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Why or why not?

- God’s mercy is endless and the grace He gives us to live good lives is never ending. How can we rejoice in God as our great Savior?

CONTEMPLATIO

Overcoming Jealousy (10 min)

Give each teen a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Close the session with a reflection on jealousy, using the following to guide the reflection:

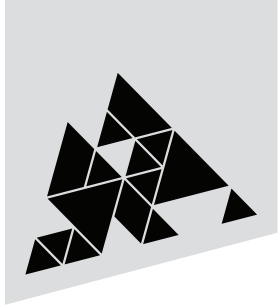
There are times in life when it is really hard to follow God and His specific plan for our lives. Oftentimes on this journey, we look at the lives of others and become jealous of the material or spiritual things they have. We may even feel like life is unfair because they have not had to endure the same experiences we have had to endure. Who are these people in your life? Why are you jealous of them? Take a few minutes to write down the names of these people. Reflect on the reason you are jealous of them and write this reflection down. Then, reflect on all of the ways God has guided and provided for you. Write these blessings down.

Give the teens several minutes to journal and then close with the Prayer of Abandonment that is attributed to Charles de Foucauld.

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me and in all of your creatures — I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to you with all of the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father. Amen.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to pray an Our Father each day this week for the courage to stand up for what is right no matter what comes their way.

**WEEK:**

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 23, 2020)

THEME:

The Key Chain

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Isaiah 22:19-23

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-8

SECOND READING:

Romans 11:33-36

GOSPEL:

Matthew 16:13-20

KEY WORDS:

Humility, Wisdom, Knowledge, Blessings, Reconciliation, Penance, Forgiveness, Apostolic Succession, Love

KEY THEMES:

1. True authority comes only from God. God humbles the powerful to replace them with the humble obedient.
2. We are limited and God is infinite; we cannot know the mind of God.
3. Jesus hands His ministry to Peter, calling him the rock upon which the Church will be built.
4. Apostolic succession is established, and the apostles and those who succeed them are given the ministry to bound and loose sins.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

The Keys (10 min)

Gather numerous types of locks with matching keys and a few other random keys. Make sure all of the locks are securely locked. Mix the locks and keys together. One by one, the teens compete to see how quickly they can sort through the keys to find the right ones to unlock the locks. The teen who completes this activity the fastest wins.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Jesus, thank you for giving us the Church, who guides us on Earth as we journey toward heaven. We pray that you continue to strengthen the Church and allow virtuous human beings to follow in the footsteps of the apostles and assume leadership roles within the Church. Inspire us to become lay leaders in the Church, offering our unique gifts and talents to continue the Church's mission. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Why is St. Peter an important person in the history of our Church?
- What is the significance of the role of Peter? Who has this same authority in the Catholic Church today?

Reflection: The Key Chain (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “The Key Chain,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Matthew 16:13-20 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Jesus asked Peter, “Who do you say that I am?” How would you respond if Jesus asked you this same question? How do your thoughts and actions reflect your answer?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- What do you think Jesus meant when He told Peter, “I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven”? Why is this significant?
- Why do you think Jesus established the Church by giving the apostles His authority?
- What is the role of the pope in the Catholic Church today? What is the pope’s role outside of the Church?

- What does it mean that the “gates of the netherworld” will not prevail against the Church?
- How do you fit into the Church? What is your role within the Church? What is your role within your local church community?

CONTEMPLATIO

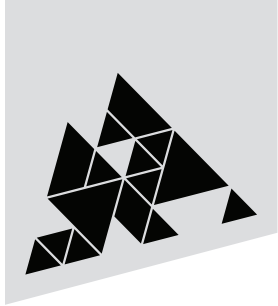
Prayer for the Pope (10 min)

Close the session with a prayer for the pope. Prior to the prayer, remind the teens of the special and difficult role of the pope, as well as the importance of praying for him. Invite a teen to lead the prayer or use the following:

Lord, source of eternal life and truth, give to your shepherd, the pope, a spirit of courage and right judgement, a spirit of knowledge and love. May he, as successor to the apostle Peter and vicar of Christ, govern with fidelity those who are entrusted to his care and build your Church into a sacrament of unity, love, and peace for all the world. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to get to know the current pope of the Catholic Church. Encourage them to spend some time learning about his life and how he came to be pope, as well as praying for him as he leads the Church.

**WEEK:**

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 30, 2020)

THEME:

Seriously?!?

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Jeremiah 20:7-9

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 63:2-6, 8-9

SECOND READING:

Romans 12:1-2

GOSPEL:

Matthew 16:21-27

KEY WORDS:

Glory, Sacrifice, Holiness, Offering, Cross, Desires, Transformation, Steadfastness, Perseverance

KEY THEMES:

1. “The glory of God is man fully alive.” The desire to proclaim the Good News is in the fiber of our being.
2. Discernment of the will of God is not of this world. We are called not to conform but to transform.
3. Christ calls us to deny ourselves, pick up our crosses, and follow Him.
4. God will always provide as a loving father provides for his family.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

On the Outside (10 min)

Ask for a volunteer and have him or her step outside the room. Have the remaining teens select a person to be the “leader.” Invite the volunteer to come back into the room. The leader begins an action and the other teens immediately mimic it. The goal is for the volunteer to guess who the leader is. Play as many rounds as time allows, choosing a new volunteer and leader each round.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, you are a constant in our lives. May we never lose sight of this fact and always strive to remain steadfast in our commitment to you. We ask that you comfort us, Lord, in the midst of misunderstanding and persecution and give us the courage to continue to build your Kingdom. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Have you ever been ridiculed for your faith? How was God present in that situation? What did that experience teach you?
- Have you ever made fun of other people for their faith? Why?

Reflection: Seriously?!? (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Seriously?!?”, found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Jeremiah 20:7-9 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO _____

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Has there been a time in your life when you felt prompted by God to do something? How did you respond? What was the outcome? What would have been the outcome if you did or did not act?

ORATIO _____

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Have you ever felt like Jeremiah did in the first reading, like following Christ made you an outcast?
- Has there been a time in your life when you found it hard to be Catholic? How did you handle that situation? How did you grow in your Catholic faith through that trial?

- Have you ever thought that it is just not worth it to be a faithful Catholic? How did you deal with those thoughts?
- Jeremiah shared that it is impossible to not speak of the goodness of God, even though it may be difficult at times. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- Why is it so important for us to never stop sharing our faith and the love and goodness of God with others?
- How do you share the Good News with others?

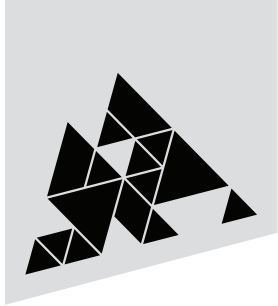
CONTEMPLATIO _____

Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus (10 min)

Encourage the teens to reflect on a time in their lives when they struggled to carry their crosses, were ridiculed for their faith, or failed to sacrifice things for the sake of Christ. Then, use the *Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus* handout to lead the teens in an abridged version of the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus. Handouts can be found on the *May 2020 Life Teen USB* and online at lifeteen.com under Life Support: *May 2020*.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to pick one of the titles of Jesus from the litany that stood out to them and pray to Jesus using that specific title this week.

**WEEK:**

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 6, 2020)

THEME:

Do-gooder

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Ezekiel 33:7-9

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

SECOND READING:

Romans 13:8-10

GOSPEL:

Matthew 18:15-20

KEY WORDS:

Love, Forgiveness, Repentance, Amends, Presence, Justice, Relationship

KEY THEMES:

1. Lead others closer to God. "Love is the fulfillment of the law." Prevent the continuation of wickedness. Forgive others first.
2. Keep whatever sin you have against someone or they have against you between you and the person. "Not necessary to first air your dirty laundry in public."
3. Wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, He is present with them.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Mystery Meal (10 min)

Before the session, fill three small containers with different kinds of food teens do not normally eat or may find repulsive, like Brussels sprouts, beets, cottage cheese, tuna fish, etc. Have the teens sit in a circle to play a variation of hot potato. Give a teen the first container and instruct the teen to pass it to the next person. The teens keep passing the container until they are told to stop. The person who is left holding the container has a choice: eat what is in the container or make the person to the left eat the mystery meal. Continue playing this game until the contents of all three containers have been eaten.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, God, you are a perfect example of love, showing us how to love our neighbor and ourselves. Sometimes, though, we fail to love as you love. We pray that, in those moments, you can remind of us how we are to love. In your name we pray. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- If you chose to eat the mystery meal yourself, why did you make that choice? If you chose to make the person next to you eat it, why did you make that choice? If you did not have to make the choice, what would you have done?
- Has someone ever showed you mercy or forgiven you for something you did? What was the situation?

Reflection: Do-gooder (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Do-gooder,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Romans 13:8-10 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Do you tend to hold grudges, or do you forgive people easily?
- Are there people in your life you are refusing to forgive? Who are they? What has kept you from forgiving them?
- How does Christ call you to treat these people? What would He want you to do in these situations?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- What does it mean to truly love another person? How are we called to treat those we love?
- Is it truly loving to let your friends do something you know is bad for them?

- Does our society consider helping others see their faults loving? Why or why not?
- Why does Christ tell us to help our brothers and sisters see their faults? How is this an example of loving your neighbor?
- What are ways that you can inwardly love your neighbors? How can you inwardly love yourself?
- What are ways that you can outwardly love your neighbors? How can you outwardly love yourself?

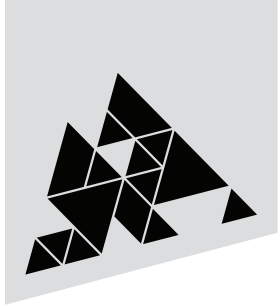
CONTEMPLATIO

Love Your Neighbor (10 min)

Instruct the teens to spread out and reflect on the words of Christ, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no evil to the neighbor” (Romans 13:9-10). Ask them to think of specific people in their lives they have not loved well this past week and why they have not loved them well. In addition, have them consider how they can better love these people and themselves. After a few minutes of reflection, close the session with a prayer of thanksgiving for the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross out of love for us.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to treat the people they have not loved well this past week with love and respect in the coming week. Encourage them to treat that person kindly and pray for him or her throughout the week.

**WEEK:**

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 13, 2020)

THEME:

Lord, Have Mercy

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Sirach 27:30-28:7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10,
11-12

SECOND READING:

Romans 14:7-9

GOSPEL:

Matthew 18:21-35

KEY WORDS:

Mercy, Compassion, Blessing, Selflessness, Virtue,
Recompense

KEY THEMES:

1. God's mercy knows no limits, ours does.
2. Those who have tasted God's mercy must never forget it.
3. It is when we forget all the Lord has done for us that we begin to count the cost.
4. True disciples ought to be known for how virtuously they handle earthly challenges.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Real or Not Real? (10 min)

Play a short trivia game that challenges the teens to guess if a story about a saint being martyred is real or not real. Read the scenarios one by one and, after each, have the teens raise their hand if they think it is real. Award a prize to the teens who guess correctly. The catch of the game is that all of the scenarios are real.

- Before he was finally beheaded, they tried to drown this saint in a lake. He made the Sign of the Cross, walked across the lake, and sat in the middle, where he taunted his accusers to come and get him. (Real, St. Blaise)
- This saint proclaimed, "I am the wheat of God, and am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, in order that I may be found the pure bread of Christ" before he was devoured by lions. (Real, St. Ignatius of Antioch)
- This saint was turned over to the authorities and was going to be put to death on account of being a Christian because her suitor was mad that all of her money had been distributed to the poor. (Real, St. Lucy)
- This saint proclaimed to be a virgin consecrated to God from youth. Before she was martyred, she was sent to a house of prostitution. She prevailed for an entire month and was untouched by any sort of impurity they tried to impose upon her. (Real, St. Agatha)

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, God, we are called to serve you, to honor you with our lives. We pray that you give us the courage and strength

we need to live out this call, to be bold in our faith in the midst of a world that has rejected you and your teachings. We pray this in your holy name. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- How do you think these saints were able to withstand such horrendous torture? What made their pain and suffering worth it?

Reflection: Lord, Have Mercy (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Lord, Have Mercy,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Romans 14:7-9 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Do you truly live your life for the Lord, or do you live your life for momentary pleasures and the comfort of the world?
- What are your eyes fixed upon in your daily life?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- The saints are great examples of people who lived their lives for Christ. Who in your life provides this same example?
- How can you tell if a person is living their life for Christ?
- What does living for Christ look like in your day-to-day life? How do your attitude and actions reflect your decision to live for Christ?
- Other than a physical death, what does it mean to die for Christ?
- What are some things in your life you need to die to in order to grow in relationship with Christ?

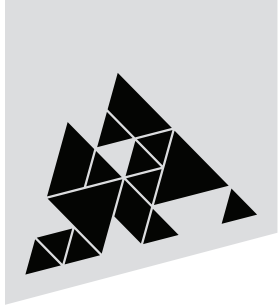
CONTEMPLATIO

All You Saints and Angels, Pray for Us (10 min)

Close the session by praying an abridged Litany of the Saints, which includes the saints from the opening activity. As the teens ask the saints to pray for them, encourage them to keep in mind all of the ways that they need to grow in their lives in order to truly live and die for Christ. The *Litany of Saints* handout can be found on the *May 2020 Life Teen USB* and online at lifeteen.com under Life Support: *May 2020*.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to ask for the intercession of one saint from the litany throughout the week.

**WEEK:**

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 20, 2020)

THEME:

Look at It This Way

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Isaiah 55:6-9

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18

SECOND READING:

Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

GOSPEL:

Matthew 20:1-16

KEY WORDS:

Reconcile, Mercy, Lost, Death, Fairness, Generosity, Love, Conduct, Justice

KEY THEMES:

1. Mercy is given to all who seek the Lord.
2. We live our lives with heaven as the goal. Our lives should reflect the Gospel message. God's justice is one of generosity. God's generous mercy is not ours to judge, even if it seems unfair.
3. God always rewards us no matter when in our lives we enter the vineyard.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Brain Teasers (10 min)

Challenge the teens' knowledge with several "brain teaser" questions. Ask several questions and keep track of each teen's points. Award a small prize to the teen who answers the most questions correctly. Use the following "brain teasers" to get started and be sure to add your own:

- What has a bed but never sleeps and a mouth but never speaks? *A river*
- What can be caught but never thrown? *A cold*
- What comes down but never goes up? *Rain*
- What has a neck but no head? *A bottle*
- What belongs to you but is used more by others? *Your name*

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Dear Lord, you are so good. While you know us perfectly, we sometimes struggle to know you. In these moments, remind us that you have given us the gift of Scripture, which helps us know you better. As we enter into your Word today, allow us to grow in our understanding of you. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Describe a time when you did not understand directions. What made them difficult to understand and what happened?

Reflection: Look at It This Way (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Look at It This Way,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Isaiah 55:6-9 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Do you ever feel like you are searching for God? Where do you most often “find” Him?
- Reflect on the verse, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8). How does this verse apply to your life?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- How are God’s thoughts different from our thoughts?

- Does the mystery of God frustrate or excite you? Why?
- In light of the reading, why do you think God revealed Himself to us through Jesus?
- Do you seek to know and do God’s will? How?
- How do we understand and know God’s will for our lives?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to seek God’s mercy through the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Why?

CONTEMPLATIO

God’s Will Be Done (10 min)

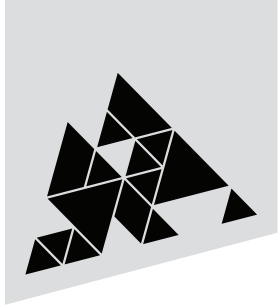
Explain that we can know God’s will and understand His ways when we look at our lives through the lens of the two great commandments (Matthew 22:36-40). Invite the teens to reflect on an area in their lives where they are struggling to know and do God’s will. After the teens have called an area to mind, ask them to view it through the lens of the two great commandments, love of God and love of neighbor. Use the following questions to prompt their reflection:

- Does the situation you are currently in allow you to love God and your neighbor more?
- If it is a decision you are trying to make, will it allow you to love God and your neighbor more?

Give the teens time to journal and reflect. Close the session by offering up these situations to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and praying a Hail Mary as a group.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to spend five minutes at the end of every day reflecting on how their decisions that day led to a greater love of God and neighbor, or how those decisions led to a diminished love of God and neighbor. Encourage the teens to close their reflection by thanking God for the grace they received that day or asking for the grace to do a better job loving Him and others the next day.

**WEEK:**

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 27, 2020)

THEME:

Actions Speak Louder

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Ezekiel 18:25-28

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

SECOND READING:

Philippians 2:1-11

GOSPEL:

Matthew 21:28-32

KEY WORDS:

Fairness, Virtue, Unity, Selflessness, Humility, Obedience, Righteousness, Repentance

KEY THEMES:

1. As mere humans, it is difficult for us to grasp God's justice; His ways, many times, are not our ways.
2. Christ is obedient to His Father's will, emptying Himself and becoming human. In this humility God exalts Jesus, who is one with Him.
3. All are welcome to join their will to God's, even and especially sinners will enter the Kingdom of heaven when they seek the life of righteousness.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Charades (10 min)

Prior to the session, write several action-centered scenarios on notecards (e.g., running a marathon, throwing a game-winning touchdown, winning a dance competition). One by one, have the teens select a notecard and act out the scenario. Allow the other teens to guess what they think the scenario is based on the teen's actions.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Jesus, you are our primary example of humility. Help us become more like you each day, embracing humility in our daily lives and serving those who are most in need. When we feel tempted to let our egos get in the way, remind us of what it means to humbly serve. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Who are your role models? Why?
- Who are you a role model for? How do you know?
- How do you set a good example for those who look up to you?

Reflection: Actions Speak Louder (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, "Actions Speak Louder," found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching

Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God's Word.

God's Voice (5 min)

Read Philippians 2:1-11 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO _____

Reflecting on God's Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Is humility easy or difficult for you? When do you find it most challenging to be humble?
- How are humility and obedience related? Do you struggle with obedience? In what regard?

ORATIO _____

Discussing God's Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Do you think humility is a virtue that is appreciated by our culture? Why or why not?
- "Actions speak louder than words." Do you agree or disagree? Is this statement always true?
- Jesus' name is powerful; it causes souls in heaven and hell to bow. Do you respect the name of Christ in the same way? How?
- How does Christ's example challenge you?
- What holds you back from more closely following the example of Jesus?

- If you were more Christ-like, what impact do you think it would have on your family? Friends? School? Community?

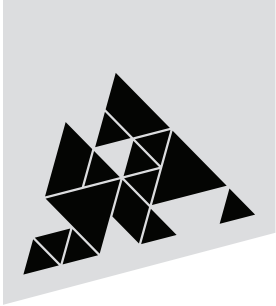
CONTEMPLATIO _____

Stations of the Cross (10 min)

Lead the teens through the Stations of the Cross, encouraging them to reflect on Jesus' sacrifice and humble obedience to the Father. Consider having the teens read the stations and then offer their prayers or reflections on the specific station.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to find one area where they can practice humility and one area where they can practice obedience this week.

**WEEK:**

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 4, 2020)

THEME:

All in Good Time

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Isaiah 5:1-7

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 80:9, 12-16, 19-20

SECOND READING:

Philippians 4:6-9

GOSPEL:

Matthew 21:33-43

KEY WORDS:

Wrath, Judgment, Justice, Prayer, Thanksgiving, Peace, Inheritance, Cornerstone, Rejection, Fruitfulness

KEY THEMES:

1. God's wrath and judgment: Do not worry, pray about it, seek all that is good, and God's peace will be yours.
2. In rejection we gain a unity with God's only Son, Jesus Christ.
3. God builds upon those who experience rejection because of their loyalty to God.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Worthy of Praise (10 min)

Divide the teens into pairs. Instruct the pairs to scroll through their social media feeds and find pictures or stories that they would consider admirable, desirable, or worthy of praise. After several minutes, have the teens share what they found that is worthy of praise and why. If the picture or story is not worthy of praise for being honorable, just, gracious, or pure, challenge the teens to consider if it is worthy of praise in God's eyes or the eyes of the world.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Jesus, you sacrificed your life on the cross for each of us. May we never forget your great, loving sacrifice. Help us trust you more fully, looking to the cross as a reminder of your love when our faith in you wavers. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Was it difficult to find representations of honor, justice, grace, or purity on social media? Why or why not?
- Is there someone in your life who exemplifies these virtues?
- Do you strive to live out these virtues in your daily life?

Reflection: All in Good Time (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “All in Good Time,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Philippians 4:6-9 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO ---

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Is there an area of your life that is causing you anxiety?
- When you experience anxiety or stress, do you offer it up in prayer? If yes, how do you feel after? If no, what has been holding you back from this form of prayer?

ORATIO ---

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- This passage is calling us to eliminate anxiety from our lives. Is this a difficult or easy task?
- Do you present your requests in prayer before the Lord?
- Has there been a time in your life when you felt God had answered your request? What did His response look like?

- Has there been a time in your life when you felt God left your request unanswered? Why did you feel that way?
- Do you take time in prayer to thank the Lord for all He has blessed you with?

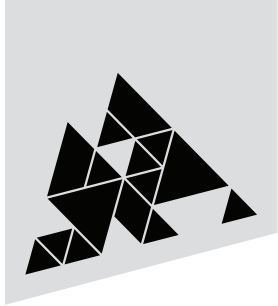
CONTEMPLATIO ---

Our Petitions (10 min)

Give each teen a piece of a paper and a writing utensil. Ask them to take a few moments, in silence, to reflect on areas in their lives that are in need of Christ’s healing and love. Have them write down their petitions on the piece of paper. When all of the teens have finished writing, invite them to share one petition from their list. After each teen shares a petition, encourage the group to pray silently or aloud for the person and specific petition.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to continue to pray for their petitions and the petitions of the rest of the group throughout the week.

**WEEK:**

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 11, 2020)

THEME:

And Then Some

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Isaiah 25:6-10a

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

SECOND READING:

Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20

GOSPEL:

Matthew 22:1-14

KEY WORDS:

Salvation, Trust, Provision, Glory, Deprivation, Invitation, Preparedness

KEY THEMES:

1. God gives salvation to those who believe in Him. God supplies all we need.
2. We are invited to attend the great banquet God has prepared for us.
3. There is punishment for those who reject or are not prepared to accept God's invitation.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Saltine Challenge (10 min)

Prior to the game, collect any drinks from the teens. Give each teen six Saltine crackers. When instructed to do so, the teens eat as many of the crackers as they can in 60 seconds. The teens will be thirsty after the game, but do not give them anything to drink.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

God, we can do all things through you but only because you give us the strength we need. When we experience difficulties in our lives, remind us of this reality. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- What was difficult about the challenge you just completed? Is there anything you desperately want or need after that game?
- How does it feel to need something and not be able to attain it?

Reflection: And Then Some (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, "And Then Some," found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God's Word.

God's Voice (5 min)

Read Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO _____

Reflecting on God's Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- When was a time you faced hardship in your life and relied on Christ? How did God help you get through this difficulty?
- Where in your life do you feel weak and are in need of God's strength?

ORATIO _____

Discussing God's Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- In the reading today, God promised to supply for our every need. When did God provide for a physical need? A spiritual need?
- Have you felt that God did not provide when you were in need? Why do you think He did not answer your prayer in the way you wanted?
- What is your response when God provides for you? Do you respond by giving Him glory and living a life of virtue? Why or why not?

- We oftentimes only think of our needs, but are there people in our community who are also in need? What do their needs look like?
- What can you do to help those who are in need in our community?

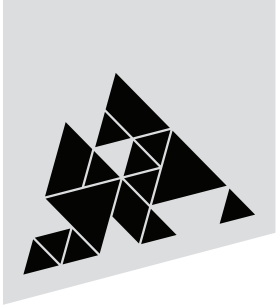
CONTEMPLATIO _____

Lord, I Need You (10 min)

Invite the teens to silently reflect on the phrase, "Lord, I need you." Encourage them to truly take this saying to heart, acknowledging areas in their lives that are desperately in need of God's mercy, healing, and love. After a few minutes, ask the teens to expand this call of "Lord, I need you" to encompass people in their community who are in need. Urge them to include these people in their prayer.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to continue to pray, "Lord, I need you" throughout the week. To take this a step further, encourage them to commit to completing a service project during the week that helps those who are in need.

**WEEK:**

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 18, 2020)

THEME:

In God We Trust

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Isaiah 45:1, 4-6

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 96:1, 3, 4-5, 7-8,
9-10

SECOND READING:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b

GOSPEL:

Matthew 22:15-21

KEY WORDS:

Called, Authority, Chosen, Power, Holy Spirit, Truth

KEY THEMES:

1. All true authority comes from God. God blesses those who use their authority to serve others.
2. As God's chosen, we persevere not only in works but in faith through the power of prayer.
3. Power comes from the Holy Spirit. Responsibility to the secular community is also obedience to God. All things belong to God.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Stage Names (10 min)

Many celebrities go by a "stage name" that may or may not be reflective of their birth name. Prior to the session, create notecards with the stage names of popular celebrities and then create notecards with the real names of those same celebrities. Challenge the teens to match as many stage names to real names as they can. For an added challenge, flip the cards upside down and only allow the teens to flip over two cards at a time to try to find a match. If the two cards they flip do not match, they are flipped over and the teens try again. The following are some celebrity names to help you get started:

- Childish Gambino (Donald McKinley Glover, Jr.)
- Nicki Minaj (Onika Tanya Maraj)
- Guy Fieri (Guy Ramsay Ferry)
- Alicia Keys (Alicia Augello Cook)
- Jamie Foxx (Eric Marlon Bishop)
- Blake Lively (Blake Ellender Brown)
- Bruno Mars (Peter Gene Hernandez)

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, you are good and trustworthy. When our faith is shaken, remind us of your goodness. In these moments, let us turn to Scripture, which is a constant reminder of your goodness and trustworthiness. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- What does it take for someone to earn your trust?
- Who do you trust the most? Why?

Reflection: In God We Trust (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “In God We Trust,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Isaiah 45:1, 4-6 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO ---

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Where do you place your trust? In God? In material things? In others? In yourself?
- Does the way you live your life and treat people and things reflect your answer above? Why or why not?

ORATIO ---

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- God calls every person by name. What makes it difficult for people to respond? How can we help them know God’s love?
- Do people put other “gods” in front of our God? What other things do people worship or follow?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to put God first in your life? What happens when God is not first?
- How is a relationship with God like a relationship with another person? How is it different?
- Do you ever put negative attributes of relationships with people onto God (e.g., I had my trust broken by a person so now I do not trust God)? How does this negatively impact and distort your relationship with God?
- Where do you need to trust God more?

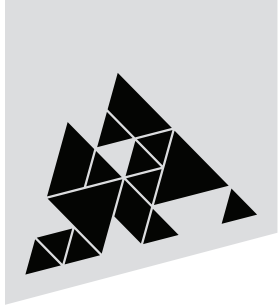
CONTEMPLATIO ---

Pray for Us (10 min)

Prior to the session, collect information on your parish patron saint. Share this information with the teens and close the session by asking for his or her intercession.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to increase their trust in God throughout the week by saying, “Jesus, I trust _____ to you” every time they find themselves worrying about a situation.

**WEEK:**

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 25, 2020)

THEME:

All Yours

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Exodus 22:20-26

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

SECOND READING:

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

GOSPEL:

Matthew 22:34-40

KEY WORDS:

Compassion, Poor, Outcast, Integrity, Service, Examples, Deliverance, Love, Commandment

KEY THEMES:

1. Service to those in need is of the utmost importance to God.
2. We are called to be people of integrity, mindful of those who are in need and returning whatever we borrow so as not to be a burden on others.
3. As followers of Christ, we are to model our beliefs. The golden rule is based in love, God's love.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Stranded (10 min)

Give each teen a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Ask them to write down ten items they cannot live without. These need to be material items that are non-essential (they cannot list family, food, and shelter). After they have finished making their lists, tell them that five of their items are going to be destroyed. Ask them to circle which five items they are willing to destroy. Then, tell them that three of their items need to be given away. Ask them to put a star next to these items. Finally, have them underline the last two items on their list. Save these lists for the opening discussion.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

God, you call us to serve. Help us root our service in humility, love, and relationship, rather than ego. Remind us that you are the one, true Savior, not us. Through our service of others, may we continually live out the great commandments you have given us. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- What items did you decide to destroy? Why?
- What items did you decide to give away? Why?
- What were your top two items? What makes them so important?

Reflection: All Yours (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “All Yours,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Matthew 22:34-40 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Which of the two great commandments do you struggle to live out most?
- Do you love yourself? Why or why not?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Moses gave the people over 600 laws that ranged from dietary restrictions to the Ten Commandments. Why do you think Jesus chose the two He did as the “greatest”?
- How are the two great commandments related? Do you think you can do one without doing the other?

- The second great commandment says we need to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Do you think you can really love someone else if you do not love yourself? Why or why not?
- What does it say about God, our creator, when we struggle to see our dignity and love ourselves?
- What negative feelings do you have about yourself that keep you from allowing God to fully love you and also keep you from loving others?

CONTEMPLATIO

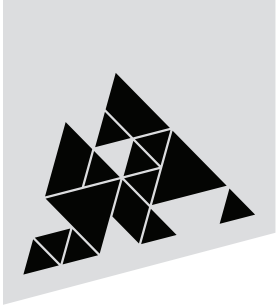
Destroying Negativity (10 min)

Explain that the teens began the session by choosing to “destroy” some things on a list. Tell them that we all carry things with us we feel we cannot live without, and sometimes those things are actually negative. Instruct the teens to write down negative thoughts or feelings they have about themselves. These may be hurtful things others have said or lies the teens tell themselves. They will not need to show this list to anyone. Have them write down as many negative statements as there are members in the group (e.g., if there are six group members, they write down six negative statements).

Once they are done writing, give each teen a turn to be affirmed by other group members. As a group member offers an affirmation, the teen being affirmed crosses out one of the negative statements and writes the affirmation instead. The time of affirmation closes with one of the group members saying a prayer for the person who is being affirmed. Repeat this process until every teen has been affirmed.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to do one thing each day that increases their love of God, their love of themselves, and their love of their neighbors.

**WEEK:**

The Feast of All Saints (November 1, 2020)

THEME:

Till the Ends of the Earth

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 24:1b-2, 3-4ab, 5-6

SECOND READING:

1 John 3:1-3

GOSPEL:

Matthew 5:1-12a

KEY WORDS:

Sealed, Multitude, Salvation, Worship, Honor, Power, Might

KEY THEMES:

1. All glory belongs to God.
2. Heaven is diverse, with people from all nationalities and of all races.
3. The blood of the Lamb of God has won salvation for all.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Starting With the End (10 min)

Give each teen a piece of paper and a writing utensil and have them write a brief summary of what they want to be remembered for doing while on Earth. Instruct the teens not to write their names on the paper. After they have finished writing, gather all of the summaries and read them aloud, having the teens guess which summary belongs to which teen. After each teen is guessed correctly, have them give a short explanation as to why they desire to be remembered that way.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

God, you are the king of glory, ruler of heaven and Earth. You have called each of us to build your Kingdom on Earth. Help us boldly and courageously answer this call, living as the disciples you created us to be. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Name a time when someone judged you wrongly. How did it make you feel?
- Why are people’s perceptions of us so important?
- What can we do to leave people with a good impression of us?

Reflection: Till the Ends of the Earth (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Till the Ends of the Earth,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Imagine you are face to face with God. How would you react? What would you say? What would you do?
- How do you imagine God would react to you being in front of Him? How would He greet you? What would He say to you?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- When you think of the Final Judgement, what comes to mind? How does your idea differ from John’s vision in Revelation?
- What is significant about what the great multitude of people are doing in the reading?

- Can you see yourself being a part of the great multitude of people? Why or why not?
- What do you think are the “great time of distress” spoken of by the Lord?
- What do you think the Lord meant when He said, “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb”?
- What are your overall thoughts about this reading? How does this reading apply to your life?

CONTEMPLATIO

Before the Throne (10 min)

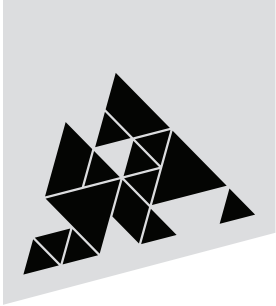
Invite the teens to close their eyes and place themselves in the presence of the Lord. Read Revelation 7:14-17 aloud and guide the teens through an imaginative prayer exercise, inviting them to imagine themselves before the throne of God. Use the following questions to guide their reflection:

- What do you see?
- Who is around you?
- What does God’s throne look like?
- What does God look like?
- How does God interact with you?
- How do you interact with God?

If time allows, have the teens share their reflections. Close the session with an Our Father.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to step outside of their comfort zones this week and honor God in a new way.

**WEEK:**

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time (November 8, 2020)

THEME:

Christ Before Me

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Wisdom 6:12-16

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalms 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

SECOND READING:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

GOSPEL:

Matthew 25:1-13

KEY WORDS:

Wisdom, Prudence, Promise, Pursuit, Hope, Glory

KEY THEMES:

1. The virtue of prudence is not about having all of the right answers but, rather, about asking the right questions.
2. Entrust your past to God's mercy, your present to His love, and your future to His providence.
3. If the Lord's return does not fill your heart with peace and joy, it may signal it is time to make some changes in your life.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one "high point" and one "low point" from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Cool It Down (10 min)

Prior to the session, gather a spicy food item and several liquids (water, juice, soda, milk). Ask for a volunteer to eat the item. When the spiciness of the food begins to set in, offer the teen one liquid at a time until the spice has dissipated. The last liquid offered should be milk, as this is the best remedy to cool your mouth when eating spicy food. The goal of this activity is to illustrate how we try to quench our thirst with things that cannot fully satisfy us; only God can fully satisfy the longings of our heart.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

God, you know the desires of our hearts and only you can truly satisfy those desires. We pray, Lord, that we can stop seeking fulfillment in the world, trusting that you offer us the fulfillment we are searching for. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- What does it mean to "thirst" for the Lord?
- Why might it be important to recognize the Lord in all things, good and bad?

Reflection: Christ Before Me (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Christ Before Me,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God’s Voice (5 min)

Read Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God’s Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Have you ever yearned for something? What did it feel like? Was your yearning ever satisfied?
- “Oh God, you are my God whom I seek” (Psalm 63:1). How are you seeking the Lord, daily? Urgently and passionately or apathetically?

ORATIO

Discussing God’s Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- In what tangible ways does God satisfy our thirst for Him?
- “Thus I have gazed toward you in the sanctuary to see your power and your glory” (Psalm 63:3). What is present in the church that you can gaze on to remind you of God’s power and glory?

- Why is the practice of visual meditation important?
- If Christ were to come today, would you be ready? If Christ were to come tomorrow, what steps would you need to take to be ready?
- What holds you back from seeking the Lord with urgency and passion, daily? What changes can you make in your life to remedy this?

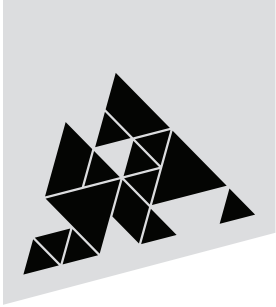
CONTEMPLATIO

Be Still and Know (10 min)

Close the session with a reflection. Provide one focal point, like the crucifix, an icon, or the Blessed Sacrament, for the teens to meditate upon. If an image is not available, hand out a specific Scripture passage. Encourage the teens to bring their desires before the Lord. End the meditation with a Glory Be.

Closing Challenge

Give the teens a copy of the image or Scripture passage that was used in the closing activity to take home with them. Challenge them to meditate on the image or passage for five minutes each day and encourage them to journal, as well.

**WEEK:**

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (November 15, 2020)

THEME:

Sooner or Later

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20,
30-31

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

SECOND READING:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

GOSPEL:

Matthew 25:14-30

KEY WORDS:

Fear, Works, Alert, Sober, Vigilant, Trust, Investment,
Labor, Responsible

KEY THEMES:

1. Fear of the Lord is good. Vigilance is needed at all times to guard against evil.
2. Responsible Christians invest in the gift of faith.
3. As we invest in faith, God rewards. Christianity is not for slackers.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Just for Laughs (10 min)

Begin the session with a video clip of a stand-up comedian. Some clean, Christian comedians are Jim Gaffigan and Tim Hawkins. Their videos can be found online at youtube.com.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Lord, we are each created in your image and likeness, but we were also given unique attributes, gifts, and talents. Help us discover these unique elements of ourselves and use them to build your Kingdom on Earth, ultimately glorifying you in all that we do. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- What was your favorite joke from the video?
- God gave some people, like the comedian we watched, the gift of comedy. What is a gift God has given you?

Reflection: Sooner or Later (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Sooner or Later,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God’s Word.

God's Voice (5 min)

Read Matthew 25:14-30 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO

Reflecting on God's Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- Think of a time in your life when you used your talents to bring glory to God. What was that experience like?
- Has there been a time in your life when you acted as the servant with one talent, hiding your talent from the world? Why?

ORATIO

Discussing God's Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- Why was the master angry when the servant hid the one talent he was given in the ground?
- What does this parable reveal about God and our call to discipleship?
- What does it mean to be humble?
- Does sharing your talents boost your ego in a negative way? How can you remain humble while sharing your talents?
- How is God calling you to share your talents and gifts to build the Kingdom of heaven?

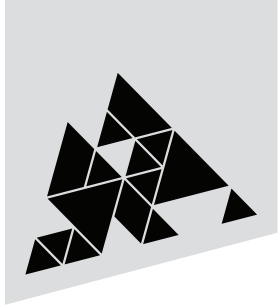
CONTEMPLATIO

Pay It Forward (10 min)

Expand upon the last discussion question, "How is God calling you to share your talents and gifts to build the Kingdom of heaven?" Give the teens a notecard and have them write down one talent God has given them on one side of the notecard. On the other side of the notecard, have the teens write down how they can use that talent to build the Kingdom of God. Encourage the teens to be creative and concrete with their responses. Once the teens have finished writing, have them share their talents and actions with the group.

Closing Challenge

Challenge the teens to focus on one of the talents God has bestowed upon them and commit to sharing that gift with the world in a concrete way this week, making sure this act ultimately brings glory to God.

**WEEK:**

The Solemnity of Christ the King (November 22, 2020)

THEME:

Royal Roundup

MASS READINGS:**FIRST READING:**

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 23:1-2, 2-3, 5, 6

SECOND READING:

1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

GOSPEL:

Matthew 25:31-46

KEY WORDS:

Shepherd, Judgment, Sin, Death, Resurrection, Inheritance, Poor, Compassion, Service, Outreach

KEY THEMES:

1. Christ is the good shepherd, judge, and king.
2. His judgment is of mercy, but still there are repercussions for those who do good and those who do evil.
3. In Adam, sin entered the world; in Christ, forgiveness for our sins gives us everlasting life.
4. Death is destroyed. We are to serve the poor at all times. God judges us on the good we do.

THE ASCENT**Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

Welcome all of the teens to the discipleship group and invite them to share one “high point” and one “low point” from their week. If there are new teens, invite them to introduce themselves.

Unbreakable (10 min)

Begin the session with a game that highlights the teens’ ability to separate something that is hard to divide: Oreos. Invite two teens to compete in a challenge to see who can separate the most Oreos in 60 seconds. If the cookies break, they do not count toward the total. The teen who separates the most Oreos at the end of 60 seconds wins. If time allows, repeat the activity with different teens.

LECTIO**Opening Prayer**

Jesus, you are the king of our hearts. May all that we do contribute to the building of your Kingdom on Earth. Ignite our hearts and strengthen our minds as we answer your call and continue your mission, making disciples of all the nations. We make this prayer in your holy name. Amen.

Our Voice (10 min)

Use the following questions to prepare the group for the topic of the session:

- Why do we focus on being ready for the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the liturgical year?
- Why is it important to be ready for the Lord’s Second Coming?

Reflection: Royal Roundup (5 min)

Play the *Summit* reflection video, “Royal Roundup,” found online at lifeteen.com. The video can also be found on the Life

Teen YouTube channel under the Summit Teaching Videos playlist. Use this video to provide a thematic overview to the session before entering into God's Word.

God's Voice (5 min)

Read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud and then invite a teen to read the passage aloud. Encourage the teens to actively listen. After the second read-through, invite the teens to open their Bibles and silently read the passage a third time. Allow time to pause and reflect between read-throughs.

MEDITATIO ---

Reflecting on God's Voice (10 min)

Invite the teens to take a few minutes to silently reflect and journal on the following questions:

- If the Lord were to come today, what do you think He would say about the way you are living your life?
- Reflect on each work of mercy listed in the Gospel passage: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and visiting the imprisoned. How do you live out each of these works in your day-to-day life? How can you better live out these works in your life?

ORATIO ---

Discussing God's Voice (30 min)

Following the silent reflection, guide the teens in a time of discussion. The following questions are a great starting point for the discussion, but be open to where the Holy Spirit may guide it:

- What are your initial thoughts after hearing this reading? What stands out to you?
- Jesus said, "What you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me" (Matthew 25:45). What did He mean by this? Does it cause you to pause and consider anything about your life?

- What are the works of mercy listed in today's Gospel? Why are they so important?
- Is it easy or difficult to live out the works of mercy? Why? Is there one in particular that is easier or more difficult than the others? How can you grow in that area?
- Do you practice the works of mercy Jesus alluded to in the Gospel reading in your life? Why or why not? How can you better incorporate these works into your life?
- How can we, as a group, better incorporate these works of mercy?

CONTEMPLATIO ---

The Works of Mercy (10 min)

At the end of the session, give a brief recap of the Corporal Works of Mercy. Then, give the teens time to participate in a work of mercy. Encourage them, as a group, to brainstorm how they can live out the works of mercy. Consider using this time to plan a service project the teens can complete together, like volunteering at a soup kitchen, organizing a clothing drive, or hosting a bake sale to raise money for a charity.

Closing Challenge

Invite the teens to determine which work of mercy is most difficult for them to live out in their daily lives and challenge them to incorporate this work into their lives in a concrete way this week.



LIFE TEEN

Leading Teens Closer to Christ
www.LifeTeen.com