

Vision of a Weekend Retreat for a Small Teen Community of Faith

Overall Goals:

- To foster in teens a personal and intimate relationship with Christ and the Church through a conversion of mind and heart
- To guide them in making decisions at an age when change comes rapidly and many have strong wishes for independence by enriching their spiritual development and forming their consciences
- To offer them an opportunity to reflect seriously in an atmosphere where daily pressures (e.g., homework and chores) and distractions (e.g., TV, music, computers, video games) are absent
- To facilitate Christian friendships and the development of Christian community through mutual respect, open sharing, and time to play and relax

Specific Goals:

- To help them confront important questions, such as “Who am I?” and “Who are we?”
- To help them realize they are God’s special creations
- To help them experience a sense of personal worth as a result of God’s love for each one of them
- To help them focus on the fragility of free choices, face and accept their failures, and examine their consciences
- To help them appreciate and participate in the sacrament of Penance in order to experience the peace and joy of reconciliation
- To help them understand Christ’s infinite mercy, unconditional love, and forgiveness, and to help them to forgive themselves
- To help them realize the central importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist, and the intimate communion that can be achieved with Jesus through the Eucharist
- To help them understand who Christ is as presented in the gospels, so they can follow Him more closely and become his hands in the world
- To motivate some important changes in their lives through resolutions inspired as a result of the new light acquired during the retreat



- To inspire them to minister to others, be witnesses for Christ, develop Christian community, and become apostles

General Outline of Weekend:

Friday Night

Prayer/Songs: Expectations and thanksgiving

Community building exercises, icebreakers

Talk: Joys and hazards of community life

Talk: Introduction of Saturday morning theme, "God loves you!"

Saturday Morning

Talk: We are great because God is great and he made us out of love

Reflection or activity: Wonderment about God's creation

Quiet time for personal prayer

Talk: Introduction of Saturday afternoon theme, the fragility of freedom

Saturday Afternoon

Talk: We have been created as free beings. We sometimes fail and sin.

Time to discover and discuss moral issues and faults

Group examination of conscience, review of the Commandments, and quiet time to examine one's conscience

Teaching and preparation to receive the sacrament of Penance

Saturday Evening

Talk: Appreciation of God's mercy (e.g., meditation on the Parable of the Prodigal Son)

Individual confessions

Penance service

Small group discussions while confessions are in progress



Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (Sunday liturgy) with homily emphasizing the value of communion and community

Sunday Morning

Talk or activity: Appreciation of Christ's life and reflection on his attitudes and values

Talk or activity: Implications of saying "yes" to Christ and obstacles to living a Christian life

Talk or activity: Importance of personal involvement in Christian community, and its impact on fidelity to the Church and its teaching

Talk: Introduction on the need to make specific resolutions for the next year as a result of the retreat

Quiet time to write out those resolutions

Sunday Afternoon

Closing prayer and personal witness to the positive effects of the retreat experience.

