

St. Theresa Parish  
LIFE TEEN  
Program



Parent  
Information Pack  
2010-2011

# **An Overview of LIFE Teen at St. Theresa Parish**

## **Mission Statement**

The purpose of the LIFE Teen Program is to create an environment that leads high school teenagers into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and His Church.

This mission is accomplished in three ways:

1. Through the celebration of the Eucharist;
2. Through the teachings of Christ and the Church;
3. Through an experience of being loved and accepted.

## **Teen Culture**

While it is certainly exciting to be alive during the year 2007, it is not always easy being a teen. Today's teens are under many difficult and complex issues and influences. Many teens are numb about life and their future, yet all of them are searching for identity. We don't need psychology to prove this: MTV, Hollywood, the internet, and the Mass Media all want the teens to be the consumer of their products. John Paul II, called this pervading culture of our day the 'Culture of Death'. LIFE Teen at St. Theresa Parish is helping to provide young people with an alternative youth culture, a culture based on Jesus Christ, His Church, and the Gospel of Life.

## **LIFE Teen Background**

The LIFE Teen program is a Catholic youth ministry program founded in 1985 at St. Timothy's Catholic Community in Mesa, Arizona. The program grew to such popularity that it was marketed and is now duplicated in over 1000 parishes across the country. St. Theresa Parish adopted the Life Teen model in 1991, and has seen tremendous stability and growth in recent years in the program. The LIFE Teen program centers around the Sunday evening 6pm Mass, geared to teens, young adults and their families. Following the Mass, teens meet in the LIFE Teen Room for a 'LIFE Night', and meeting with fellow high school students that helps them grow in their Catholic faith.

## **LIFE Teen Staffing**

The LIFE Teen program is run by the youth minister, Ryan Howe. Assisting Ryan is the Core Team, a group of young adults who help bring teens into the program and plan the 'LIFE Nights'. Each Core member, acting in a volunteer capacity, has been interviewed and evaluated by Ryan to be a worthy representative of the Church to our teens. They spend many hours putting the program together to help young people know the value of Jesus and His Church.

## **What happens at LIFE Teen**

The LIFE Teen Program at St. Theresa Parish is divided up into 4-month 'semesters', each based on a different catechetical theme. Every month roughly consists of two educational meetings, a social event and a special event, such as a retreat. The Sunday night LIFE Nights are evangelistic, helping every teen, no matter where they are at in their faith, to deepen their love for Christ. Meetings are open to both Catholic and non-Catholic teens. The meetings are creative, fast-flowing and are designed to engage the teens in a fun and exciting way so that they will be talking to their friends about the fun they had at LIFE Teen. All the meetings are based on the teachings of the Catholic Church, in unity with our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, our Bishop, Thomas, and our Pastor, Fr. Chuck.

## **Description of Events/Event Times**

The primary events of our program are:

- The Sunday, 6pm Mass (6:00-7:15pm);
- The Sunday Night Life Nights (7:30-8:45/9:00pm, unless otherwise noted);
- The LIFE Teen Weekend Retreat;
- Wednesday Night Prayer meeting (7:00-8:45/9:00pm);
- High School Outreach to Arcadia, Brophy, and Xavier
- Special Events: California Inspiration Rally, World Youth Day, Discipleship Retreat
- Confirmation Preparation

For all 'Open' activities, teens can come and go as they please. For all other specific activities, they must either be at the meeting, or leave the property.

For more information on our program, please check out our web Sites at [www.godtalk.org](http://www.godtalk.org). For more information on the National LIFE Teen program, please check out [www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com).

## **Online Social Networking**

Now more than ever high school teenagers are using the internet. While it can be a powerful tool, it can also be a dangerous avenue for teens to try to navigate. The LIFE Teen program at St. Theresa's has a presence on web sights such as twitter and facebook. It is encouraged for the both the teens and parents to become part of these online communities to receive updates about the program and to also encounter a safe online community. Links to both the twitter and facebook page can be found on the homepage of [www.godtalk.org](http://www.godtalk.org).

## **Conversion in the LIFE TEEN Program**

At the heart of the activities in the LIFE TEEN program is the process of conversion, moving each teen deeper and deeper into a relationship with Christ through the Church. Conversion is our personal response to our baptismal promises. Through a conversion that is holistic, touching every part of our lives, we develop a Catholic identity. The LIFE TEEN program is designed to reach teens where they are in their relationship with God. The activities in the LIFE TEEN program can be grouped as follows:

### **Preparation to Respond to the Good News: Pre-evangelization**

For many teens, pre-evangelization marks the first point of entrance into the life of the Church. A teen in need of pre-evangelization is a teen that simply needs to feel comfortable with a Church environment. Often times this teen may be ambivalent toward the Church, or may even be hostile towards the Church. Hospitality to and relationships with these teens from the LIFE TEEN program is what counteracts these feelings toward the Church. Hospitality provides teens with a sense of belonging, and helps them feel comfortable just hanging out at the Church.

- Goal: To make the teens comfortable with the idea of church, with being at church, with the people, surroundings and settings of the Church.
- Pre-evangelistic activities at St. Theresa Parish: Wednesday Basketball (5-7pm in the Gym), Sunday Night Social events, Open Life room and 'hang out' time in the LIFE TEEN Room (snacks, pool table, ping pong, video games, entertainment center, air conditioning), relationships with the Core team and priests, visiting high school campuses.

### **Responding to the Good News: Evangelization**

A teen that needs to be evangelized is one who feels comfortable with being at Church but cannot necessarily explain why he is at Church. He has not made a conscious decision to respond to his baptismal call and commit his life to Jesus.

- Goal: To answer the teens' key questions about faith and life, and to help them make commitments to follow Christ through the Church.
- Evangelistic Activities at St. Theresa Parish: Sunday Night 6pm Mass, Educational/Issue Sunday Night LIFE Nights, Fall and Spring Retreat, Confirmation preparation, Steubenville West youth conference.

### **Developing a Well-Rooted Faith: Catechesis**

A teen that needs to be catechized is one that already has an active, conscious relationship with Christ, and has a desire to get to know Him on a deeper level. Through catechesis, teens will be given roots in the Catholic Faith so as to help them see the Truth of the Faith, especially in regards to other philosophies that are competing for their time.

- Goal: To help the teens develop a well-rooted faith in the Catholic Church for the purpose of giving them the tools for success as an adult Catholic.
- Catechetical Activities at St. Theresa Parish: Wednesday Prayer Meeting, Discipleship Retreat (summer), World Youth Day Pilgrimages.

# Four-Year Curriculum at St. Theresa Parish LIFE Teen

## Year One

- Semester Theme: Attributes of God
  - a. The purpose of man
  - b. God existence
  - c. Divine Revelation
  - d. Scripture as the Word of God
  - e. Biblical Interpretation
  - f. Faith: Our Response to God
  - g. Attributes of God
  
- Semester Theme: The Old Testament
  - a. Self-esteem (Creation)
  - b. Sin and Temptation (The Fall)
  - c. Trust in God (Father Abraham and the Patriarchs)
  - d. Godly Leadership (Holy Moses)
  - e. Repentance (King David)
  - f. Witnessing our Faith (The Prophets)
  - g. Christ our Hope (Finding Jesus in the Old Testament)
  
- Semester Theme: The Person of Jesus
  - a. Did He really exist?
  - b. Who is Jesus?
  - c. Changing your life for Jesus
  - d. Absolutely committed to Christ
  - e. Finding Jesus at Mass
  - f. Serving Jesus in others
  - g. Quiet times with Jesus
  - h. Leading others to Christ

## Year Two

- Semester Theme: Discipleship in Christ
  - a. Called by Jesus
  - b. Abandonment
  - c. Service and Vocation
  - d. Relationship with the Holy Spirit
  - e. Faithful to the Church
  - f. Evangelizing and Witnessing
  
- Semester Theme: Sacraments
  - a. Why Sacraments?
  - b. Baptism and Confirmation
  - c. Beliefs about the Mass
  - d. Etiquette at Mass
  - e. Marriage and Holy Orders
  - f. Reconciliation and Anointing
  
- Semester Theme: Christian Morality
  - a. The Standard Dropped (The Modern Moral Crisis)

- b. Mortal and Venial Sin
- c. Finding the Standard (Moral Absolutes)
- d. Setting the Standard (Making Moral Decisions)
- e. Living the Standard (Building Character)
- f. Key Moral Issues

### **Year Three**

- Semester Theme: Catholic Understanding of Sexuality
  - a. What is Love?
  - b. The Meaning of Sex?
  - c. Sexually Transmitted Diseases & Teen Pregnancy
  - d. Sex and Emotion
  - e. Sex, Sin and Reconciliation
  - f. Walk the Walk
  
- Semester Theme: The Social Gospel (What Would Jesus Do?)
  - a. Moral Principles
  - b. Relationships with Friends
  - c. Studies and Work
  - d. Poverty
  - e. War
  - f. Capital Punishment
  - g. Pro-LIFE Issues
  
- Semester Theme: Apologetics
  - a. Divine Revelation
  - b. Salvation
  - c. The Blessed Virgin Mary
  - d. The Church Hierarchy (Church authority, papal infallibility, male priesthood)
  - e. Sacraments (infant baptism, transubstantiation, confession)
  - f. Basic Catholic traditions/Sacramentals

### **Year Four**

- Semester Theme: Prayer
  - a. Prayer as communication with God
  - b. Setting up prayer times/making our life a prayer
  - c. The Communion of Saints
  - d. The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Rosary
  - e. Charismatic Prayer
  - f. Praying the Scriptures
  
- Semester Theme: Vocation
  - a. Universal Call to Holiness
  - b. The nature of Christian Service
  - c. Marriage
  - d. Holy Orders
  - e. Religious LIFE
  - f. Choosing a career
  
- Semester Theme: The Last Things
  - a. Death and Eternal LIFE

- b. Angels, Demons, St. Michael, and Satan
- c. Theories on the End of the World (fundamentalist vs. Catholic understanding)
- d. Heaven, Hell, Purgatory
- e. How to get to Heaven