

SIX-MONTH PLAN

The following schedule is meant to serve as a guideline as you begin to implement Life Teen at your parish. This plan is for a parish that is:

- Implementing a youth Mass from scratch
- Implementing a Life Teen program (no pre-existing youth ministry program exists)
- Recruiting an entirely new Core Team (no pre-existing catechist or volunteers exist)

If your parish has an existing youth ministry program, has a youth Mass or is not planning on starting a youth Mass or has an existing Core Team in place, the timetable can be adjusted. Please use the Live Chat feature on lifeteen.com/cym to connect with the Parish Support Team to talk about the necessary steps to starting Life Teen and how we can best serve you.

We always suggest visiting a parish in your area that implements Life Teen. Experiencing a Life Night and Youth Mass first hand is beneficial. Perhaps you will take a few teens, Core Members and parish staff with you for this visit. To find a parish near you, contact our staff and they can assist you.

Parish Coaches are available to answer all your questions about starting Life Teen. They will guide you through the very important startup phase, your first year, and throughout your years with Life Teen. They will also connect you with other pertinent Life Teen staff and Area Contacts who can assist you.

When you registered for Life Teen, your parish was provided with a username and password to access Life Teen resources and downloadable videos at lifeteen.com/cym. Please login and take some time to review our vast library of Life Nights, retreats, Summit lectionary resource, Unleashed discipleship series, and liturgy planning guides in the Youth Ministry section. This is where you will find everything you need to plan your semesters.

Ask the parish staff and other parishioners to pray with you as you begin to implement Life Teen. Make sure that you are keeping your pastor informed, and have frequent dialogue with him about the plans to start Life Teen. In addition, be sure to watch the Starting Life Teen training video on lifeteen.com/cym (lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/steps-starting-life-teen/) to get a great play by play on what you should do as you get started.

SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

PRAY!

Spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and through daily Mass to center yourself on Christ. The key to a successful, Christ-centered youth ministry program is to pray more than you plan or prepare.

CONTACT YOUR PARISH COACH

They are available to assist you and guide you through the entire startup process as well as support you in prayer. There is no question too big or small for them. Consider your Parish Coach as a member of your parish staff and your brother or sister in the Life Teen family.

ATTEND LIFE TEEN TRAINING

Check out our training conferences and conventions on lifeteen.com/events/. Our Training Conferences are truly the best way to catch the vision of Life Teen.

In addition, we have some basic training videos available on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/ to assist you with the startup phase as well as Core Training and Liturgy planning.

Our staff and Area Contacts are also trained and available for parish trainings if that is something you feel your parish needs. Parish trainings come at an additional cost, but are valuable and customizable to your parish needs. For more details: lifeteen.com/events

SUBSCRIBE TO LIFE SUPPORT

This is a good time to subscribe to Life Support in order to access training videos, resources and our staff's support and prayers. If you have not already purchased Life Support, please contact a Parish Coach via the Live Chat feature on lifeteen.com/cym or visit lifeteen.com/cym/subscribe/.

GAIN PRAYER SUPPORT

Meet with different groups within your parish and ask them to begin praying for the teens and for the program.

Give these groups specific intentions to be offered depending upon the needs of your parish. For example, if you are looking for a youth minister or a music minister, ask parishioners to pray specifically for that intention.

Add special prayers to the petitions at Mass for Life Teen to help raise awareness and advocate for the ministry.

Attend daily Mass. This is also a great place to meet potential Core Members!

DEVELOP A YOUTH MINISTRY VISION

It is important that you pray and prepare a youth ministry vision that will allow you to communicate to the parish and the staff the purpose of your ministry.

Our Life Teen mission statement is "Leading Teens Closer to Christ", and for many of our parishes this is the mission statement they will share with their parish community. However, a youth ministry vision will share WHY your ministry is important to you and your parish and WHAT your ministry will entail. Check out the Creating a Youth Ministry Vision training video on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos/ for more on developing your parish youth ministry vision.

FIVE MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

SHARE THE EXCITEMENT AND VISION

Begin meeting with your pastoral council, finance council, faith formation/education board, and any other groups in your parish that will be needed to support Life Teen. Share the Life Teen Promotional Video and the Why Life Teen? video from lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos with everyone so that they are equally as excited to start this ministry at your parish.

Make sure that someone is designated as the Life Teen coordinator or Youth Minister (paid or volunteer). It helps to have one person that parishioners, staff, parents and teens can turn to with questions and concerns as well as one person to help coordinate the Core Team.

BEGIN PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Ask your pastor if he will allow you to make a short announcement before the final blessing at all Masses on a particular Sunday. A short summary of the youth ministry vision and volunteer needs can be shared at this time. Be sure to have an information table outside of Mass, with flyers about the upcoming Life Teen Information Night. Hopefully some of your new volunteers (and teens) will be available to share their enthusiasm with the rest of the parish.

HOST A LIFE TEEN INFORMATION NIGHT

After speaking at all the Masses, host a 1-hour Life Teen Information Night with parents, teens, potential Core and other interested parishioners to share the entire vision of the ministry and start creating excitement for the Kickoff. Share the Life Teen Promotional Video. The atmosphere for this meeting should be fun and energetic. Perhaps a youth minister or a Core Member from a neighboring parish that implements Life Teen could speak at this meeting. Have Core Member applications available for those expressing interest in serving the teens as Core.

Gather information on teens who would like to be a part of the visioning process and provide input on the Kickoff and the ministry in general. Make sure to keep the teens in the loop! Ask for their input, making sure that they know this program is God's first, then theirs. Host pizza gatherings for the teens to specifically talk about this new program coming to their parish.

FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CREATE A CORE RECRUITMENT PLAN

Create a strategy for recruiting a Core Team that has multiple staff and parishioners involved. Check out the Core Recruitment training videos to understand the role of a Core Member, who you are looking for to be on Core, and how to recruit for Core.

Do not be afraid to approach people that you think would make great Core Members; ask them to discern the ministry. Ask your pastor and parish staff for suggestions. Be sure to involve teens in this search; they know who they would want to lead them spiritually. The teens will give you honest suggestions. Personal invitation is always best. Come up with some fun ways to invite people into your Life Teen Core Team.

Consider adults from every generation, as this will bring a variety of life experiences to your Core Team that will serve your ministry well. Parents are always welcome to serve as Core Members – whether they are single or married. The main requirement is that the Core Member is a practicing Catholic, and has a healthy love for teens and is willing to share their faith through their time, talent and treasure.

Make sure you go to all Masses and begin meeting parishioners in various ministries, of different ages and backgrounds. The more people you know, the better your chances of finding those that God has selected for this ministry. If you are new to the parish, ask others to help you in this area. A healthy Core Team is diverse, just as our teens are diverse.

Advertise at your local college Newman Centers, with FOCUS missionaries, and diocesan young adult ministries.

CORE INFORMATION NIGHT

Following the Life Teen Information Night and implanting some specific Core recruitment strategies, host a Core Information Night that helps explain what a Core Member is and what commitment you are looking for from them. Have copies of the Core Application available for interested Core Members to fill out and turn in. Share the “A Core Member Is...” video on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos

CORE INTERVIEWS

Begin scheduling one-on-one appointments with the potential Core Members. Take them to coffee or dinner and get to know them to see if this is the right ministry for them. Taking the time to have them share their gifts and talents will go far in his or her involvement in the ministry and will lead to God being fully glorified through their service.

Not every person is called to youth ministry; do not be afraid to charitably re-direct an interested adult to another ministry and say no to some people who apply to be a Core Member, especially if you have doubts.

Be sure that you are complying with your diocesan guidelines for volunteers who work with adolescents.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

This is a critical time to finalize your music director for your youth Mass if you are not using your parish music director. Most youth Mass directors are stipend musicians who are able to run weekly rehearsals, your youth Mass, as well as additional events such as Life Nights and Life Teen Retreats. Remember you are seeking a humble, dedicated worship leader, not necessarily a “band” leader. Contact your Parish Coach for job descriptions, if you are in need of one.

SCHEDULE AND PLAN OUT YOUR CORE TEAM TRAINING AND RETREAT

One month prior to Kickoff, it is a great idea to either plan a one-day training with your Core Team or spread out your Core Training to a once a week for a 1.5 to 2 hour training when you will normally gather for Life Nights. Spreading out the training at the same time as your Life Nights firmly cements Life Nights as a habit for your Core Team’s regular schedule prior to Kickoff. Be sure to balance prayer and training on either the full day training or the weekly spread out format. At this time, you are simply scheduling out what you will do, not actually doing it.

In addition, schedule a site for a Core team retreat (weekend) to be held at least one to two months before kick-off. Check with your diocese or ask around for a cabin or retreat center where you all can get away for an overnight if possible. Hotels are also a great option. We have a great sampling of past and current Core Retreats online at lifeteen.com/cym, search “Core Retreats”. Once you have created a Core Team, provide the date and make sure that every Core Member is able to attend this retreat.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

As you get new Core Members, make sure that they complete any and all safe environment diocesan training (and possibly fingerprinting) for those who work with children. Contact your Diocesan or Archdiocesan office for specific requirements and training dates and locations.

THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

RECRUIT AND AUDITION YOUTH CHOIR/BAND

At this time, your music director should begin recruiting and auditioning potential choir and band members. Review the Worship Ministry Audition and Application Packet (available from your Parish Coach) and present it to potential choir and band members. At the time of the audition, take time to get to know them as well as understand their music and/or vocal giftedness.

RECRUIT LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Designate someone to coordinate the youth Liturgy. Begin asking teens to serve as ushers, altar servers, lectors, etc. Remember that the lectors are not just “readers”, but rather, they proclaim the Word of God. Plug them into regular parish lector training and Bible studies.

SECURE MUSIC COPYRIGHTS

The coordinator of music for the teen liturgy will need to work with the parish in making sure that all the proper music copyrights are secured. Check with your Liturgy director for your parish musical license. CCLI is the most standard parish license. When your parish is a registered user of a database like CCLI, you pay your annual registration fee, and CCLI makes sure the artist gets paid for his/her work.

FINALIZE CORE TEAM

Once you have recruited and interviewed your Core Team, finalize who you will ask to be on Core and ask them to make a one-year commitment to God and the teens. Be sure to share with them any and all dates that are important, including the Core Retreat, Core Training and Life Teen Kickoff date.

TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CORE RETREAT

Take Core on retreat. A final commitment time for the Core - not designed to be a training, but completely spiritual in nature. Some parishes may want to take time at the end to briefly review the upcoming semester. After this retreat, continue the weekly Core meetings to complete preparations for kick-off and for continuing training.

RELATIONAL MINISTRY (IN-REACH AND OUTREACH)

Begin working with Core to do some relational ministry on high school campuses, in the community, and at your parish. Meet the administrators of the different schools and begin to build relationships with them. Attend sporting events, concerts, plays, coffee houses - any places and/or activities where you can meet teens.

Schedule to have lunch at different schools. Bring Core Members with you and meet as many teens during lunch as possible. Maybe bring some free pizza and t-shirts, and tell them about Life Teen. Invite, invite, invite!

Watch these three Relational Ministry videos to brush up on your ministry skills on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos:

- Relational Ministry Part 1: Basics
- Relational Ministry Part 2: Core Team
- Relational Ministry Part 3: Beyond Basics

TRAIN LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Take time to train all liturgical ministers for your youth Mass including Lectors, Ushers, Hospitality, and music ministers (vocalists and musicians).

SONG SELECTION

The music director should work with your priest and youth minister on selecting the Mass parts and music for the first month of your youth Mass. It is always good to share expectations and be very clear from the start on the direction you want the music to go prior to song selection. Pastors have strong opinions on music, so be obedient to the direction he has for this Mass and be open to compromise. Look for a nice balance between new and familiar music for the parish. As much as possible, bring a contemporary sound to already familiar and liturgical music that the parish has responded well to.

REHEARSE, REHEARSE, AND REHEARSE

This is the time that your band/choir needs to be rehearsing Mass parts and songs for the first few weeks of your youth Mass. Don't just rehearse for the first Sunday; rehearse at least 3 weeks out the music you will be presenting to the parish community.

KEEP PARENTS IN THE LOOP

Invite parents to a meeting where you can give them more information about Life Teen and the topics that will be covered with their teens. Introduce Parent Life, a ministry to, for and by parents whose mission is to solidify and strengthen the family structure. This ministry is facilitated by parents, and under the direction of the youth minister and pastor. Encourage them to be part of the program and to help you in the mission of drawing teens closer to Christ, by sharing different aspects of the program with them.

Express the need for volunteers at Life Nights, including food prep and cleanup. Ask volunteers to send birthday cards, help with fundraisers, pray for teens, and support events outside the church (i.e. retreats and service projects).

Be sure to keep parents in the loop. As youth leader, be sure to inform the parents of your office hours. If you do not have an office at the parish and work from home, make sure you are accessible via email or phone so parents can reach you.

PUBLICITY AND MARKETING

Begin publicizing your Kickoff Event date as an event that will be like no other! This is something new and exciting for your parish. Use social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to announce your kickoff. Bulletin and pulpit announcements, flyers and posters are helpful, but nothing is as effective as a personal invitation!

CREATE YOUR ANNUAL & FIRST SEMESTER

CALENDAR Contact your Life Teen Parish Coach to calendar your first Life Teen semester calendar and if necessary, aid you in planning your Annual Calendar.

Your Parish Coach can help you select the best Kickoff night, semester curriculum, issue and social Life Nights for the first 3-4 months in preparation for your upcoming Core meeting. With the vast archive of past and current resources, you will be sure to have the best first semester with your teens and Core Team.

Three great videos to check out are:

- Annual Calendaring
- Planning your Semester Calendar
- Budgeting Your Ministry

All three will help you with planning out your year and semesters (3-4 months) easily and with purposeful vision.

In addition, if you need to fundraise for your ministry, you might want to check out the Development and Fundraising training video for a great strategy for ongoing fundraising and development.

CORE TRAINING

Hold your Core Training Day or spread out your Core Training over the next few weeks prior to kickoff. Be sure you are covering the basic training topics, including:

- Life Nights
- Relational Ministry
- Small Groups

This will ensure that your Core Team is confident in some basic ministry skills as they kick off Life Teen at your parish. Videos available on lifeteen.com/cym/training-videos

ONE MONTH PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

BRAINSTORMING AND PLANNING KICKOFF AND LIFE NIGHTS

One month out, hold a meeting with Core to go over the first semester (3-4 months) of Life Night, starting with the Kickoff. At this meeting you will plan out your Kickoff and delegate the following 2 weeks of Life Nights after Kickoff. You want to be ahead of the curve and not put all your energy into the Kickoff. You want the second Life Night to be as strong, if not stronger than your Kickoff and that will only happen if you are doing advance planning.

When delegating Life Nights, put 2-3 Core Members on each night to work together on planning out the entire night from Gather to Send. Additional Core Members and sometimes teens will be involved in the implementation of the Life Night in skits and other aspects of the night, however, these 2-3 Core Members will assign those tasks and communicate any needs to the youth minister.

Most importantly, have fun with the brainstorming and planning of the Life Nights. The more you pray, the better the night will be and the more fun you will have overall.

DIOCESAN GUIDELINES

Meet with your Diocesan Office to cover any Safe Environment training and/or fingerprinting that needs to be done on Core and Parent volunteers. Put all Adult Volunteers through necessary Safe Environment Diocesan training if you have not already done so.

LITURGY PLANNING

Meet with the celebrant of the Kickoff Mass, the music minister, and the parish liturgist to plan the liturgy for the kick-off. Refer to the liturgical planning guides for help. It is best to start holding weekly Liturgy Meetings to prepare for the youth Mass.

THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CORE MEETING

Start every Core Team meeting in prayer and not just an Our Father. Take some serious time in prayer and offer up your planning to the Lord. Go over the details of the Kickoff night and the first Life Night following the Kickoff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Put an announcement into your church bulletin announcing the Kickoff Mass and Life Night. Be sure to include clear times and location.

Prominently display signs and banners announcing the Life Teen kickoff date. Distribute flyers to various ministries and, if applicable, the parish SRE classes and/ or school. Invite your diocesan youth office and other diocesan staff to the kickoff, as well as surrounding parishes. Use all forms of allowable media to inform: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO KICK-OFF

CORE MEETING

Pray! Review the Kickoff as well as the following two weeks of Life nights. Make sure everyone is on the same page.

PREPARATIONS

Be sure to meet with pastor, or celebrant for the youth liturgy (this should be a regular weekly meeting if possible!).

Get payment prepared to pay for food and/or special guests, sound equipment, giveaways, door prizes, etc.

Make sure the lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, ushers and hospitality ministers are assigned, trained and ready! Prepare and copy song sheets for Mass or prepare projected lyrics.

Create a calendar of your first semester's events. Include all of your Life Nights, titles and a one- line description, any retreats, service opportunities or other functions. Make lots of copies.

WEEK OF KICK-OFF

CORE MEETING

Pray! Review the logistics of the Kickoff. Walk through the Life Night, check and double check to make sure each Core Member understands his/her responsibility for that night. Thank them for all they do for the teens! If possible, have a teen make an announcement at each Mass, inviting teens to the Kickoff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prepare announcements to make at the end of the Mass about Life Night. Set up the room and environment as previously decided at Core meetings. Have teens, Core, youth leader, parents at every Mass, creating a buzz, and inviting all teens to come back that evening for the Kickoff. Pray and Have Fun!!!

