

LIFE TEEN CORE TRAINING

Core Recruitment



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Cover design by Laura Womack

For more information about Life Teen or to order additional copies, go online to www.lifeteen.com or call us at 1-800-809-3902

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INTRODUCTION

We are ecstatic to announce a new resource in our Life Support box: *Life Teen Core Training*. Through both written and video resources, we will help you train your Core Members whenever they join your team. This will hopefully allow you more time with your teens and less time behind a desk and more time finding and training the right Core.

In every Life Support box you will receive a new training resource for your Core Team. The 8-part training series will cover topics including:

- Core Recruitment
- Life Nights: Gather, Proclaim, Break, Send
- Relational Ministry
- Small Groups
- Core Spirituality
- Pastoral Care and Discipline
- Retreats and Events
- Conflict Resolution

This first resource in our 8-part series will cover Core Recruitment. A healthy Core Team is a key ingredient to ministry success. Without a solid, well-formed Core Team it is difficult to reach out to teens and lead them closer to Christ. Teens need a variety of adults with different personalities, ages, nationalities and life experiences to mentor them in their spiritual development. This requires a Core Team that is diverse. A perfect Core Member is someone who, loves God, loves teens and wants to humbly serve.

You will soon discover as a youth minister that your job is mostly focused on supporting your Core Team. Don't get discouraged when you are spending more time with your Core than your teens at first. In the end, the time and energy spent with the Core Team will reap many fruits as they begin to reach out to teens and lead them closer to Christ. You and your Core will disciple together, two-by-two, proclaiming the Good News and doing meaningful relational ministry. That is why the time, prayer and support you provide your Core Team is invaluable.

Your Core will make this journey a bit less lonely. Your Core will make you laugh and cry; they will disappoint you and make you proud; they will be faithful and broken; they will hold you accountable while you hold them accountable. They will be companions on a journey that bring your teens to salvation. So take time and invest in them, the reward is everlasting.

CREATING A CORE RECRUITMENT PLAN

Creating a Core recruitment plan is key to calling forth everyone in the community who has a passion for serving teens. It is important to realize that recruiting a Core Team is a daily challenge. Recruitment will take place at your church and the grocery store. It will happen through life-long relationships and chance meetings with random strangers. Core recruitment is a constant part of your ministry and you have to continually be on the lookout for people with the gifts and talents to minister to your teens.

Below is a step-by-step guide on recruiting Core. While it will need to be adapted to fit the dynamics of your parish, hopefully this is a good starting place:

Step 1: Pray! God wants you to pray before you ask the question, “do you want to be on the Core Team?” He wants you to pray for eyes to see the people He has already called to serve His Church, His teens. He is calling them right now, He just needs you to find them and ask the question. You could make the best Core recruitment plan in history, make the best video, have a teen give the best testimony but unless you pray, it won’t make a difference. So begin on your knees listening to who God is calling to lead His teens closer to Him. Ask others to join you in praying for the potential Core Members as well.

Step 2: Sit down with your current Core Team or pastor and decide on a specific plan of action to recruit Core members. Some suggestions are on pages 8 -12. Make a commitment to 2-3 ideas to maximize the people you reach.

Step 3: Work with the pastor to set a weekend where you will speak at all the Masses annually. Whether you are starting Life Teen or you have been doing Life Teen for 10 years, you will want to share the ministry with the community. This is called *advocacy* and it is the most misunderstood aspect of youth ministry. The more you advocate for your teens, the more the parish will listen and respond to their needs.

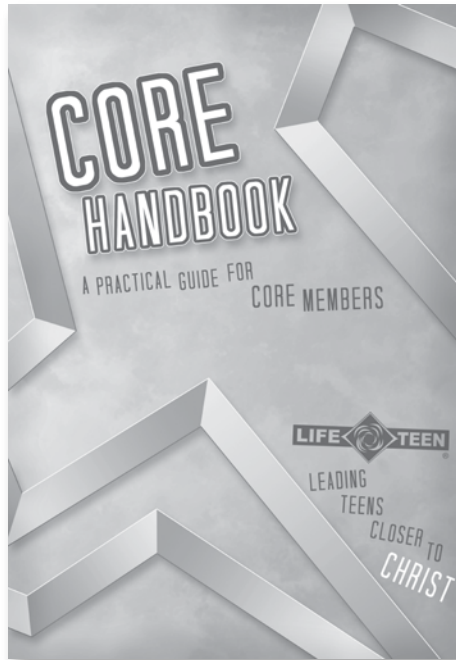
Step 4: Host a Life Teen Core Information Night for people who have expressed an interest in serving on Core (see pages 13-16). At the end of the night, ask them to prayerfully discern this ministry and tell them you will be in touch to schedule a one-on-one interview.

Step 5: Schedule one-on-one interviews with each potential Core Member. This is where you discover where they are personally and spiritually as well as discern if they are right for this ministry. This is also where you will ask them to either be on Core or not be on Core. You don't have to accept everyone and God will direct you in this decision. (See sample interview questions on pages 23-24)

Step 6: Have new Core Members attend any diocesan certifications and safe environment trainings necessary for volunteers with minors.

Step 7: Train your new Core Members in the Life Teen basics. Purchase a *Core Handbook: A Practical Guide for Core Members* for each Core Member so they understand all aspects of this ministry. In each Life Support shipment you will receive new training materials to assist with ongoing Core training.

Step 8: Bless and commission your new Core Team at Mass. See the Core Commissioning on page 18.



Core Handbook: A Practical Guide for Core Members can be purchased from the Life Teen online store at www.lifeteen.com or by contacting the Life Teen office at 480-820-7001. Bulk discounts are also available.

CORE RECRUITMENT IDEAS

Here are some ideas for initial and ongoing Core Recruitment. Work with the pastor and parish staff to determine which ideas are best suited to your parish.

A.S.K.!

Ask-Seek-Knock (Matthew 7:7-8)

Ask – Ask the Lord to reveal the people He is calling into ministry. Ask the Lord specifically what you need on your adult Core Team: college students, married couples, multicultural and multigenerational, graphic artists, musicians, actors, etc. Ask the Lord to bless your ministry with adults on fire for their faith.

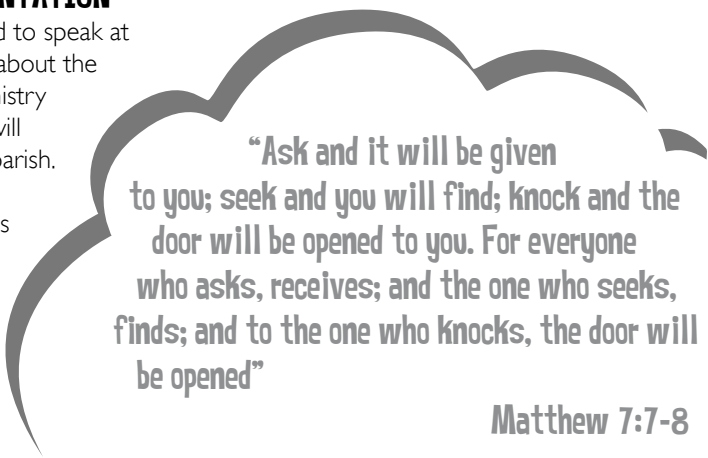
Seek – Create a plan to seek out the people called to this ministry. Seek out adults on college campuses and Newman Centers, the grocery store, local high schools, in RCIA, wherever!

Knock - Once you seek someone you would love in the ministry, knock on the door and ask them. You will miss 100% of the shots you never take so take the shot and knock. They can choose to answer the door or not.

MASS PRESENTATION

Pick a weekend to speak at all the Masses about the new youth ministry program you will begin at your parish.

There are a variety of things you can do in this 3-4 minute presentation.



“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened”

Matthew 7:7-8

Some suggestions are:

- Youth Minister Presentation – In this presentation you want to communicate with passion the vision you have for the parish youth ministry.
- Teen Testimony – Select a few teens to give a 30 second to 1 minute witness at different Masses throughout the weekend about what youth ministry means to them. Have them rehearse it with you prior and if possible, don't have them read off a sheet of paper.
- Core Testimony – If you have past catechists or Core Members who have served teens in your parish, have them give a testimony on what they have received from their service to the youth. Again, have them rehearse it with you prior and if possible, don't have them read off a sheet of paper.
- Life Teen Information Video – Life Teen has an excellent video that can be shown at all Masses. If you cannot show the entire video at Mass, select a portion to show to the congregation. If you cannot show it at all, have it playing outside Mass on a table so people can view it as they stop by to gain more information. Contact the Life Teen office for a copy or search for it on www.vimeo.com.
- Parish Video – Create a short video of your teens asking people to serve as Core Members. Have them share the name of mentors in their life and what those mentors mean to them. Make it no longer than 2-3 minutes.

INFORMATION TABLE

Outside of Mass it is important to be present to answer any questions. If possible, have the following things available to gain support for your ministry.

Prayer Cards – After Mass, have teens at the doors of the church passing out prayer cards with names of the teens of your parish on them. Ask them to pray for this teen for the coming month. You will be amazed how this will bring about future Core Members.

Information Table – Have a sign up sheet where adults and teens interested in getting involved can leave their name, email and phone number for you to contact them. In addition have the following items available for people to take home with them:

- Core Information Night flyer
- Calendar and flyers for all youth ministry events
- Life Teen Interest Form (see sample on page 22)
- Any diocesan minor release/registration forms

WORLD YOUTH DAY SUNDAY

In the United States the National Celebration of World Youth Day is on the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time. This is a wonderful Sunday to share with your community the spiritual growth of the teens in the past year and what the vision of your ministry is for the year to come. Some suggestions to celebrate and recruit new Core Members on this Sunday are:

- Mass Presentation – Speak at all the Masses and use some of the suggestions from the previous Mass Presentation ideas. We especially encourage teen testimonies, parish videos, and Core testimonies.
- Parish Slide/Video Show – Take photographs from the year along with videos from various events to create a short “digital yearbook” of your youth group. Show it at all the Masses that weekend.
- Produced or Scripted Video – Produce a quality video of your teens affirming the people who have served on Core throughout the past year. Share this video with the congregation to show that you receive more than you give when you serve as a Core Member.
- Information Table – Have an information table (see page 9) for parishioners to get involved in the ministry.

MINISTRY FAIR

If your parish has an annual ministry fair, be sure that youth ministry is well represented there. Have teens and Core Members present to answer questions and invite others into this dynamic ministry.

TEEN INVESTMENT

This is part fundraiser, part Core recruitment. If you have an event coming up, sell Life Teen Stock for \$10 or \$5 a share after all your Masses. Get the names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of each person who “invests” in the teens. After the event, invite all “Stockholders” to attend a “Stockholders Meeting” where teens give personal testimonies and invite them to continue to invest in the teens as Core Members.

COLLEGE NEWMAN CENTERS

Most every college campus has a Newman Center or Catholic Club. Create flyers and ask to speak at one of their meetings or prayer groups. Offer to give a quarterly presentation or even an annual retreat for their group. Foster a strong relationship with them and invite them to serve in your Life Teen ministry.

PERSONAL LETTERS OR INVITATION

A personal, hand written letter or a personal invitation is one of the best ways to invite someone on your Core Team. Ask teens and adults in your community for names of adults they think would be great on Core and gather their mailing address from your parish office. Send them a card saying that a teen or adult recommended them for the Core Team. Ask them to prayerfully discern the ministry and tell them you are praying for them. Follow up the card with a phone call a week later.

ONE MORE

Have you ever just needed one more chaperone for an event? This is a great way to expose parents, Confirmation Sponsors and young adults to your Life Teen ministry. Ask people you would love to get involved in your ministry to be that "one more" chaperone for a retreat, a youth rally or teen event. When they spend time with teens at an event, they are more open to being on the Core Team.

DAILY MASS ATTENDEES

Daily Mass is a prime location for Core Recruitment. You will find mothers, fathers, young adults, teens and businessmen. If someone is attending daily Mass, his or her life is centered on the Eucharist and who is better to lead teens closer to Christ than someone whose life is already centered on the Eucharist. Attend Mass, receive our Lord and ask someone sitting beside you to be on the journey of leading teens closer to Christ with you.

BULLETIN AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advertise in your parish bulletin and be sure to have the priests make verbal announcements at Mass. It is amazing how a priest's support from the pulpit will generate more interest in the ministry.

CONFIRMATION SPONSORS

Every Confirmation program has a component for candidates and their sponsors. Whether it's a one-day retreat, multiple Confirmation workshops, or a sponsor meeting, these gatherings can be a wonderful opportunity to spot a sponsor who would make a great Core Member. Invite sponsors to be Retreat leaders, prayer warriors or chaperones on Confirmation retreat. Involve them as much as possible, and seek opportunities to invite them to be on the Core Team.

RCIA

Some of the most on-fire Catholics are the newly initiated. Offer to do a teaching with the RCIA candidates and catechumens during the year and continue to support them on their journey towards Easter. Have the teens write them letters and cards when they go on retreat and host a Life Night in their honor after Easter Sunday asking them to share their experience of coming onto the Church.

CORE INFORMATION NIGHT

Core Information Nights are meant to give potential Core a vision of the Life Teen Mission and your parish ministry. This information night should not feel like a formal meeting. Instead, it should have a casual feel to it. This is a chance for everyone to get to know one another while taking time to help potential Core understand the commitment you are asking of them.

A Life Teen Core Information Night should be an hour to an hour and a half in length. Most of that time will be a social time to allow people to mingle and get to know one another. It is always great to have teens present to serve the Core Team. The Information Night can be a dessert time, sit down dinner, barbeque, or coffee bar with snacks. Whatever you decide, make it fun and give teens or parents a chance to serve the future Core.

Mingle – 10-15 minutes

Give everyone a chance to get to know one another. Have refreshments such as desserts and coffee available and invite teens to serve. If you know who is coming to the gathering, make nametags in advance so you know when everyone has arrived. If you are leaving an open-ended invitation, have blank nametags available for people to make their own.

Opening Prayer – 2 minutes

Welcome everyone to the night and say an opening prayer for the new ministry at your parish, for the teens and for the future Core Members.

What Am I Saying Yes To? – 15 minutes

This is when you will share with them the vision of the Life Teen Mission and your parish ministry. It is always good to have teens in the program or past Core Members share what the ministry has meant to them and how it has helped them grow spiritually. It will also address the role and expectations of the Core Member.

The talk outline can be found on pages 15-16
PowerPoint available on www.catholicyouthministry.com

Question & Answer - 15 minutes

Allow some time for questions and answers. After everyone has asked questions, pass out a Core Application Packet (available for download on www.catholicyouthministry.com in the Members Resource page). It is best to have them take the application home and take time filling it out. Mention that you will be contacting them for one-on-one interviews. At the interview they can return the Application.

Closing Prayer - 10 minutes

Close the night by leading a prayer over the potential Core Members. If possible, have a teen lead this prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the adults who you have called here tonight to discern being a Core Member for our Life Teen ministry. Lord, we ask that you will guide their prayer as they make a commitment not only to you, but to our teens and to one another. This ministry demands our time, our talent and our treasure. Allow us to all be open to sharing freely all that you have provided for us and in us. Give us the grace we need to reach out to the teens of this community, both the ones in the pews and the ones who have never seen the inside of a Church. Let us not look at what we lack, but on what you have given us to reach your children. Strengthen us as a team so that together we can lead teens closer to Christ. Mother Mary, guide our steps and intensify our yes as we pray;

Hail Mary, full of grace...



WHAT AM I SAYING YES TO?

Talk Outline

The teaching outline below highlights the topics covered on pages 11-31 in the *Core Handbook: A Practical Guide for Core Members*. It is suggested that each Core Member receive a copy once they have committed to being on the Core Team so they fully understand the commitment they are making. It is a short, helpful book that increases a Core Member's confidence in the ministry they are saying yes to.

To download a PowerPoint presentation for this teaching, visit www.catholicyouthministry.com and download the "Core Information Night" PowerPoint.

I. What is Life Teen?

A. Life Teen is an international Catholic movement that serves the Church and leads all teens closer to Christ by providing resources and training that encourages vibrant Eucharistic celebrations and opportunities for teens to grow in their faith.

B. This mission is accomplished by bringing teens to:

1. The celebration of the Eucharist
2. The teachings of Christ and the Church
3. An experience of being loved and accepted within the community

II. Core Member Expectations

A. Life Teen wants to be open with you about the role of Core Members and the responsibilities and rewards you will experience as one.

B. What Core Is?

C. What Core is NOT?

D. Who is a Life Teen Core Member?

E. There are three main roles for every Core Member:

1. Core as a child of God (to expand on this role, read pages 16-19 in the *Core Handbook*)
2. Core as a Catechist (to expand on this role, read pages 20-21 in the *Core Handbook*)
3. Core as a relational minister (to expand on this role, read pages 22-25 in the *Core Handbook*)

F. The commitment to be part of Core is demanding but also rewarding. It is important that the entire team understands the expectations of each team member.

1. The Mass
2. Life Nights
3. Retreats
4. Core Meetings and Trainings
5. Outreach and Relational Ministry

III. Ministry Calendar

A. Pass out a calendar with the dates of:

1. Trainings
2. Meetings
3. Semester calendar
4. Additional events

B. Do not water down the expectations! Be up front and honest about the expectations so people can commit with confidence and not waiver.

IV. Testimonies

A. Teen Testimony

1. Invite a teen to give a short 2-3 minute testimony of what Life Teen has meant to them. If you are just starting a youth ministry program, you can have a teen share what it would mean to them if they committed to the Core Team.

B. Core Testimony

1. Invite a Core Member (or past catechist or volunteer) to give a short 2-3 minute testimony of what Life Teen has meant to them. If you are just starting, invite them to share a previous ministry with youth that has brought them joy.

CORE COVENANT

In the Bible, covenants are the promises between God and His people. A Core Covenant is a commitment that your Core Members make to God, to the teens and to the ministry. All too often we don't spell out for our Core Members our expectations and desires for how they will serve the teens of the parish. A Core Covenant will make it abundantly clear the expectations and desires.

Have each Core Member read and sign a Core Covenant annually. At the end of each year, have your entire Core Team evaluate their role on the Core Team and discern if God is calling them to a new year of ministry with the youth. If so, have them recommit by signing a new Core Covenant. If you evaluate that they are not right for the ministry, this is the perfect opportunity to ask them to step down. Simply meet with them one-on-one and make clear why you are asking them to step down.

Below is a sample of a Core Covenant. You can find another sample on www.catholicyouthministry.com. It is important to adapt the Covenant to reflect the needs and expectations of your parish's Core Team.

SAMPLE CORE TEAM COVENANT

As Catholic Christians, we have been baptized into the three-fold office of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King. As a unified body in Christ, taking Mary our Mother as our model of submission, we say "yes" to Jesus, and chose to glorify Him in all of our words and actions. We choose to die to ourselves and our earthly desires in order to follow the Lord and His commands. Realizing that this is a serious commitment, we the brothers and sisters of the Life Teen Core pledge, for the next year, to be faithful to one another; holding each other accountable and helping one another become the saints that God wants us to be. We the undersigned, pledge to be faithful to the teenagers at all our Youth Masses and Life Nights; to do relational ministry throughout the week; and attend all meetings in order to grow as Evangelists. We pledge to live lives of holiness giving all greater glory to God in all things.

Signed this day,

Month / Day / Year

CORE COMMISSIONING

Annually the Core Team should be blessed to solidify the commitment they have made individually and as a team to the youth of the parish. You will need:

- The Commissioning printed out for your priest to follow along
- The Core Covenant printed out for the Youth Minister to read out loud
- One teen for each Core Member to stand behind and place their hand on their shoulder
- A copy of the Core Covenant for your Core Team to sign
- Pens
- A Bible, Catechism or cross for each Core Member (optional)

CORE COMMISSIONING & BLESSING

Adapted from the Book of Blessings (Blessing of Officers of Parish Societies).

Immediately after Homily (before Creed/Profession of Faith) the Celebrant will invite the youth minister and the Life Teen and/or Edge Core members forward. The Youth minister will go to the Ambo to read the Core Covenant. One teen will be behind each Core Member with a hand on their shoulder (if there are steps in front of the altar, have them stand on the steps).

- Youth minister will introduce the Core/give small explanation of the covenant they are about to sign.
- Youth minister will read the covenant from the Ambo. During the reading of the covenant, the Core will sign it.
- (Optional) Celebrant will pass out a Bible, Catechism of the Catholic Church or cross for each Core Member as a gift.
- Celebrant will then conclude the commissioning with the following blessing:
Almighty God, we give you thanks for the many and varied ways you build up your Church. Bless this Core Team of the Life Teen Program. Grant that through their vision and direction they may be of service to this parish's youth and bring honor and glory to your name. And may Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

CORE TRAINING & SPIRITUALITY

When it comes to training your Core Team you want to be sure you cover three very important things:

- Diocesan training
- Life Teen training
- Personal spirituality

DIOCESAN TRAINING

Check with the diocese for Core Member age requirements to work with minors. Every diocese requires that volunteers go through specific faith formation courses to be a certified catechist or Core Member. In addition, all adults working with minors must attend safe environment training and possible fingerprinting. Contact your diocesan office to verify that all Core Members are in compliance with diocesan standards.

In addition, diocesan offices offer a variety of specializations for catechists. Be sure to encourage participation in as many training opportunities as possible to continue faith formation for your Core.

LIFE TEEN TRAINING

Life Teen offers a variety of training conferences throughout the year for Core Members, specifically our Core Member Universities (CMU) in the fall of every year. All Core Members are invited to attend any of our training conferences including the Training Convention, Liturgy and Music Conference and the Life Teen and Edge Basic Training Conference. In addition, free, ongoing online web training is available for Core to attend throughout the year:

On a parish level, each Core Member should be trained on some basic aspects of Life Teen including:

- Life Nights – Gather, Proclaim, Break and Send
- Small Group Facilitation
- Relational Ministry

Training materials for each of these topics will be offered in future Life Support boxes. If you need assistance with materials in the meantime, please contact our Startup Coordinator for materials to be sent to you.

PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY

The best way to bring your Core Team together is through a Life Teen Core Retreat specifically written for the spiritual development of Core Members. Every year through Life Support you will receive a Core Retreat that you can put on for your Core Members. These can be a full weekend or a day of reflection. There are a number of ways to offer these retreats:

- Work with a local parish and co-host the retreat with another youth minister.
- Host the retreat yourself and invite your priests to be involved in the planning and execution of the retreat.
- Invite an outside speaker, local youth minister or priest to come in and facilitate the retreat.

In addition to an annual weekend retreat, it is wonderful to offer continual opportunities for your Core Team to grow spiritually. Encourage all Core Members to have a spiritual director who will hold them accountable in their spiritual walk. Prayerfully discern 2-3 people who will be Core Support to provide continual opportunities for the Core to grow spiritually as individuals and a team.

CORE SUPPORT

If you really want your Core Team to be a family, it is important to foster opportunities for them to get to know one another beyond the skits and talks they give at a Life Night or Retreat. Another way to support your Core Team is to invite 2-3 adults to be Core Support.

Core Support is a team of people who pray for and support the Core Members and music ministers serving in Life Teen. Core Support does the following for the ministers in your Life Teen program:

- Plan monthly or quarterly socials for the Core Team to hang out together and just have fun.
- Gather to pray a weekly Holy Hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament for the Core Team and the teens.
- Assist with the annual weekend Core Retreat.
- Attend the weekly Youth Liturgy to touch base with the Core Members, musicians, youth minister and teens.

It is not a time consuming ministry. However, it is one that requires a prayerful, servant heart. This ministry will help you retain Core Members rather than constantly rotating new members in and out. This is where the servant (Core) is being served so that they can continue to reach out to teens and lead them closer to Christ.

If for some reason you are unable to find people to take on this ministry, be sure to include some of these ideas into your meetings and monthly Core calendar to ensure that your ministry is centered on Christ.

LIFE TEEN INTEREST FORM

LAST NAME _____

FIRST _____

MIDDLE INITIAL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____

CELL _____

E-MAIL _____

Adult Involvement

Please check any of the areas in which you would like to serve in Life Teen.

- Life Teen Core Member
- Edge Core Member
- Music Ministry
- Parent Life
- Retreat Team
- Core Support
- Photography
- Liturgy Coordinator
- Environment
- Videographer
- Web Designer/Graphic Design
- Other _____

Teen Involvement

Please check any of the areas in which you would like to serve in Life Teen.

- Edge Core Member
- Teen Leadership Team
- Music Ministry (circle one) Vocal Instrument
- Lector
- Usher
- Hospitality
- Altar Server
- Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist

CORE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction

Have you done anything especially fun lately?

Have you read any good books in the last six months?

Life Night/Retreat Work

How did you first hear about the Life Teen Program?

If it was from a Life Teen retreat, what do you most remember from your retreat?

Why do you want to serve on the Core Team for Life Teen?

What do you feel you do/could do best at Life Nights/Retreats?

What would you like to become more skilled at for Life Nights/Retreats?

Relationships

What do you think are your greatest strengths in relationships with other people?

How do you usually resolve conflicts when they arise between you and your friends?

If you work, what is your relationship like with your employer? How do you get along with your co-workers?

What would you do if you saw a fellow member of the Core Team in public who was acting in an unchristian manner? (For example drunk or stoned)

Family Relationships

Please describe how your relationship was/is like with each of your parents.

Mother:

Father:

Siblings:

Personal Faith

Describe your understanding of the Eucharist and Mass.

Why do you think young people need a relationship with Jesus?

What is the strongest statement you can make about your relationship with Jesus?

If a young person on a retreat asked you, "why do I need a personal relationship with Jesus?" How would you respond?

Describe your prayer life, including how you pray, when and where?

Any other questions that the interviewer needs to ask, based upon application, please write here.

This is the end of this part of the interview. Since I just asked you so many questions, are there any questions that you would like to ask me?

Is there anything else you would like to say?