

"God is love." - 1 John 4:16

*"Father, this is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."
- John 17:3*

"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." - Matthew 28:18-20

*"It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh." - Romans 13:11-14*

The purpose of this rule of life is to root our lives in Christ Jesus. By providing the foundational pillars for a culture of "missionary discipleship" this rule of life will allow our communities to embrace a lifestyle of dying to self and living in the Spirit. Obedience to this rule of life leads us to form certain Christ-like habits, transforming us into witnesses of the Gospel regardless of camp, household, or state in life.

Glorify God in Prayer

(I) *"Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me, you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. **As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.**" - John 15:4-9*

Prayer—remaining in Christ and in his love—is non-negotiable. Our entire culture, depends on prayer, for we can do nothing if we do not remain in His love. The spirituality of the rule can be defined as "dynamic orthodoxy"—fully in-line with the Roman Catholic Church, which includes an openness to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. By fostering a communal culture of ongoing prayer, Life Teen Missions Communities will be filled with people striving to make worship a lifestyle.

"...[F]or my house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples." - Isaiah 56:7

(II) Rhythm of Prayer

Our **Rhythm of Prayer** is the heartbeat of our community. By committing to a consistent prayer routine, we pray on God's timing rather than our own. Our rhythm of prayer is both personal and communal – fostering an openness to God's voice as He speaks uniquely to each individual while conforming our community to the liturgical seasons.

Specifically our commitment includes:

- Daily personal holy hour ideally before the Blessed Sacrament guided by:
 - Scripture: *"If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." - John 8:31-32.*
 - Spiritual reading: *"It is the great multitude of the saints – both known and unknown – in whose lives the Lord has opened up the Gospel before us and turned over the pages; he has done this throughout history and he still does so today. In their lives, as if in a great picture-book, the riches of the Gospel are revealed." - Pope St. John Paul II*
- Morning and Night Community Liturgy of the Hours

- Daily Mass as often as possible
- Life Teen holy hour (2pm EST on Thursday)
- Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a month.
 - *“Jesus said to them, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ And when he said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.’” - John 20:21-23*
- Celebration of missionary feast days and baptismal days
- Communal devotions according to the liturgical season.

(III) Sacraments

Being both Catholic and liturgical, our rhythm of prayer is sacramental. With the commitment to partake in the Eucharist on every Sunday, Holy Day of Obligation, and daily as often as possible, as well as Confession at least once a month, we are more fully able to trust in and call on the sacramental grace available to us through the seven sacraments as we strive to be a sacrament to one another.

- *“The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.” - CCC 1113*
- *“Sacraments are ‘powers that come forth’ from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in His Body, the Church. They are ‘the masterworks of God’ in the new and everlasting covenant.” - CCC 1116*
- *The sacraments “manifest and communicate to men, above all in the Eucharist, the mystery of communion with the God who is love, One in three persons.” - CCC 1118*
- *“The fruit of sacramental life is both personal and ecclesial. For every one of the faithful on the one hand, this fruit is life for God in Christ Jesus; for the Church, on the other, it is an increase in charity and in her mission of witness.” - CCC 1134*

(IV) Spirit Led Worship, Marian Devotion, and Fasting

Our spirituality emphasizes developing a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit who is the “principle agent of mission”. We strive to mold every aspect of our lives into acts of worship, where our thoughts and actions are driven not by us but by complete docility to the Holy Spirit. Therefore, by praying in the Spirit and living into His charisms we will consistently seek a deeper openness to His presence, power, and gifts.

- *“With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit.” - Ephesians 6:18*
- *“The Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groaning.” - Romans 8:26*
- *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit...to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Cor. 12)*

Our Blessed Mother Mary is the best example of living every moment as worship, so as a community, we will seek to develop a personal and communal devotion to Mary.

- The Church’s devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship. - CCC 971
- *“When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’” - John 19:26-27*
- As a community, we will pray the Rosary (an “epitome of the whole Gospel” CCC 971) and seek a deeper devotion to our Blessed Mother.

We will fast as a community. In order to help missionaries freely embrace fasting and the grace that comes from choosing it, each mission team will discuss and commit to how they will fast as a community.

- *“Fasting represents an important ascetical practice, a spiritual arm to do battle against every possible disordered attachment to ourselves. Freely chosen detachment from the pleasure of food and other material goods helps the disciple of Christ to control the appetites of nature, weakened by original sin, whose negative effects impact the entire human person... The ultimate goal of fasting is to help*

each one of us to make a complete gift of self to God.”- Pope Benedict XVI

Glorify God in Community

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.” - Philippians 2:1-2

(I) Life Teen Missions Communities are Apostolic, striving to imitate communal life described in Acts 2: 42-47

- **Magersterial & Liturgical:** *“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers.”* While all people are welcome, we will not deviate from a fully Catholic communal life lived according to the sacraments, faithfulness to the Magesterium, and the liturgical season of the Church.
- **Charismatic** *“many wonders and signs were done through the apostles”*. As a community, we will be open to the Spirit’s charisms as an empowerment for our mission and allow Him to unite us as one body.
- **Celebratory:** *“they partook of food with glad and generous hearts”*. By regularly referencing scenes of banquets and feasts, Christ Himself made images of celebration central to His proclamation of the Kingdom. We will make celebration a priority within our communities.
- **Evangelistic:** *“the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”* We will seek to be a community that gives life to the Church by adding to her numbers, both through the lived witness of our communal life and through our direct proclamation of the Gospel.

(II) Life Teen Missions Communities are **welcome places** where people are refreshed, restored, and revived, where the focus is not to escape “normal life,” but to pursue the face of God and encounter Him personally. *“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” - Matthew 11:28*

(III) Mission Schools.

We strive to conform our lives to the ultimate mission of the Church, the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28. Fueled by the Holy Spirit, we are committed to teaching God’s loving plan of salvation, empowering missionaries with prayer and the truths of the Church, and launching them into God’s mission.

We are committed to living out the core values of Life Teen: Love, Joy, Eucharistic Spirituality, Primary Vocation, Affirmation, Evangelization, and Authenticity. These values serve to guide our response to the Holy Spirit.

(IV) Trust and Trustworthiness

- *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” – Proverbs 3:5-6*
- Healthy community life is built on a foundation of trust. Often times, there are unexplainable gaps between what we expect people to do and what they actually do. We can choose to fill the gap with trust or suspicion. As Christians, we have been called to trust; anything else erodes our team. Two promises that enhance one’s ability to live into the discipline of trust are choosing to trust the other and choosing to be trustworthy to the best of my ability.

Glorify God in Discipleship

"I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." - John 17:20-21

*"Go, therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations..." - Matthew 28:19*

To be a disciple requires a commitment to Christ which embraces the entirety of one's life. True discipleship involves a personal investment which seeks to usher another into an intimacy with Christ that permeates each moment of the day. While ministering to thousands, Christ shared life with twelve,, turning investment into a lifestyle. Life Teen Missions communal life is organizationally structured for the sake of creating a lifestyle of discipleship – a personal investment model of shared life which leaves no part of the day or year unaffected.

Glorify God in Our Dependence on Him

*"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' Or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But **seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.**" - Matthew 6:25-33*

God is worthy of our trust and desires our complete dependence on Him. He does not ask for more of us, He asks for all of us. We are committed to depend on God with our worries, our finances, our fleshy desires, our passions, our attitudes, our fears, our joys, and all that we are. An attitude of dependence is formed through a spirituality of childlike simplicity which focuses on the "one thing necessary", trusting that all else will be given besides.

Glorify God in Loving One Another

"Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, with your whole mind and all your strength... Love your neighbor as yourself." - Mark 12:30-31

"As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." - John 13:34-35

"Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another, do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all." - Romans 12:9-18

*"Your way of acting should be different from the world's way; **the love of Christ must come before all else**... Live by God's commandments everyday; treasure chastity, harbor neither hatred nor jealousy of anyone, and do nothing out of envy. Do not love quarreling; shun arrogance. Respect the elders and love the young. Pray for your enemies out of love for Christ. If you have a dispute with someone, make peace with him before the sun goes down. **And finally, never lose hope in God's mercy.**" (Rule of St. Benedict, Ch. 4, 20-12; 63-74)*

Glorify God in Building Relationships

(I) Building Chaste Friendships

"A clean heart create for me, God, renew a steadfast spirit within me." - Psalm 51:12

*"Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while **keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus**, the leader and perfecter of faith." - Hebrews 12:1-2a*

Out of respect for the unique opportunity to truly focus on our personal relationship with the Triune God and to develop healthy relationships between men and women, missionaries commit to not pursuing new romantic relationships during their missions year. Relationships with one another are to flow out of our love for God and more importantly, His love for us. All community members are committed to engage only in chaste relationships centered on Christ.

(II) Through Reconciling with One Another

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church." - Matthew 18:15-17

We are committed to intentionally loving all people in our community, to reconciling quickly, and to forgiving as often as God forgives us. Healthy conflict resolution should involve prayer, ownership of responsibility, and a healthy process of individual addressment while maintaining the commitment to mutual love.

Glorify God in Dying to Self

(I) Humility and Obedience

"The first step of humility is unhesitating obedience, which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all." (Rule of St. Benedict, Ch.5, 1). All community members commit to humble obedience for a full life in Christ through this rule.

- *"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." - Luke 14:11*
- *"I have not come to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me." - John 6:38*
- *"Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." - Philippians 2:3-11*

(II) Sacrifice

Dying to self is a sacrifice. Our love is made sacred when we give of ourselves for the sake of another out of reverence for Christ. In living the Christian life, especially in community, we will be presented each day with opportunities to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow Jesus.

- *"Live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desires of the flesh." - Galatians 5:16*
- *"Those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires." - Galatians 5:24*
- *"Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." - Matthew 16:24*

- *"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me." - Galatians 2:19-20*
- *"We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor." - Romans 15:1-2*

Glorify God in Our Work

"Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." - Colossians 3:23

"Do all things without grumbling or question." - Philippians 2:14

"Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do your will. Amen." - St. Ignatius of Loyola

Glorify God In Our Person

"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." - 1 Corinthians 10:31

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body." 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Since the human person is a body-soul composite, everything we do physically affects us spiritually, and vice versa. By empowering us to be holy, the Holy Spirit also empowers us to be whole. Through the Holy Spirit, we have everything we need to walk in complete freedom – spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally. Spiritually, we pray and worship. Intellectually, we read and study. Emotionally, we practice forgiveness, trust, and healthy interactions with others. Physically, we exercise and recreate. What is required of us is discipline: *"Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified." - 1 Corinthians 9:25-27*

Within our personal rule, we will schedule time for physical activity and rest:

- Exercise: make time for some physical activity that helps us be our best.
- Rest well: as the Lord commands we keep holy the Sabbath, we find what works for us within the context of the rule and live into it.
- Eat well: Glorify God in what we eat and how much we eat. Treat food and drink as a blessing, a gift, and do not waste it.
 - *"For nothing is so inconsistent with the life of any Christian as overindulgence. "Our Lord says: 'Take care that your hearts are not weighed down with overindulgence' Luke 21:34." (Rule of St. Benedict, Ch.39, 9)*
- Alcohol: we adhere to the local legal drinking age and will limit ourselves to two drinks on any occasion, keeping in mind that we are witnesses of Christ at every moment of our lives.
- Free Time: we Glorify God in our free time by embracing a healthy sense of leisure and creativity.

Glorify God in our use of Technology and Entertainment

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him (Ps. 62:5) It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD (Lam. 3: 26)

We respect technology as a gift that, when used in a healthy manner, can enhance communication and evangelization. At the same time, we acknowledge the dangers of its overuse and misuse. Therefore, we intentionally limit our use of technology and screen-based entertainment. In a culture where distraction

is a constant, this allows a greater space for silence, receptivity to God's voice, and the ability to be more fully present to others.

"I will not set whatever is base before my eyes" (Psalm 101: 3)

In addition, we acknowledge that what we watch and listen to affects the way we think and live; therefore, we seek those forms of entertainment that build community, contribute to a healthy culture, and glorify God. We avoid those that do not foster a culture of holiness, especially which contain excessive profanity, violence, and sexual activity.

Glorify God in Our Speech

"Encourage one another and build one another up." - 1 Thessalonians 5:11

"No foul language should come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for needed edification, that it may impart grace to those who hear." - Ephesians 4:29

"A cheerful glance brings joy to the heart, good news invigorates the bones." - Proverbs 15:30

Three poisons of community life are complaining, sarcasm, and gossip. We strive to use our speech to encourage, affirm, and show gratitude. In addition, we seek to rid our speech of all profanity.

Glorify God within our Physical Homes (reworded and combined home with property of others)

(I) Houses

- *"Love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor." - Romans 12:10*

This scripture is especially poignant within the home, keeping in mind that the houses in which we live belong to God and we are His guest. We will respect the physical house in which we live and the property of others as gifts from God. We will uphold all household standards, and be mindful of any designated quiet or visiting hours, cooking and cleaning schedules, and common spaces.

(II) Community Property

"Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy." - Matthew 25:21

With everything Life Teen owns, we will be good stewards. All community property, from facilities to the natural environment, will be respected and cared for and vehicle standards for usage and cleanliness will be upheld. We will avoid carelessness with and misuse of physical resources.

Glorify God in Hospitality

(I) Foot Washers

"As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." - John 13:34-35

"Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." - 1 Peter 4:7-11

"Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." - John 13:12-15

We are foot-washers. We will humbly love each other and all our guests sacrificially by offering an open heart that can encounter the sacred in the other. Through this encounter, the stranger may be introduced to the sacred. The challenge of hospitality is to preserve our way of life while we continue to welcome others.

(II) Receiving Visitors

Receive others as if you are receiving Christ himself. "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ." (*Rule of St. Benedict Ch.53, 1*)

Visitors are welcome. Out of respect for preserving our way of life, all visitors will be discussed with the community beforehand and all missionaries will be mindful of healthy limits on guests. All visitors will be invited to join our schedule, including prayer and work, in order to participate in the culture and lifestyle we are creating. While a period of free time may be granted to spend with a guest, missionaries will remain mostly committed to their normal responsibilities.

(III) Communicating with Others

We commit to communicating with others to the extent that it glorifies God. We limit our communication with others only to free ourselves to be more available to communication with God. All community members are encouraged to be intentional and to schedule time accordingly.

Glorify God through Mission Partnering

(I) Communication

"I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you." - Philippians 1:3-4

Since mission partners are vital to our mission, communicating with them is of utmost importance. We are the hands and feet that get to experience mission on the front lines; therefore, it is our responsibility to communicate with the rest of the body behind the scenes. Specifically, we"

- Ask our mission partners for intercessory intentions
- Pray for every mission partner by name before the Blessed Sacrament at Life Teen Holy Hour
- Send a regular letter sharing the fruit of what is happening through their prayer and financial support

(II) Our Finances

"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow." - Proverbs 3:9-10

"My God will supply whatever you need, in accord with his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:19

We commit to keeping in the forefront of our minds that we are stewards of the money given to us by our mission partners. They are investing in our commitment to join God on His mission through Life Teen. We are committed to a healthy budget that respects and accounts for all money donated to our mission both individually and communally.

Glorify God Away From Mission Base

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." - Acts 1:8

We are witnesses of the love of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit at all times. A life committed to Christ is prophetic. This is especially difficult when we return home, or journey to another place outside of our regular mission base; therefore, we are committed to sending out

missionaries in prayer. *"For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his native place."* - John 4:44

Conclusion

Since God called us to Life Teen Missions, we are committed to this Rule of Life. By following it, we embrace our communal way of living out our loving relationship with God, built on the foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. May it be a blessing. We will be aware of anything that may distract us from our yes to this life. And in the words of St. Benedict, "may the strong have something to strive for and the weak have nothing to run from." (Rule of St. Benedict Ch.64, 19)

"Rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

After all, **"God is love."** - 1 John 4:16