

**Growing  
Together  
in Faith**



***Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert***

**Office of Youth Ministry**

**Training and**

**Resource Manual**

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## **Introduction**

Being a youth ministry leader is a special calling! But not all aspects of being a leader in youth ministry come naturally to everyone. That doesn't mean that God hasn't graced each and every one of us with this gift. After all, we can all become good at being youth leaders with a little bit of Good Orderly Direction (GOD)!! One thing we have been blessed with is the capacity to learn. With good teachers, and a good resource we can all learn to be effective in youth ministry. Ask any teacher, with access to user-friendly strategies and resources, some God-given personality and enthusiasm, and just some good old common sense with a dash of faith, we can all have fun and be successful leading a youth group.

One nice thing about youth ministry is that all who are involved are willing to share what they have discovered in the process. Therefore, this resource is a compilation of ideas and the approaches that we have used within youth ministry and education. We would like to give a shout out to the authors of the "Dive In" manual who have synthesized much of this information (Mike Landry et al <http://mikeisthird.com>) . A sizable portion of this resource has been taken from their hard work and dedication.

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers, in speech, in conduct, in love in faith and in purity.

1 Timothy 4:12



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## 1. A Christian Leader

***Every Christian must be convinced of his fundamental and vital duty of bearing witness to the truth in which he believes and the grace that has transformed him.*** -St. John XXIII

## 2. Some Guidelines for Christian Leadership

### ***...we follow Jesus into the desert***

Jesus' ministry began with time away from everything and everyone, time in silence allowing the voice of God to speak. If we are to lead others to Jesus... we need to go to Him ourselves.

### ***...we wash dirty feet:***

On the evening of the last supper, Jesus got on his hands and knees to wash His apostles' feet. Leading others to Jesus means embracing the "duty of the moment" – loving others as He has loved us.

### ***...we admit that we are weak and ask for help to do better:***

Three of the most important words we need to be willing to say are "I'm sorry, Lord." Three words our Lord will respond with are "I forgive you." Embrace opportunities to do this daily – and to run to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as needed.

### ***...we honor the ways in which we are made in God's image and likeness:***

Scripture and the Church give us a particular view of the way in which we are made in the image and likeness of God, male and female. We are different yet equal in dignity

### ***...we answer God's call in our lives:***

As Mary responded to God's call with a whole-hearted yes, bring Jesus into the world, God has a similar call for each of our lives.

### *...we are willing to swim upstream:*

Following Jesus can be hard. There are moments when what He is asking of you seems like the last thing you want to do because God feels far away, because you feel alone, or because you're afraid of what you might miss out on. Remember that Jesus says:

*"In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"*-John 16:33

### *...we give reasons for our hope:*

"But they have conquered Him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death" (Revelation 12:11). Know your story and be willing to share your story.

### *... we embrace the Cross:*

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?" (Matthew 16:24-26).

## **3. Hosting Youth Ministry Events**

### *What is the purpose of holding youth ministry events?*

#### *We want to:*

- Create an environment for youth to experience God's love.
- Help make faith RELEVANT and TRANSFORMATIONAL .
- Encourage young people to see the life our Church has to offer.
- Break open the richness of our faith.
- Respond to their desire to see change (in their lives and in the world) .
- Make the faith contagious by our example.

### *Why do they come?*

- They are invited.
- They see youth ministry as an opportunity to meet new people.
- They are seeking a place to belong.
- They are searching.
- They see joy in your faith
- They truly desire to have a relationship with Jesus

## **4. Four Part Structure of a youth event (Gather, Proclaim, Break, Send)**

***LIFE TEEN has developed a dynamic model to help Youth Ministers and Core members execute comprehensive Catholic youth ministry in a parish setting. LIFE TEEN's systematic catechetical gatherings, called Life Nights, have four distinct segments. These segments, derived from the flow of the Mass, are: Gather, Proclaim, Break and Send.***

***Gather:*** This section of the Life Night involves an invitation to the teenagers that welcomes them to a Life Night. This can be anything from an interactive game, a chance to win a prize, a skit or a funny video clip. Depending upon the specific night, some nights might utilize several of these aids. Also considered a part of the Gather is any promotion done at the youth Mass (which normally directly precedes a life night). This promotion can take several forms such as the Youth Minister making an announcement or the Core members passing out an object related to the theme of the night to try to pique the interest of the teens. The Gather is always directly related to the main message of the night.

***Proclaim*** This section of the Life Night is devoted to the main teaching for the night. The Proclaim is advised to be 10–15 minutes long, depending on the topic. Typically, the talk is usually given by the Youth Minister or another Core member. Some Life Nights change the rhythm of this by suggesting a clergy member, a panel of people, or a team of 2-3 people lead the talk. LIFE TEEN also has a prepared DVD component for certain Life Nights which can be shown in place of a live teaching.

***Break:*** In this section of the Life Night, teenagers are given the chance to "break open" the message of the night. Typically, this takes the form of small groups. LIFE TEEN recommends one adult for every 6-8 teens in a group. Certain Life Nights recommend a large group wrap session or doing a group activity (like a prayer walk) to provide the teens a chance to digest the message of the night.

***Send:*** The send portion of a Life Night is to wrap up the Life Night by giving the teens a way to take the message they learned and apply it to their lives at home. Generally, the send involves some personal prayer

*time. Depending on the night, teens might be given the chance to make a personal commitment to do something or not do something. The teens may also be presented with a small gift (such as holy water, a nail or a cross) to help them remember the message of the night. LIFE TEEN also recommends the closing of each Life Night with a reminder of what the next Life Night will be and having the teens say as a group the Hail Mary and sing Ave Maria. -via <http://www.archkck.org/>*

## 5. Five simple ways to Improve your Youth Ministry activities:

1. **Pray** before youth arrive, **pray** in the room where the night is going to take place. Ask God to bless each person who will be coming, pray for the team, and pray for the speaker
2. **Create a warm & friendly environment:**
  - Decorate (and think outside the box!)
  - Have leaders at the door welcoming people as they enter. Have roving leaders talking to the youth they know, introducing themselves to the youth they don't, and making sure no one is standing awkwardly alone (try to introduce new teens to regulars as well!).
  - Run a slideshow of pictures from past events or have music playing as youth enter.
3. **Start strong:**
  - Have an enthusiastic welcome and begin in prayer.
  - Know what you're doing (and practice!).
  - Identify newcomers & officially welcome them (we're glad you're here!).
  - Have an activity to mix youth, and to make them move around ( music, game... something to help them burn energy and prepare for what comes next).
4. **Finish strong:**
  - Do not immediately start to clean up, but plan to visit with youth (possibly with food) for at least 10 minutes after the event has ended
  - Invite those who are just 'hanging out' to help clean up (stack chairs, sweep, etc.)
  - Roving leaders—look for those waiting by the door or outside

**5. Pray**

- After the event is complete and ensure your leader/coordinator is aware of any issues for follow-up

## **6. Leading Games or Activities**

*So, you're leading an activity, mixer, game, etc... here's how to plan, lead, and evaluate it:*

- 1. Match the game/activity to your objective.**
    - Do you want to introduce a theme? (ex: human pyramid/build on the foundation of Christ)
    - Is it an icebreaker?
    - Are you trying to speed things up or slow things down?
  - 2. Match the game to your audience** (if you don't know your group, play it safe)
  - 3. Make it fun! Meaningful both to play and watch** (or you'll lose them)
  - 4. Gather the group before you begin**
- Other **leaders should get involved** – should be participating and playing along as much as possible.
- 5. When giving instructions:**
    - Be seen
    - Make eye contact
    - Be enthusiastic and project your voice
    - Explain simply and clearly
    - Demonstrate
    -
  - 6. In challenges, assign cheering sections and check the score from time to time.**
  - 7. Practice before leading and playing** (ask yourself: is it safe?).
  - 8. Evaluate**
    - How did the leading go?
    - Should the game be enhanced, improved, or retired?

*\*Adapted from a presentation by Frank Mercadante, Cultivation Ministries*

## 7. Writing a Talk

### *You've been asked to give a talk. Now what?*

First of all, remember that you have been chosen prayerfully, so trust in prayer as you prepare. Ask others to pray for you. Youth ministry leaders will be praying for you as you share your talk. You may even consider opening or closing your talk with a prayer if you are not prayed for as a part of this youth ministry event.

Whether or not your talk contains a theological teaching element, **its primary purpose should be to inspire, encourage or perhaps simply affirm youth in their struggles and experiences on their faith journeys.** While youth ministry talks are often primarily a personal witness from the speaker's life, even those which are presentational in nature always contain contemporary, concrete examples of living as a Christian in today's world. Whether you use examples from your personal life or the lives of others, bring your message home to the youth in their regular lives of school, work, family and friends, so your retreat talk becomes a living, breathing vision of our journeys as followers of Christ. Consider choosing a passage from Scripture to tie in your talk with our faith tradition. This can also help make Scripture come alive for retreatants by bringing the truth of our faith into present experience.

If a personal witness is being incorporated into your talk, it is good to use an event distant enough from your experience to have reflected on it well. It is often useful to also choose an event that is recent enough to have relevance to where you are now on your faith journey; however, sometimes a more distant event is more appropriate in order to relate to the ages of the retreatants. Reflect on these questions as you prepare:

#### **If your talk is primarily a personal witness...**

- In what event of your life did you most keenly experience God's presence?
- What happened? What did you learn? How were you affected, changed?
- How did you become a better, more faithful person and Christian as a result?

#### **If your talk is more presentational in nature...**

- What is my objective? (What do I want the retreatants to learn or understand by the end of my talk?)
- Why should the retreatants care about your objective? How is it relevant to them today?
- What personal story can I share to help the retreatants relate this learning to their daily lives?

Depending upon the length of your talk, it may be a good idea to incorporate some active learning. Rather than simply talking at retreatants for the allotted time, you can introduce your topic or bring it home using a variety of techniques that get your audience moving and engaged. Numerous resources are available to assist

you with ideas. Contact your local youth ministry office, youth minister or chaplain for appropriate and helpful resources.

#### **Other Basic Talk Guidelines:**

1. *Keep the objective of your talk simple and focused* to keep retreatants engaged and attentive.
2. *Stay within the allotted time frame.* It can be difficult to make up for lost time on a retreat.
3. *Include a story or illustration* to make it more than simply informational.

#### **What a Youth Ministry Talk Should Not Be:**

1. Sensational. This is not about impressing people with an amazing event in and of itself.
2. Emotional: an outpouring of personal troubles or current here-and-now struggles and difficulties of a very personal nature. This is better suited for family, close friends or therapy.
3. Preachy.

#### **What a Youth Ministry Talk Should Be:**

1. Relevant: keep it real (connected with experiences to which the retreatants can relate).
2. Age-appropriate: speak at the level of your audience, but be challenging.
3. Hopeful: even serious topics must leave retreatants with a sense of hope, not discouragement. May God's blessings be with you as you prepare your talk!

*Adapted from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Youth & Young Adult Ministry "Retreat Talks" resource:*

[http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/LP\\_Givng\\_Talk.pdf](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/LP_Givng_Talk.pdf)

## **8. Writing a Testimony**

### **1. What is a Testimony?**

Hearing the word testimony probably makes you think of the word 'witness' - where, in a court of law a witness is called to give testimony to some event or crime they have seen or experienced. The Christian understanding is similar: a Christian witness is **One who can give evidence based on personal and immediate knowledge of a fact, event, or experience. The Christian concept of witness**

***adds to the popular notion the idea of a religious experience to which a believer testifies by his life, words, and actions, and thus gives inspiration and example to others by his testimony.***” (Source: Catholicculture.org)

It was the testimony of Jesus’ closest followers (the Apostles) who gave their witness to the resurrected Jesus that brought the faith to the world. They were the first evangelists, the first witnesses to the resurrected Christ. And it is no accident that the word ‘witness’ finds its roots in a Greek word, *martyros*, or martyr (one who dies for their faith) – as nearly everyone did precisely that.

***“Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence...”*** (1 Peter 3:15).

## 2. Testimony: A Story told in 3 parts

We often describe a testimony as an awakening or conversion experience, where some particular moment (or series of moments) causes an individual to make some key changes in their lives. When giving a testimony in this manner, it is presented in **3 parts** – the conversion/awakening moment **before, how and after**.

These three parts should be equal in length – ensuring that the focus isn’t disproportionately on some of the failures that came before the conversion. In a 3 minute testimony (which is what we’ll be working on) each of these parts should take about one minute.

Example: Someone who experiences a massive heart attack as the result of eating too much fast food will (hopefully) look upon that near-death experience as a moment of awakening, and will adjust their diet and exercise regimen accordingly. In this case you can identify three phases of this person’s health:

- a) **Before:** Lack of self-care – no exercise and his food regimen was primarily McDonald’s, A&W, & pizza
- b) **How:** Massive heart attack lands him in the hospital and nearly costs him his life (perhaps he missed a significant moment in his family’s life here – a wedding, graduation, etc.)
- c) **After:** once recovered from the heart attack, he makes a resolution to improve his health, cuts back on the fast food and adopts an exercise regiment.

***One who can give evidence based testimony.***” \*(Source: Catholicculture.org)

One of the most useful tools we have in sharing our faith is the same tool the Apostles did: our own stories of knowing and experiencing Jesus can help bring the faith to others.

## 9. The Conversion Story of St. Paul:

Paul (Saul) was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians who had a life-changing encounter with Jesus (knocked down and struck blind – see Acts 9), leading him to become not only a key figure in the growth of the Church, but also the author of much of the New Testament. In Acts 26, Paul gives his own testimony – explaining what his life was *before* he met Christ, *how* he met Christ, and what his life was like *after* this conversion experience:

### Let us look at Paul's conversion story:

#### *a) Before* (Paul's conversion): Acts 26:4-11

*My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and at Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?*

*"I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem; I not only shut up many of the saints in prison, by authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme; and in raging fury against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

#### *b) How* (Paul's conversion experience):

Acts 26:12-20

*Thus, I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles—to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

*"Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance.*

*c) After* (Paul's conversion): Acts 26:21-23

*For this reason, the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles."*

## 10. Writing Your 3 Minute Testimony

*(Adapted from ECYD Resource "My 3 Minute Testimony"- <https://youth2change.com/2013/10/28/the-3-minute-teen-testimony/> )*

*Use the following guide to help you prepare and write out your 3-Minute Testimony. You don't have to follow the questions, but they may help you go deeper.*

*A) Before:*

***Simply tell what your life was like before you experienced Christ.***

- What was a key problem, attitude, emotion, or situation you were dealing with? Did something happen in your life that put you in crisis? Why was this hard for you?
- What did my life revolve around? Where did I find happiness, security?
- What were you searching for before coming to know Christ?
- What was I missing before, that I have now *because of Christ*?
- How did you try to satisfy your inner needs?

- *(Examples of inner needs are loneliness, insecurity, boredom. Possible ways to fill those needs include work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, lust, sex, video games)*
- Did any of this leave you dissatisfied? Disappointed? If so, how?
- How much was Christ a part of my life?

### ***Tips on "Before":***

- Remember that descriptions of concrete examples better establish you as a credible witness. Try to use word pictures as best you can. •
- For now, keep the focus on what was happening *in you*.
- Also, avoid being explicit and sensational in speaking of drugs, immorality, crime or drunkenness. You don't have to go into the details.

### ***B) How:***

### ***Explain how your faith was awakened & became more important to you.***

- At what moments did you really experience Christ? Did you feel close to God when you received one of the sacraments? (first communion, confession, confirmation)
- Did you have an experience of Christ at a retreat? Camp?
- Were you alone in prayer when you felt close to God?
- Did a friend or adult tell you something, or give you good example?
- What were my initial reactions?
- How did you feel during this moment with Christ?
- Simply tell the events and circumstances that caused you to have that experience of Christ.
- Perhaps it was a specific person that brought you closer to God? Think about what moments in particular in that relationship.
- Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of changing as a person, and trusting more in Christ.
- Where were you?
- What was happening at the time?
- What people or problems influenced your decision?

### C. After:

#### **Explain what has changed since your experience of awakening**

- Give specific changes and examples about the changes Christ has made in my life, actions and attitudes.
- How long did it take before I noticed changes?
- Am I motivated differently? Do I still struggle?
- Do I speak with God? Do I feel closer to him? Do I feel he is present in my life?
- How has your life in Christ made a difference?
- How has his forgiveness impacted you?
- How have your thoughts, attitudes and emotions changed?
- Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.
- Very importantly, and lastly, challenge your audience:
- To be more open to God in their lives
- To allow God to change their hearts, make a difference in their lives

#### **Tips on 'After':**

- **Stick to the point.** Your conversion and new life in Christ should be the main points.
- **Be specific.** Include events, genuine feelings and personal insights that clarify your main point. This makes your testimony tangible - something others can relate to.
- **Be current.** Tell what is happening in your life with God now, today.
- **Be honest.** Don't exaggerate or dramatize your life for effect. The simple truth of what God has done in your life is all the Holy Spirit needs to convince others of God's love.

#### **Phrases that may help you:**

**When describing negative experiences:** *heading in the wrong direction, separated from God, had no hope, rejecting God, missing the mark, falling away from the right path, a crime against God's law, disobedience to God, admit a wrong.*

**When describing positive experiences:** *spiritual renewal, to come alive spiritually, given a new life, sins forgiven, delivered from despair, found hope for life, God's message to man, the good news about Christ's purpose on earth, change one's mind, heart or attitude, make a decision to turn away, turn around, a 180 degree turn from what you were doing*

## 11. Tips for Public Speaking

*Feeling some nervousness before giving public speaking is natural can even be helpful (it makes you pray!), but too much nervousness can be detrimental if it distracts you. Here are some proven tips on how to control your butterflies and give better presentations:*

### 1. Practice.

**Practice. Practice!** Rehearse out loud with all equipment you plan on using. Practice in front of a mirror to see yourself speak. Revise as necessary. Work to control filler words (“um” “uh” etc). Practice, pause and breathe. Practice with a timer and allow time for the unexpected.

### 2. Get comfortable with the space and with the audience.

**Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice (test!) using the microphone and any visual aids. Before the event begins, take time to visit with and get to know some of the youth – it’ll make both of you more comfortable.**

### 3. Relax.

**Begin by addressing the audience. It buys you time and calms your nerves. Pause, smile and count to three before saying anything. (“One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand. Pause. Begin.) Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.**

### 4. Never apologize for any nervousness or problem.

**The audience probably never noticed it (and you surrender some of your credibility when you do.)**

### 5. Speak slowly, and thoughtfully.

**Try to keep eye contact with the youth. Speak to them, not around them.**

### 6. Don’t read!

**Get comfortable with your notes in point form. (Also, if you’ve got it on a PowerPoint slide.. they can read for themselves. Slides should help focus on an image, point, or quote – not contain the bulk of your talk).**

### 7. Concentrate on the message.

Concentrate on the main message, not the medium. Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.

**8. Gain experience.**

Mainly, your talk should represent you — as an authority and as a person. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

**9. Be comfortable.**

If you want to sit in one place, be sure you can be easily seen by the group. If you tend to walk or move around when you give a talk, try to avoid pacing, or repeated motions that can become distracting.

**10. Most importantly, be yourself!**

## 12. A Resource for Spontaneous Prayer

### *You-Who-Do-To-Through Prayer*

So... you've been asked to lead a prayer – to pray for someone who is speaking, to bless a meal or a meeting, or simply to ask God's help in a particular situation. You-who-do-to-through prayers follow an ancient pattern for making a short prayer with a single theme. Anglicans, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics call the pattern a *collect*, with the stress on the first syllable.

The YOU part is how you choose to address and praise God, such as:

- Almighty God
- Light of the world
- Creator of all that is good
- ElRoi, God who sees
- Great Healer

The WHO part names an attribute or action of God, such as:

- Who parted the Red Sea
- You love us despite our weaknesses
- Who fills the earth with life
- You know us better than we know ourselves

- You cast out demons and cured lepers

The **DO** part offers a petition connected to who you've just said God is, such as:

- We ask to sense your presence in a special way today
- Shine your love into our dark corners.
- Show us how to cherish what you create
- Reveal the opportunities you've planned for us
- Please release our brother from his addiction

The **TO** part explains why you're asking God for this, such as:

- So that this chapel service may touch those who doubt your power
- We long to live as one and bring you glory
- So that future generations may live in abundance
- May our congregation bless others in new ways
- Let his friends see what you can do

The **THROUGH** part affirms that Jesus is our Way to the Father, such as:

- We ask this for Jesus' sake
- We ask in Jesus' name
- Accept our prayer for the sake of your Son, our Savior
- Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER** (Some simple examples of You/who/do/to/through prayers):

*Almighty God, who parted the Red Sea, we ask to sense your presence in a special way today—so that our time of prayer may inspire those who doubt your power. We ask this for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

*Light of the world, you love us despite our weaknesses. Shine your love into our dark corners. We long to live as one and bring you glory. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Heavenly Father, God who sees, you know us better than we know ourselves. Reveal the opportunities you've planned for us. May our youth group bless others in new ways. Accept our prayer for the sake of your Son, our Savior. Amen.*

*Great Healer, you cast out demons and cured lepers. Please release our brother from his addiction. Let his friends see what you can do. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

*Adapted from <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/how-to-make-a-you-who-do-to-through-prayer/>*

## 13. Praying with and for Others

*From Abraham (Genesis 18) to St. Paul (1 Timothy 6:20), scripture is filled with moments where people prayed for others. Youth ministry often provides a unique opportunity for us to pray for others. The following is a simple format by which you might offer prayer ministry to a young person on retreat:*

- a. Ideally, pray for young people in pairs, in mixed teams, both for your comfort and for theirs.
- b. Set up an environment that is conducive to prayer. When possible, it's better to be sitting in chairs than standing or sitting on the floor (it's more comfortable, too.) You can include candles, a Bible, an image of Christ, and even some meditative music.
  - Don't forget Kleenex!
  - If there are multiple prayer teams at an event, ensure that they are far enough apart from the rest of the group and one another to prevent distractions.
  - There should be at least a couple of leaders not on prayer teams to help with the flow of the event and to help with any issues that may arise (discipline, emotional reactions, etc.).
- c. When a young person approaches your prayer station:
  - Welcome them and invite them to sit with you.
  - Ask the teen if he/she has anything specific going on that they want to pray about.
  - Ask if it's okay to put your hand on the person's shoulder (and respect their answer).
  - With a guy teen, the guy leads the prayer. With a girl teen, the girl leads. Both people can still pray – whoever is leading can leave a moment of silence when they are finished to allow the other person to say something.
  - Ask the teen if they have anything to add once you're done praying.
  - Don't be afraid of small moments of silence in the midst of the prayer, but be aware of the comfort level of the teen.
  - You can finish with an Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.

A couple other things to keep in mind:

- *The power of prayer comes not from the person who says the prayer, but from God who hears it. Don't worry about trying to get things exactly right – simply bring the person in front of you to Christ and leave them there.*
- *The best person who does prayer ministry is the one that the person being prayed over does not remember afterwards – he or she just remembers Christ.*

## 14. Leading Small Groups

*(Adapted from a resource provided to team members with NET Ministries of Canada.)*

*Small groups often take place after a notable part of a youth ministry event (talk, prayer experience, etc.) with the intention of helping young people process what they've experienced and apply it to their lives. Unfortunately, many youth leaders don't look forward to the experience of leading a small group – because the payoff takes a lot of work. Here's how to get more out of leading a small group.*

**Setting The Tone:** As a small group leader, you should take control of the tone of the group so that the group will look to you for direction. You want to be friendly but do not allow things to get out of control. Always start with a prayer and if there is even ONE new person have everyone go around and introduce themselves (share creative ways to introduce.) At the start, talk about confidentiality, respect, and wanting to hear from everyone. You will then have small group questions to follow. Hopefully, prior to the event, you have discussed as a leadership team the direction you wish to see your small group discussions going. They should generally start with some 'surfacey,' general questions and then go deeper. Always have open-ended questions rather than yes-or-no questions.

**Navigate your way:** You are the small group leader, so lead away! You should now navigate your way through the topic. Some teens may try to distract or stray away from the topic being discussed, especially if it is a difficult topic. Be accepting of their comments and then gently direct them back to the original topic. Be open to the Holy Spirit though. If they are straying from the actual topic, but what they are talking about is fruitful, go with it. For example, you are having a night on reconciliation, the conversation strays to the Eucharist and teens are really getting into it and asking you lots of questions! That's great. BUT if you are talking about reconciliation and the topic strays to the movie they saw last Tuesday, steer it back!

**Be prepared:** Have the questions handy *before* you break up into small groups. Know what time you're supposed to return and space your questions as best you can (both being done too quickly or going overtime disrupts the flow of the event).

**What should I share:**

You are also be encouraged to share during small group. Your sharing will be especially important to set the depth of sharing. If you go deep, so will they. Don't dominate the conversation though! The purpose of small group is for them to share, not listen to another talk from you. Here are some other tips about sharing:

1. If you have not resolved a particular struggle in your life (e.g. lots of emotion still tied to it, much pain, have not worked through or forgiven, etc.) you probably should not share. You should almost never share about suicide. This can only heighten the special needs situations.
2. Some areas of struggle should almost never be shared (such as detailed sexual sin) because it may present a great obstacle for the young people in looking past the sin and seeing the gospel.

**Small group Tips:**

1. You will have some teens who want to talk the whole time. If someone is dominating you can simply say "Luke, thanks for all you have to say. Maybe we can hear from some other people." If this is a continual problem, you may want to speak to them outside of the group. Also, if someone hasn't said anything, you can call them straight out by saying, "Sara, what do you think?"
2. *Silence* is a part of every small group experience. It can be very painful, but bear with it! Don't feel like you have to fill the silence, eventually they will talk. Sometimes silence allows them time to gather their thoughts.
3. Avoid debates in small group. If someone is intent on arguing with you, tell them you can discuss it further at the end of the night. We want this to be a comfortable place of sharing, and let's face it, most of us aren't comfortable with this type of conflict. Also, most times a debate won't get you very far. Some people just like to debate for the sake of debating.
4. Sometimes a teen may ask a question and you really just don't know the answer. That's okay! Just tell them that and offer to look it up yourself or speak to someone else about it try to get the answer. Having a catechism on hand might be a good idea. The small group can look things up together. Don't try to give them an answer that may be wrong.
5. If someone asks a question, first open it up to the rest of the group to see what they think before you give your almighty wisdom! They will probably respond a lot better if it comes from their peers.
6. Always thank them for their input. Even if what they are saying might be problematic (morally or theologically), never put them in a position where they wouldn't want to share again and be wrong. For the most part, you will be discussing their feelings about things anyway. They can't be wrong about that!

## 15. Music Ministry

**From the time King David ruled in Jerusalem, music has been central in the prayer & worship of God's people:**

- When the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, David appointed music to accompany it (1 Chronicles 15:2)
- The Psalms are a collection of sacred music from the Israelite people
- Vatican II Recognized the importance of music in the work of our Church:

**From a personal perspective, music matters:**

- Music acts as a soundtrack to much of our lives (driving and shopping and watching TV or movies) – take away the music and then
- Music is a language spoken differently by various generations (from boomboxes to walkman's & discman's to iPod's and beyond).

If we're doing music at Mass, we are faced with the challenge of picking music that is both good and appropriate for use in the Liturgy. Tom Booth, an incredibly gifted musician whose music can be found throughout Breaking Bread (and who helped found LIFE TEEN) cites a US Bishops document called *Music in Catholic Worship* to MCW when he discusses the **"Three judgments" – musical, liturgical, and pastoral:**

### **Musical Judgment**

***"When we look at a piece of music for Mass, we need to ask ourselves, "Is this song musically good?" It may have the right lyrical theme and may underscore the message of the holy scriptures, but can it musically carry the weight and timelessness of liturgy?"***

### **Liturgical Judgment**

***We may like a song for its musical characteristics; it may have a pretty melody or an interesting chord progression. But what of the theology of the lyric? Are the words consistent with the Catholic theology of salvation? Do the lyrics trivialize the message of the gospel? This is the liturgical judgment.***

*“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.” –SC 112*

*“There is a Latin maxim that addresses the centrality of worship in the life, identity and mission of the Church; “Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi”. The phrase in Latin literally means the law of prayer (“the way we worship”), and the law of belief (“what we believe”). It is sometimes written as, “lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi”, further deepening the implications of this truth - how we worship reflects what we believe and determines how we will live.” –Deacon Keith Fournier*

### **Pastoral Judgment**

***When deciding whether or not a particular piece of music is right for a liturgical celebration, we need to consider its pastoral effectiveness or relevance. There may be a song that the young church sings well, “owns” and prays well. That same song may not speak to an older generation. Some music may exclude members of the assembly by its own unique nature. Another musical choice may unite an assembly because of its lyric content, despite its musical style.***

*These three judgments or guidelines are meant to teach us about BALANCE. In liturgy planning it is not about winning or losing — my favorite song versus your favorite song. Liturgy is always about the Church, the People of God, encountering the sacred, and being transformed through that encounter. Our musical choices, sometimes good, sometimes not so good, need to point to and support that encounter.”*

## ***Outline of the Mass – with cues for music***

### **Introductory Rites**

- **Procession song/Entrance Chant** (a little more upbeat)
- Sign of the Cross, Greeting
- Penitential Rite: (you usually **sing Lord Have Mercy in Advent/Lent**) *There are several forms of the penitential rite – the two most common:*
  - 1) The Priest invites people to *we pause to recognize that we don’t always live up to being who God created us to be, and ask for His forgiveness.*, and then begins the Confiteor (I confess) which he concludes by praying: *May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.*

**All: Amen.**

**At this point you the Lord have Mercy is said or sung.**

2) **The priest invites people to pause and recognize that we don't always live up to being who God created us to be, and ask for His forgiveness.**

**The Lord have Mercy is said or sung, and he concludes with “may almighty God have mercy on us...”**

**This is immediately followed by the Gloria on Sundays outside of Advent/Lent, or special feast days during the week.**

After the Collect (the opening prayer, for lack of a better term), we sit to take in the Word of God.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

- First Reading
- **Responsorial Psalm – this can be sung, spoken, and in some cases you can sing the response while a reader proclaims the verses in between.)**
- Second Reading (only on Sundays & particular feast days)
- **Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia except during Lent) – be ready to play as soon as the priest or Deacon rises from his seat.**
- Gospel
- Homily
- Creed
- Prayers of the Faithful

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

**Preparation of the Gifts/offertory song** (more mellow.)

*-Many priests prefer that the music lasts until he is washing his hands*

*-If incense is used, keep singing/playing (even instrumentally) until the deacon incenses the assembly*

Preface & Eucharistic Prayer

There are three sung Responses – listen for these cues:

-Early in the first part of the prayer - “unending hymn of praise” - **Holy Holy Holy** -Immediately after the consecration - “The mystery of faith” – **Memorial Acclamation** -At the end of the Eucharistic prayer, the priest holds up the consecrated Eucharist and says or sings “Through Him, with in, and In Him ... all glory and honor... forever and ever” – and we respond *immediately* with the Great **Amen**

**Our Father** (can be sung – just be mindful of whether the assembly knows the sung version, and the spoken prayer of the priest in the middle)

Sign of Peace

**Lamb of God** (This is a litany for the breaking of the bread. Begin playing when the priest returns to the altar from the sign of peace.)

**Communion Songs** (more mellow)

– know the practice in whatever parish or community you are in... does the music ministry receive communion first or last? At times it can be helpful, if you have the musicians to do it, to have some of your group go at the beginning and some later. Many parishes expect a period of silence after communion as well.

**Concluding Rites**

- (Announcements usually happen here, but in some communities will happen after the prayer after communion)
- Prayer After Communion
- Blessing & Dismissal – some parishes do announcements around this time.
- **Recessional Song** (can be more upbeat)



Youth Choir, Our Lady of  
Consolation Parish, Melfort



# Appendix One

## Youth Ministry

### Activity Ideas and Games

Games (Sources: Camp St. Louis, OLVC, dowym.com, thesourcefym.com)

**Note: \* -means Covid adaptable (ensure sanitation, masks and distancing).**

**\* 1. Alphabit Soup:** Split your group into several teams. Give each (**member of a**) team a bowl of *Alpha-Bits* cereal. Each team must sift through the letters to spell words. They are given a time frame to do this (maybe 3 minutes or so). Remind them - no curse words or body parts. You can give points a number of ways:

-Number of letters in a word (ie: 3 letters=1, 4 letters=2 points, etc.) -the biggest word gets a lot of points

-teacher's name/Saint names get bonus points

**2. Animal Game (AKA Food Chain):** Start by getting all the teenagers to sit in chairs in a circle. Make sure they have plenty of elbow room between each chair. When everyone is seated, instruct everyone to think of an animal they like. Next, go around the room and have everyone say the name of their animal. (So, one person is dog, another is tiger, another is llama, etc.) No one in the circle can have the same animal; everyone must have a different animal chosen for themselves. Go around the circle a couple of times, asking teens to repeat their animal name. (By the way, the shorter the animal name, the better...but you don't have to tell them that!)

Select one person to stand in the middle of the group with a pool noodle. Then choose another person (let's say the guy who picked zebra) to start the game by saying he eats another student's animal in the circle. He might say, "Zebra eats octopus."

As soon as the student says, "Zebra eats octopus," the student holding the noodle begins looking for the student who is the octopus so he can whack him/her. Meanwhile, the octopus tries to avoid getting whacked by saying, "Octopus eats eagle," or whatever other animal he/she chooses.

If the whacker hits the octopus before that student can spit out a name, that student is now in the middle. However, if that student re-directs to another animal in time (by saying he/she eats a different animal), the whacker just keeps on going until he/she finally whacks someone before they can spit out their line. Here are a few rules to help govern play of this really fun little game:

1. No going back and forth between players. For example: "Cow eats cat!" "Cat eats cow!" No one can call out the animal's name that called them out.

2. If someone sitting in the circle accidentally says the animal name of the person holding the newspaper/noodle, they get whacked and sent into the middle of the circle. For example, if cow says, "Cow eats dolphin," and the dolphin is the whacker, then the student who is "cow" is now 'it'.

3. This game can also be played using names (noodle/name game) – but instead of saying so-and-so eats so-and-so, just say Peter-Mike, Mike-Luke, Luke-Jeannette, etc.

**3. Back to Base:** A base is decided and young people must run away and hide. They must then try and get back to base as quick as possible without getting caught.

Explain that in this challenge they will first have 20 seconds to run and hide before they must then try and be the quickest back to base. Allocate a base for the activity. It can be anything from a wall to a cone. We suggest a tree as a good standard, as it is easily visible and approachable from all sides. Explain that stopping them from getting back to base will be one of them who will be the first catcher. The first catcher job is to stop people getting back to base by tapping them and saying 'caught', 'tag' or something similar.

When someone is caught by a catcher, that person joins the catchers in their task to catch the rest of the group. Young people win a round of back to base if they manage to reach the base and shout 'safe', before being caught. You may also like to have a special prize for the first back each round but this is of course optional. If everyone is caught the victor is the first catcher.

**4. Balloon Stomp:** Give everyone a balloon and a piece of string or yarn. Have them blow up the balloon and tie it to their ankle. Then announce that they are to try to stomp out other people's balloons while keeping their own safe. Last person with a blown up balloon wins. (Be sure to have some guideline regarding the length of the string that the balloon is attached to. You don't want the balloon so tight against someone's ankle that it doesn't touch ground, and you don't want anyone to have a four-foot string either.)

**5. British Bulldog/Shark attack:** One bulldog or shark chosen. Everyone lines up on one side of field. Bulldog yells "British Bulldog!" (Shark yells "Shark Attack.") All run to other side. If tagged by Bulldog/Shark they plant their feet, are seaweed, and help catch others by tagging them without moving feet. Repeat until all are caught.

**6. Bum shuffle chair slap (AKA Shuffle your buns):** Chairs in circle, one empty chair. Person in middle tries to sit in empty chair. Everyone shuffle into empty on their right. If someone slaps the chair movement reverses to empty on left.

**7. Camouflage:** 1 person is it, closes their eyes, and counts to 20 while everyone else hides in the forest. Opens eyes, without moving feet calls people out he can see –anyone who is found is eliminated. After he can't see anyone, closes eyes, and again counts to 10. Everyone hides closer. Calls those he can see... closes eyes, calls out (repeat). The closest person remaining hidden wins.

**8. Card Bum Shuffle:** Everyone sits in a circle on chairs, and each person is handed a single playing card. (REMEMBER IT!) Leader collects all the cards, and shuffles them, then begins reading out the suits. When your suit is read, you move one space to the right. If someone is already there you move into their lap. If someone is in your lap when your card is read, you may not move. May end up with a row of 5

people in each other's laps, though be careful of safety. Game ends when one person makes it all the way around the circle.

**\* 9. Captain's Cabin:** Leader calls out a word/phrase & everyone has to do the associated action:

*(Dive In Leadership Handbook 2018 page 7)*

Bow – everyone races to the front of the room.

Stern – everyone races to the back of the room.

Starboard – everyone races to the right of the room.

Port – everyone races to the left of the room.

Captain's coming – everyone stands tall, salutes and shouts, 'Aye aye Captain.' Captain's wife – everyone curtseys. Scrub the decks – mime scrubbing on hands and knees.

Climb the rigging – everyone pretends to climb a rope ladder.

(Man the lifeboat – find a partner and hold both hands. Anyone without a partner is out.

Sharks – lie on stomach with feet up).

Freeze – stop all actions when this is called. If a further command is given without saying 'unfreeze' anyone obeying it is out.

*Variation: Same principal can be applied but each word is a saint name or whatever you want to teach. Example, every time the leader calls "Joan of Ark" action is to draw your swords and say "Vive La France!"*)

**10. Choose Your Base:** The leader explains that the group is about to play 'choose your base'. For this game, the leader first needs to explain that there will be several bases that the young people will need to choose from. These bases can be anything from corners of the room to certain point in a field. The only pre-requisite is that the bases have enough room for several people to gather at comfortably. We recommend having between 3 and 5 bases. Once you have chosen the bases we strongly suggest naming them as it makes it much easier later in the game. Once the bases have been allocated, explain that every round they will need to choose a base and move over to it in a set style. Several examples of things you could ask them to imitate are: a dinosaur, a robot, a particular dance style, a chicken, a monkey, a train, a martial artist/ninja, slow motion, their favorite farm animal.

Explain that every round, you will give them a different thing to choose a base as. They must then individually choose a base that they will go to while the second leader either leaves the area or closes their eyes. Once the leader who can still see the group sees that all the young people have chosen a base they must then call out loudly to the second leader asking them to choose one of the bases.

The second leader the loudly replies 'I choose [NAME OF BASE]' while still being unable to see the rest of the group and what base different people have chosen. The reason this conversation is done loudly is so that all the young people can. The young people at the base which the second leader chooses are now

out of the game and do not compete in future rounds. Make sure you keep them involved by having them all sit together near the middle to make a drum roll every time the second leader is choosing a base to knock out. At the end of a round, after a base has been chosen, call everyone back into the middle. If people have been knocked out, have them sit down together. When numbers begin to get low or you need to finish the game quickly a very easy way to finish is to announce at the start of the next round that to decide who the winners will be, the base which is chosen next time will be the winners instead of the losers of that round. These winners are now the winners of your game.

**11. Clothespin challenge:** Pass out about 4-5 clothespins per kid in the room and instruct them to pin them on their own sleeves. Explain that when the music begins, the object of the game is to get all clothes pins off themselves and on to someone else (chest/stomach is off limits.) Winner is the person with the least clothespins at the end of the game.

**12. Crocodile Dentist:** Giant size version of an old board game. Can be done with a small group or several small groups (should have no more than 6-8 people per group. Sit one person on a chair and blindfold them (the “Crocodile”). Place several objects (6-8) underneath the chair (“teeth” – we’ve used Styrofoam cups, foam balls, or Duplo). The rest of the team (the “dentists”) lines up fifteen feet from the crocodile. One at a time, they need to sneak up on the crocodile, grab a tooth, and return to the lineup *without being hit*. Any hit dentist drops their tooth immediately and returns to the back of the line.

**13. Defend the Balloon:** Make sure each team gets 50 balloons that are all the same color. (For example, if you have three teams, you need 50 yellow, 50 red, and 50 green.) If you can, make the colors represent the local school colors for a little added zeal!

Each team must defend its “treasure” (their pile of same-colored balloons) while attempting to steal or destroy the other team's “treasure.” Designate a time period (1-2 minutes) to play the game. When the time ends, each team's un-popped balloons each count 100 points for them. Additionally, balloons that have been stolen from another team that are un-popped, count 200 points each! If a balloon is popped, it counts nothing. (Depending on your team’s level of physicality, this can be played as a Capture the Flag style game, or just all-out full contact.)

**\* 14. Ducky Wucky:** Sit in circle. Person in middle blind folded, spun. Sits on a pillow on someone else’s lap (*sitting social distance away*), saying “Ducky Wucky?” Other person replies “Ducky Wucky who?” in a disguised voice. The blindfolded person can make the other repeat, and have 3 tries to guess who's lap he's in. If correct, trade places. If wrong start over with someone else.

**15. Featherweight relay (TP):** Form teams of equal numbers. Designate a starting line and a finish line. Have each team space its students across the playing field from the starting line to the finish line. Have them place the straw in their mouths. Tear off a square of toilet paper to each team’s first person. They must suck on the straw to hold the square with the other end (no hands!) On your cue, have the

first person run to the second person, who must receive the square by sucking on his or her straw. If the square does not make the pass, it is the carrier's responsibility to pick it up and transfer again. Once it reaches the end of the line, the person at the end must return the square to the first person, so that every team member has the opportunity to be the carrier.

**EXTREME ROUND:** Lose the straws and keep the square of TP airborne (no contact with people or other objects) – need to blow in the air to get it from one end to the other.

**16. Finger Grab:** Have the group stood or sat in a circle, then place their left hand flat, palm up, and their right index finger pointing in the air. Next, have them place their right finger on the left hand of the person to their right.

Explain that you are going to say a key word and when you say that word they have got to close their left hand and raise their right finger as fast as they can. The people who win the challenge are those who both catch the finger of the person to the left, but also escape the closing hand of the person to the right. (At this point you'll probably notice many of their left hands will be subtly closing to make it easier for them, so it is important to remind them again that their left hand needs to be flat.) You can use anything as a key word but '3' works well as you can count up to it and it doesn't take much thinking about how you'll set it up. As leader, you may enjoy throwing in some trick rounds to up the tension and generally have a laugh as this gets the young people more involved with the game. Examples of this may be: "1, 2, Tree", or "1, 2, 30".

\* **17. Five Word Skits:** From small groups, brainstorm 5 random words (if your group needs encouragement, tell them to pick a place, object, crisis, etc.). Pass list on to another group and have them create a skit that somehow includes all of those words.

**18. Foot stomp:** everyone tries to step on each other's feet. If your foot gets stepped on you are out.

**19. Four on the Couch:** Setup – a circle that includes Four marked chairs or a "couch" that can fit four people (everyone else sits in on unmarked chairs or on the ground). How to play:

Split everyone into two equal teams and ask them to sit in a circle. Add one empty seat. When starting, each participant needs to sit next to his/her opponent on both sides (alternating team members), including the four people on the "couch". Hand out the pieces of paper and pens (one per person). Ask everyone to write their names on their piece of paper and to put their pieces of paper in the bag. After this, pass around the bag and ask everyone to draw one piece of paper with someone else's name on it. Each person should read their own piece of paper without letting anyone else know what his or her paper says.

Explain that the goal of the game is to get four of their teammates on the couch. The person on the right of empty chair/spot calls the name of another game participant. The person whose piece of paper has the called name sits in the empty chair, and trades names with the one who called them.

Whoever sits on the right of the new empty chair calls out another name (you cannot call the same name twice in a row.) Continue this pattern, the first team to have four of their members on the couch wins the game.

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**20. Gorilla/Man/Gun:** This game is played the same way as with "Paper, rock, scissors." The difference is the symbolic gestures used. To start, everyone is to find a partner. (If your group has an odd number, don't worry, because those who get out in the first round, will open up for those who didn't get in.) Once everyone is ready to play with their partner, students are to stand back to back. At the word "Go" students turn around immediately giving their gesture of play. Here is how it is done. Students decide at "go" what they are going to be. GORILLA roars out loud with hands beating chest. MAN just stands there with his/her head faced up (as a stance of pride) with hands and arms folded. GUN is using the hand shaped like a gun and the person says bang. Here is the rules: Gorilla beats man (because he his bigger and stronger); Man beats gun (because he invented it); and gun beats gorilla. Whoever beats their partner, goes and finds another partner who won, and losers are out. As you continue to play the game, it will come down to a final two...

**\* 21. How are you?** Divide into groups of groups of 4, and all say "How are you Mike?" Mike says "I'm great, how are you Jeannette?" Jeannette "I'm Exuberant, how are you Peter?" Every answer has to be a positive emotion, if someone stalls or repeats one that has already been said, group yells "Banished, Banished, Banished!" and, that individual is eliminated. This continues until there is lone survivor, who then forms group of 4 with other survivors.

**22. Human foosball:** Split the kids into two teams, have a captain decide who goes in which rows and how many in each row. Each entire team faces one direction and has to stay that way. They link arms by holding the person's elbows next to them. The whole row has to stay within their boundaries like in the game, but they can slide back and forth, left and right.

When you play inside you can mark the boundaries with masking tape or tables on their sides, and if you play outside you can use paint (if acceptable) or tape or flour. Watch for obstacles and consider having people outside the game to toss the ball back in. Use a SOFT (nerf) ball!

**23. Jenny's Game (Hot Potato with a twist):** music plays while a shoe/hat/glove is passed around circles of 5- 8 students. When the music stops, the student with the item is given an activity to do. After doing this activity (each time they receive the item for the duration of the game), they are able to pass

the item on until it returns to them and they must repeat the activity. Each player may receive only 2 activities, and then they pass it on to another player (no matter how many times they are caught.)

Activities can include: Scratch your chin saying "hmm... interesting," do 3 push-ups or jumping jacks, recite "I'm a little teapot" (with actions), do your best evil laugh, sing "Twinkle Twinkle little star," run around your circle like a race car, yelling Aussie, Aussie, Aussie (group replies "oi, oi, oi), go find someone in another circle and offer them a compliment, act out a dramatic death scene, high Five me

**24. Jockeys:** Split your group into two even circles (outer circles are 1's/inner circle is 2's). This'll create 2 circles: an inner circle who are the 'horses' and an outer circle who are the 'jockeys'. Once the young people are in place it is worth mentioning this will be their present role as it helps with explanation later. Now the young people are numbered and know their roles; explain to the jockeys that you are going to shout out instructions and they have to follow the said instructions to stay in.

These instructions are:

- Jockey Up: The Jockeys put their hands on the shoulders of their 'horse'
- Jockey Down: The Jockeys put their hands down by their sides
- Jockey Switch: The Jockey and Horse change places so that the horse is now acting as the jockey and the jockey is now acting as the horse.
- Jockey Left: All the Jockeys (and not the horses )run to their left around the outside of the circle to try and get back to their horse first.
- Jockey Right: All the Jockeys (and not the horses) run to their right around the outside of the circle to try and get back to their horse first. There are several ways young people can be knocked out of this challenge:
  - They don't follow an action when you say 'jockey' in front of it.
  - They follow an action when you don't say 'jockey' in front of it. This is similar to 'Simon says', for example you could say 'up' instead of 'Jockey up'
  - They are the last to get back to their horse in one of the races that ensue 'jockey left' or 'jockey right'.
  - They flinch or do any action which is not what you have asked them to do. If a jockey is knocked out, their horse is knocked out as well. When leading this game, give a flurry of commands very quickly to try and confuse the groups. When a pair is knocked out, they will need to stand out the way. However, try to keep them involved by keeping them close and having them be your judges. As judges get them to keep an eye on those who are still playing. The winning pair follows all the instructions without any errors until every other pair is knocked out.

**\* 25. Jump/turn/twizzle:** Everyone jumps when leader says **jump**, turns 90 degrees when leader says **turn**, spins 360 degrees on **twizzle**. People are eliminated if they can't keep up. Leader tells stories with words, and tricks people by clarifying rules expecting people to keep obeying. Example "ok, guys, when I say **twizzle** you don't just **turn** 90 degrees, you **turn** all the way around, and you **jump** to do it. So a **twizzle** is like a **jump, turn, turn, turn, turn** all in one action."

\* **26. Ladders (twist on duck, duck, goose):** Sit in 2 parallel lines on ground (six feet apart), with your feet (connected to the person across from them). Number the pairs. When that number is called, each pair (person) races through the middle to one end, (over people's legs), back around to other end around outside, and back to their spots through the middle. Keep track of score.

\* **27. Laundry Basket Chaos** (Great game in tight spaces): Split group into 4 color themed groups, with arm band or something to indicate team (Streamers, tape, etc.) Place a basket in each corner of the room assigned to each color. Youth have to try to score balls in their basket without leaving their chair.

**28. Musical chairs of death:** Basically it is like musical chairs, but with a twist. First, set up the chairs in a circle with seats facing out then when the music plays, students walk around the chairs. (There needs to be TWO less chairs than students.) When the music stops, students scramble for a seat. Those who find a seat are safe until the next round. The two who cannot find a chair must run to a predetermined "safe zone" (like a door, or a wall) while adult leaders are throwing large Nerf balls at them. If one or both of the students are hit by the balls, they are out. If they are not hit, they are still in the game. Continue until there is only one winner.

**29. Musical Squirt Gun:** Youth sit in a large circle, and one or more (loaded) squirt guns is passed out among the group. When the music starts, the squirt gun is passed clockwise around the circle. When music stops, person holding the squirt gun is eliminated – but is give 2 shots with the squirt gun. They can shoot the person on their left twice OR the person on their right twice OR one shot each to the person on their left or on their right. Winners will be very wet...

\* **29. Ninja:** Players stand in a circle. They will take turns, going around the circle. The player who is up can make one quick motion in order to chop at the hand or the arm (elbow down to the fingertips) of another player. The motion must last not much more than 1 second. The player freezes in the position he or she ends in. The player being assaulted must try, also with one quick move, to evade being chopped. This move must also last not much more than 1 second and the player then freezes in whatever position he or she ends in. If a players' arm is chopped, they lose that arm and must hold it behind their back. If they lose both arms, they are eliminated from the circle. If a players' move is not swift and quick, they may lose an arm or be eliminated from the circle (your call).

**30. Partner Dodge Ball:** Normal dodge ball rules, but in pairs. Everyone has to link arms with a partner, and play elimination dodge ball against everyone else. If partner is hit, he can no longer throw, but he can still block to defend surviving partner. Once both are hit, both sit down.

\* **31. Play-doh Pictionary:** Pictionary, but with Play-doh. Have a list of words that could be sculpted in play-doh. Divide into teams. Have a representative come up front from each group. Whisper a Pictionary word (like "dog") to the group and they must run back to their group and, without talking, mold that

word with Play-doh. Whoever guesses the word must return to the leader, say the word, and return to mold a new one. First group through the list wins.

*Roaming twist: Have the person with the list wander around the facility – people need to find the leader with the list (can be anywhere).*

**\* 32. Protect the Pope:** Have each class stand in a wide circle with two people in the middle. One person in the middle is the Pope, the other is a swiss guard. The people in the circle have the nerf ball, and throw it at the Pope. The swiss guard may do anything to block the ball with his body: jump, squat, dive, etc. The ball may NEVER touch the Pope. If the ball touches the Pope at any time, the person who threw the ball (or the last person to touch it) then becomes the Pope, the Pope becomes the swiss guard, and the swiss guard goes back into the circle.

What makes this exciting is that from the moment the Pope is hit, the new Pope is vulnerable because the transition is instantaneous. The new swiss guard must be fast at getting into the circle to defend him or her. This sometimes makes papal turnover pretty quick, but it's exciting.

**\* 33. Psychiatrist:** One person leaves the room, everyone agrees on a psychological disorder that they all share, example, everyone is a liar or all sentences begin with letter S, psychiatrist is brought back and begins asking questions, tries to diagnose disorder.

**34. Pull Up:** Have students sit in a circle. Invite an odd number of volunteers into the middle - somewhere between 1/4 and 1/3 of the entire group. Explain that you'll play music and their task is simple – pull up people of the opposite gender until the music stops. You do this by finding someone, pulling them up by the hand, and sitting down in their spot. The gender (or team) with the smallest # of people in the middle get a point. Ground rules: you can't refuse to get up, you must go at least 5 seats away from the last spot you were in, and if music stops mid-pull-up, and bum-to-chair contact is still happening, person in the middle stays in the middle; if there is no bum-to-chair contact, person being pulled up goes to the middle, and other person sits in their seat.

Add a variety of actions (1 round per action): Ballerina, Gorilla, Secret agent, Barnyard animals, Superheroes, Supermodels, Ladies/Gentlemen

**35. Rip Off:** Divide into two teams. One team places a 1.5 foot long strip of duct tape horizontally on each of their backs. The other team places a 1.5 foot long strip of duct tape vertically on their back. (You can use different colored tape if you want and name the teams by the colors. i.e. Yellow vs. Black). Have teams separate in a large playing area, preferably at night. The object is to "rip off" the tape from their backs. Once their tape is removed they are out of the game.

**\* 36. Rock Paper Scissors evolution:** Everyone starts out as an egg. You find another egg and play Rock-Paper- Scissors. The winner "grows" into a chicken who finds another chicken to play against. Whoever wins "grows" into a dinosaur. The loser returns to being an egg. Once a dinosaur you must find another dinosaur to play against. If you lose you step down to a chicken. The next step is becoming a prince or princess, which of course means playing against another prince or princess. If you win you become a King or Queen and stand off to the side. If you lose you return to a dinosaur. The game is played until there is one egg, chicken, dinosaur and prince or princess. All other players will be kings or queens.

Eggs waddle on the ground in a little ball, chickens walk and squat while flapping their wings and "clicking", dinosaurs "roar" standing up. Princes/princesses "prance" around holding an imaginary scepter while kings and queens stand off to the side victoriously.

**\* 37. Rolling Ball Gauntlet:** Split the group into teams of about 10. Next, make one big circle with all the young people, and send one of the groups in the middle. The surrounding groups sit down while the group in the middle stands up. Now, the surrounding groups will roll all the dodgeballs toward the group in the middle, which will try to dodge all the balls coming at them in every direction. Once they get hit they are out. The last person standing is the winner.

Once one group has had a go, send in the next group and continue doing so until all groups have had a go. As an additional twist, you could have a final where all the winners of previous rounds now enter for a final time against each other, with the last person standing being the grand winner!

**\* 38. Scratch (wink) Exterminator:** Everyone closes eyes. Select a the "Exterminator" by patting someone on the top of the head (**extended object**). Once awake, everyone walks around (shaking hands - Exterminator ('scratches' the inside palm of their intended victims (don't have to do this each time) – and after shaking two other hands, victim is terminated. The rest of group tries to guess who the Exterminator was. (Can also play **wink** or hand squeeze variations).

**39. Sharing God's Love:** Have everyone sit in a circle and two youth to stand inside the circle, where the bucket/table is located. Give them each a noodle. The object of the game is for the student to swat someone (share God's love) and run back to the bucket/table, put the noodle down, and get back to where the person they swatted was sitting, before they can grab the noodle out of the bucket/table and swat them back. If they are able to hit the student back, before they make it back to the spot, then the one who got swatted back is now "it" with the noodle. If the other person swats them back, they remain in the middle.

**\* 40. Snowball Fight (Indoor):** To prepare the game, divide the room in half with something and split the young people in half – one lot on one side and the other lot on the other.

The scrunched up paper balls will be your snowballs and its worth having two black bags full so you can dump a roughly equal amount on either sides area at the start of the game.

Before you dump the paper out of the bag on their sides, explain that they have a time limit of X amount and to win they must have cleared their zone the most by throwing the 'snowballs' at the other team.

From here you can let carnage unfold and keep them up to date on how long they have left. A nice time limit is 90-120 seconds, as its long enough for them to have a great time throwing the paper but short enough that it won't drag towards the end.

Once the time limit has run out, have the young people stand at the back of their zone so you can tell which team has won the game. It doesn't have to be an exact count; its easiest if you just make a snap first decision.

**41. Spaghetti Relay:** Relay. Split group into teams of 5 or 6, and place them in a line between 2 tables. Place one cup full of cheerios on one table, and one empty cup on the other table. Each team member is given an uncooked piece of spaghetti - without using their hands (except to take the cheerio from the first cup) they must pass cheerios, one at a time, without touching it, to the empty cup on the other side. Have a time limit – most cheerios at the other end wins. (Can also be done with toothpicks and lifesavers).

**42. Splat:** Have the young people stand up in a circle around you. Explain that you are the splat master and that through this game you hope to find the new splat master. You'll do this by having a splat show down; this works by having you in the middle splatting someone in the circle. When this happens, that person ducks and the person on their left and right turn and splat each other. The fastest person stays in the game, the slowest sits down.

The way you, or anyone, 'splats' someone else is by making a pistol with your hands and fingers, extending your arms towards the person you want to splat and shouting splat at the desired person. As the person in the middle, you'll want to make it clear who you're splatting and the best way to do that is really extending your arms.

**43. Additional rules to help the game run well are:**

- If the person you splat does not duck before the person on their left and right splat each other, they are out and will have to sit down. You may like to explain this as that the person has just been splatted in both sides of the head by the people around them and therefore has to sit out.
  
- If someone shouts splat when they're not supposed to, they are out. You may like to explain this as that the person has been 'splat happy', wasted all their ammunition and because splat fuel is very expensive and hard to come by they will have to sit out as well.

- If you can't hear them say 'splat' it doesn't count. You may like to explain this as splat pistols do not have silencers and are very loud; therefore, if you can't hear it, clearly you haven't shot it.
- Only the word 'Splat' counts. No 'Bang', 'Splash', 'Boom' etc. This just ensures an even playing field. Technically, the word does not have to be 'splat' but it is helpful to ensure everyone is saying the same word. When you, the leader, shout 'Splat Bomb' everyone has to hit the floor as soon as possible; the last to do so is out and will have to sit down. As the game progresses you will have fewer and fewer people standing in the circle. To keep people involved, when they're out explain that they are now your judges and therefore if a round is too close for you to call, you'll defer to their judgement.

Eventually, you'll have only two people remaining. At this point, it's quite nice to get everyone to give the finalists a round of applause. Once done, however, explain that while they've both done very well, there can only be one winner and to decide who it is they will have a splat duel; have the finalist stand back to back in the middle, explain for every word you say they must take a step forward. When you eventually say 'splat' they must turn around and splat each other – the fastest is the winner.

**\* 44. Synchronized Swimming on Land:** Just like it sounds... have them create a synchronized swimming routine (30 seconds-1 minute) which they will need to perform on land. Play random music when they perform... and have a camera handy.

**\* 45. Who started the movement?** Have everyone sit in circle while one person leaves the room. A leader is assigned to guide (simple) actions such as clapping, patting head, rubbing belly, etc. Leader can change actions at will – when the outsider returns, he/she must guess who the leader is.

**\* 46. Bim, Bam, Bom:** Arrange people into a circle. Explain that basically all they have to do is say one of three words, either 'bim', 'bam' or 'bom', when it comes around to them. The word they say is determined by where they are sat as the person who starts a round says 'bim', the second says 'bam' and the third says 'bom'. This sequence is then repeated with everyone else in the circle and continues until someone slips up. The key twist to the game is that everyone only has half a second to say their word. If they mispronounce their word, say the wrong word, laugh when saying their word, stumble on their word or do anything other than say their word at the right time, they are out of the game. When someone loses a round, the game restarts with them no longer playing. You may want to change the direction you go round the circle to increase difficulty, but, as it's quite fast-paced anyway, people will drop out quickly and those who aren't in the round are still very involved. Last three standing are the winners!

**47. Carpets:** Music plays and everyone roams around, music stops and everyone jumps on a carpet/piece of cardboard, all huddled together. Pieces diminish in size and number as game progresses and people are eliminated.



# Appendix Two

Internet Activities / Games

Prayers, Meditations, readings,  
videos, retreat ideas, and more!

## Website/ Online Activities and Games

**Note:** These sites are suggested for games and activities for use in youth ministry and not an endorsement of the site. Discretion and common sense must be used in selection of activities.

### Game Ideas



<http://www.creativeyouthideas.com/resources/game-ideas>

### Engineering Challenges for kids

<https://frugalfun4boys.com/4-engineering-challenges-kids>



### Teampedia

Games like: The Egg Drop, Toxic Transport, Jigsaw Puzzle Blind Polygon and more!!

[https://www.teampedia.net/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://www.teampedia.net/wiki/Main_Page)

### Ultimate Camp Resource

- Activities such as: Hot Chocolate River, Lift the Pail (Baptism) etc.
- <https://www.ultimatecampresource.com>



### The Chaos and the Clutter

This site is designed for games at home, however, many of these games can be used and adapted for your Youth Ministry group.

<https://www.thechaosandtheclutter.com/archives/family-fun-night-minute-to-win-it>

<https://www.thechaosandtheclutter.com/archives/dollar-store-minute-to-win-it>

### Youth Ministry Downloads and Ideas



This site has a wide variety of power point games that can be downloaded for great fun! Mad Gab, Family Feud, Christmas Wheel of Fortune and many more. It includes a wide variety of game ideas as well as videos on Known- Understanding our Identity in Christ-sermon series, World Religions Sermon series and many more!

<https://www.youthdownloads.com/games/mad-gab-powerpoint-game/>



[www.bustedhalo.com](http://www.bustedhalo.com)

A wonderful site for ministry resources, videos, podcasts, clips to use at retreats, info on Saints, scripture, social teaching, Pope Francis, questions of faith, virtual retreats and more!!

**An example of short videos available on this site:**

#### **WATCH: Lent in Three Minutes**

THE EDITORS FEBRUARY 17, 2020 Busted Halo explains the significance of the Lenten season of prayer, fasting, and giving, and how you can make the most of this time of repentance and renewal.

- 
 This site has a variety of youth games provided with scripture references provided and related themes. If you wish to purchase game packs they are available in age groupings. However the free games on this site are a good easy resource to access and use.

<https://youth-group-games.com/blogs/free-games/>

## QUICK LINKS:

- 
 Youth Ministry 360 – Resources, Sunday school and Bible stories, disciple now and Retreat weekends, games
- 
 Youth Worker – Offers resources specifically for ministry leaders and pastors as they minister teens and preteens. You'll find mini-movies, worship tracks, and tips and tools to develop leadership, discipleship, and encouragement for students in their walk with God. Many free resources.
- 
 Teen Sunday School – Online source for the best youth Sunday school curriculum and ministry resources. Printable material, lessons, small group bible studies, activities, skits, games and more.
- 
 Fervr – A Christian youth website that publishes daily articles, reviews and video content for teens. The site includes information on Bible reading, understanding God, entertainment, youth group ideas and more!
- 
 Children's Ministry – A resource for children's ministers packed with practical, authentic ministry ideas – games, devotions, crafts, and more.

- 
**Catholic Mom** – A resource for Catholics seeking spiritual enrichment for their families. Includes information on the sacraments, saints, mass lesson plans, crafts, activities, and coloring pages.
- 
**4 Catholic Educators** – Resources for Catholic Educators including lesson plans, teaching tools, saints, angels, moral issues, sacraments, and more!
- 
**Catholic to the Max** – Catholic apparel, art, gifts, and home décor.
- 
**Creative Youth Ideas** – Owners of this site have compiled resources taken from years of involvement and experience in youth ministry. It includes small group discussions, game ideas, creative teaching ideas, illustrations, object lessons and everything else that you need to build a strong youth ministry.
- 
**TeamPedia** - a collaborative encyclopedia of free team building activities, icebreakers, teamwork resources, and tools for teams. Many wonderful resources for group leaders, trainers, teachers, counselors, youth groups, ... anyone wanting to enhance collaboration and creativity.
- 
**Youth Group Games** – Everyone’s favorite place for great games, icebreakers, ideas and activities for youth groups, team building and more.
- 
**Ultimate Camp Resource** – an excellent resource filled with games, skits, songs, icebreakers, team building activities, and much more – great for camping and Youth Groups!!
- 
**Chaos and the Clutter** – This site is designed for games at home; however, many can be used and adapted for your Youth ministry group.
- 
**Loyola Press** – Filled with Catholic resources and faith formation programs for all ages – kids, teens, family, parish ministry, prayer and more.
- 
**Seedbed - top-20-youth-group-games** – This site has some of the top youth group games. Be sure to check out the section on free resources.

- 
 Spiritually Hungry – Many youth ministry ideas including: 15 ways to do Youth ministry virtually; how to find youth group volunteers; how to start a small group; icebreakers for youth groups; year end parties; conversation starters; as well as many personal discipleship resources.
- 
 Youth Downloads – Contains a variety of power point games, as well as videos on Known-Understanding our Identity in Christ-sermon series, World Religions Sermon series and many more.
  -
- 
 FORMED - provides the very best Catholic content from more than 60 organizations to help parishes, families and individuals explore their faith anywhere. Supporting thousands of movies, children’s programs, eBooks, audio, parish programs and studies direct to your browser, mobile or connected device.
- 
 WCACYM (Western Canadian Association of Catholic Youth Ministers): a source of community, networking, support, and professional & spiritual development for everyone involved in youth ministry.
- 
 CCYMN (Canadian Catholic Youth Ministry Network)
- 
 Catholic Organization - gives the largest and broadest population of Catholics worldwide easy access to comprehensive, educational and timely information about Catholicism, and provides a range of easy methods to integrate their faith into their daily lives.
- 
 Catholic Christian Outreach A university student movement dedicated to evangelization, challenging students to live in the fullness of the Catholic faith. At a time when young people are making decisions that shape the course of their lives, we introduce them to Jesus and help them become leaders who will renew the world.
- 
 Vocations



**Prince Albert Diocesan Forms**

- [Appendix 9 - General Registration](#)
- [Appendix 10A - Child Health Form](#)
- [Appendix 10B - Adult Health Form](#)
- [Appendix 11B - Parent Information Sheet](#)
- [Appendix 12 - Offsite Travel Form](#)

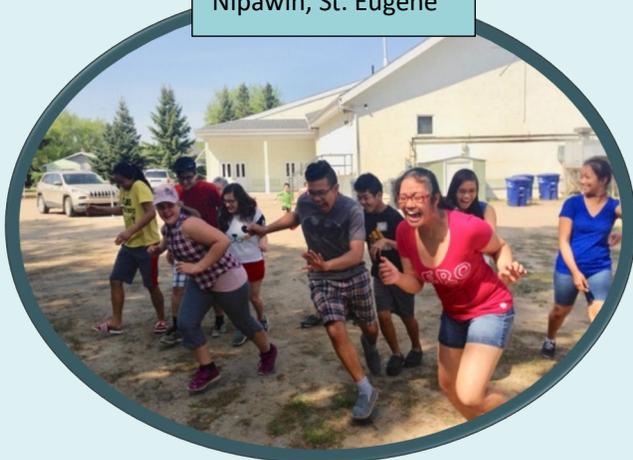


Chutes

Fr. Ramel shows us how it is done!



Nipawin, St. Eugene





Our Lady of Consolation,  
Melfort - Family Retreat



E'cole Monseigneur Blaise Morand Elementary School



St. Antoninus, Pierceland

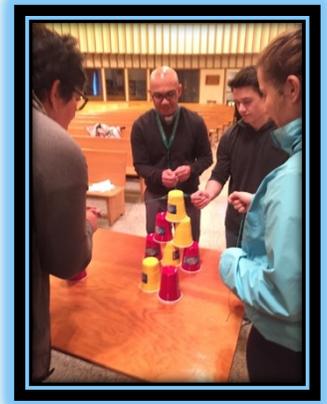




# Appendix 3

## Join the Journey

### Retreats



## School and Diocesan

### Retreat Activities



Adapted for Faith Development

By Brian Bauche and Dave McQuaid

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## **1. Our Beginnings**

Five years ago, the Youth Ministry director/coordinator for the Diocese of Prince Albert had decided to recognize his calling to become a Priest. This left the Youth Ministry office position vacant. At the time, there was some consideration for not filling this position immediately, but rather postponing it a year or two. After wrapping up a career as a high school teacher and working with youth as a Catholic teacher for the

majority of my career, I was not excited about the prospect of seeing this important ministry paused for any amount of time. As a result of my voice being heard, the Bishop suggested that since I was coming to the end of my career in education, he asked if I might be interested in the job. After politely declining the offer, and after further inquiry and prayer, I decided to fill the position temporarily. Rather than becoming an employee of the diocese, I offered to take on the position, on a contractual basis with the intent of being more present in the parishes.

Because of the vastness and size of our diocese, and the fact that I was currently only available half time, I began working with deaneries 4, 5 and 6 with deaneries 1 to 3 “on call” if they needed support. This was a huge undertaking! I then as a result, began in small manageable ways planning to re-structure the idea of youth ministry as it had existed prior to this time.

In September of 2015, Brian Bauche (retired teacher/administrator, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools), agreed to provide youth ministry in two of the six deaneries within the diocese. Deaneries 2 and 3 on the east side of the province. (At this time Deanery 1 had a working committee formed to support the needs there). Now, as a team of two persons, we began with a five-year plan as requested. Once the plan was approved, implementation began in late September of 2015. Together, we created our vision for youth ministry in the diocese. It is always evolving and changing to better meet the needs of the youth and parishes of the diocese. Our main emphasis was to be present in the parishes and throughout the diocese. Evangelization means that we go to the people. And so it began...

### **a) The parish connection**

The natural place for us to begin with our retreat formats was of course, within the parishes of the diocese. We began a series of parish visits, introducing ourselves, explaining our sense of direction and soliciting support and prayer for our work in encouraging existing youth groups and the development of new youth groups. Interest began, and we visited parishes to facilitate youth group gatherings, as well as parish and family gatherings related to the life of the church. Groupings were at times small in the initial stages, but interest grew. Over the years more youth ministry programs began. It became evident to us that we were not reaching the numbers of Catholic children we had hoped to serve. They simply were not in the churches. This realization led us to the conclusion that in order to reach them, we would have to go where they were. This led us to considering retreats for Catholic Schools within the diocese.

### **b) The school connection**

Our delivery of retreats to the school settings definitely increased the numbers of youth we would now have the opportunity to impact. This “expansion”, also brought with it the need to increase the diocesan resources at our disposal. As music is an integral part of our ministry, audio resources had to be upgraded and/or expanded. As well, the amount of resource materials required for our planned activities and challenges needed to grow. Our school retreats are high energy, and very interactive. Students are challenged in their faith and responsibilities in and to our world.

Current school division themes are used to direct our retreats. As well, if schools prefer to suggest a particular thematic approach that responds more directly to the current situation within their communities, we make every attempt to incorporate those focuses into our planning. Our own personal experiences within education was instrumental in guiding our sense of direction within youth ministry.

### **c) Our Direction**

As with most things in life, it was certainly “**grow as you go**”... We began with a revised version of successful and familiar leadership and team building formats, and started by rationalizing those formats to the “Catholic/Christian” perspective. It was a good place to start, but definitely required some changes to fit the needs of a good youth ministry program. What it did do for us was clarify the “process”. Of course, being educators of both elementary and high school experience, we were well aware of two major things:

**...the youth of today have a decidedly shorter attention span and.....**

**...Youth have a unique ability to identify those who don't firmly believe in what they are saying.**

With these two understandings in mind, we developed our version of what we refer to as our “retreat foundations”. We believe that without addressing all of these “foundations”, we seriously jeopardize our chances of success in ministry to youth.

## **2. Retreat Foundations**

**Music, engaging activities, a clear message, and a sense of purpose.**

For us, the four foundations listed above are the core items for consideration when developing our retreats for youth. If we are missing anyone of these critical building blocks, then we miss the mark.

Of course, all of these fit under the major umbrella of sharing the love of God. While recognizing the diversity of faiths within our classrooms and youth groups, we do this most assuredly within the “Catholic” context.

### **a. Music**

We do keep up with much more contemporary offerings with our music. We gather music that is very likeable, and sing-able. This music is adapted to meet the particular age group whether it be elementary or high school, and is always engaging! The lyrics fit the message and theme.

Our favourite go artists' are, Matt Maher, Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Bethany music, Kari Jobe, and Rend Collective experiment to name a few. Also, we love playing for Masses and adoration!

#### **b. Engaging activities**

Each of the activities we use is garnered from the internet or developed from our own needs. Most are revised to suit our purposes, and all are designed to be high activity, fun, and to bring to the forefront feelings and emotions that will be discussed within the context of the main message. Without a doubt, we have hit the mark with most of these activities as students are seldom disengaged, always appreciative and 'get' the connection to their faith and real lives.

#### **c. Clear Message**

Our talks are clear, simple and brief. If a talk is not age appropriate in delivery and length, then we are wasting their time and defeating the purpose.

#### **d. Sense of purpose**

Just like adults, (even more so), the young do not like doing anything when they see little purpose. This is why we go out of our way to "draw a continuous thread" so to speak through all that we do during our retreat day. This common thread runs through all aspects of the retreat, thus reinforcing the main message(s) for the day. Students and staff recognize this and remain engaged and appreciative because of it. It is all tied together, ....it has to be!

In conclusion, suffice it to say, it is never just 'fun and games' with youth. Although to the casual observer, it may look like this, each of our songs, activities and challenges are carefully **debriefed** to bring out specific learnings. Learnings that are foundational to our faith as Catholics. The **opportunity to debrief** is why we went to all of the work of choosing and facilitating music, designing activities and providing talks and purpose. The debriefs throughout the day are instrumental in tying it all together with meaning.

### **3. Debriefing**

#### **a) The team approach**

So what is a team?

Simply, it's a group of people intent upon and working toward a common goal.

Think about the best team of which you've been a part, a sports team, a drama team, a music team (band), a youth group? Chances are, that team wasn't awesome from day one. The best teams become great because they learn from their experiences and they make adjustments to improve.

A large part of that success comes from what is referred to as debriefing. Debriefing is a structured learning process designed to continuously evolve plans while they're being executed. It is an opportunity for reflection, listening, questioning, probing, and cooperation with a focus toward improvement and growth.

There is no doubt that properly executed debriefing improves a team's performance! As well, as each individual improves, it follows naturally that a team's performance improves,.

## **b) The ministry approach**

Although we use teams for challenges and activities within youth ministry, our direction is focused more on "personal" improvement and growth. All of our activities and challenges have a greater purpose than their seemingly simple appearance. The challenges and activities lend support to the higher meaning and deeper understanding of the messages surrounding the theme of a particular event. From the challenges placed before our participants, learnings are discussed and rationalized within the context of our Catholic Christian perspective. Just as in any team, individual development and growth will help individuals to improve thereby enhancing any teamwork or team they may belong to throughout their lives.

Rationalizing any activity towards the deeper understanding of a theme, requires faith and creativity! It is perhaps somewhat like music. Take for example a simple 3-4 basic chords in any key. Those same three or four chords can be used to create thousands of recognizably different songs. It just takes that willingness and creative attitude to bring them forth. Games or creative challenges can be rationalized in many different ways. Be creative!

**Debriefing is not "telling" participants what you think they have learned.** Rather, it is a careful coaching of participants to "dig deeper", to draw out understandings and meanings that speak to their own life experience(s). Just as we are each unique and different, so it is that a number of different people can experience the same challenge, but come through it with totally different understandings and insights. It is always enlightening to hear the insights and learnings of others. If we truly listen, we can at times learn things that we perhaps never even considered.

## **4. Debriefing in this manual.**

When planning for a youth retreat or event, consideration should always be given to selecting age appropriate events that provide a challenge and the opportunity for learning. It is important to use activities

that are engaging and fun. Having fun is a very important and valuable part of the process. It can make the entire event both meaningful and memorable.

## **5. Choosing challenges:**

### **a) The direct approach**

Each event should have an underlying theme. Activities therefore should be chosen with that theme in mind, thereby directing debriefings development to bring the concepts and meaning of that theme to life. Sounds like a lot of work? We have found over the years that a bit of creative thinking can take almost any activity and have it rationalized to your specific theme. Prayer helps here too!!

### **b) The indirect approach**

As a volunteer you may or may not have the time to go through challenges to find just the right one for your event. Sometimes you may choose them simply because of familiarity or simplicity. That does not mean that you have failed! If your youth are engaged and reactive to the challenges, you have set a great foundation for successive gatherings. Sometimes, the indirect approach is superior to the direct approach. Ah.....so many possibilities.

At the end of each challenge in this manual, there are suggestions, or examples of debriefing pertaining to each specific challenge. They are by no means exhaustive, nor the only way to debrief this specific challenge. They are merely examples.

Here are some suggested guidelines for an effective debrief session.

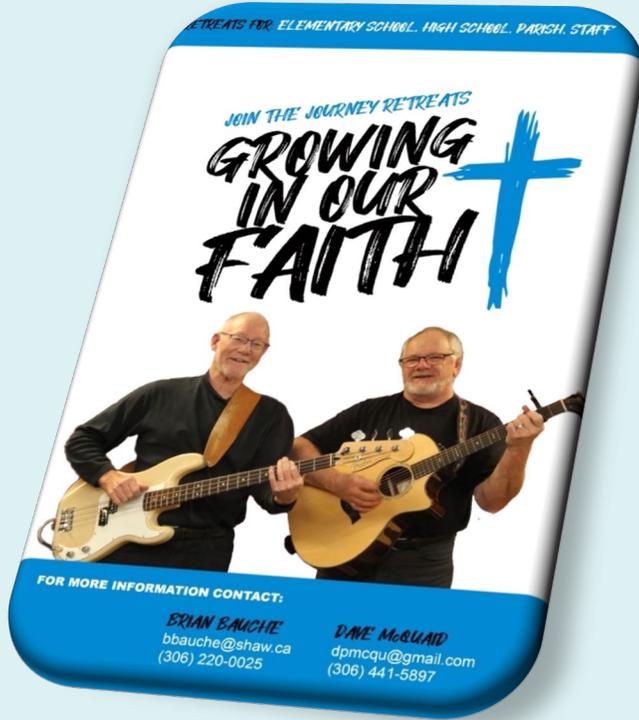
### **Debrief as soon after the challenge as possible.**

1. Begin by asking for one word suggestions of **how people felt** during this challenge.
2. Acknowledge these feelings and perhaps ask for a few clarifications if you feel it is appropriate.
3. Ask for input regarding how individuals would draw parallels to life situations and their faith experience.
4. Acknowledge these inputs.
5. Suggest parallels that you feel have come to light for you as facilitator.
6. Ask for participant feedback on your suggestions.
7. Always acknowledge the input of others.

**Always debrief!!!**

(Otherwise, it's just a game!)

## 6. Join the Journey Retreats – Activities / Challenges



St. J.P.II Bridge Challenge



Leoville Mini Retreat



J.P.II Collegiate Retreats



J.P.II Collegiate, Grade 12 Year End Retreat



Brian and Dave



St. Odilon. Rosthern –  
Family/Youth Retreat  
Time to Eat!



Laird Ecumenical  
Youth Retreat



Immaculate Conception  
Parish, Tisdale



J.P.II Collegiate, North  
Battleford. Gr. 8 – 12  
Retreats



## Water tower

(Indoor)

### Age:

8 years and up

### Materials:

1. 100 chopsticks per team. (3-5 people per team)
2. 1 - roll of masking tape per team
3. 1 - 18.5 Litre water jug (with about 5-6 inches of water in it)

### Explanation:

**The object** is to build a support for a water tower tank. (The 18.5 L jug which you provide.) For this activity we created a fictitious story , for the kids.....Here's the story!

Let's pretend.....

Your school has been offered the opportunity to provide community service to a special community, in a very exciting way! The communities name is, **Aldanno** in the country of **Morivaena**.

It is a small community of 5000 people in an area secluded from the rest of the country . It has many beautiful blessings, but it is not a wealthy place. Years of drought has caused dry and disastrous conditions for the community. Crops will not grow without water, and the rains have not come to freshen the earth in Aldanno for 5 years. A well was drilled in the community 4 years ago but because of lack of money and

workers nothing else has been done. The people there know that they need a water storage facility, however it seems an impossibility to get one built.

Your school has been asked to plan the construction of a water tower. Once a good plan has been created with the help of some of your teachers and parents, to actually go there to help build it!

**Wow! That's exciting!**

So we need a plan.....

We, (the facilitators), have been asked to get everyone working on a water tower model... and here's how it will work.

1. You will break into groups of 3-5.
2. You will be given your construction materials, (100 chopsticks and one roll of masking tape)

**(nothing else is to be used)**

3. You will be given your job-site, all instructions and **height restriction** instructions. **(14 inches)**
4. You will be given 5 minutes to plan your tower.
5. You have a limited time to build the water tower stand. (Max 1 hour)
6. Get to work.
7. The tower may be attached to the floor only, nothing else.
8. When completed, **count the number of unused chopsticks you have left. (later on, if you need help deciding a "winner", the group with the greatest unused number of chopsticks could turn the tide.**

Work begins in **silence**....

**Penalties** may apply...

*By penalties my suggestion would be that we use blindfolds to incapacitate those who have difficulty honouring the silence request (We have never had to use them). The group, however, is still expected to include the blindfolded team member throughout the process.*

*In actuality, we happened upon the idea of beginning the building phase in silence. We rationalized it by mentioning that all the members of your international team, spoke different languages and could not understand each other, **therefore planning and work must be done in silence**..... (In fact ,what we wanted was to simply get a break from all the noise of the youngsters).*



Water Tower



*This had some great spinoff lessons even for us!! For example at debrief time, an equal number of students stated that they preferred to work in silence. One student stated that he felt he was listened to better in silence.*

### Testing time

Once the construction time is complete, our “water tank” will be placed on each tower to see if the tower is strong enough to support the tank.

Good Luck!!!

### Notes:

It's a good idea to have a mock-up example of a tower constructed as a visual! As this was first initiated as an international level project, we decided to add the concept of working in silence. (As the workers may not understand each other's languages).

### Remember to debrief the activity

This activity was designed around the theme of “**service**”. Participants are asked to work with an “international group”, (the silent others), while understanding the common goal. It's simple really, build a tower with the materials supplied. What did we learn? Well, perhaps we have learned that the most vocal people are not always right, that everyone has an opinion, and each opinion has value. Sometimes silence is deafening! Everyone worked together!

But then if we look deeper.....



We weren't given much to work with, but with that small amount of materials, great things sprang up from the ground. Marvellous towers were attempted. Sometimes successfully, sometimes not. In service to others, how do we measure success? Is it only by successful completion?

**Never.....**Those simple materials became a thing of amazement!

But we knew this already didn't we? All through history God has taken the meek, the mild, the sinners, the unexpected, and turned those people's lives into blessings beyond belief.

## 100

(Indoor )

### Age:

8 years and up

### Materials:

1. One dice for every 5 people
2. One pencil for every 5 people
3. 1 piece of blank paper per individual
4. Tables to play on (The floor works too!)

### Explanation:

1. Arrange groups of 3-5, (5 works best)
2. At each groups' play area, place one pencil, one dice, as well as one sheet of paper per player.
3. In each group, the person whose birthday is closest to the date of this event will be the starting player.
4. After each player's turn, the play moves to the next player in a clockwise fashion. (Be sure they understand "clockwise"...).
5. On the word "GO", the starting player rolls the dice, if he/she rolls a 1 or a 6, he/she immediately grabs the pencil and begins to put the numbers in order from 1-100 on their paper.

6. While this is happening, player two rolls the die once, trying to roll a 1 or 6. If they successfully roll a 1 or a 6, they may then steal the pencil from the person who is currently writing. If they don't get a 1 or 6, the next player takes the die, rolls, and so on.....

7. Once a player gets the pencil again, he/she can continue on their own sheet where they left off last time they had the pencil. (They pick up the writing of numbers where they last left off, they do not have to start all over again.)

First person to 100 wins!

**Notes:**

If possible, it is best to be played standing, as this event can become quite active. Once you roll a 1 or 6, you may “grab” the pencil from whoever has it! BE QUICK!!!! Remember, when someone after you rolls and gets a 1 or 6, you MUST allow them to take the pencil.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

This is one activity where turning the other cheek seems to disappear during the event. In the debrief, as always, ask questions. Aside from the, “did you have fun questions”, ask if anyone thought someone else had cheated during the challenge. You could also ask if there is a cheater out there who admits they just threw caution to the wind and perhaps took control of the pencil even though they did not roll the required 1 or 6. It can easily happen, even by mistake!

Regardless, this event mimics things in our lives.

Things like this;

Sometimes things get too hectic!

Sometimes others treat me unfairly!

Sometimes I act unfairly!

People take my things!

I just want to quit!

If they are going to cheat, I am too!

It is not whether these things happen in our lives, it's more like how often they happen in our lives. But our job is to not let these things bother and direct our lives.

Happy are those who can engage in life and not be “pulled down” by it. We won't always be the perfect Mr. or Mrs. Nice guy/gal, but we can live this life with respect , dignity and compassion..... even when it gets hectic!



The game “100”

100



## **Architect/Builder**

(Indoor or outdoor)

### **Age:**

8 years and up

### **Materials: (per team)**

1. 3, architect /builder envelopes per team of three. (see notes)
2. 1, lap type tray or plate for the builder to work upon.
3. 2, chairs, (back to back)
4. A timekeeper.

### **Explanation**

1. Have the participants split off in groups of three or four. (6 feet between groups if possible)
2. Two people sit in chairs back to back about 18" apart. Designate one a builder, the other an architect.
3. The observer(s) stand beside and face the same direction as the architect. (observers must remain unengaged until they are seated in the architect chair.)
4. Give the architect the first empty folder with the picture only.
5. Give the builder a work tray and the parts provided from within the envelope.
6. The observers may 'tap in" to the architects position at any time.
7. Remember no peeking by the architect or observers, at what the builder is doing at any time!
8. When the builder thinks they have completed the challenge, they must raise their hand and check with the facilitator.

If the answer is correct, share it with the team. If not, have them continue to the next challenge. At this point they may rotate positions as required.

The object of course is to complete a set of three envelopes, provided to each team, in the time allotted. Allow a total of 30 minutes to complete all three envelopes. If the team is struggling with a particular envelope, they may ask to move on to a different one.

**BEWARE!!!** Once they pass on an envelope they cannot return to it.

**Notes:**

**Envelopes**

For example, If you have 6 teams once participants are split up, you will need a total of 18 envelopes. Six envelopes 1's, six ,2's and 6, 3's. So all groups will be working on the same envelope 1 example when they begin.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

Originally, this activity was designed as a teambuilding activity, designed to focus on the art of communication.

Sometimes, even simple activities can be overwhelming when all we have is our voice to try and explain ourselves to others. Our words are easily misunderstood at times, and perhaps we may not do the best job of explaining ourselves. As well, our words, the way we think, and our past experiences can be very different from another individuals. We don't all have the same foundations!

So, if this is all true, is it any wonder that others have difficulty understanding us when we talk about God and our faith. Firstly, how deep is our own understanding, and how well can we articulate it? Perhaps that is where we need to focus our time. Perhaps we need to work on ourselves first, to be the best we can be in our faith as we attempt to share that faith with others. Afterall, how can we expect to have an effect on other people's lives, if we cannot have that same effect on our own lives?

## Baptism

(Outdoor)

### Ages:

Six years and up.

### Materials:

1. String - one piece (Approx. 50 feet.)
2. Two solo cups. (and a few extras) Note: The cups being used must have a hole drilled in the bottom in order to be able to be mounted on the strings.
3. 2 - water pistols
4. 2 - 4 litre ice cream pails full of water. (Maybe more if necessary!)

### Explanation:

First of all, this is the setup we have used to engage this activity.

Cut the string in half.

Thread each string through one cup.

Tie each end of each string to a stationary item such as a tree. Tie them at about eye height, and the strings can be either parallel or converging at one end.

Participants will use the supplied water pistols to shoot water into the open end of the cup to move it from one end of the string to the other.

If a player runs out of water....refill....

If an opposing player gets wet, oh my, .....that's a shame!!!!

### Your job is simple.

One at a time, on the word "GO" from your facilitator(s), the teams will use the water guns to move (shoot) the cups down the strings until they hit the stop point at the other end. Then grab the cup, pull it back to the start as fast as you can, and hand off the pistol to the next member of your team. Each member

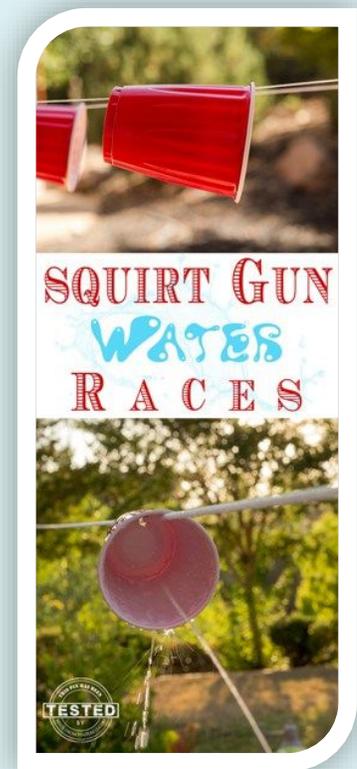
of your team will do the same to see which team finishes first. In the event the teams are not the same size, make someone go twice!

### Remember to debrief the activity

#### Example:

In the Catholic church, infants are baptized to welcome them into the Faith and to free them from the original sin they were born with. Baptism is the first of the Holy sacraments. So.... how could we debrief this?

If we are debriefing towards the concept of Baptism then perhaps we could look at the string as our path of life. Our Catholic path of course begins with baptism. The waters of course are meant to cleanse us and help us along our path of life towards eternal life with our savior.



## Botter Wottle (Best game ever!)

(Outdoor)

#### Age:

Six years and up

#### Materials:

- 2 litre bottles with caps (required) - 1 per participant.
- Water, to fill bottles.
- 5 - 8 balls, as required by group size (mid weight balls about the size of a handball.)
- 1 (facilitator)

## Explanation

1. Arrange players in a circle with an appropriate distance between them (5-6 feet). (No more than 8 players per circle).
2. This is an active and exciting game where it is entirely possible that you might get wet.
3. Botter wottle has a single goal to achieve; **to be the last person in the game to still have some water in their bottle.** It's a game that requires you to **"bowl"** (bowl – do not throw the ball overhand ) a ball at another person's bottle in your game grouping.
4. The idea is to empty others bottles first.
5. If you successfully hit someone else's bottle and knock it over, that person must first retrieve the ball **"before"** standing their bottle back up.
6. If the ball has knocked over their bottle and the ball then gets past them, you alone as the thrower have the right to run over and **"help empty"** their bottle.
7. Once the player returns with the ball and tags you, you must then set their bottle down.
8. Be careful to return to your bottle as quickly as possible as the player may throw the ball at your bottle before you are ready. So.....judge carefully.... !!!! That move could backfire.

\*\*\*Here are a few things to remember: (Listen to your "Facilitator"!)

1. Do not remove the cap from the bottle until instructed to do so by the "facilitator"!
2. You must always be in position behind your bottle (one step) (Whether throwing or not)
3. You **may not guard or protect your bottle** from being hit.
4. You may not kick or jump on another person's bottle.
5. If your bottle is emptied by another player, you then have one final throw before you must step out of the game.
6. Once a player is knocked out of play, the circle is re-adjusted following instructions from the facilitator.
7. The "facilitators" decisions are final and not to be questioned.
8. Depending on the judgement of the facilitator., there may be one or more additional balls introduced in any one game. (This gets a bit chaotic...)

### Remember to debrief the activity

Remember, this and each activity you do, should be chosen for a purpose. Even if you just want to use it as a fun activity, you should use your own creative skills or those of a trusted friend to debrief the way you want to.

### Example:

This challenge can be seen as a reflection of life for each of us. The bottle of water could represent you, its water represents what you are as a person, it is filled with our hopes, dreams, prayers etc. The ball represents those things in life that knock us down, that eat away at our hopes and dreams. Try as we might sometimes it just gets the better of us. But.....one good thing is that we can be at times reborn into the challenge, we can get refilled and recharged with our hopes and dreams. (Give them a new bottle, or fill everyone's and restart the challenge.) Just like in life, we don't quit just because things get hard, we simply try harder!!!





**Botter Wottle**

## Bridges

(Indoor )

### Age:

10 years and up

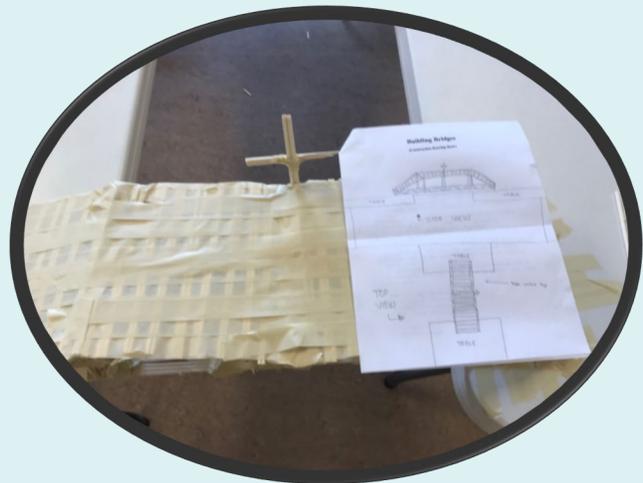
### Materials: (per team) (4-5 people)

1. 100 chopsticks (That's 50 pairs!)
2. 1 roll of masking tape
3. A river, (as defined by you)  
(We made a river out of blue paper, minimum 14 inches wide.)
4. A number of small bags of rocks.

### Explanation:

There is a river in front of you. A spot on the river has been chosen for your team to build their bridge. Your job is to build a bridge across this river following these guidelines:

1. Your bridge must fully span over the river.
2. Your bridge can be supported only on land, not on or in the river.
3. Your bridge must be built with consideration that vehicles may drive across.
4. Your bridge must be as wide as a chopstick is long.
5. The height of your bridge above the river must be a minimum of half the length of a chopstick.
6. You may use the tape that you have been given however you see necessary to give your bridge strength.
7. You will be given 60 minutes to build. When you are told to stop you must step back from your bridge.



8. We will then test the strength of your bridge by putting weight on it. The bridges that respect the above guidelines and can withstand the most weight will be considered a success.

**Notes:**

No other materials are to be used, only what is given.

We weighted the bridge with bags of colored rocks from our local store.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

There are many possibilities for debrief with this challenge. But let's talk about the concept of bridge building. Always start by asking a couple of questions like;

What is the purpose of a 'real life' bridge?

Have you ever used a bridge?

What about a bridge between people?

Then talk about the purpose of a real life bridge and relate it to the bridges people build between through or around each other. Bridges are a way of connecting, they allow us to transport feelings or ideas to one another. At times we use these bridges through someone to get to another individual. Just like bridges can link one land mass to another, "people bridges" link us together for support and encouragement.



## Chutes

(Indoor or outdoor)

### Age:

8 years and up.



### Materials: (Per team)

1. Chutes (one per participant) see notes
2. 3-4 Small balls. (3/4" to 1" in diameter)
3. 1, solo cup
4. 1, regular size coffee cup
5. 1, small solo cup (shot size)
6. 1, tables or bench (for the cups to sit on)

### Explanation:

1. Split your entire group into two, three or four teams.
2. Have each team, place their three different sized cups at least 50 feet from the start point for the teams. (For example, one end of the gymnasium to the other.)
3. Have each participant get one chute for themselves and meet as a group at the start points indicated.
4. It would be a good idea to use 3-4 participants and go through an example of how this challenge is to be accomplished.
5. The object of the challenge is to get a ball from the start point, (without dropping it), into each of the cups one at a time, beginning with the largest and proceeding down to the smallest last.
6. Participants cannot drop the ball, cannot touch the ball with their hands, and cannot touch the cups at all.

7. Also please remember that participants cannot move their feet when the ball is in their chute. If any of these transgressions occur, they return to the beginning and start again.
8. Once the ball has passed thru your chute, a player may then move to another position in the line..... (preferably the front)
9. Once a cup has been successfully dropped into a cup, the cup is turned upside down and players go back to the start to begin their attempt with the next cup(s).
10. Note!!!... If the ball is dropped at any time, it must be returned to the start and players begin again....

Once all three cups are completed and turned over, you are a winner. In fact you are a winner no matter what!

**Notes:**

The chutes are made from 1 ½" ABS pipe, cut approximately 36" in length, and sliced in half down the length of the pipe. (We took the pipe to the local high school shop and asked to have it cut like this. Worked very well. The edges should be lightly sanded to remove unwanted roughness).

If attempting this challenge outdoors, you may need small rocks in the cups to keep them from being blown over.

This becomes a fairly active challenge once participants get the hang of it.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

Once again, begin your debrief by asking some very directed questions.

- Ask for single words that describe their feelings during the challenge. Acknowledge these feelings.
- Ask how this challenge relates to their lives. Eventually, you should get around to talking about the struggles and frustrations of working together. Each time the ball is dropped, that team is asked to return to the beginning and start again. Talk about how that feels.
- How is this similar to the challenges of our daily lives?

**Now for a twist.....**

Ask them, what if I said the ball represents God? How would we explain that?

At this point, you get to talk about ignoring God, or dropping him out of our lives altogether, and then at some point in our lives going to look for him and put him back in our lives once again.



Chutes



## **Disc-Tac-Toe**

(Outdoor)

### **Materials:**

1. Ropes for Tic Tac Toe type grid(s) (Approx. 18" squares)
2. Pegs for the ropes
3. Frisbees (Half one color, half another color)
4. Large boundary rope (to create a 20' diameter circle)
5. Small Pylons (As many as possible for markers)
6. Tape measure
7. Mallet
8. 1 Facilitator

### **Explanation**

1. Most of us have experienced the time honoured game called tic-tac-toe. Sometimes it has been referred to as (X's and O's). Whatever its name, it is always fun when you are perhaps feeling a bit bored on those long trips.
2. We have changed the game only slightly. We have made it life-size!!! Now it will be played on the grass with the grid area designated by a nine box Tic Tac Toe grid of yellow rope.
3. Instead of a pen, pencil or other type of marker, instead, you will be using frisbees!!
4. You are expected to stand on the outside of the large circle that is designated by a red boundary rope. From there you will throw the frisbee to get it to land in one of grid areas. The idea is still to get three identical frisbees in a row in order to win
5. Instead of this being a "one on one" game, it will be played in teams of six. Each player will take a turn throwing their frisbee while alternating the throws between teams.
6. The first objective of the game is of course to get three frisbees in a row in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction. The other objective is to get the most three in a rows and be the victors.

**Things to remember:**

1. Your throw must be made from outside of the boundary rope.
2. The frisbee must be “cleanly” in the square to count.
3. Frisbees touching, on top of or underneath a rope do not count.
4. Once a play grid has been clearly marked with a frisbee it is closed to further play. (It will be marked by the “Facilitator”).
5. Frisbees may only be removed from the playing area by the keeper (attending adult).
6. Frisbees may only be removed after all teams throws have been completed.
7. The game will continue until one of the teams gets Disc-Tac-Toe. The facilitator will then reset the game and the teams will begin again.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

This is not an easy challenge! Of course, we have to be patient, we must wait our turn, and the facilitator will be picky about what is a good resting place for the frisbee. Add to that, we may not be the best frisbee thrower and others may even heckle us! What about the wind? That can blow our throw off course!

Ask the question, what frustrated you the most in this challenge.

Acknowledge these frustrations.

Much like in this game, in life there are so many unknowns. On any given day at any given moment, our life circumstances can immediately change. There is so much we have absolutely no control over. Ever wonder why grandma perhaps loves to pray, why grandpa loves to go to church, why mom and dad are insistent on getting you to experience the sacraments? Perhaps it is because they know oh so well how little control they have in this life and that a relationship with God can bring us peace and comfort.

It would be a poor idea to leave God out of our lives.

## Disc Tac-Toe



## Fill up my cup

(Outdoor)

### Age:

Six years and up

### Materials:

1. 6 - solo cups. (3 per team )
2. Two ping pong balls (1 per team)
3. 4 - tablespoons (2 per team)
4. 2 - 4 litre pails of water (1 per team)
5. 6 rocks, the size of your thumb. (one for each cup, holds them still...)

**Explanation:**

1. Form 2 teams. (3 players per team).
2. Place the water pails either on the ground or tables.
3. Place the cups on tables or the ground for each team. There should be three cups for each team.
4. Place a ping pong ball in the far right cup for each team. These cups should be 8-10 feet from the water pails.
5. On the word "go", from your facilitator, team against team, one at a time you will move spoonful's of water, one at a time, from the large pail to the solo cups. You will note a single ping pong ball in the first cup. As the cup is filled the ball will rise to the top. Once the ball rises to the top, it may be "blown only" by your breath into the next cup and so on. The winning team will be the first to have the third cup completely full, with the ball resting on top of the water. No hands are to be used to move the ball. If the ball falls to the ground, simply pick it up and continue where you left off.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

We all should get used to things that require effort. One thing this challenge demonstrates is that a goal is achievable no matter how many small steps one might have to take. It seems tedious to fill those cups one spoon full at a time, but with God, friends, persistence, and time it is possible. If problems occur along the way, fear not, be encouraged. We have each other, and Gods promise to always be with us.

Or perhaps.....

The ball is you. You have many stages and challenges in your life. Sometimes you get off track, or you simply drop the ball in life. Each little spoonful of water could represent the prayers of others to support you and bring you back onto the path.

## Group Juggle

(Indoor or outdoor)

### Age:

8 years and up

### Materials:

1. A tub with 10-20 assorted throw/catch items (Frisbees , assorted balls, ringette rings, footballs etc.)

### Explanation:

1. Assign groups no larger than 10 participants.
2. Groups are to stand in a circle, about 3-4 feet apart, facing into the center.
3. The facilitator chooses an individual as a starting point for the challenge. The individual chosen will be given an item that is easy to throw. He/she is to throw the item to any other individual within the playing group.

### There are a couple of simple rules for participants:

1. Remember who you throw the ball to (same person each time), and who throws the ball to you.
2. Loudly call out the name of who you are throwing it to, **“before”** you throw it.
3. Underhand or overhand, no matter how you throw it, make it a good throw that can be easily caught.

### Leaders:

4. By inserting one ball with the beginning person, be sure it goes throughout the entire circle so that everyone has caught and thrown it before it gets back to the beginning point.
5. Now, do it once more so that people are familiar with the path, the names, and the process.
6. Once that is in place, introduce another item into the challenge at the beginning point whenever you as a facilitator are ready.
7. Then, keep adding items to see if the group can handle more and more.

**If your group can handle it, here are a couple of additional twists...!**

At some point, when it is still moving fairly well with 6-8 items in play, move about the circle and remove one individual taking them 10 or so feet away from the group and turning them with their back to the group. This will no doubt send the group into a bit of a chaotic state but they will figure it out. Once they have regained fluidity, remove a second person. Re-adjustment will happen once again.

After the second readjustment, place the removed participants back into the groups circle. (Not in the same location you took them from!). It should be interesting to see if and how they will be assimilated back into the challenge.

**Notes:**

This is a great game that by its nature also operates as a way for people to get to know each other by name.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

With this seemingly simple task, there is a lot to talk about.

**Questions like;**

Did you feel included?

What happened when one or two people disappeared, what did the group do?

How did the group feel?

How did the group adjust?

How did the participants who were removed feel?

How did they feel when they were placed back into the challenge.

Discussion should eventually get around to inclusion, the work place, school, the family, the friend group, youth group etc.

People move in and out of our circles of life all of the time for a variety of reasons. Some good, some not so good. The question here is, how do we deal with that individually? Part of God's plan is that we live in community. Community life has its challenges but the goal remains the same,.....live as community.

Take for example our parish(es). How do we adjust when individuals are no longer there or available? How do we accept them back if they choose to return? How do we accept newcomers? Is our parish still trying to operate as a community as God intended, or have we seemingly lost our sense of direction?

Perhaps ask for strengths that were noted during the activity. What positives did we see? How might we use both the positives and challenges to our best advantage?

## Human Foosball

(Indoor or Outdoor)

### Age:

Six years and up

### Materials:

1. 4 pool noodle ropes per team (See explanation).
2. 1 or 2 Game balls
3. 2 - goalie nets
4. 1 - Facilitator



**Bishop Albert** holds the ropes at the Bishop's Annual Altar Server Appreciation Day in P.A.



### Explanation:

## **Yup, you heard it right! Foosball!!!!**

It's a great game! We basically exploded the game to make it much bigger and use real people to act as the players. Pool noodles seem to be the order of the day, so they will obviously work very well in this instance.

1. Players will be positioned by the facilitator. The players will stay with the noodle that they have been placed on for the balance of the game or until subbing or swapping is granted by the facilitator.
2. Subbing is simply replacing an active player with a waiting player. Swapping is getting 10 seconds to move to another location on your teams noodles. You may not switch teams!
3. The object you ask???... Simple really.... just score more goals than the opponents.

### **Pool Noodle ropes**

All ropes required must be the same length with the number of "floating noodles" on the ropes just as required for players in the real game. Make it so there is about 3-4 feet at least of lateral movement. Players can control only their noodle and must stay in contact with it unless retrieving the ball.

We left about an extra 4-5 feet on the ends of each rope. Here's why....

**If you are playing indoors (gym)**, then you will likely need players to hold the rope ends to keep the foosball ropes up in the air. We put noodles on these ends as well as is more comfortable around the waist for those people holding the ropes. They simply tie it around their waist and lean back planting their feet securely on the floor/ground beneath them.

**If you are playing outdoors**, another option is to find an area fenced off with chain link fence, preferably at a corner. Then tie one end of the ropes to the fence and you would only need "rope holders on the other end"! The fence also serves to help keep the ball in play.

### **Subbing:**

Just like in any sport where subs are allowed..... substitutions are controlled by the facilitator and timed in order to keep the flow of the game going. Subbing is simply replacing an active player with a waiting player.

### **Swapping:**

The facilitator grabs the ball, then yells **SWAP!!!** All people involved in the game have a countdown of ten seconds to move to a different location on their team to play. Once the countdown is complete the Keeper throws the ball into play. **(Yes even the people holding the ends of the ropes are allowed to switch!).**

**A few things to remember:**

1. The facilitator is the boss!
2. The game begins with a centerfield toss by the facilitator. ( after a goal as well)
3. Do not leave your position on the noodle until instructed to do so by your facilitator.
4. The ball is to remain in play **below the waist** at all times.
5. The goalie may only use their hands to hold their pool noodle, they may not use their hands in any other way.
6. The 8 people holding the main ropes in place for the game, may be substituted in as the facilitator allows.
7. If the ball goes out of play it may be re-inserted into the game at the location where it went out of play. ( facilitator discretion)
8. Score is kept using the honour system.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

There is a lot we could talk about within this challenge.

We would like to focus on the bigger picture. This challenge has a very defined set of rules, and lots of them! The whole process works best when all follow the rules. When some participants decide to change the rules to their liking, with or without informing the others, it sends the whole challenge into frustration and chaos.

Is this how we got to have so many different denominations of churches within the Christian world?

Didn't we all begin from the one true church?

Has our church changed over time?

Will it, and should it, continue to change?

The answers to the above questions should of course be yes!!!!

The bigger question is..... will you be part of that process?

## Juggling Balls

(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:** 8 years and up.

### Materials:

1. Bags of appropriately sized balloons. (See notes)
2. A box of plastic wrap. (See notes)
3. Rice
4. Scissors, (3-4 pair)
5. Scotch tape

### Explanation:

1. Cut the "necks" off of 6 balloons.
2. Place a piece of plastic wrap on the table.
3. Take a medium sized hand full of rice and put it in the middle of the plastic. Fold the plastic around it.
4. Loosely place some scotch tape around it to keep it from falling apart.
5. Take one of the prepared balloons and force the rice sack into it.
6. One end of course is open, so put another balloon over it in the opposite direction. Voila! One Juggle ball!
7. Now make two more for yourself, every good juggler needs at least three!

### Notes:

#### Balloons

These should be round shape balloons measuring 10-12 inches in diameter. A minimum of two will be required for each individual juggle ball.

### **Plastic wrap**

Each ball will require a single piece of plastic measuring around 6"x6".

Kids being kids, they invariably like to try and launch them at each other. Discourage this, as they may break on an impact spreading rice everywhere!

### **Remember to debrief the activity**

We start of course with questions? What percentage of the population of our province do you think knows how to juggle? Why would most anyone other than children even consider making juggle balls, let alone trying to learn how to juggle? The construction of these juggling items is simply one step in the process of planting a seed of interest that may eventually become some form of real juggling!!

The actual art of juggling (once controlled enough), is very relaxing. In fact while perfecting it, your full attention is required. All other things are forgotten and you are solely committed to your task at hand. Wouldn't it be great if our prayer life was just like that? .....Total focus.....But perhaps, just like juggling, prayer is looked at as something just not worth doing. We must ask ourselves, where is prayer in my life, is it focused, do I even use it?

## **My Bonnie (Ice Breaker)**

(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:** Any age (almost)

### **Materials:**

1. A guitar or two, and a willingness to have fun.

### **Explanation:**

If you know the old song "My Bonnie" (lies over the ocean), then get ready to sing and play your heart out for a couple of minutes.

1. Instruct the participants that whenever they hear a word being sung that starts with the letter "B" sound that they either raise or lower their arms. In other words if their arms are down at their sides, and they hear the "B" sound, they should raise their arms. A variation of this is if the youth are in chairs is to have them stand when they hear a word starting with a "B" and then sit when they hear the next word beginning with a "B" – continuing to sit and stand in an alternating way for each "B" heard.

2. If they hear another “B” sound then they should lower their arms, etc.
3. Begin slowly with the first verse, doing it a few times so they get the idea....
4. Once they seem to have it, add in the second part of the song.
5. Increase the speed as you repeat the song a few times....

It’s a great song to get the very young to actively warm up a bit.

**Notes:**

**Have fun!**

Need the words??? Ask your Grandma or Grandpa.....

**Remember to debrief the activity**

This can be used as an icebreaker, or as a break after a talk or some other heavy thinking activity. It is just plain fun for kids and the facilitator gets to have some “nonsense” time with the participants. Play them off against yourself as a facilitator, ask them to do better, to get it together... (playfully).

If you really want to debrief it, perhaps ask the following question....

Is it really important that we all do exactly the same thing at exactly the same time? We can never do “exactly “ the same thing, as each of us are differently made. We all have our own styles, and interpretations.

God has certainly made us very well indeed!

## **Noodle Hockey**

(Indoor or outdoor)

**Materials**

1. 2 - Goalie nets (can be just cones)
2. 2 - red goalie pool noodle bats
3. 10 - green player pool noodle bats

4. 10 - blue player pool noodle bats
5. 2 - game balls (lightweight)
6. Playing field (you may size it according to your numbers and ages of participants)
7. 1 - Facilitator

### **Explanation**

Really, it is still a game of hockey, we simply changed a few items. As in hockey, the highest scoring team is the winner of the game. Only the equipment provided may be used in this game.

### **A few things to remember: (Listen to your Facilitator!)**

1. There are 10 players on the field for each team (including the goalie) during the game.
2. The keeper drops the ball in a face-off at centre field at the beginning of the game and after each goal is scored.
3. The ball may not be kicked or hit with the hands. Use the noodle bat only. (Only the goalie may use hands and feet while in the net.)
4. Penalties may be applied for tripping, or hitting others with the noodle stick.
5. Keeping track of the score is on the honour system.
6. Once a goal is scored, play begins once again at centre field.
7. Substitutes (5) are allowed on the field after each goal for either team.



8. The judgement of the “Facilitator” is not to be questioned.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

This one is up to you – have fun with it



Fr. Phinh demonstrates his skill at the Altar Server Appreciation Day

**On-track (4 corners)**

(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:**

8 years and up

**Materials:**

1. 1 - tennis ball per participant (group up to 120)
2. 1 - chute for each participant. (See chute note)
3. 4 - boxes (See boxes note...)
4. 4 - milk crates, (or facsimiles thereof), each holding 30 tennis balls.

**Explanation:**

In the centre of the playing area, (we will use a gymnasium as an example), place the four boxes side by side to form a rectangle of sorts. Split the group in four equal teams, (or as close as possible, with age groups equally dispersed), and send them to the 4 corners of the gym. Give each participant one “chute”.

1. Have the team’s practise travelling a ball down the chutes towards the box closest to them and attempt to drop it in.
2. They are not to drop the ball.
3. They are not to touch the ball with their hands, and they may not touch the box at all.
4. Also please remember that participants cannot move their feet when the ball is in their chute.
5. If any of these transgressions occur, they return to the beginning and start again.

**Note!!!... If the ball is dropped at any time, it must go back to the start and begin again....**

After the practise....



### **On the word "GO" .....**

Get to it and see how many balls they can get in "in total" (all teams together), in a five minute span. Repeat the process as long as they are improving their score. As soon as they do not improve on their previous score, the challenge is complete.

Be creative!!!! Have fun with it!!!

#### **Notes:**

##### **Chutes**

The chutes are made from 1 ½" ABS pipe, cut approximately 36" in length, and sliced in half down the length of the pipe. (We took the pipe to the local high school shop and asked to have it cut in that way. Worked very well. The edges should be lightly sanded to remove unwanted roughness.

##### **Boxes**

For boxes, we used empty wine boxes from our local liquor store. The boxes should be totally closed and duct tape used to reinforce their strength.

In the centre, on the top, cut a hole our about the size of a roll of masking tape to allow balls to be dropped into the box. Reinforce the edges of the hole with duct tape as well.

#### **Remember to debrief the activity**

Things in our lives certainly don't always go as planned! This activity can bring home this reality in a big way. If you play by the rules, this task is physically impossible to achieve. It is only while working with others that we could have the successes promised. It's the working with others that can at times provide us a real challenge. The goal is of course to move the ball along thru the trials we experience to get it to come to rest within the box. In a way, does this remind you of raising a child!? If the ball represented one of your children, you would do your utmost to protect them and insure that they get to the end goal. In this case, the box! In real life, perhaps that they get to heaven!

WHAT IF WE SAID GOD WAS THE BALL?!?!?

Could that be used as a debrief question?... Of course.....In our lives we are in some small and/or large ways, exposed to the reality and relationship of God. How do we accept and protect that relationship? If you think of the dropping of the ball, how many of us have at some point “dropped” God out of our relationships and our lives? Do we ignore him and perhaps later in life find him again and get back into “the game “ with him?

There is lots to think about within this approach as well.

## Spread the Word

(Indoor outdoor)

### Materials list:

1. Four scrolls ( on dowel with Mad Gab Bible verse written on each)
2. Masking tape (4 rolls)
3. Four groups (5-6 pieces of newsprint for each station)

### Explanation:

Once your lead disciple, (you the leader) explains the following task, you **will divide all of the disciples into four groups.** and a group will go to each of the four corners of the activity area to await the word **GO..** from the lead disciple.

**Each group take one of the four scrolls from the center meeting area.**

1. Your mission is to spread the Gospels to the four corners of the world (playing area). The four corners are marked with flagging tape.
2. As you travel, you must attempt to decipher the Mad Gab Bible verse on your scroll.
3. At each corner you will find four identical items, pick one.

**When the lead disciple says “go”, your task is to:**

- a) GO to one of the four corners of the world, **that is now your home corner.**
- b) Keep one item from your home corner.
- c). Moving in a counterclockwise manner, move to each corner with your whole team and gather one item from each corner of the world. While you are doing this, try to solve the Mad Gab clue on your scroll. One of your goals is to solve the Mad Gab Bible verse by the end of the game.
- d). With the paper and tape you have accumulated, build a boat complete with a mast, that will bring the words of the gospel to the four corners of the earth.
- e) Once complete, gather at the center area for pictures and to replace the scrolls for the next group. At this point you will also be asked for your solution of the Mad Gab Bible v

**Remember to debrief the activity**

Ask....

**Were there any parts in this challenge that you found frustrating?**

**What do you think the purpose of the Mad Gab Bible verse is?**

**Have you ever had difficulty understanding the word of God?**

**The boat represents a mode of transport to spread the gospel. Does it matter if they look the same?**

**Is it sometimes hard to get people to listen?**



Rivier School Join the Journey Retreat



Fr. Greg sharing wisdom at JP11 Join the Journey Retreat





A new twist to stackers



St. Eugene Parish, Join the Journey Retreat – the Catechism class catches everyone by surprise with water guns!

## Paper Tower

(Indoor)

**Age:**

8 years and up

**Materials:**

1. (22 ) Newsprint pieces, (whatever the roll width is x 3 feet long) , per team (*see Paper notes*)
2. 1, roll of masking tape per team

**Explanation:**

There are a number of opportunities with this building project.

A couple of suggestions are;

1. Simply, build the tallest **freestanding** tower, no ladders, chairs, tables etc. are to be used. You may not get on each other's shoulders!
2. Build the tallest tower that will support a small item at its very top, such as a rubber ducky, or a Kool-aid package, or a small flag etc. etc.

You may use only the materials given.

You may not tape to anything other than the floor.

Teams of 3-4 participants are manageable.

**Notes:**

**Paper**

We provided unused newsprint from roll ends which we procured from our nearest local newspaper printing establishment. This material can also be found at most schools on large rolls.

If this sort of paper is not available, simply substitute scrap paper (8 ½ x 11), and build smaller towers on tables.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

**Suggestions:**

Talk about...

.... how we plan and work together.

....how we accept others ideas.

....how we make the best use of our talents and resources.

....how a strong foundation is important to the tower.

....how a strong foundation is important in our lives.



Paper Tower



## Stackers (Indoor)

**Age:**  
8 years and up

**Materials: (per team)**

1. 1, "Stacker Octopus" (per team) (See notes)
2. 10, solo cups (per team) (upside down)
3. 1 table, (per team if possible)

**Explanation:**

Using the octopus, and only the octopus, your job, as a team is to stack the cups in the way your facilitator instructs. There are three stacking formats that will be expected:

1. A stack of 3 cups. Two on the bottom, one on top. Then dismantle.
2. A stack of 6 cups. Three on the bottom, two on the middle row, and one on top. Then dismantle.
3. A stack of 10 cups. Rows of 4, then 3 then 2, then 1..... Then dismantle.

**Notes:**

1. The "**Stacker Octopus**" is made in the following manner using these materials:
2. For each octopus you will need two wide rubber bands, about 2-3 inch in diameter, these will have to be stretched over the bottom area of the solo cups, in order to pick them up.
3. Attach six strings, (each about 40 inches long), around the rubber bands when together. Try to make them equally spaced. This sort of makes it look like an octopus! Place a knot about the 24 inch point away from the elastic down each string.
4. **No hands can get any closer than that knot to the elastics!**  
Participants may now practise stacking and moving cups with the octopus. Practise time may be important for some participants.
5. **You CANNOT slide the cups, they must be picked up with the Stacker Octopus to move them.**
6. **If cups fall over, or on top of each other, or off of the table, you may use only the octopus to right them. You may not use your hands.**
7. **After each stacking format, dismantling of stacks must also be completed with the octopus only.**
8. **Teams can compete against each other, or simply compete against the clock.**

**Remember to debrief the activity**

Is this frustrating or easy?

Remember that in this challenge, you have control over a small portion of the overall "octopus". You must focus on your task! By doing your best at this you are actually making the success of others more likely.



Stackers with a ball on top!

Did you find that you had to talk, (communicate), in order to make it work?  
We talk to share our experiences, what works for us. We are all working towards a common goal! In this challenge it is stacking the cups, in life it is to reach our heavenly home. When a cup falls, (similar to us making a mistake in life), we help each other and find a way to make things right, a way to get back on the path to our common goal.

God “stretches” us in many ways throughout our lives....  
Can you share a way in which he may be stretching you?.....



Stackers



## **Straight and narrow (ropes)**

(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:**

8 years and up

**Materials:**

1. 50-75 tennis balls (per group of 10 participants)
2. 1, **rope loop** for every 2 participants (*See note*)
3. 1, box per participant (as well one extra box per each 10 participants) (*See boxes note...*)

**Explanation:**

1. Have the pairs of students stretch their rope loops centre over that box. (*From above this would look like a "spoked wheel".*) Of course they will all be facing into the centre of the circle.
2. Place one box on the floor in the center of the circle of players.
3. Have the pairs of players stretch their rope loops so the center of their rope is above the center of the box. (*If you were to look at this from above, it would resemble a spoked wheel.*)
4. Next place a box about one foot in front of each participant, and ensure that one of those partners boxes has about 15 balls inside of it.

**Now the fun part!**

Allow some practise time to do the following:

1. Each of the partners is to try and get a ball to roll along their outstretched rope and drop it into the centre box.
2. After each participant does this, they should then try to get a ball to go into the box in front of their partner.

*(Care must be taken to set the correct tension of the rope and the distance the two parts of the rope are apart).*

***It should be noted that we also assigned two or three participants to the team as rovers. Their job is simply to retrieve stray balls and place them in any players boxes. At certain points the facilitator will shout SUBS! This allows the rovers to sub into the game wherever they want. Less boring that way!!!***

Now the Real challenge!

**To start the challenge**, ensure one team member of each pair has 15 balls in their box.

1. On the word "go" one partner will place a ball on his/her track and attempt to get it into the centre box. Once successful, their partner must do the same.
2. Once they have done that they can then try to get balls to go across the circle to their partner's box. Remember to keep track of how many balls have successfully made it across the entire circle.
3. Once success is beginning to occur, allow three minutes of play and then the facilitator yells "reset"!!
4. The participants lay their ropes down and reset the balls in boxes to start all over again.
5. Before they restart, ask the teams how many successes they had. Add the results together.
6. Now restart to see if they can beat their previous total record. etc. etc. etc.

### Rope loop

We used 1/4-3/16" rope to make a continuous rope loop. Don't worry about the knot. Simply get a participant to hold the knot in their hand to keep it out of the play area.

### Weight advantage

Pair students off who are of similar body mass. (Trust me, it will work better.)

Lighter students may have a hard time pulling enough on the rope in order to be successful. Success lies in the ability to apply enough tension in the rope in order to complete the task. Some participants because of physical strength and body mass, are unable to do this. If this is the case, simply use a shorter portion of the rope.

### Remember to debrief the activity

This a challenging, fun and interesting activity. Its nature provides a lot of possibilities with regards to "life analogies". Some topics that come to mind are:

**Persistence.** Do we have the persistence to continue to try at this challenge even though we may find it difficult?

**Tension.** Are we able to apply just the right amount of tension towards fulfilling the task?

**Patience.**

**Cooperation.**

**Target goals.**

### Straight and Narrow



## **Team Pen** (Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:**  
8 years and up

**Materials:**

1. 4, 8 foot lengths of duct tape. (*see duct tape notes*)
2. Erasable or permanent markers. One for every 8 participants  
(*But beware, see notes*)
3. 11"x 17" paper. Two sheets for every 8 participants.
4. A table, for each team of 8 participants.
5. Masking tape. To tape the sheets to the table.

**Explanation:**

The main idea is to get the teams to write a word(s), or draw an object that is suggested to them by the facilitator.

1. Help the teams to construct their team pen "octopus writers".
2. Once the teams have successfully constructed them, have each team member grab an "octopus tentacle" of the writer.
3. Instruct the players to use only capital letters, and try to print the word MOM.
4. Suggest another word and set a time limit, give 3-4 minutes depending on the length of the word(s).
5. Allow time for teams to look at each other final results.

Once you have afforded a bit of practise time, (**perhaps**), you can replace the top paper and ask the participant teams to print words, or draw pictures etc.

As well, you could secretly give each group a different task to write or draw, and then have the other teams try and guess what it is they have done.

You might try blindfolding a couple of players in each team to increase the difficulty. You could even blindfold all but one player on the team, making them the "eyes" for the team, and having them give instructions for the movement (direction) of the pen in order to produce the word.

**Notes:**

**Duct tape**

The tape will be used to make an octopus arrangement that will hold the marker in the center. The marker should be positioned in such a way that when individuals hold an end of each of the duct tape octopus arms, the pen will be able to make marks on the sheet once it is being moved by the participants.

**Paper sheets**

If you use permanent markers, double them up as the marker will bleed through and damage the table.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

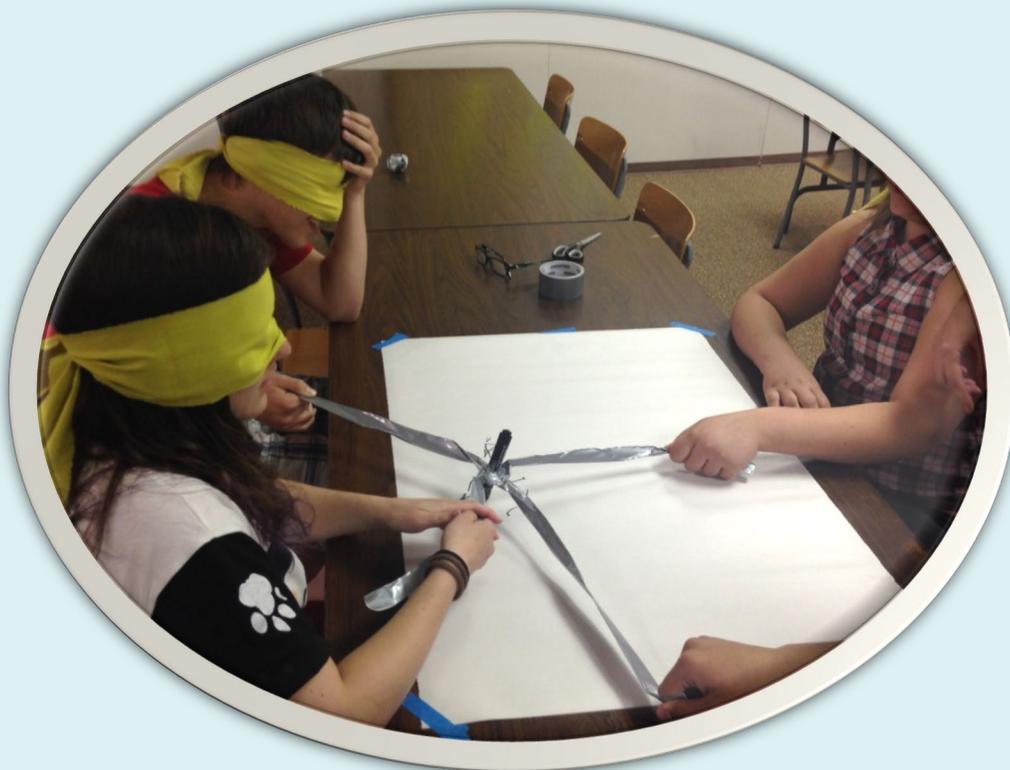
Ask:

What emotions did you experience while performing this challenge? (Acknowledge those emotions)

How does this team grouping activity compare with the working of : a family, a sports team, a drama troupe, a youth group, a circle of friends?

If you were a blindfolded individual, how did you feel?

If all of your team was blindfolded except for you, how did you feel being in that position?



Team Pen



P-noodle

### **Circle of six (P-noodle)** **(Indoor or outdoor)**

**Ages:** For players 8 years and over ( \* with **younger children** adults should play along or assist the player)

**Materials:** Playing sticks. *(We have about 70 of them for use with larger groups as well.)*

#### **The “Playing stick”**

We made each playing stick from a 39 1/2 inch length of 1/2” 16mm rigid PVC conduit, along with two small pieces of pool noodle, 1 1/2” in length. One piece of the noodle is placed on the top end of the playing stick, the other should be placed 13 inches down the stick from the top. *( if the noodle pieces are too loose on the stick, I used duct tape wrapped around the areas of the stick to make the noodle pieces fit tighter.)*

**Note:** *(The area between the pool noodle sections is the only place a players hand may touch the playing stick.)*

It should also be noted that the very bottom of the pole should be cut at a slight angle in order to disable the opportunity that the pole could be made to stand on its own.

*(We do not want that!!!)*

*We have added the pool noodle foam parts for two reasons: firstly, to indicate the area that may be used for proper placement of the players hand; and secondly, the foams make the playing stick easier to pick up and cuts down the noise when they hit the floor. (Which they will...!!!)*

#### **The “Ready right position”**

Model the following for the participants: (This is called the “**ready right**” position.)

1. Grasp the playing stick with your right hand in the centre between the pool noodle pieces. Hold it straight out in front of you with your arm parallel to the floor.
2. Place your right foot forward and your left foot a ½ step back.
3. Place your left hand behind your back.

### The “Ready left position”

Model the following for the participants: (This is called the “ready left” position.)

1. Grasp the playing stick with your left hand in the centre between the pool noodle pieces. Hold it straight out in front of you with your arm parallel to the floor.
2. Place your right foot forward and your left foot a ½ step back.  
Place your right hand behind your back.

### Warmup

Choose yourself a partner, each having a playing stick each.

Stand face to face about 6 feet apart.

Hold your playing stick in the **ready right position**. (Teach this now)

Follow instructions as stated.

- ie.      Ready right  
            Ready left  
            Ready right

Drop right (Meaning place the bottom end of the stick on the floor and move one position to the right. When playing in a circle of players.)

### Phase 1

**Six players** stand shoulder to shoulder each holding a foam pole, (between the foam parts) with the right hand only. Be sure the foam ends are on the top. Each player steps back two steps. As they continue to hold the foam pole, now place the bottom end on the floor and await further instructions.

Instructions are now given that ask each player to place their left hand behind their back.

**The left (or right) hand must remain behind their backs until the game is completed.**

(Music will begin to play)

Instructions are as follows and are given while the music is going!

1. Assume ready position, (example to be given).
2. When the “game master” calls out a direction, (ready left or ready right), the players must assume that stance.
3. After practicing a few of those stance changes the Master will call “**Drop left, or Drop right**. Each player is then expected to move in the stated direction to grab the pole of the person next to them in the direction called, while letting go of their own playing stick and trying to grab the next playing stick before it falls to the floor.
4. The playing stick must only be caught between the small foam parts, with the hand indicated only!
5. If a pole is properly caught, the players breathe easy and await the next instruction. If the neighbouring playing stick is not caught, one point must be added to the teams score for each playing stick that is not caught.
6. The team with the lowest score after ten rounds are the winners!

To mix it up a bit, (and to help out those lefties) switch hands for the last five rounds or alternate the rounds as you wish.

### Phase 2

Combine the lowest and highest scoring teams to form teams of 12.

Replay the above rules keeping track of scores.

### Phase 3

From the teams of 12, place six players shoulder to shoulder as in **Phase 1**. Have them back up two steps and assume the ready position. These players now form the inner circle. With the remaining six players, locate a player two steps behind each inner circle player to form an outer circle. They must also assume the ready position. Players are moving left and right as instructed with relation to their own circle. **They are not to switch circles at any time.** Play the game again according to the rules stated in **Phase 1** keeping track of the scores for the entire team of twelve. Lowest scoring team is the winner.

### Phase 4

Set up exactly as in **Phase 3**. Now, have the inner circle players simply turn to face their outer circle playing partners. All must now assume the ready position! Play the game as per the rules stated in **Phase 1**. (This little change sends inner and outer circles traveling in what seems to be opposite directions. It is more than enough to confuse the odd player!) Once again keep track of the scores as the lowest scoring team will be victorious!

Hopefully some excited individual will wonder if the whole group could try, just to see if they could do a **“perfect run”**. (*Plant the seed if they don't come up with it.*)

For those who don't want or like to keep track of points simply practise with them to allow them time to get the challenge perfectly as a whole group.

### Remember to debrief the activity

Each challenge requires a debrief.

The debrief should relate to the lesson of the day. Depending on the ages of the participants, the debrief can simply be explained (for the young), or a discussion could follow with a direction from the leaders to solicit understandings of how the challenge could be seen as a descriptor of the lesson(s) of the day. Care should be taken when choosing activities that can easily be justified towards a specific outcome, or you can rely on your creative side to come up with a rationalization.

Ask:

Did you find this challenge confusing?

Did you find this challenge stressful?

If we look at the playing stick (P-noodle), we could treat it as a part of each other's lives. It could for example represent our dreams. Each of us tries to help one another with their dreams by catching the others playing stick and not letting their dreams fall. In effect we get a chance to support one another.

If we look at the stick as representing our sorrows and failings, it also give us the opportunity to help and support others through their difficulties.

**Each player has a playing stick**, obviously each player also has dreams, wishes, sorrows and failings.

Wouldn't it be great if we could all successfully support and help each other?

## Water to wine.

(Outdoor)

### Age:

(Six years and up)

### Materials:

1. Boundary rope.  
(One continuous rope to create an approximately 10 foot diameter circle.)  
***You will need a boundary rope approx. 32 feet long.***
2. Two pails of approx. 1 litre size each.
3. 7-8, six foot lengths of rope.
4. Bungee (elastic) ring or loop.
4. Water.

### Explanation:

**Begin by making a large circle using the boundary rope**

**Place 1 pail inside in the circle and one just outside the circle.**

**The rope and elastic will be used to help transfer the water???**

**Your job has two parts.**

1. First, is to transfer the water from the container inside the circle, into the similar container that is placed outside of the circle. ***One half of your team members will do this part of the activity!*** The outside container cannot be moved during this phase.
2. Secondly, the remaining half of the team must transfer the water back into the container inside the circle. The inside container cannot be moved during this phase.

**Note!! Know this!!**

The inside container is marked, and in order for the team to succeed, the water must meet or pass that mark when it is returned to the inner container. Be careful with the water, it is precious!

**Nothing, absolutely nothing,** may touch the ground inside the circle or the rope boundary itself. If anything other than water touches the ground, you must start again!

The team must use the six foot lengths of rope to form an “octopus” of sorts, having the bungee ring or loop in the centre. This is what will be used to move the containers.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

Let's just say that you are whichever container the water is in. It is of course up to God and others, to move you in the direction which God has decided. In the caring hands of others and God himself, you place your safety and your future. Sometimes portions of yourself fall to the side as your goals in life are attempted. This is noticeable when the precious water perhaps is spilled or otherwise escapes. But the core of your being remains intact, (enough water to cover the mark on the inner circle container). Should the unthinkable happen, (total loss), there always remains moisture inside the walls of the container. God takes what little there is left sometimes, and replenishes our soul by constantly pouring his spirit into us (replacing the water). Once replenished, off we go again to give it another try, a renewed lease on life.



# Running a Successful Youth Group:

A Living Example: St. Thérèse Parish

Leoville, Sask.



By: Adele Craswell

### Ash Wednesday "Join the Journey" Mini Retreat



Over the years I have experimented with a variety of methods and formats for running my youth group; and I have seen some of what others have done as well. I think it goes without saying that you have to experiment or try out new ideas, until you come up with what feels the best for you and your group. Obviously, there are a number of different methods in which to run a youth group, and I believe that since the dynamics of each community, each parish, and each youth group are very different, you need to adapt to the dynamics of your particular group. After being involved in youth ministry for 25 years or so, I will share with you the format or method in which I have found the greatest success.

A few years ago, we added an extra dimension to our youth group. In discussing the love of Jesus in some of our lessons, we decided we wanted to reach out to others, to the less fortunate, and to come to "serve" others. For "Jesus came not to be served, but to serve," (Matthew 20:28). Our group then came up with a "vision" or "motto" after one of the many powerful quotes of St. Mother Teresa: **"It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."**

So, beyond our regularly scheduled meetings, we also have several service projects we do throughout the year.

## **REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS:**

### **Meeting format:**

Our meetings are held once every 2 - 3 weeks; and they last between 2 to 2 ½ hours.

Our evenings are broken into 4 sections:

- Welcome
- Teach
- Share
- Close and send forth

### **Welcome**

- 1) Music is playing as youth arrive
- 2) Be there to greet them as they come in, (smiling and happy to see them).
- 3) Discussion time – spend 5-10 minutes in discussion – review what we have done in the past few weeks, talk about our last event, what’s coming up; other.....
- 4) Opening prayer – either the priest, me, or one of the students will lead the prayer

### **Teach**

- 1) Game/Activity 10-15 min. I often will run 2 activities. Both are fun, but one is specifically tied to the lesson of the evening.
- 2) Lesson – 30-45 min.
- 3) Theme – I always have a lesson theme) Some examples are: “Where is God in the Storm?”; “Being a Disciple of Jesus”; “The Jesus Choice”
- 4) A talk, teaching about the lesson theme
- 5) May include music
- 6) May include a video
- 7) May be an object lesson
- 8) May include the youth creating a skit related to the lesson

## Share

### 1) Sharing and/or self-reflection

2) Small group questions/sharing. After the lesson, the group is divided into small groups. The older youth lead each of the groups, to share and discuss questions that I have made up which are related to the lesson. Afterwards, we all gather once again and those that wish to do so, will share with the entire group, something from the small group discussion, or anything relating to the lesson of the evening.

3) 10 min. Question and Answer period with our priest. This is something we have recently added and has proved to be a wonderful addition to our evenings! The youth were asked to write down any questions that they have or doubts that they struggle with, (anonymously), and each meeting Father Peter will take 2-3 of the questions and answer them. The youth are also free to ask any question they wish verbally, at this time. It's been very enlightening for many youth and has been an excellent way for our youth to connect with the priest.

## Close and Send forth

1) Closing Prayer – the prayer will be said by our priest, me, or all of us together as a group.

2) Snack time – After the lesson, we always make time for food! Snack time is generally about 15-20 min. I make a schedule, and the youth all take turns bringing snack.

3) I often have music playing throughout snack time; and I make a point to walk around and visit with all the kids throughout the time.

### \*\*\*\*\*NOTE:

For the past 15 years or so, I've had quite a large group of kids, (25 – 38) for the size of our community. That being said, there is often a large difference as to the knowledge and level of faith of the members in our group and is sometimes a challenge to find lesson topics that will reach all of them where they are at. Sometimes, the group will be split into two groups for the "teaching" part of the evening. Also, my lessons will vary from "fairly general" lessons, to **very deep** topics with personal and group reflection and prayer. It is amazing to see how the youth respond to these lessons.

## Some of the "service" projects we do:

1) Every second year, during Holy Week, our youth group performs a still-life presentation of **The Stations of the Cross**. This has become one of the major events for our group and our parish, and many people travel from other parishes to watch. It is a very powerful presentation and leaves a deep impact on our audience as we journey to the Cross with Jesus.

2) Acts of Kindness – handing out bottles of water and rosaries to people on the street

3) Raising money – for Haiti, World Vision, etc.

- 4) Volunteer at the Friendship Inn in Saskatoon
- 5) Clothing Drive/ Food Drive/ Toy Drive for the less fortunate
- 6) Creating Christmas cards for those that have lost loved ones in our community in the past year
- 7) Valentines packages and homemade cards to residents of the Health Care Center
- 8) Reaching out to those that have experienced trauma and devastation. For example: - we had people in our community that were involved in the Vegas shooting. All members of our youth group prepared food items/meals and we provided the families with enough food for a couple months.
- 9) Prayer evening/remembrance for a past youth club member who died tragically. All present and past youth group members gathered for an evening of prayer, music, sharing stories, ..... time together as a group.
- 10) Parish Fall Supper – every year we volunteer to clear tables and doing crafts with the children.
- 11) Visiting seniors – supper and games with seniors at the Senior Golden Ring Center; going to the homes of seniors and visiting, playing cards, or playing guitar and singing, etc.
- 12) Cleaning, raking and cutting grass of the church and rectory yard
- 13) Serving at MSP (Missionary of Saint Paul) Priests Fundraiser in North Battleford
- 14) Visiting “The Lighthouse” in Saskatoon
- 15) Handing out coffee and donuts to homeless people
- 16) Handing out scriptural and inspirational verses to random people on the street
- 17) Visiting sick children in the hospital

Over the years, I have also found that it’s very important to attend events, and do additional things together as a group. These may be simply for fun or may be faith-based. Spending time together in this way, has proven to be such a positive way for the youth to connect, and to come to realize that they can still be teens and have LOTS of fun, yet have a personal relationship with Jesus, and a strong faith life. It is also an opportunity for the members of our group to meet the faith filled youth from other communities. Below are some of the things we have done, places we have visited, or events we have attended.

- 1) United Conference in Saskatoon
- 2) Face-to-Face Retreats (We have hosted retreats, as well as attended numerous others)
- 3) Net Ministries (hosted and attended in other parishes)
- 4) Join-the-Journey Retreats
- 5) Home Mini Retreats with adoration

6) Watching the Passion Movie – This is a tradition we have continued for many years. Every year a week or two before Easter, we have a pot-luck supper and watch a movie on the Passion of the Christ.

7) Camping

8) Canoeing

9) Christmas Party – supper, games, gift exchange, lesson, and prayer

10) (Dinner and a Movie) - Movie nights with pot-luck supper

11) Youth Mass

12) Youth Choir

13) Bowling

14) Movies in the city

15) Paint ball

16) Wall climbing

17) Zip Line

18) Clip 'n Climb

19) Lazer Tag

20) Horse and wagon rides – with Christmas carolling

21) Horseback riding

22) Make a Slideshow for the end of the year – pics of meetings, activities, Christmas party, service events, windup, etc.....

23) Participate in the community Christmas concert

As I have mentioned, this is the format and method that I have found to be very successful with my group. There are times during the year that become very busy, but our youth are still so eager and committed.

I have to stress how important it is to stay connected with your youth. Youth of today want to be connected, they want consistency, and they want to know that you care about them – beyond the youth group meeting! Find ways to stay connected with your youth group.

May God Bless you in your youth ministry and give you the grace you require to touch the lives of our youth.

Adele Craswell  
Youth Leader, Leoville

# St. Thérèse Parish Youth Group Activities



Canoeing



Bowling



"Join the Journey Retreat" group challenge.

## St. Thérèse Parish Youth Group Activities



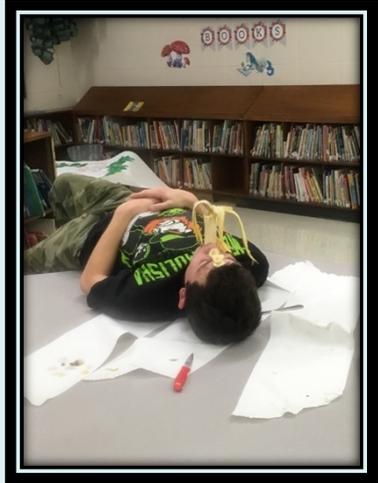
Enjoying a visit with Fr. Peter



# St. Thérèse Parish Youth Group Activities



Team Pyramid



Choices

Fun, Faith and Fellowship



# APPENDIX FIVE

## JOIN THE JOURNEY

## COVID ADAPTED

 ACTIVITIES 



RETREATS FOR: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL, PARISH, STAFF

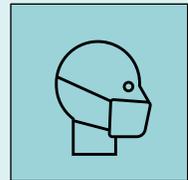
JOIN THE JOURNEY RETREATS

# GROWING IN OUR FAITH



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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**Architect/Builder**  
(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:**  
8 years and up

**Materials: (per team) (Masks and gloves must be worn)**

1. 3 - architect /builder envelopes per team of three. (see notes)
2. 1 - lap type tray or plate for the builder to work upon.
3. 2 - chairs, (back to back 2 meters apart)
4. A timekeeper.

**Explanation**

1. Have the participants split off in groups of three (2 meters between groups if possible)
2. Two people sit in chairs back to back . Designate one a builder, the other an architect.
3. The observer(s) stand beside and face the same direction as the architect. **(observers must remain unengaged until they are seated in the architect chair.)**
4. Give the architect the first empty folder with the picture only.
5. Give the builder a work tray and the parts provided from within the envelope.
6. The observers may 'tap in'' to the architects position at any time.
7. **Remember no peeking by the architect or observers, at what the builder is doing at any time!**
8. When the builder thinks they have completed the challenge, they must raise their hand and check with the facilitator.

**If the answer is correct, share their success with the team. If not, have them continue to the next challenge. At this point they may rotate positions as required.**

The object of course is to complete a set of three envelopes, provided to each team, in the time allotted. **Allow a total of 30 minutes to complete all three envelopes.** If the team is struggling with a particular envelop, they may ask to move on to a different one.

**BEWARE!!!** Once they pass on an envelope they cannot return to it.

**Notes:**

**Envelopes**

For example, if you have 6 teams once participants are split up, you will need a total of 18 envelopes. Six envelopes 1's, six ,2's and 6, 3's. So all groups will be working on the same envelope 1 example when they begin.

### **Remember to debrief the activity**

Originally, this activity was designed as a teambuilding activity, designed to focus on the art of communication.

Sometimes, even simple activities can be overwhelming when all we have is our voice to try and explain ourselves to others. Our words are easily misunderstood at times, and perhaps we may not do the best job of explaining ourselves. As well, our words, the way we think, and our past experiences can be very different from another individuals. We don't all have the same foundations!

So, if this is all true, is it any wonder that others have difficulty understanding us when we talk about God and our faith. Firstly, how deep is our own understanding, and how well can we articulate it? Perhaps that is where we need to focus our time. Perhaps we need to work on ourselves first, to be the best we can be in our faith as we attempt to share that faith with others. Afterall, how can we expect to have an effect on other people's lives, if we cannot have that same effect on our own lives?

**The blind leading the blind – another “Join the journey Retreat “ activity.**



## **Bean bag-Tac-Toe (Covid Style) (indoor)**

### **Materials:**

1. Surveyors Tape for Tic Tac Toe type grid(s) (Approx. 18” squares).
2. Masking tape to hold the surveyors tape in place.
3. Bean bags (Half one color, half another color).
4. Large boundary rope (to create a 20’ diameter circle).
5. Small Pylons (As many as possible for markers).
6. Tape measure.
7. 1 Facilitator.

### **Explanation**

1. Most of us have experienced the time honoured game called tic-tac-toe. Sometimes it has been referred to as (X’s and O’s). Whatever its name, it is always fun when you are perhaps feeling a bit bored on those long trips.
2. We have changed the game only slightly. We have made it **life-size!!!** Now it will be played in the gym with the grid area designated by a nine box Tic Tac Toe grid of tape.
3. Instead of a pen, pencil or other type of marker, instead, you will be using **Bean bags!!**
4. You are expected to stand on the outside of the large circle that is designated by a red boundary rope. From there you will throw the Bean bag to get it to land in one of grid areas. The idea is still to get three identical Bean bags in a row in order to win
5. Instead of this being a “one on one” game, it will be played in teams of six. Each player will take a turn throwing their Bean bag while alternating the throws between teams.
6. The first objective of the game is of course to get three same colored Bean bags in a row in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction. The other objective is to get the most three in a rows and be the victors.

### **Things to remember:**

1. Your throw must be made from outside of the boundary rope.
2. The Bean bag must be “cleanly” in the square to count.
3. Bean bags touching, on top of or underneath a rope do not count.
4. Once a play grid has been clearly marked with a bean bag it is closed to further play. (It will be marked by the “Facilitator”)
5. Bean bags may only be removed from the playing area by the keeper (attending adult).
6. Bean bags may only be removed after all teams throws have been completed.
7. The game will continue until one of the teams gets Disc-Tac-Toe. The facilitator will then reset the game and the teams will begin again.

### **Remember to debrief the activity**

This is not an easy challenge! Of course, we have to be patient, we must wait our turn, and the facilitator will be picky about what is a good resting place for the Bean bag Add to that, we may not be the best thrower and others may even heckle us! What about the wind? That can blow our throw off course!

Ask the question, what frustrated you the most in this challenge.

Acknowledge these frustrations.

Much like in this game, in life there are so many unknowns. On any given day at any given moment, our life circumstances can immediately change. There is so much we have absolutely no control over. Ever wonder why grandma perhaps loves to pray, why grandpa loves to go to church, why mom and dad are insistent on getting you to experience the sacraments? Perhaps it is because they know oh so well how little control they have in this life and that a relationship with God can bring us peace and comfort.

It would be a poor idea to leave God out of our lives.

**Debriefing** activities is an essential part of the process.



## **Disc-Tac-Toe (Covid Style)** (Outdoor)

### **Materials:**

1. Ropes for Tic Tac Toe type grid(s) (Approx. 18" squares).
2. Pegs for the ropes.
3. Frisbees (Half one color, half another color).
4. Large boundary rope (to create a 20' diameter circle).
5. Small Pylons (As many as possible for markers).
6. Tape measure.
7. Mallet.
8. 1 Facilitator.

### **Explanation**

1. Most of us have experienced the time honoured game called tic-tac-toe. Sometimes it has been referred to as (X's and O's). Whatever its name, it is always fun when you are perhaps feeling a bit bored on those long trips.
2. We have changed the game only slightly. We have made it **life-size!!!** Now it will be played on the grass with the grid area designated by a nine box Tic Tac Toe grid of yellow rope.
3. Instead of a pen, pencil or other type of marker, instead, you will be using **frisbees!!**
4. You are expected to stand on the outside of the large circle that is designated by a red boundary rope. From there you will throw the frisbee to get it to land in one of grid areas. The idea is still to get three identical frisbees in a row in order to win
5. Instead of this being a "one on one" game, it will be played in teams of six. Each player will take a turn throwing their frisbee while alternating the throws between teams.
6. The first objective of the game is of course to get three frisbees in a row in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal direction. The other objective is to get the most three in a rows and be the victors.

### **Things to remember:**

1. Your throw must be made from outside of the boundary rope.
2. The frisbee must be "**cleanly**" in the square to count.
3. Frisbees touching, on top of or underneath a rope do not count.
4. Once a play grid has been clearly marked with a frisbee it is closed to further play.  
(It will be marked by the "Facilitator")
5. Frisbees may only be removed from the playing area by the keeper (attending adult).
6. Frisbees may only be removed after all teams throws have been completed.
7. The game will continue until one of the teams gets Disc-Tac-Toe. The facilitator will then reset the game and the teams will begin again.

### Remember to debrief the activity

This is not an easy challenge! Of course, we have to be patient, we must wait our turn, and the facilitator will be picky about what is a good resting place for the frisbee. Add to that, we may not be the best frisbee thrower and others may even heckle us! What about the wind? That can blow our throw off course!

Ask the question, what frustrated you the most in this challenge.

Acknowledge these frustrations.

Much like in this game, in life there are so many unknowns. On any given day at any given moment, our life circumstances can immediately change. There is so much we have absolutely no control over. Ever wonder why grandma perhaps loves to pray, why grandpa loves to go to church, why mom and dad are insistent on getting you to experience the sacraments? Perhaps it is because they know oh so well how little control they have in this life and that a relationship with God can bring us peace and comfort.

It would be a poor idea to leave God out of our lives.



**Group Juggle**  
(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:**  
8 years and up

**Materials: (Masks and gloves must be worn)**

1. A tub with 10-20 assorted throw/catch items (Frisbees , assorted balls, ringette rings, footballs etc.)

**Explanation:**

Assign groups no larger than 6 participants.

Groups are to stand in a circle, 2 meters apart, facing into the center.

The facilitator chooses an individual as a starting point for the challenge. The individual chosen will be given an item that is easy to throw. He/she is to throw the item to any other individual within the playing group.

There are a couple of simple rules for participants:

1. Remember who you throw the ball to (same person each time), and who throws the ball to you.
2. Loudly call out the name of who you are throwing it to, **“before”** you throw it.
3. Underhand or overhand, no matter how you throw it, make it a good throw that can be easily caught.

**Leaders:**

4. By inserting one ball with the beginning person, be sure it goes throughout the entire circle so that everyone has caught and thrown it before it gets back to the beginning point.
5. Now, do it once more so that people are familiar with the path, the names, and the process.
6. Once that is in place, introduce another item into the challenge at the beginning point whenever you as a facilitator are ready.
7. Then, keep adding items to see if the group can handle more and more.

***If your group can handle it, here are a couple of additional twists!***

At some point, when it is still moving fairly well with 6-8 items in play, move about the circle and remove one individual taking them 10 or so feet away from the group and turning them with their back to the group. This will no doubt send the group into a bit of a chaotic state but they will figure it out. Once they have regained fluidity, remove a second person. Re-adjustment will happen once again.

After the second readjustment, place the removed participants back into the groups circle. (Not in the same location you took them from!). It should be interesting to see if and how they will be assimilated back into the challenge. It should revert to its original pattern.

**Notes:**

This is a great game that by its nature also operates as a way for people to get to know each other by name.



### **Remember to debrief the activity**

With this seemingly simple task, there is a lot to talk about.

Questions like;

Did you feel included?

What happened when one or two people disappeared, what did the group do?

How did the group feel?

How did the group adjust?

How did the participants who were removed feel?

How did they feel when they were placed back into the challenge?

Discussion should eventually get around to inclusion, the workplace, school, the family, the friend group, youth group etc.

People move in and out of our circles of life all of the time for a variety of reasons. Some good, some not so good. The question here is, how do we deal with that individually? Part of God's plan is that we live in community. Community life has its challenges but the goal remains the same,.....live as community.

Take for example our parish(es). How do we adjust when individuals are no longer there or available? How do we accept them back if they choose to return? How do we accept newcomers? Is our parish still trying to operate as a community as God intended, or have we seemingly lost our sense of direction?

Perhaps ask for strengths that were noted during the activity. What positives did we see? How might we use both the positives and challenges to our best advantage?

**Paper Tower (Covid style)**  
**(Indoor)**

**Age:**

8 years and up

**Materials:**

1. 5 - sheets of paper (*see Paper notes*).
2. 25 - chopsticks.
3. A predetermined amount of masking tape.
4. A paper flag.

**Explanation:**

There are a number of opportunities with this building project.

A couple of suggestions are;

1. Simply, build the tallest **freestanding** tower, no ladders, chairs, tables etc are to be used.
2. Build the tallest tower that will support a small item at its very top, a small flag .

You may use only the materials given.

You may not tape to anything other than the floor.

You will work individually.

**Notes:**

**Paper**

Scrap paper (8 ½ x 11), and build the towers on the floor.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

**Suggestions:**

Talk about....

.... how we plan and work.

....how we acknowledge others ideas.

....how we make the best use of our talents and resources

....how a strong foundation is important to the tower

....how a strong foundation is important in our lives

## **Stackers (Indoor)**

**Age:**

8 years and up

**Materials: (per team) (Masks and gloves must be worn).**

1. 1 - "Stacker Octopus" (per team of 4 people) (See notes).
2. 10 - solo cups (per team) (upside down).
3. 1 - table, (per team if possible).

**Explanation:**

Using the octopus, and only the octopus, your job, as a team is to stack the cups in the way your facilitator instructs. There are three stacking formats that will be expected:

1. A stack of 3 cups. Two on the bottom, one on top. Then dismantle.
2. A stack of 6 cups. Three on the bottom, two on the middle row, and one on top. Then dismantle.
3. A stack of 10 cups. Rows of 4, then 3 then 2, then 1..... Then dismantle.

**Notes:**

1. The "Stacker Octopus" is made in the following manner using these materials:
2. For each octopus you will need two wide rubber bands, about 2-3 inch in diameter, these will have to be stretched over the bottom area of the solo cups, in order to pick them up.
3. Attach 4 strings, (each about 45 inches long), around the rubber bands when together. Try to make them equally spaced. This sort of makes it look like an octopus! Place a "finger loop" at the other end of each string.
4. No hands beyond the finger loop towards to the elastics!  
Participants may now practise stacking and moving cups with the octopus. Practise time may be important for some participants.
5. You CANNOT slide the cups, they must be picked up with the Stacker Octopus to move them.
6. If cups fall over, or on top of each other, or off of the table, you may use only the octopus to right them. You may not use your hands.
7. After each stacking format, dismantling of stacks must also be completed with the octopus only.
8. Teams can compete against each other , or simply compete against the clock.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

Is this frustrating or easy?

Remember that in this challenge, you have control over a small portion of the overall "octopus". You must focus on your task! By doing your best at this you are actually making the success of others more likely.

Did you find that you had to talk, (communicate), in order to make it work?

We talk to share our experiences, what works for us. We are all working towards a common goal! In this challenge it is stacking the cups, in life it is to reach our heavenly home. When a cup falls, (similar to us making a mistake in life), we help each other and find a way to make things right, a way to get back on the path to our common goal.

God "stretches" us in many ways throughout our lives....  
Can you share a way in which he may be stretching you?.....



Stackers

### **Straight and narrow (ropes)**

(Indoor or outdoor)

**Age:**

8 years and up

**Materials: (Masks and gloves must be worn)**

1. 30-45 tennis balls (per group of 6 participants)
2. 1, **rope loop** for every 2 participants. *(See note)*
3. 1, box per participant. (as well one extra box for each 6 participants) *(See boxes note...)*
4. *One pair of rubber gloves for each participant.*
5. *One push broom or hockey stick per 6 member group.*

**Explanation:**

1. Have the pairs of participants stretch their rope loops centre over that box. *(From above this would look like a "spoked wheel".)* Of course they will all be facing into the centre of the circle.
2. Place one box on the floor in the center of the circle of players.
3. Have the pairs of players stretch their rope loops so the center of their rope is above the center of the box. *(If you were to look at this from above, it would resemble a spoked wheel.)*
4. Next place a box about one foot in front of each participant, and ensure that one of those partners boxes has about 10 -15 balls inside of it.

### Now the fun part!

Allow some practise time to do the following:

1. Each of the partners is to try and get a ball to roll along their outstretched rope and drop it into the centre box.
2. After each participant does this, they should then try to get a ball to go into the box in front of their partner.

*(Care must be taken to set the correct tension of the rope and the distance the two parts of the rope are apart).*

***It should be noted that we also assigned two or three participants to the team as rovers. Their job is simply to retrieve stray balls. This should be done with push brooms or hockey sticks. Have the rovers simply sweep the balls over to the participants. At certain points the facilitator will shout SUBS! This allows the rovers to sub into the game wherever they want. Less boring that way!!!***

Now the Real challenge!

**To start the challenge**, ensure one team member of each pair has 10 -15 balls in their box.



1. On the word “go” one partner will place a ball on his/her track and attempt to get it into the centre box. Once successful, their partner must do the same.

1. Once they have done that they can then try to get balls to go across the circle to their partner's box. Remember to keep track of how many balls have successfully made it across the entire circle.
2. Once success is beginning to occur, allow three minutes of play and then the facilitator yells “reset”!!
3. The participants lay their ropes down and reset the balls in boxes to start all over again. (**do not leave your box area**)
4. Before they restart, ask the teams how many successes they had. Add the results together.
5. Now restart to see if they can beat their previous total record etc. etc. etc..

## Notes:

### Boxes

For boxes, we used empty wine boxes from our local liquor store. Flatten them for transport and set them up as needed. Once re-setup, simply fold the top flaps in for ease of use and rigidity.

### Rope loop

We used 1/4-3/16" rope to make a continuous rope loop. Don't worry about the knot. Simply get a participant to hold the knot in their hand to keep it out of the play area.

### Weight advantage

Pair students off who are of similar body mass. (Trust me, it will work better.)

Lighter students may have a hard time pulling enough on the rope in order to be successful. Success lies on the ability to apply enough tension in the rope in order to complete the task. **(Never less than 3 meters)** Some participants because of physical strength and body mass, are unable to do this. If this is the case, simply use a shorter portion of the rope.

### Remember to debrief the activity

This a challenging, fun and interesting activity. Its nature provides a lot of possibilities with regards to "life analogies".

Some topics that come to mind are:

**Persistence.** Do we have the persistence to continue to try at this challenge even though we may find it difficult?

**Tension.** Are we able to apply just the right amount of tension towards fulfilling the task?

**Patience. Cooperation. Target goals.**

## Team Pen

(Indoor or outdoor)

### Age:

8 years and up

### Materials: (Per 5 person team) (Masks and gloves must be worn)

1. 4 - 10 foot lengths of duct tape. *(see duct tape notes)*
2. Erasable or permanent markers. One for every 8 participants  
*( But beware, see notes)*
3. 11"x 17" paper. Two sheets for every 8 participants.
4. A table, for each team of 8 participants.
5. Masking tape. To tape the sheets to the table.
6. Each participant must wear a mask and gloves

### Explanation:

The main idea is to get the teams to write a word(s), or draw an object that is suggested to them by the facilitator.

1. Help the teams to construct their team pen "octopus writers".
2. Once the teams have successfully constructed them, have each team member grab an "octopus tentacle" of the writer.
3. Instruct the players to use only capital letters, and try to print the word MOM.
4. Suggest another word and set a time limit, give 3-4 minutes depending on the length of the word(s).
5. Allow time for teams to look at each other's final results.

Once you have afforded a bit of practise time, (**perhaps**), you can replace the top paper and ask the participant teams to print words, or draw pictures etc.

As well, you could secretly give each group a different task to write or draw, and then have the other teams try and guess what it is they have done.

You might try blindfolding a couple of players in each team to increase the difficulty. You could even blindfold all but one player on the team, making them the “eyes” for the team, and having them give instructions for the movement (direction) of the pen in order to produce the word.

**Notes:**

**Duct tape**

The tape will be used to make an octopus arrangement that will hold the marker in the center. The marker should be positioned in such a way that when individuals hold an end of each of the duct tape octopus arms, the pen will be able to make marks on the sheet once it is being moved by the participants.

**Paper sheets**

If you use permanent markers, double up the sheets as the marker will bleed through and damage the table.

**Remember to debrief the activity**

**Ask:**

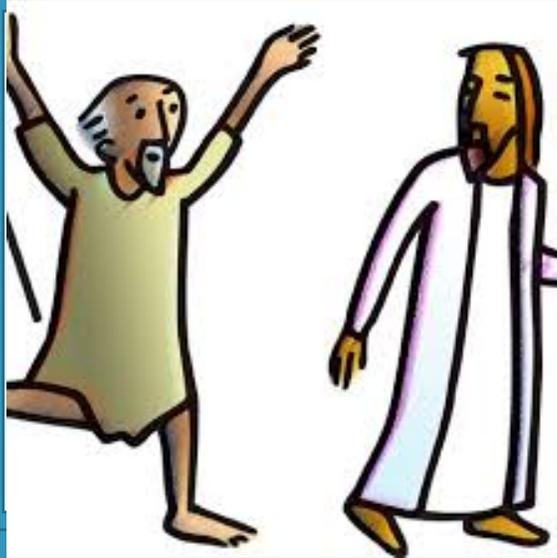
What emotions did you experience while performing this challenge?

(Acknowledge those emotions)

How does this team grouping activity compare with the working of : a family, a sports team, a drama troupe, a youth group, a circle of friends?

If you were a blindfolded individual, how did you feel?

If all of your team was blindfolded except for you, how did you feel being in that position?



## Appendix Six

# Graces



## Graces

*When teaching graces, be sure to practice it before praying it. If you don't have the words on a poster or screen, have them repeat each line back to you.*

*Don't forget to begin and end with the Sign of the Cross!*

### Traditional:

Bless us oh Lord, and these, Thy gifts  
Which we are about to receive from Thy bounty Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### Beatnik Grace

***(Snap in the shape of the sign of the Cross)***

Version 1 (OLVC):

Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Here's to the God we love the most  
He's cool, He's hip, He's quite a dude  
And we thank Him for our daily food,  
So the next time you make a toast,  
Toast the Father and the son and the Holy Ghost, ...yeah.

Version 2 (Camp St. Louis):

To the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost  
Here's to the One we love the most  
He's cool, He's clean, He's got a lot of soul  
And He gives us the food that makes us grow  
So the next time you wanna, wanna make a toast  
Toast the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, ...yeah.

### STAR WARS GRACE

*(to the tune of the Star Wars theme song)* **Bless us, Bless us oh Lord, and  
These thy gifts, which, we will receive. From thy, Bounty Oh Christ, our**

**Lord and Sa-a-a-avior.**

**A-amen, a-amen, a-amen**

**In the name or the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### Eat em Up, Eat em Up (Hungry, Hungry)

The Lord is the Baker,  
And we are the Bread,  
And we come together so we can be fed,  
So let's thank the Lord for this awesome feast, Remember your manners,  
Don't eat like a Beast!

### Batman Grace

*(To the tune of 1960's batman theme song:)*

na na na na na na na na Thank You na na na na na na na na for the  
na na na na na na na na food Lord Thank You for the food Lord

Thank You for the food Lord

### Flintstones Grace

*(Tune of Flintstones Theme Song)* God is – great – and God is – good And let us thank Him for our food. God is  
– great – and God is – good And let us thank Him for our food. Amen. Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-men. Amen. Ah-ah-  
ah-ah-ah-ah-men.

### God is Great

*(Tune of "Rock Around the Clock")*

The Lord is great, The Lord is good  
We thank Him for the food we're gonna eat  
We thank Him morning, noon, and night  
We're gonna thank Him cause He's outta sight!  
We're gonna thank the Lord, thank the Lord tonight Shu-wap, shu-wap, yeah.

### Jaws Prayer

*To the Tune of Jaws - put your hands on top of your head like a shark fin*

God is  
Great and  
God is  
Good and

(speed up now)

So we

Thank Him

For Our

Food and

AMEN!(*when saying amen make your hand and arms close like a shark mouth*)

*Simpler version: simply say Thank you / for our / food Lord – faster and faster until you get to Amen (and do the same shark bite)*

### Original Super Man

Thank you Lord for giving us food! Thank you Lord for giving us food! For the food that we eat and the friends that we meet Thank you Lord for giving us food!

### We Will Rock You Grace

*(campers can keep rhythm by slapping their palms against their legs twice, followed by clapping their hands once, in a continuous pattern)*

God, You are a good God Please accept this grace

As we sit and feed our face We've got food on our plates We think that's great

It's time to eat not time to wait Singin' we will, we will thank You We will, we will thank You... Amen!



