

00:00 – Students arrive (5-10min)

- Name tags and mingle
 - *Hint: It's a great idea to have some snacks available at this time, and a couple of adults around to pass them out!*

00:10 – **Gather and Opening** (5-10min)

- M.C. introduces him/herself and the rest of the team follows. (*It helps to make it goofy by saying favorite ice cream or deodorant or something silly along those lines*).
- Briefly introduce the retreat.
 - ***"Today we will learn about how important decisions can be in our lives and how God's love can make every day amazing! So I encourage you guys to really pay attention to the talks, let go and have fun during the activities, and really share and get involved in your small groups. This will be a really fun day if you let it be!"***

00:20 – **Small Groups** (5-10min)

- Say, *"We are going to do a quick small group, just so you can get to know each other before we really get into the retreat."*
- Refer to **"Guidelines for Small Group Leaders"**
 - Remember, the main point is to just get them comfortable with one another and you.
 - This should "break the ice".

00:30 – **Game Time** (10-15min)

- ***Do This, Do That***
 - This game is played just like *Simon Says*...except you always "do this" and you never "do that".
 - Make sure that there is one leader who is enthusiastic and loud!

00:45 – **First Talk** (10min)

- Refer to Talk Sheet **"Being Responsible for your own lives!"**
- Make sure you are interactive and engaging. *Do not read directly off the talk sheet for the whole time.*

00:55 – **Saint Story or Testimony** (3-5min)

- Refer to **"Saint Stories"** or use a *personal testimony*

1:00 – Bathroom Break (3-5min)

1:05 – **Small Groups** (15min)

- Refer to **"Small Group Questions"** for assistance.

- It may still be a lot of getting to know one another. Don't worry if it is still not very deep. The last one should be the deepest.

1:20 – **Game Time** (10-15min)

- ***I Love People who Love...***
 - Refer to game sheet for instructions

1:35 – **Second Talk** (20-25min)

- Refer to talk sheet **“God is Love”**
- Make sure you are interactive and engaging. *Do not read directly off the talk sheet for the whole time.*
- Draw on previous things that have happened that day!

2:00 – **Saint Story or Testimony** (3-5min)

- Refer to **“Saint Stories”** or use a *personal testimony*

2:05 – **Small Groups** (15-20min)

- Refer to **“Small Group Questions”** for assistance.
- Engage students in discussion and try to draw them deeper into the reality of **Who Love Is**.

2:25 – LUNCH (45 min)

- Interact with them and continue that bond! *In other words, don't hide out during lunch....eat lunch **with** your small group.*
- Have them use the restroom

3:00 – Fun Activity (15min)

- Students may need some free time to walk around and talk with each other. Some groups may need “regulated recreation” to get them moving. Do whatever your group needs.

3:15 – **Brief Sharing on Importance of Prayer** (5 min)

- Refer to talk sheet **“Importance of Prayer”**
- Keep it simple.

3:20 – **Prayer Time**

- Have them pray though and follow along with the **Prayer Sheet**

3:40 – **Encouragement Talk** (3-5 min)

- Refer to talk sheet **“Encouragement Talk”**

3:45 – Large Group Discussion/Questions (10 min)

- Some General Prompts to Guide Discussion: *What did you hear today that you think is important? What questions do you still have?*

3:55 – Closing Prayer

- Hand out **Prayer for Future Spouse** and pray it with them.
- Close with a **Glory Be**.

Being Responsible for your own lives!

Objective:

This talk brings about the idea that the kids are at the point in their lives where they are becoming more and more responsible for the consequences to their decisions; good and bad. The purpose is for the kids to start taking ownership of the decisions they make and hopefully that will lead to wise and healthy choices.

Main Idea:

YOU are responsible for your actions. The choices you make can either bring you closer to God or farther away from Him through sin.

Introducing this talk: Use a similar story to build up to the concept....

I remember when I was young and I did something stupid, I never saw it as my fault. It didn't matter what it was (give a few examples such as trespassing or lying or swearing etc) "everyone else was doing it" so in my head I thought that meant I could do it as well. That wouldn't fly with my mom though. She'd come right back at me with the saying I'm sure most of you have heard before, "if all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you do it? Back then I would just say "no mom" and know I was defeated, but now thinking back, there is so much there to think about.

Key Points:

- 1. Just because other people are doing something (even if they get away with it) is not an excuse.**
 - If something happens to me, who is responsible? If something happens to you, who is responsible?
 - Talk about some examples of choices with good and bad consequences
 - o Ex. Getting an "F", lying, cheating, stealing, fighting, getting an "A", hitting a homerun, saving someone's life
 - God created us because He loves us and he wants us to make decisions that will bring us closer to Him (virtue) not ones that will bring us farther from Him (sin).
 - o What is virtue? "A good habit, one that creates within us a kind of inner readiness or attraction to move toward or accomplish the good."
 - o In other words, "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should..."
 - o What is sin? "A deliberate offense, in thought, word, or action against the will of God."
 - o What does God will for us? The good, in all things.
 - o Sometimes, we get confused about being **free to choose the good**...sometimes we think that freedom is the ability to do whatever we want, whenever we want. Thinking like that makes it a lot easier to make a poor choice....maybe a better definition of freedom is "**free to choose the good, in any and every situation, with nothing holding you back.**"
 - Ultimately we are responsible for whether or not we get to heaven by the decisions we make on earth.
 - o 2 Corinthians 5:10 *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil."*
- 2. Consequences both on earth and in eternity**
 - What are consequences? (in general and specific)
 - o Are they always bad?
 - Like we already mentioned, sin has some negative consequences. What do you think they are? (penance, separation from God, hurting other people, hurting your own body, etc)
 - We are blessed to be able to go the Sacrament of Reconciliation to take ownership of our shortcomings and make some amends. We can be forgiven of our sins because Christ told Peter

"I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* (Mt 16:19)

3. It's good to do the right thing no matter what. It's better to do the right thing for the right reasons, the Glory of God.

- Let's think of the act of contrition for a second... **"O My God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. I detest all my sins *because of thy just punishment*, but most of all *because they offend thee My God, who are all good and deserving of all my love...*"**
- It is good to not sin because you do not want to suffer the consequences in this life and/or the next
- It is even better to not sin because you love God and want nothing to get in the way of that
 - o The idea of not being able to receive my Lord and Savior in the Eucharist has stopped me from sinning countless times
- It should not only stop us from sinning though, it should cause us to do good for our brothers and sisters.
- Read Matthew 25:31-46 preferably from a Bible *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*
- Our actions and lack of actions are what pave the path of our futures both on earth and eternal.

4. Conclusion (say something similar with enthusiasm)

You guys are growing up and it is an exciting time!

With the freedom and joy that comes with this time in your life comes more and more responsibilities.

It gives you opportunities to say, with your words and your actions, how much Christ means to you and how important certain things in your life are.

How will your decisions affect your family and friends, your health, your future, and most importantly, your relationship with God?

If you take responsibility for your life and the gift it is from God, then He can truly work through you and you can be an instrument of His love and peace.

You can truly be a saint if you choose to love God and live your life reflecting that love.

But it's your choice, and it'll be your consequences, good or bad.

Choose wisely.

God is Love

Objective:

This talk is to remind the kids why we do anything and everything; love. We were created by love, out of love, to love. Without love in our hearts, nothing else matters.

Main Idea:

God is love. God loves us so much that He died to save us. He calls us to love in return

Introducing this talk:

Who here has been to a wedding before? (*Talk about a few of them for a few minutes. Who's wedding? What did they like? Etc. Maybe tell a wedding story*) **A lot of times at weddings they have a reading from 1 Corinthians 13. Does anyone know what that is? Let me read it to you for a minute. (Read 1 Cor 13) So what are some characteristics of love that Saint Paul talks about?**

Key Points:

1. What is love?

- See above—God is love.
- The **Catholic Vision of Love** is LOVE, hung on a Cross. What are we talking about here? What kind of love would it take to “hang on a cross”?
- Contrast to how the world views love
 - o Forever vs for now
 - o Never fails vs divorce
 - o etc

2. How do we love others?

- Parents loving their children
 - o Gift of life, food, clothes
- Children loving their parents
 - o Respect, obedience
- Friends loving friends
 - o Spend time, share interest, draw each other closer to God
 - o Thomas Aquinas said the purpose of friendship is to get one another to heaven
- Spouse loving spouse
- When we talk about Chastity, it's really an expression of how we love.
- Chastity is an appropriate expression of affection for a relationship—what does that look like with parents and children? With siblings? With friends?

3. How God loves us.

- John 3:16, Love hung on a cross....
- He became a lowly man just to be with us and raise us up
- He suffered so that we can unite our pain and suffering to His so it all has purpose
- He died so that we do not have to suffer eternal death, but rise with Him
- God is Love (short catechesis on this based on content of the “Theology” Portion of the CVOL Curriculum and the 6th Grade Catechist background)
- 1 John 4:7-21
- REAL Love is completely unconditional
 - o As much as our parents or friends may love us, the only true unconditional love comes from God

4. Our response to Love.

- 1 John 4:7-21 *“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love. **We love because he first loved us.** If anyone says, “I love God,” but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.*
- Reiterate 1 John 4:19, highlighted above
 - o We are only able to love because he first loved us. **Our love comes from His love.**
 - o Waterfall analogy
 - God’s love is like a waterfall. We can fill our cups up from that waterfall and go out and share that love with the world. Our cups are only so deep though, so we must return to the waterfall to refill our cups constantly or our cup will run dry and we will be unable to truly love anyone. The waterfall is an endless font of Christ’s love and grace.

5. Conclusion (say something along these lines)

We were created by Love, out of love, for love.

We are called to love and to be loved.

First by God, then here on earth. I don’t know if any of you have heard the song we sometimes sing at mass that goes “they will know we are Christians by our love.”

(Or maybe even play the song before the talk and allude back to it)

Love is our greatest witness to Christ and is a way that others can truly experience God through us.

It might be hard to love sometimes, especially if someone has hurt you, but just remember, God loved you so much that He died for you, and we have all hurt Him way more than anyone could ever hurt us! There are a lot of amazing ways to share Christ with others and to grow in holiness, but never forget the words of St. Paul... “So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor 13:13)

The Importance of Prayer

Objective:

This talk is brief and clear—before sending youth into prayer, they need some guidelines on “the what and how to”.

Main Idea:

Prayer sustains us and is our communication with God.

Key Points:

1. If you made a list of ways to build a good friendship, what would it include?

- *Making time for each other, aka “doing stuff”*
- *Similar interests*
- *Talking to each other AND listening to each other*

2. A classic definition of prayer is:

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God” (CCC 2590)

In other words, it’s more than just what we say or do—it’s about what we think and feel. It’s like a good friendship.

3. Just as friendship is more about affection than about knowing everything, prayer is a matter of the heart—when we allow ourselves to open up our hearts in friendship to God, we can hear God’s voice within us saying “I love you!”

4. JUST DO IT....when you really want to get to know someone, it is easy to get caught up in worrying about saying the right words and doing the right things. You can’t “mess up” prayer...God knows you and loves you too much! So here’s a simple way to start:

(Pass out the Prayer Sheets and briefly go over the following)

- **Acknowledge:** *Take some time to acknowledge what is going on in your heart and mind right now. There is nothing going on in your heart that God is not interested in, so just take some time to quiet down.*
- **Relate:** *Now share what’s going on in your heart and mind with God. This is the ‘you talk to God’ part. You can do this by writing it down, or speaking to God in the silence of your heart. If you are thankful, thank Him...if you are scared, tell Him about it...if you are happy, tell Him why. The most important part of this is that you are honest with Him; don’t just tell Him what you think He wants to hear...be authentic and share with Him like you would with a friend.*
- **Receive:** *Now is the time to listen and receive whatever God desires to give you in response to what you have shared with Him. If you have fully shared your heart, you are in a place to listen and receive. This can be difficult because it requires us to wait and sometimes learn to hear His voice! Try sitting for a few moments and then read this passage: **Mark 1:35***
- **Jesus goes off to be alone and pray to the Father.** *Why do you think Jesus would have needed to be alone to pray? What would Jesus’ prayer time have been like? What types of things would He have prayed for? What do you think the Father told Jesus in His prayer time? What do you think the Father and Jesus want to say to you right now? **You might want to refer to other scriptures at this time as well...***
- **Respond:** *This is a time to respond to what you have just received. Responding in this way should be natural, just as it’s natural to say thank you when someone gives you a gift....you may also want to respond in other ways:*

Encouragement Talk

Objective:

This talk is short and upbeat—the final encouragement in living this Catholic Vision of Love.

Main Idea:

Young people can make all the difference in the world.

Key Points:

- Today was great, right?
- In review:
 - God wants to love you more than He wants to use you.
 - God is Love.
 - Our Catholic vision of Love is LOVE hung on a cross.
 - Real love is good, true, pure, holy, and self-sacrificing.
 - Chastity and purity are possible.
 - Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.
 - We all need good friends to remind us of this.
 - Young people can make all the difference in the world.

Let no one have contempt for your youth,

but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity

1 Timothy 4:12

- God has something particular in mind for you and for every person you meet, are friends with, go to school with, and will date. So let's pray:

My prayer for you is this: That you would wait upon the Lord.

That you wouldn't give out premature emotion and you wouldn't get so caught up in the chase that you forget who's at the finish line.

I pray that you would keep yourself pure...in action, mind, and word...that when you stumble you would get back up and make sure to watch out for the block that tripped you up.

I pray that your heart would be protected and yet you would live with everything you have...

that you would understand the true love that Jesus means for us ALL to have.

I pray for wisdom on choices that will affect us both in the future.

I pray for strength to not fall for the standard of a fallen world, but to set your standard on God's perfect creation.

I pray for discernment to know the difference.

I pray that your passion for the Lord increases, while your hunger for the world decreases.

I pray that you would know love before you try to give it out.

I pray that you will wait for me.

Guidelines for Facilitating Small Groups

The facilitator's role is to help a group to its best thinking and sharing. A good facilitator is helpful when a group is trying to deal with new or difficult issues. If you accept the role of facilitator you must be neutral. You should also use the following techniques.

Begin with Prayer & Ice breaker

Introduce yourself as the facilitator and lay the groundwork for sharing by saying ***"We are here tonight to share, not to judge or gossip. Please respect yourself and the other people in this group by not sharing what other people say outside of the group. What you say is important—so we will all listen to you."*** Ask the other members of the group to go around and share their name and something about themselves (like favorite ice cream flavor, or deodorant brand, etc). Begin with a simple prayer--as simple as ***"Lord, we invite you to join us today in this group and guide our words and thoughts to help us grow closer to you."***

Watch group vibes: If people seem bored or inattentive, you may have to speed up the pace of the meeting. If people seem tense because of unvoiced disagreements, you may have to bring concerns out into the open.

Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak: Invite quiet people to speak. If necessary, use the clock: ***"We have ten minutes left. I think we should hear from people who haven't spoken for a while."***

Another way to get quiet people to speak is to initiate a round, in which you move around the table, with everyone getting a few minutes to present their views.

Encourage open discussion: Try to encourage people to speak up if they seem reluctant to disagree with a speaker: ***"On difficult issues, people disagree. Does anyone have a different point of view?"***

Another way to encourage open discussion is to ask participants to avoid using critical language for a period of time.

Draw people out with open-ended questions: Open-ended questions require more than a yes / no answer. Some examples: ***"We seem to be having trouble here. What do you think we should do?"***
"Could you say more about that?" ***"What do you mean when you say . . . ?"***

Inject humor: Humor is one of the best ways of improving the tone of meetings. It makes meetings seem like friendly get-togethers. It's ok for small group time to be light and fun too!

Paraphrase: When you paraphrase, you try to restate briefly the point that someone has just made: ***"Let me see if I'm understanding you . . ."*** If paraphrasing doesn't convince a person that he or she has been heard, you may have to repeat what was said verbatim.

Please note that these questions are simply a guideline if you are having trouble coming up with questions within your small group.

Feel free to use them or come up with your own questions especially in the first small group meeting.

Remember that if a student says something that indicates that they or someone else is in danger, it is your responsibility to report it to someone in authority.

Opening small group

1. What is your name and if you could be any animal which one would you be and why?
2. What are your expectations for today? Any fears/worries, or joys/excitements?
3. How would you describe your relationship with God? Using a scale of 1-10 and explain why. Where would you like it to be, and how can you get there?

Small group after talk #1

1. What stuck out to you most in the talk and why?
2. What does it mean to be responsible for your own life? How can you do that in your everyday life now?
3. What are consequences? (talk about different scenarios with good and bad consequences)
4. What are some ways you can live your life now to prepare for your future and be responsible?

Small group after talk #2

1. What stuck out to you most in the talk and why?
2. What is love? What are some different types of love?
3. How can you let God's love in more? How can you love Him more in return?
4. What are some ways you can love more? Family, friends, strangers, etc.

"St. Francis was born around 1181 in Assisi, in Italy. As a young man he loved parties and good times. He was handsome and rich, so he bought himself the finest clothes and spent money freely.

Francis had no wish to study or to learn his father's business, as he was having too much fun. One day he refused to give alms to a poor beggar but as the man was leaving, he felt sorry for what he had done and ran after him with some money.

After he fell ill twice, Francis realized that he was wasting precious time. He realized that he should be serving Jesus and began praying more and making sacrifices to grow strong in spirit.

While riding his horse one day he saw a leper and quickly turned his horse to ride away. Then he thought to himself, if Jesus saw a leper he would not turn the other way. So he kissed the horrible-looking leper, and gave him money.

Often he gave his clothes and money to the poor. He served the sick in hospitals. Still he felt he must do more. He fasted and began to go around in rags to humble himself.

It is not hard to imagine how his rich friends must have looked at him now! His father was so angry that he beat him and locked him up at home. Francis bore all this suffering for love of Jesus.

When his father took everything from him in disgust, Francis put all his trust in his Father in heaven. He said that he was married to "Lady Poverty" and he began to live as a beggar.

He had no shelter. His food was what kind people gave him. Everywhere he went, he begged people to stop sinning and return to God. Many men began to see how close to God this poor man really was, and they became his followers. Francis followed the example of Jesus closely by living a life of simplicity and teaching the Gospel message with great joy.

That is how the great Franciscan order of priests and brothers began. They helped the poor and sick and preached everywhere. Even after the order had spread all over Italy, Francis insisted that they should not own anything. He wanted his priests to love poverty as he did.

St. Francis had the power of working miracles. He loved all creatures and the birds and animals happily obeyed his commands!

As a reward for his great love, Jesus gave him his own wounds. Two in his hands, two in his feet and one in his side but the humble Francis tried to hide them from people.

Toward the end of his life, he became very sick. He was told he would live only a few more weeks and he exclaimed, "Welcome, Sister Death!" He asked to be laid on the ground and covered with an old habit.

He advised his brothers to love God, to love being poor, and to obey the Gospel. "I have done my part," he said. "May Jesus teach you to do yours." Francis died on October 3, 1226."¹

Presenter's Note: Make sure you tie this into responsibility. He was not taking responsibility for his own life as a kid, but then he realized that this life that God gave him was a gift and he needed to take care of it! He not only took responsibility for his own life, but for as much of God's creation as he could, seeing beauty in it all.

¹ http://www.holyspiritinteractive.net/kids/saints/1004_francis.asp

“In other words, the most important thing you've done today, yesterday, and last week is love. One act of love, no matter how quiet, can change a person's day—even his or her whole life! Now that's important.”

When we think about the difference that love can make, many people very often think of one person: Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. A tiny woman, just under five feet tall, with no tools except prayer, love, and the unique qualities God had given her, Mother Teresa is probably the most powerful symbol of the virtue of charity for people today.

Mother Teresa wasn't, of course, born with that name. Her parents named her Agnes—or Gonxha in her own language—when she was born to them in Albania, a country north of Greece.

Agnes was one of four children. Her childhood was a busy, ordinary one. Although Agnes was very interested in missionary work around the world, as a child she didn't really think about becoming a nun; but when she turned 18, she felt that God was beginning to tug at her heart, to call her, asking her to follow him.

Now Agnes, like all of us, had a choice. She could have ignored the tug on her heart. She could have filled her life up with other things so maybe she wouldn't hear God's call. But of course, she didn't do that. She listened and followed, joining a religious order called the Sisters of Loreto, who were based in Dublin, Ireland.



After two months in Ireland, spent mostly learning how to speak English, Agnes got on a boat (in 1928, hardly anyone took trips by plane), and 37 days later she arrived in the beautiful, busy, complicated country of India.

In India, Agnes took her final vows as a sister and took the name Teresa, after Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower. She spent 15 years teaching in a girl's school in Calcutta, a job that she loved and was very good at. But then one day, she heard that call again.

The voice in her heart was telling her that she was to make a very big change in her life—that she should leave her teaching position and go into the streets of Calcutta and care for the poor.

Again, Teresa could have ignored the voice and just gone on teaching the wealthy girls behind the high walls of her school. But you know how it feels to ignore the voice of God in your heart, right? You can't rest easy until you obey that voice. Do you know why

So Sister Teresa listened and said yes. She had lived in India for years, and she knew how desperate the poor of that country were, especially in the big cities. It was these people, the dying poor, that Sister Teresa felt a special call to love. After all, these were people who had absolutely no one else in the world to love them. Not only were they poor, but they were also dying. Why did their feelings matter? Wouldn't they be gone soon enough?

Teresa saw these people differently. She saw them through God's eyes, which means that she saw each of them as his dear child, suffering and yearning for some kind touch or word, some comfort in their last days on earth. She heard that call and chose to live it out—to let God love the forgotten ones through her charity.

As is the case with all great things, Teresa's efforts started out small. She got permission to leave her order, to live with the poor, and to dress like them, too. She changed her habit from the traditional one to the sari worn by Indian women. Her sari would be white with blue trim, the blue symbolizing the love of Mary. She didn't waste time, either. On her very first day among the poor of Calcutta, Mother Teresa started a school with five students, a school

for poor children. That school still exists today. She quickly got some training in basic medical care and went right into the homes of the poor to help them.

Within two years, Teresa had been joined by other women in her efforts, all of them her former students. She was soon "Mother Teresa" because she was the head of a new religious order: the Missionaries of Charity.

The Missionaries of Charity tried to care for as many of the dying as they could. They bought an old Hindu temple and made it into what they called a home for the dying. Hospitals had no room or interest in caring for the dying—especially the dying poor—so the dying had no choice but to lie on the streets and suffer. The sisters knew this, so they didn't wait for the poor to come to them. They constantly roamed the streets, picking up what looked from the outside like nothing but a pile of rags, but was actually a sick child or a frail old person.

When a dying person came or was brought to Mother Teresa and her sisters, they were met with nothing but love. They were washed and given clean clothes, medicine, and—most important—someone who could hold their hand, listen, stroke their foreheads, and comfort them with love in their last days

One of the most feared diseases in the world is leprosy. It's a terrible sickness that deadens a person's nerves and can even cause their fingers, toes, ears, and nose to eventually fall away. You know that in Jesus' time, lepers were kept away from communities. Lepers in poor countries like India, where they have a hard time getting the medicines to treat the disease, are often treated the same way.

So Mother Teresa saw people with leprosy in the same way—through God's loving eyes. She got the help of doctors and nurses, gathered lepers from the slums, and began treating and caring for them in a way that no one before her had tried to do.

Mother Teresa's work of love started out small, but it isn't small anymore. There are more than four thousand Missionaries of Charity today, living, praying, and caring for the helpless in more than a hundred different houses around the world, including in the United States.

Mother Teresa died in 1997, but even now, when we think about her work, we can learn all we need to know about love: It doesn't take any money or power to love. It doesn't take great talent or intelligence. It simply takes love.

Mother Teresa did wonderful, brave work in caring for the forgotten, but if there's one thing she would want you to remember about love, it's that you don't have to travel to foreign countries to practice the virtue of charity."²

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go.
Flood our souls with your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly
that our lives may only be a radiance of yours.
Shine through us and be so in us that every soul we come in contact with
may feel your presence in our soul.
Let them look up and see no longer us, but only Jesus.
Stay with us and then we shall begin to shine as you shine,
so to shine as to be light to others.
The light, O Jesus, will be all from you.
None of it will be ours.
It will be you shining on others through us.
Let us thus praise you in the way you love best
by shining on those around us.
Let us preach you without preaching,
not by words, but by our example;
by the catching force - the sympathetic influence of what we do,
the evident fullness of the love our hearts bear to you.

² <http://www.loyolapress.com/saints-stories-for-kids.htm?cld=77288>

“Do This, Do That”

- Assemble students in main area.
- Explain rules: When I say “do this”, do this...when I say “do that”, don’t do that.
- This is just like Simon Says. When people “do that”, they are out.

“I Love People who...”

- Set up the chair in a circle with everyone having a chair and one person standing in the middle of the circle (there should be no empty chairs).
- The person in the middle will start off their sentence with “I love people who...” and then finish with some sort of characteristic, trait, or article of clothing.
 - For example, “I love people who are wearing jeans” or “who have green eyes” or “who love cats.”
- Then everyone who fits in that category must get up from their chair and sit in a new chair.
 - They cannot sit back in the same chair or in the chair directly to the left or right of them.
 - The person who was in the middle tries to sit down in a chair as well.
- The person who is left without a chair is now the person in the middle and they must come up with a new characteristic, trait, or article of clothing.
- Music can be playing soft in the background if you want. Make sure the same kid isn’t in the middle the whole time. It is important to have some adults playing so they can start the game and “not get a chair” if someone has been in the middle too long.
- *Note: You can change up the phrasing a little if you want, ex. “I love everyone here, especially the people who...”*

Let no one have contempt for your youth,

but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity

1 Timothy 4:12

Acknowledge: Take some time to acknowledge what is going on in your heart and mind right now. There is nothing going on in your heart that God is not interested in, so just take some time to quiet down.

Relate: Now share what's going on in your heart and mind with God. This is the 'you talk to God' part. You can do this by writing it down, or speaking to God in the silence of your heart. If you are thankful, thank Him...if you are scared, tell Him about it...if you are happy, tell Him why. The most important part of this is that you are honest with Him; don't just tell Him what you think He wants to hear...be authentic and share with Him like you would with a friend.

Receive: Now is the time to listen and receive whatever God desires to give you in response to what you have shared with Him. If you have fully shared your heart, you are in a place to listen and receive. This can be difficult because it requires us to wait and sometimes learn to hear His voice! Try sitting for a few moments and then read this passage: **Mark 1:35**

Jesus goes off to be alone and pray to the Father. Why do you think Jesus would have needed to be alone to pray? What would Jesus' prayer time have been like? What types of things would He have prayed for? What do you think the Father told Jesus in His prayer time? What do you think the Father and Jesus wanted to say to you right now?

You might want to read other scriptures at this time as well...

Respond: This is a time to respond to what you have just received. Responding in this way should be natural, just as it's natural to say thank you when someone gives you a gift....you may also want to respond in other ways:

How can I be more responsible? _____

How can I love better? _____



My Prayer for Future Spouse

My prayer for you is this: That you would wait upon the Lord.
That you wouldn't give out premature emotion and you wouldn't get so
caught up in the chase that you forget who's at the finish line.

I pray that you would keep yourself pure...
in action, mind, and word...
that when you stumble you would get back up and
make sure to watch out for the block that tripped you up.

I pray that your heart would be protected and
yet you would live with everything you have...
that you would understand the true love that
Jesus means for us ALL to have.

I pray for wisdom on choices that will affect us both in the future.

I pray for strength to not fall for the standard of a fallen world,
but to set your standard on God's perfect creation.
I pray for discernment to know the difference.

I pray that your passion for the Lord increases,
while your hunger for the world decreases.
I pray that you would know love before you try to give it out.
I pray that you will wait for me.