7th Grade Retreat Outline
4 Hours

00:00 – Students arrive (5-10 min)
  - 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 (5-10 min)
  - 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 are going to talk about courage in big things and in small “everyday” things! 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 (5-10 min)
  - 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 (10-15 min)
  - Red Light Green Light
    - Refer to game sheet for instructions

00:45 – First Talk (10 min)
  - Refer to Talk Sheet “Courage in Everyday Life”
  - 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 (3-5 min)
  - Refer to “Saint Stories” or use a personal testimony

1:00 – Bathroom Break (3-5 min)

1:05 – Small Groups (15 min)
  - 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)

- *Land Mine Game*
  - Refer to game sheet for instructions

1:35 – **Second Talk** (20-25min)

- Refer to talk sheet “Courage in Christ”
- 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 call to take **Courage in Christ**.

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** (20 min)

- Have them pray though and follow along with the **Prayer Sheet**
- Write down times in their life where they needed courage and strength from the Lord to carry on, and ways to build up that strength for future struggles

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

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

3:45 – Large group discussion/questions (10 min)

- Engage the large group in dialogue about what people learned and liked about this experience.

3:55 – Closing Prayer

- Hand out “**Footprints**” poem and read it with them.
- Close with a **Glory Be**.
Courage in Everyday Life

Objective:
This talk brings about the idea that purity takes courage. It is not something that is easy in our society today but it is something we are called to do, be pure. It may take losing some friends or unhealthy relationships or some articles of clothing, but it means guarding and saving your soul. It is one of the ways we need courage in the little things of our everyday life.

Main Idea:
We need courage and strength from the Lord to be pure and modest. Modestly and purity are KEY in becoming holier and getting to heaven.

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

Taking risks is a part of every person’s life. Some risks are worth it, some are not. Some are about big things; others have little to no implications at all. There is a huge difference between taking a risk of trying the new hot sauce at Taco Bell and moving across the country for a new job or a girl. You take a risk every time you take a stand for what you believe in too! Every January, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly youth, head out to Washington D.C. to stand up for life, but we will talk about big steps of courage like that later. Every day you are faced with small ways to be courageous and stand up for your faith, most of the time without even saying a word. One of the biggest ways you do that is through the way you dress and your relationships to others. Now I am not talking about wearing “I <3 Jesus” shirts all the time, what I am talking about is modesty and purity.

Key Points:
1. Why is Purity so important?
   - Define Pure (dictionary.com)
     o 1. free from anything of a different, inferior, or contaminating kind; free from extraneous matter
     o 2. unmodified by an admixture
     o 3. of unmixed descent or ancestry
     o 4. free from foreign or inappropriate elements
     o 5. clear; free from blemishes
   - Purity is about living our lives the way God intended us to, including our sexuality.
     o It is not just about “not having sex,” it is about saving sex for marriage because God intended it to be that way. “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one flesh.” (Gen 2:24, Eph 5:31)
     - It is not about a restriction but and wholeness, an integrity that can only be found if something or someone is kept pure
2. Modesty protects and encourages purity
   - "Either we must speak as we dress, or dress as we speak. Why do we profess one thing and display another? The tongue talks of chastity, but the whole body reveals impurity." (St. Jerome)
   - We cannot expect to keep ourselves pure and spotless if we dress or act in a way that is contrary to that. That is why modesty is so key.
- Different types of modesty
  o Speech – inappropriate jokes, language, etc.
  o Dress – clothes that are too revealing or draw attention to inappropriate areas.
  o Action – PDA, excessive flirting, etc.
  o These are all important!
- The bottom line is this: Modesty is an outward expression of an inward disposition.
  o What we show on the outside reflects what is going on inside.
3. It takes courage to stand against the stream and be modest and pure.
- Where do we get our courage from?
  o Ultimately Christ!
  o Also from our friends and family
- You need to fight the urge to “fit in” and just be yourself.
- It may not take the same amount of courage that it would to take a bullet for a friend, but it is by no means easy to be pure and modest
4. Conclusion (say something similar with sincerity)

Purity not only protects you from so many dangers in the world, but it most of all protects your soul and keeps you whole and unblemished. It is not easy because of the temptations in the world, but it is how we are created to be and therefore, it makes us even more beautiful surround yourself with friends that will help you stay pure and stand up for things you believe in, and life will be so much easier! We do ultimately get our strength from Christ, but sometimes He uses other people in our life as a channel of His love and grace.
Courage in Christ

Objective:
This talk is about having the Lord as our source of courage and strength. There are a lot of tough times in life and only if we rely on the Lord will we be able to get through them with joy. Courage is not about never being afraid, it is about overcoming that fear with the strength and courage of Christ.

Main Idea:
In big and small things in life we need courage. The only way we can be truly strong is if we get our courage from the Lord!

Introducing this talk:
Does anyone know what a martyr is? The word martyr means “witness.” Normally when we think of a martyr we think of someone who dies for their beliefs but there are different types of martyrdom. Do you know what the two types of martyrdom are? We usually use the term red martyr for one who literally shed his blood and died for his faith. We usually use the term white martyr for those who die to themselves or to worldly pleasure as a witness to their faith! Most, hopefully all of you will never be called to red martyrdom, but in one way or another, we are all called to be white martyrs. But how do we have the strength to make that sacrifice, where do we find the courage in the face of fear and failure. We must run to the Lord as our foundation.

Key Points:
1. What is fear?
   - Define fear (dictionary.com)
     o a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined; the feeling or condition of being afraid.
     o something that causes feelings of dread or apprehension
     o concern or anxiety; solicitude
   - We are not called to live in fear! We are called to live in faith and trust in the Lord.
     o “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.” (Matthew 6:25-34)
God created us. He made everything perfect for our existence and he loves us. We do not need to fear or be anxious.

St. Paul reaffirms that in his letter to the Philippians

- “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:6-9)

- Be joyful in all things! (Do try to be joy-filled while saying this and delivering this talk!)

2. What are strength and courage?
- Strength (dictionary.com)
  - 1. the quality or state of being strong; bodily or muscular power; vigor.
  - 2. mental power, force, or vigor.
  - 3. moral power, firmness, or courage.
  - 4. power by reason of influence, authority, resources, numbers, etc.
- Courage (dictionary.com)
  - the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear; bravery.
- A friend of mine always said “Fear is necessary for courage.” That definition doesn’t mean fear was never there, but that fear was present and overcome!
- Talk here about some common fears and how to have courage through them.

3. Where does this courage come from?
- These things do not come from us they come from the Lord!
  - The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear? The LORD is my life’s refuge; of whom should I be afraid? When evildoers come at me to devour my flesh, these my enemies and foes themselves stumble and fall. Though an army encamp against me, my heart does not fear; Though war be waged against me, even then do I trust. One thing I ask of the LORD; this I seek: To dwell in the LORD’s house all the days of my life, to gaze on the LORD’s beauty, to visit his temple. For God will hide me in his shelter in time of trouble, He will conceal me in the cover of his tent; and set me high upon a rock. Even now my head is held high above my enemies on every side! I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and chant praise to the LORD.” (Psalm 27:1-6)
- The Lord is our shield and our protection. St. Paul even tells us in Ephesians...
  - “Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all [the] flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication,
pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones and also for me, that speech may be given me to open my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains, so that I may have the courage to speak as I must.” (Ephesians 6:10-20)

4. **Conclusion** *(Say something along these lines with conviction.)*

Life is a battle.
There are winners and there are losers.
The winners aren’t the fastest, or the prettiest, or the strongest; they are the ones who are in heaven.

And the losers,
well they are the ones who chose hell and sin above God.

At the end of our life,
nothing else matters except where we go next;
heaven or hell.

So suit up and fight for Christ.
He will equip you and give you all the strength and courage you need.

Your joy, your strength, your courage, your salvation is in Him.
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 if 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:
  - It takes courage to stand against the stream and be modest and pure.
  - Where do we get our courage from?
  - Ultimately Christ! Also from our friends and family
  - What we show on the outside reflects what is going on inside.
  - You need to fight the urge to “fit in” and just be yourself.
  - It may not take the same amount of courage that it would to take a bullet for a friend, but it is by no means easy to be pure and modest.

- Purity not only protects you from so many dangers in the world, but it most of all protects your soul and keeps you whole and unblemished. I believe that you can do this. I believe that you are worth it.
- It is not easy because of the temptations in the world, but it is how we are created to be and therefore, it makes us even more beautiful surround yourself with friends that will help you stay pure and stand up for things you believe in, and life will be so much easier! We do ultimately get our strength from Christ, but sometimes He uses other people in our life as a channel of His love and grace. We need each other.
- Life is a battle. There are winners and there are losers. The winners aren’t the fastest, or the prettiest, or the strongest; they are the ones who are in heaven. Let’s get to heaven together.

- So suit up and fight for Christ. He will equip you and give you all the strength and courage you need.

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 for the courage to follow the leader... (The Road Ahead Prayer by Thomas Merton)
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 are some ways that you could be more modest in speech, dress, and action?
3. What is purity and why is it so important?
4. Is being modest and pure easy? How can you find the courage to continue? What are some practical ways you can do that?

Small group after talk #2

1. What stuck out to you most in the talk and why?
2. What does strength mean? What does courage mean?
3. What are some times in your life where you were afraid but had courage and overcame that fear? In small ways or big ways.
4. What are some ways to build up strength and courage?
5. What are sometimes in the future that you may need courage, and how can you start preparing for that now?
Leah Darrow

This story isn’t necessarily about a saint, but rather is about a beautiful woman, a model actually, who has given her life completely to Christ. A lot of times people think of saints or people who gave up everything for Christ as people from a different time period, and nobody does that now. Well, Leah Darrow is a true example that people are doing it today. She realized that the modeling lifestyle was not bringing her closer to Christ, but was actually becoming a barrier. She took the stand realizing that her dignity as a daughter of God was way more important than her modeling career. It’s not an easy thing to give up such a glamorous job like a professional model, but with the strength and courage from Christ, and knowing how important modesty and purity are, she decided to leave those circles and go into ministry helping young women feel beautiful while still being modest.

“Before her debut on the hit reality TV show, America’s Next Top Model, and the subsequent years as a professional model, Leah earned a bachelor degree in psychology from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, graduating with Magna cum Laude honors and President of the Psychology Honor Society, Psi Chi. Leah is currently working towards her Masters in Pastoral Theology, in the IPT program, at Ave Maria University.

Now, as a full-time apologist for Catholic Answers, Leah brings her experience of the fashion world and the Catholic world to the masses. Leah has appeared on numerous secular and non-secular television and radio programs, including EWTN’s Life on the Rock and Faith & Culture programs. Leah, also spoke on behalf of international youth at the United Nations’ panel discussion in July of 2011.

Leah speaks internationally to people of all ages on topics of mercy, conversion, human dignity, modesty and chastity.

Inspired by John Paul II, Mother Teresa and Pope Benedict XVI, Leah reaches out to all those lost in sin, scared to change and offers them the lighted pathway to Christ, our Hope and our Salvation. Pope Benedict XVI said, ‘The world promises you comfort but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness!’ Leah inspires and challenges her audiences to accept the mercy of Christ, embrace true love, and welcome conversion.”

Note: This should not be very difficult to tie into modesty and purity, but make sure it is clear to the students. Also encourage them to find role models such as Leah to inspire them to be lights in the world today.

1 Excerpt and picture from http://www.chastity.com/node/478
Joan was born at Greux-Domremy, Lorraine, a little village in France. Jacques d'Arc, her father, was a hard working farmer. Her mother Isabelle Romee was gentle and loving. She taught Joan many practical things. "I can sew and spin as well as any woman," she once said.

Joan was a shepherdess who loved to pray, especially at the shrines of Our Blessed Mother. This honest little peasant girl was to become a heroine. One day while she was watching her sheep, St. Michael the Archangel, appeared to her and said, "Daughter of God, go save France!"

For three years she heard the voices of saints calling her to action. When she was sixteen, she began her mission.

At that time, there was a war going on between France and England. It was called the Hundred Years' War. England had won so much French land that the king of England called himself the king of France, too. The real French king was weak and fun-loving. He thought the French armies would never be able to save the country.

With his permission, St. Joan led an army into the city of Orleans, which the English had almost captured. In her white, shining armor, this young heroine rode with her banner flying above her. On it were the names of JESUS and MARY.

She was hit by an arrow in the great battle of Orleans, but she kept on urging her men to victory. At last they won! St. Joan and her army won more and more battles. The English armies had to retreat.

After the victories, Joan's time of suffering began. She was captured by the Burgundians. Then she was sold to the English for ten thousand Francs. The ungrateful French king did not even try to save her. She was put in prison and after an unfair trial at Rouen in France, she was tied to a stake and burned to death.

Joan was not even twenty. She had a great horror of fire. Yet she went bravely to her death on May 29, 1431. Her last word was "Jesus." Four hundred and eighty-nine years later, on May 16, 1920, Pope Benedict XV proclaimed Joan a saint.

**Reflection:** The life of this saint was marked by heroic courage for the sake of the mission that God had entrusted to her. We can call on St. Joan of Arc to help us especially when we need to carry out a very difficult, nearly impossible task.²

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² [http://www.holyspiritinteractive.net/kids/saints/0530.asp](http://www.holyspiritinteractive.net/kids/saints/0530.asp)
“Red Light, Green Light”

**Goal:** Be the first person to tag the person in the front.

**Note: Before playing, let everyone know the boundaries of the playing/running area. If anyone exceeds those boundaries, they will automatically be out of the game!**

**How to Play Red Light Green Light:**
1. Start the game out as being the person at the front. Have the kids line up on the other side of the room.

2. Rules of the game: If you turn your back and say "green light", the kids try to run and tag you. If you jump to face forward and say "red light", then the kids have to freeze - if you see anyone moving while there's a "red light", you need to call the person by name and they have to start over from the beginning.

3. The first person to tag you is the winner of the game - this person can be "it" and be in front of the room to start a new game.

**Variation:**
- To make things more interesting, you can ask the kids to hop on one foot, crab walk, jump backwards, skip, or other actions to reach you. 

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“Land Mine/Obstacle Course”

**Goal:** We need to be trustworthy and courageous when it comes to leading other people....and sometimes leading other people means following the leader.

**Note:** Before playing, select an appropriate area. Go outside, if possible, however, this can be done inside in any room, using furniture as “land mines” to be avoided.

**Items needed:**
- Blindfolds for half of the participants. Be cautious about blind-folding people - it can provoke trust and care issues and trigger reactions. It is recommended to pass out blindfolds and ask participants to blindfold themselves.
- Objects that may be used as “land mines”, like Frisbees, paper plates, orange cones, foam noodles, pillows, etc.

How to play this game:
1. Establish a concentrating and caring tone for this activity. Trust exercises require a more serious atmosphere to help develop a genuine sense of trust and safety. This activity should be done in a large group, with small groups functioning together, and broken down into pairs.

2. Once pairs are formed, one person is blind-folded (or keeps eyes closed). The other person can see and talk, but cannot enter the field or touch the person. The challenge for each blindfolded person is to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the “mines”, by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners.

3. The facilitators should float around the playing area to help prevent collisions for the blindfolded people. If the groups are particularly large (over 18 participants), multiple mine fields are recommended.

4. Decide on a penalty for hitting a “mine”...it could be a restart or being sidelined.

**Variations:**
- The facilitator plays an important role in creating an optimal level of challenge, e.g., consider introducing more items or removing items if it seems too easy or too hard. Also consider coaching participants with communication methods (e.g., for younger students, hint that they could benefit from coming up with clear commands for stop, forward, left, right, etc.).
- To increase the difficulty, you can have other people calling out. The blindfolded person must concentrate on their partner's voice amidst all the other voices that could distract them from the task.
- It may be preferable to rename the activity, for example, as an "obstacle course" or "navigation course".

**Processing Ideas**
- How much did you trust your partner (out of 10) at the start? How much did you trust your partner (out of 10) at the end?
- What ingredients are needed when trusting someone else?
- What did your partner do to help you feel safe and secure? What could your partner have done to help make you feel more safe/secure?
- What communication strategies worked best?
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 want 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 is God calling me to follow Him?________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to him and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and would never leave you.

During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints in the sand, it was then that I carried you."

Anonymous
The Road Ahead

MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

- Thomas Merton, "Thoughts in Solitude"