

MOUNTAIN MADNESS 2024

**SAINTS
AMONG
US!**

**Small Group
Guide**





Prayer Intentions

This weekend's theme offers a great opportunity to discuss the power of prayer and the Communion of Saints. This means that we can pray for one another and support each other on our path toward personal holiness! It also means that we have a great cloud of witnesses praying for us in heaven - the SAINTS!

During small group time and any down time over the weekend you can invite your teens to write prayer intentions and place them in the prayer boxes throughout the conference site. These prayers will be prayed over during the weekend and beyond. The prayer boxes will be brought up to the altar as an offering during our Sunday Mass. All intentions in the boxes will remain anonymous.



MY INTENTION IS...

**ALL ANGELS AND SAINTS
PRAY FOR US...**

Theme Explanation

Theme:

Saints Among Us

Main Scripture Verse:

“Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these.”
John 14:12

Theme Development:

Each of us are called by Christ into a life of holiness. By the grace given to us in our baptism we are given the power to do great things and live out our faith in a powerful way. By looking at the lives of the many saints that have gone before us we can be inspired to also live the holiness we are called to.

Small Group Times & Supplies

Friday Night | 9:00PM

Small Group Time #1

“The Great Saints”

Supplies Provided:

Ice Breaker Dice Game - with card questions
Saint Cards (one/person)

Saturday Morning | 11:00AM

Small Group Time #2

“Recharging the Light of Christ”

Supplies Provided:

Flashlights (one/person)

Saturday Evening | 9:30PM

Small Group Time #3

“An Encounter with Love”

Supplies Provided:

Pencil and Parable Card (one/person)

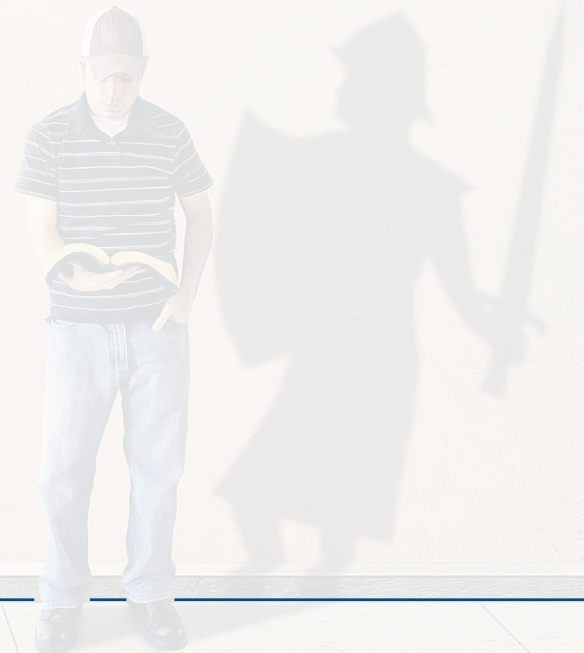
Follow-Up Session | After Retreat

Small Group Follow-Up

“The Sign of a Christian”

Supplies Provided:

Shield Print Out (one/person)



Tips to Lead a Small Group

1. Start your group with a prayer.
2. Don't feel bound to the questions provided. The goal of a small group is to help them process what they are going through and to help form community. The questions are only to help spur on conversation to this end. You don't need to get to them all.
3. Have everyone sit on the same eye level.
4. Don't dominate the group by talking the whole time. They just heard a long talk. Small group is not Talk #2.
5. Don't fear silence.
6. Don't fear your own discomfort. Try your best to be natural. Prioritize getting to know the people your group and how God is working in their lives.
7. Small groups are for personal sharing ("I...") not just theological reflection or preaching ("you...") ...though some theological reflection and preaching is fine. Try to keep it personal without laying down hard fast rules about it.
8. Make sure they feel safe to be themselves. Make it clear that no negative humor is allowed. What is said in the group stays in the group – it isn't to become gossip.
9. While this isn't time for you to preach – you do need to steer the discussion in the following ways:
 - a. Try to keep it personal, and set the stage yourself through personal sharing (though not necessarily first).
 - b. Keep them generally on topic.
 - c. Keep one kid from dominating too much.
 - d. Encourage those who need it to share (without pushing).
 - e. Gently teach if a kid is in error about a Church teaching.
10. Recognize the difference between questioning and pouring out disbelief. The latter usually can't be solved through endless answers. It usually has a faith/trust issue at its core. Don't get caught up in providing endless answers if this is the case. Tell the person you can talk more with him one on one after the group.
11. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up. Tell them you'll find out and reconnect later!

Remember, your small group time is a great time to build intentional relationships with your students. You don't have to know everything – Just do your best to love them as Jesus does!

The Great Saints

Time:

25 minutes. (Friday night during reconciliation).

Objective:

To help teens reflect on what they have heard this evening and reflect on the lives of the Saints that have gone before us. They will learn about their own specific Saint for the weekend and further discuss our own calling to a holy life.

Key Point:

The Saints lived extraordinary lives, but we are also called to live out our own calling of holiness.

Overview of Session:

1. Icebreaker Questions (5 minutes)
2. Discussion about the large group time, Saints and getting a Saint for the weekend (10-15 minutes)
3. Scripture Time and Reflection (5-10 Minutes)
4. Close in prayer as a group (3 minutes)

Icebreaker Questions:

(5 minutes)

Use the “Icebreaker Question” dice game at the beginning of each small group as needed to get discussions started! Most of these questions are designed to keep the theme of super heroes and saints at the center of conversation - but have fun with them!



Discussion:

Saints (10 minutes)

- What do you hope to get out of this weekend?
- What stuck out to you from the evening session?
- Have you ever thought about being a Saint?
- What do you think about when you think of the Saints?
- What Saints do you already know about? Can you briefly share a Saint story that you like?
- Pass around the Saint Cards in the small group box.
- Give them a moment to read about the Saint they've been assigned for the weekend. Let them know that this is a Saint they can learn about and pray with all weekend! (The card should fit perfectly into their nametag lanyard to keep close all weekend)
- What does it mean to ask a Saint to pray for you?
 - Just like you may ask a family member or friend to pray for you in difficult times, we can also ask the Saints who are in Heaven to pray for us. They can be a heavenly guide and friend that we can talk to, pray with and learn from.
- What did you learn about the life of the Saint you've been given?
What is inspiring about his/her life?

Scripture Time and Reflection:

(7-10 minutes)

- Do you think a holy life is attainable? Do you have a desire to be like the Saints? What does it mean to you to be like a Saint? What is standing in your way to becoming a Saint?
- Have you thought that your unique calling may not look like all the other saints' stories?
- Before we read our scripture, reflect on how God might be calling you specifically and consider opening your heart to what God wants to do within you.

Quiet your hearts and listen to this passage from St. Paul to the Corinthians: (feel free to read more than once)

“Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong.” 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

- What does this passage say to you?
 - Have you considered that God is calling you? How can you know God's calling for your life?
 - Does God only use the perfect people and those who are already holy?
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Small Group Session 1 (cont'd)

Wrap Up and Prayer: (3-5 minutes)

You have been made with a special calling and purpose that is unique to only you. There are many wonderful stories of amazing Saints that have lived before us – but this weekend is also about finding how God will use you to accomplish His will. He can use you just as you are, if you are willing to give Him permission to work in your life.

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, thank you for bringing us all here to Mountain Madness to draw closer to you. Help us to be open to our calling to become saints. Help us to begin making room in our hearts for you, clearing out whatever is in the way of becoming the saint you know we can be. We pray that through this weekend our hearts will continually be transformed as you teach us more about the Saints that have gone before.

For all of the prayers in our hearts, as well as those spoken here...(Take a moment and invite teens to offer up intentions as a group – to speak aloud some of their prayers)...Amen.

Litany – go around the circle and invite each teen to say their Saint name while everyone else responds, “Pray for us”. (Ex. St. Edith Stein...Pray for us). Consider closing with a Hail Mary – a prayer to the Queen of all Saints!

Transition:

Small Groups and Reconciliation time end the evening. All are dismissed back to lodges.

Recharging the Light of Christ

Time:

25 minutes.

Objective:

To help teens process the messages from Saturday morning and apply it to their own lives, particularly that they should continue to come to prayer and the Sacraments as their source of strength and power.

Key Points:

There is a real difference between what is truly important in this world and what will fade away. The Sacraments and a regular prayer life are essential in order to live out your calling to sainthood, and keep our eyes focused on the truly important things.

Overview of Session:

1. Ice Breaker questions - as needed (3-5 minutes)
2. Discussion (10-15 minutes)
3. Activity: Keeping Your Battery Charged (7-10 minutes)
4. Close in prayer (3-5 minutes)

Icebreaker Questions:

(3-5 minutes)

Use the "Icebreaker Question" dice game at the beginning of each small group as needed to get discussions started!

Discussion:

(10-15 minutes)

- What did you experience this morning that impacted you? Was there something in the keynote talk, testimonies, prayer time or sprinkling rite that really touched you? Explain.
- Truly important things vs. things of the world: What are the most important things in this life?
 - What are some things that you think other middle school kids think is really important now that they won't care about in 10 years??
 - Baptism - this is real! This sacrament (and all Sacraments) has truly changed us. Even though these changes are often unseen, Sacraments are the 'stuff' that is most important in this world.
 - Do we give the eternally important stuff enough priority in our daily lives? How can you do that better (prayer, Mass, sacraments, helping others, etc. - but be specific!)
 - How can you make time in your life for prayer and staying connected to God?
- How do you think YOU becoming a saint would affect your daily life for the worse? (what sacrifices would be required?)
- How would you becoming a saint impact your life for the better?
- How do you feel about God calling you to be a Saint?

Small Group Session 2 (cont'd)

Activity: Keeping Your Battery Charged (7-10 minutes)

Intro: At your baptism, you were given a baptismal candle as a sign of your call to be a light in the world and the priest/deacon said, "Receive the Light of Christ". You are asked to keep your light burning bright! But what happens if that light goes dim?

- Show one of the flashlights from the small group box.
- What is the function of this flashlight? (to shine, give light...)
- What makes a flashlight give light? What is the source of its power? (the batteries)
- Have you ever seen corroded batteries? They're pretty gross...and definitely don't work. What would happen if these batteries in the flashlight died, were corroded or lost? (it wouldn't shine)
- What use could a flashlight be if the batteries were not charged or functioning?
- Our lives are like these flashlights - we have a great potential to shine bright! But, if we are not being powered by the Spirit and keeping our batteries charged and in good shape, we cannot live up to our potential.
- The good news is, even if our batteries are dying or gross we can always come back to God and have him recharge the batteries within us!
- How do you think we can recharge our batteries???(Prayer, Sacraments...)
- You'll be spending a good amount of time in prayer this weekend -do you pray on a regular basis? How does prayer help you personally?
- Pass around a light to each student. These are a reminder to keep your lights shining, and your batteries charged with the Holy Spirit!
 - **Adult Leaders: please make sure that the students are not being a distraction with the flashlights, especially during talks, prayer time and general sessions.**



Wrap Up and Prayer: (3-5 minutes)

In baptism, you received the light of Christ. Now as an older member of the faith, you have the responsibility to keep your light burning bright for all to see Christ in you. Think for a minute how you will commit to keeping your battery charged - be specific - come up with 1-2 concrete ways to do this! How will you be accountable for keeping your commitment to prayer and receiving the Sacraments? When we keep our lights shining, it is easier for us to see what is truly important, and keep our eyes focused on Christ!

Let's pray:

Lord, we come to you when we are feeling dim, burned out and tired because we know that you revive us and recharge our lives. Be our source of strength and power so that we can shine our lights to the darkest parts of this world. Help keep our eyes focused on you to know the difference between the things of this world that truly matter, and those things which will just fade away. Give us the strength to commit to spending time with you in prayer, and help us to feel your love for us each day.

(Invite people to share any special intentions they would like to pray for...)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Transition:

After this small group, you can head to lunch according to your schedule (see schedule on name tags).

An Encounter with Love

Time:

25 minutes. (after Adoration)

Objective:


To help teens process the message from Saturday evening and their experience of adoration. Christ has come to meet with us this evening – in a very powerful way! When God encounters his people, it is never with the intention that they remain the same. When we encounter Love, we are changed.

Key Points:

Christ is always loving us, right where we are. But he loves us enough to call us forward into something greater, bigger, than ourselves. He calls us to transformation.

Discussion:

- Do you feel like you've begun to let God 'transform' and/or 'change' you this weekend? How so?
- What message do you feel God giving you personally this evening?
- Have you ever experienced Adoration before? What was this experience tonight like for you?
- Do you have any questions about what you experienced (or did not experience)?
- How have you felt God's love tonight, or throughout this weekend?
- Sometimes it's difficult to let ourselves be loved by God – even Pope Francis talks about this:
 - "Let Him draw close to us and feel Him close to us. This is really very difficult: letting ourselves be loved by Him. And that is perhaps what we need to ask today in the Mass: 'Lord, I want to love You, but teach me the difficult science, the difficult habit of letting myself be loved by You, to feel You close and feel Your tenderness! May the Lord give us this grace.'" Pope Francis June 7, 2013
 - It is important to let ourselves be loved, even though it can be difficult! You will draw strength from that love, and be able to live out your calling.
 - Christ's Love for you can change everything! God can never love you more than he does in this very moment – His love never changes or fades. And he loves you enough to call you into something better – into your own unique calling for your life. His Love will make you the Saint that you are made to be.
 - **Pass around the "Parable of the Pencil" to each student.**
 - Feel free to read the parable together, or silently for reflection.
 - The truth is, you are good and strong and capable of so much! If you stay connected to Christ, he will be there to guide you even in the confusing and hard times of life.

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- How do you feel about the fact that God is calling YOU to be a saint?
 - What's the biggest thing you need to stop doing to become the saint you're called to be? (You don't have to be overly specific, especially if it's a particular sin you're thinking of, we have confession for that!).
 - What's the biggest thing you need to start doing to become that saint?
 - Is there a Saint that you have felt particularly connected with this weekend? What about their life has inspired you to live out your own holiness?

Parable of the Pencil

You will be able to do great things, but only if you allow yourself to be held by someone higher than you.

It is okay to experience a painful sharpening from time to time.

The most important part of you will always be what's on the inside. Be men and women of honor, relying on your inner core value and morals. You will make mistakes. Everyone does. That is why pencils have an eraser.

MAKE YOUR MARK

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, thank you for creating us, loving us and transforming us into your saints. Thank you for showing us your face in adoration tonight. We pray for the grace to let ourselves be loved, even when we feel unlovable.

(Invite people to share any special intentions they would like to pray for...)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Transition:

Small groups will be dismissed back to lodges.

Small Group Session 4

The Sign of a Christian

Time:

25 minutes. (Use during Sunday lunch, on the drive home, or during your next youth group meeting)

Objective:

To help teens process the messages from Sunday morning and the weekend as a whole and apply it to their own lives. To help the youth understand that they are called and guided through the Spirit to go out and do great works.

Key Points:

We are called to be a visible sign of Christ in the world, and to be bold and proclaim Christ through our words and actions. Christ tells us that we will do the works that he has done, and even greater ones than Him (John 14:12).

Discussion:

- The Apostles and early Christians were on fire with the Spirit and many miracles and great deeds were done through them. Do you believe that you are also called to do great things?
 - Saints are often remembered because of the miracles they performed, or the way they stood up to adversity in difficult times. Can you recall any amazing stories of Saints that show they had the Spirit alive and working within them?
 - How about in your own life? Have you seen any examples of someone who has been able to do amazing things because of the Spirit working through them? Have you ever witnessed a miracle?
- How do you think Jesus wants you to share your faith when you get home? Give a specific plan of action!
- Who in your life needs to hear about the love of God? What will you do to reach out to them?
- How can you live your life differently so that people will see Christ's light alive in you?
- Think for a minute of Super Heroes. Each one has their 'image' or 'sign' that makes them known for who they are. Ex. Batman has the bat signal, Captain America has his shield...can you think of any others?
 - The Saints and all Christians are called to have a sign as well! If you were a Saint what would your sign be? What would you want to be known for?
 - What actions would you look for in someone who claims to be a Christian? What does it look like to live a life of faith in Christ?



Activity: The Sign of a Christian – creating your shield

Shields, or a coat of arms, are a popular way to brand an army, country, or dynasty. A coat of arms is traditionally unique to an individual person, family, state, organization or corporation. It often shows what is most important about that person/group and what they want to be known for. Much like the super heroes that are known for the sign that accompanies them, many Saints are shown with specific signs or images that make them recognizable.

As Christians, we are in a real battle of good vs. evil. The world around us will know that we are Christians by our words and actions. Imagine that you had your own coat of arms to bear on a shield (or your super hero cape!) – what would you want to be known for? What would identify you as a Christian? We can go into the world with confidence that Christ will lead us and be with us wherever we go.

Give the students time to design and decorate the shields that they would want to carry into battle – spiritual battle! Be creative! Share with the group what you have on your shield and why.

“I command you: be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD, your God, is with you wherever you go.” –Joshua 1:9

Wrap Up:

As we go back to the world, our homes, and schools, let us take the messages from the weekend with us!

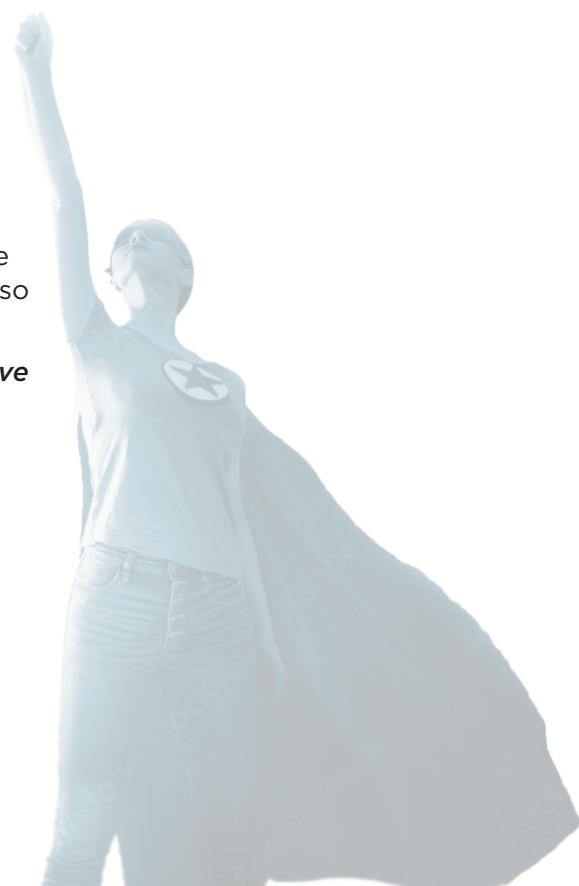
Let’s pray:

Lord, we desire to follow you with all our heart. Be our strength to go back into the world and share your message of love. Help us to bear our sign as a Christian and stand up for what is good and true, even in a world that does not value goodness and truth. Renew us in prayer and the Sacraments so that we may always live out our holy calling to be Saints.

****Allow students time to share any specific intentions they have to offer.***

All Holy men and women – Pray for Us.

Close with a Hail Mary, a prayer to the Queen of All Saints.





Notes

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A series of 25 horizontal dotted lines, evenly spaced, providing a guide for handwriting practice. The lines are light gray and extend across the width of the page.





Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



A series of horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the entire width of the page.



Office of Evangelization and Family Life Ministries