

# Saint Katharine Drexel Youth Group

Lesson Plan for July 12, 2015

## Conversion to Christ

### Overview

Change becomes growth when it is oriented towards a goal. Our goal in life should be perfect imitation of our heavenly Father. This is a lofty goal, but with help from friends, family, the Church, and the Holy Spirit, we can achieve it. It requires a daily conversion of our thoughts, or words, and our actions. Tonight we invite the teens to consider what kind of person they want to be and what they must do each day to become that person.

### Objectives

**Mind** – Teens will compete individually in a memory game and will then develop a list of practical ways in which we can make a daily conversion to Christ.

**Body** – Teens will compete in teams to gather the most tennis balls. This spirited game will require planning and teamwork which will have the teams energetically moving around the field.

**Soul** – Teens will form an understanding of who they want to be and will privately consider what daily actions they must begin to take to achieve this goal.

### Growth

This is primarily a **FAITH** lesson.

**Esteem** – Teens will grow in esteem by forming a clearer understanding of who they want to be and by developing a list of practical steps they can take to achieve this goal.

**Community** – Teens will grow in community through a fun team event and through small group discussions.

**Faith** – Teens will grow in faith by praying to God for a daily conversion to Christ and by listing ways that they can live their faith more fully each day.

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### Agenda

#### **5:00 – 6:00: SET-UP** *(prior to arrival of teens)*

- Lower projector screen, hook up laptop, and preview video.
- Move tennis balls, cones, and hula hoops into lobby.
- Gather pencils/pens and paper for teens to write on. Also envelopes to place their letters in.
- Turn on lights in church.

#### **6:00 – 6:30: FREE TIME** – Unstructured socializing time.

#### **6:30 – 6:45: TEAM ACTIVITY: Hot Lava**

Teens will compete in teams to gather the most tennis balls, but will only be able to move by stepping in the area inside hula hoops.

- Teens will be divided into two teams and given a certain number of hula hoops.
- Tennis balls will be spread randomly through the grass field.
- Spare hula hoops will be thrown randomly in the field, as well, and teams can commandeer them during the game.
- The grass will be considered “hot lava” and no teen may step on it, unless they are standing inside the footprint of a hula hoop.
- To gather the balls, the teams must move across the field by repositioning the hula hoops, and then throwing a hoop over a tennis ball.
- A tennis ball may only be picked up if it inside the hula hoop.
- The game will continue until all of the tennis balls have been gathered.
- The team that collects the most tennis balls wins.
- Other items might be added to count as bonus points.

#### **6:45 – 6:55: ICEBREAKER: Memory Game**

Teens will compete individually to become the last person to successfully repeat an ever-increasing list of daily activities.

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Sitting in a large circle, teens will recite an ordered list of fictional daily activities beginning with the phrase "Every morning I . . .". The first person will say this phrase and then make-up an activity. The second person will say the phrase, the item given by the first person, and then add their own item. Each person then continues to recite the phrase and list (in order) and then adds another item. A person is eliminated if they forget an item or say them out of order. The winner is the last person to successfully recite the entire list in order.

#### **6:55 – 7:40: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

(7:00 – 7:10) We will watch a video showing photo tropism, which is the mechanism plants have developed to always grow towards the source of light. They are constantly changing themselves so that they stay oriented toward their goal. Similarly, in our opening game, the teens had to constantly change their hula hoops to move towards the tennis balls.

Last week, we talked about reacting to change that is forced on us. This week, we will discuss initiating change in our lives.

What are examples of good changes that we make in our lives?

- We begin to change ourselves at a very early age
  - Potty training
  - Learning to walk
  - Learning to speak
- We are still changing ourselves today
  - Learning time management
  - Gaining a driver's license
  - Going to college and living on our own
- We have changes in the future that we hope to make some day
  - Buying a house
  - Getting married
  - Having children

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We discussed in previous weeks that change is inevitable. But consider this saying:

*“Change is inevitable; growth is optional.”*

What is the difference between ‘change’ and ‘growth’?

- Change moves us from one state to another but lacks direction
- Growth progresses towards a pre-defined goal
- In order to grow, we must know our goal

What are some goals that you have set in your life?

- Teens will be asked to share some of their personal goals
- Other examples
  - Climb a tree or do a somersault
  - Get an ‘A’ in a difficult class
  - Wake up on time everyday
  - Get a summer job

## SETTING AND ACHIEVING (MATERIAL) GOALS

(7:10 – 7:20) What must we do to achieve these goals?

DESIRE CHANGE – to achieve a goal, first we must want to achieve it

- What do you want?
- Why do you want it?

SET A S.M.A.R.T. GOAL – a good goal has certain qualities

- **S** – Specific: Vague goals do not provide direction
- **M** – Measureable: Define the finish line to monitor progress
- **A** – Attainable: Unrealistic goals damage esteem and motivation
- **R** – Relevant: Stay focused or you’ll just become confused
- **T** – Time Bound: Deadlines provide motivation

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WRITE IT DOWN – Just like with legal documents, putting something in writing adds weight to the decision. You are more likely to finish the goal if you write it down, and it will give you something to look back at for motivation.

MAKE AN ACTION PLAN – How will you get there? Just like taking a trip, you need directions.

- Break the big goal into smaller, manageable steps
- Create a realistic schedule with milestones
- Monitor your progress and stick to your schedule
- Cross off items as you complete them to see how well you are doing
- Do not try to do too much too quickly
- Do not go crazy to start and then whimper out after a while

STICK WITH IT – It is a process and not an event; you must make a daily commitment to achieving your goal

- Do not become demoralized by failures or mistakes
- Monitor your progress and remind yourself to achieve your milestones
- Seek help when needed and rely on friends and family for support
- Read success stories and review your progress for inspiration and motivation
- Never give up

## SETTING AND ACHIEVING SPIRITUAL GOALS

(7:20 – 7:35) When we set goals, they are often to gain material, money, power, fame, or some other accomplishment. But we should also be setting spiritual goals. That is, think not merely of WHAT we want, but rather WHO we want to be.

What kind of person do I want to be?

- Do I want to be someone who is often angry and upset?
- Do I want to be someone who humbly accepts praise?
- Do I want to be someone who seeks out the lost and lonely?
- Do I want to be someone who looks for fights?
- Do I want to be someone who prays the rosary every week?

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- Do I want to be someone who becomes addicted to drugs and alcohol?
- Do I want to be someone who others trust and who is dependable?
- Do I want to be someone who thinks of the needs of other people?

Knowing what kind of person you want to be is the first level of setting goals, because it will affect what other kinds of goals you want to achieve.

As Christian, we have many wonderful examples of **holy people** who we can use as role models. Just as a child will hang a poster on the wall of his or her favorite role model, the Church hangs 'posters' of our saintly role models in **stained glass**.

There are far too many saints to discuss them all tonight, but we know that all of the saints had the same role model, and He is the role model that we should all have, as well: **Jesus Christ**.

Our God is not one who rules over us from Heaven, but rather one who loves us unconditionally, and who **humbled Himself** and entered into our suffering. By becoming man, Jesus showed us how a human could live a holy life.

**Like the plants, let us change how we grow so that we grow towards the Son.**

During His **sermon** on the mount, He set some lofty goals for us to achieve:

*Read Matthew 5 – "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

You may say *"I thought we were supposed to set attainable goals?"*

The goal Jesus gives us is attainable, but not in this life and not by ourselves. We will not be perfected until we reach Heaven, and we are not meant to make the journey alone. The **Holy Spirit** will guide us while friends, family, and the Church support us. The name of this goal is CONVERSION.

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## DAILY CONVERSION

Conversion is not just something non-Catholic do to enter the Church. We are all to seek conversion of our hearts.

Conversion is not a singular event, either. It is an ongoing process, a commitment, a desire, a goal. Our conversion is to take place every day.

- In our memory activity, did we include any religious items?
- Does your actual daily routine include any religious activity?
- Is your goal in life to imitate Christ?
- What steps are you taking to achieve it?
- Would anyone like to share what their religious practice looks like?

Since we are all here at youth group, I assume that we all desire to imitate Christ in your lives. So let's move on to thinking about how to set and achieve spiritual goals. What can you start doing right now to begin making progress towards Heaven?

### **7:35 – 8:00: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Re-break into small groups to brainstorm ways of making a daily conversion to Christ. Each group will be given the same sheet and will be led by one of the three adult ministers.

### **8:00 – 8:20: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

What are some of the ways each group listed for making a daily conversion to Christ? Each person should share, not just the team leader.

Remember that conversion is from the Holy Spirit. We must want and allow Him to work in our lives.

- Daily prayer and increasing our communication with God
- Daily examination of conscience to review our progress

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- Frequently attending confession to quickly apologize and receive mercy
- Frequently receiving the Holy Eucharist, from which all graces flow
- Frequently reading the Sacred Scripture and allowing God to speak to us
- Find good role models
- Avoid morally bad or confusing situations
- Listen more; grow in humility; practice patience; give more than you receive

*“Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair.”*

#### **8:20 – 8:35: CLOSING ACTIVITY**

(8:20) The entire group will go upstairs to the church. The teens will be given pencil and paper and asked to write down (secretly) who they want to be. This is not about where you want to be, but rather who you want to be.

- Who do I want to be?
- Why do I want to be that person?
- What will I do to become that person?

Each teen will write this goal or goals privately and place it in their envelopes to take home. When they are done writing, they will all sit up in the front of the Church for a closing prayer.

**8:35 – 9:00: FREE TIME** – Unstructured socializing time, if applicable.

### Announcements

1. All teens are encouraged to join our Facebook group and follow our Twitter account. We will post upcoming events, photos, and other bits of news and information.
2. Our next meeting will be on July 19<sup>th</sup>, which will be a movie night!
3. Who would be interested in participating in a phone-a-thon? We would like to have it either August 9th or August 16th in advance of our August 23rd welcome event.