

Saint Katharine Drexel Youth Group

Lesson Plan for July 26, 2015

Say Hello: Welcoming New Members

Overview

Teens will prepare for the freshmen welcome event in August by folding flyers and stuffing envelopes that will be mailed to parish high school students. Teens will also discuss ways in which they can personally create a welcoming environment at the event.

Objectives

Mind – Teens will list ways that they can be welcoming at our event and recognize their own needs and the needs of others when it comes to feeling welcomed into a group.

Body – Teens will engage in a community-building group activity and also create and perform skits.

Soul – Teens will recognize their own desire to belong and see how they can fulfill the desire that incoming freshmen will have by welcoming them to the summer event.

Growth

This is primarily a **COMMUNITY** lesson.

Esteem – Teens will explore ways in which they can personally help to welcome new members to youth group, particularly at our welcome event.

Community – Teens will understand the importance of hospitality and community building.

Faith – Teens will practice ways to ‘love our neighbor’ and will recognize the importance of friendliness and hospitality in our Christian faith.

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Agenda

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

Prepare props and costumes for skits

Prepare pens/pencils and notepads for skit script writing

Prepare instruction sheets for skits

Have mailing list, envelopes, mailing page, pencils/pens, stamps, and so forth ready

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

6:30 – 6:40: ICEBREAKER: Tarp Cruise

Teens all stand on a tarp and must keep everyone on board while folding it in half.

Teens are told we're going on a cruise together and must all stand on the blanket. The cruise ship will then encounter various problems that reduce it in size (hit an iceberg, attacked by pirates, caught in a hurricane, etc...). Their mission is to not lose any one overboard (falling off the sheet) while successfully folding it in half.

Our goal in this game, as in our welcome event, is to bring everyone close together and not let anyone feel unwelcomed.

6:40 – 6:50: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

We will discuss our upcoming freshmen welcome event and the importance of being neighborly.

- Our welcome event is on August 23rd
- We will be formally inviting all the freshmen and sophomores to join us
- Our goal is to find new members to come and join our family
- The adults will be doing our best to create an atmosphere and activities that are fun and engaging and will draw people into the group
- However, we need your help to welcome everyone on a personal basis

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8:20 – 8:45: ACTIVITY: Mailer Preparation

Teens will help to prepare mailers for parishioners and stuff envelopes.
Have papers set-up on tables with pens and envelopes

VOLUNTEERS

Phone-a-thon on August 16th, 6pm – 9pm

Greeters at the welcome event (give them a giant foam hand)

Speak at mass about the event

Man a table in the narthex after mass

Table will need a big poster of photos and information

RSVP sheet for parents or teens to fill out

Flyer of upcoming events

MAILER July 26th; August 2nd

TABLE August 8th and 9th

PHONE August 16th

PULPIT August 22nd and 23rd

6:40 – 6:50: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Our goal is to make everyone feel welcomed, but sometimes people can be unwelcoming. What are examples of ways that we can be unwelcoming?
 - Ignoring people; faking interest
 - Making fun of them or judging them
 - Forming cliques or talking about insider information
 - Overwhelming people; being too preachy
- To better demonstrate what an unwelcoming attitude looks like, we're going to create and perform short skits.

6:50 – 7:20: SMALL GROUP

Before we get into welcoming people, let's talk about some of the ways we should not welcome people. Teens will break into small groups and develop a skit

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to show at three (3) actions that are unwelcoming. The skit should have 1 person who is new who approaches or is approached by the regulars and who is given a poor welcome.

Teams will have 20 minutes to prepare and 10 minutes to present.

7:20 – 7:35: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

What are some experiences you have had in the past that have turned you away from a group?

What are the fears that freshmen have, especially about meeting new people?

- Being judged; feeling stupid or awkward
- Being ridiculed
- Being ignored; want to be approached by teen, not adult
- Being excluded
- Being bored; we want to have fun and enjoy our time together

Why do we have fears of others? Humans are social beings, even those of us who are introverted. And someone who is outgoing and extroverted can still feel unwelcomed.

Considering our skits, what are words and actions that we should avoid when interacting with other teenagers?

- Don't judge
- Don't oppress
- Don't preach
- Don't fake it, be genuine
- Remember that everyone is different (introvert / extrovert)
- Don't be too proud of yourself

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6:30 – 6:20: ICEBREAKER: Greetings!

Teens will form a circle. The first person chosen will turn to his/her left and greet that person using their name and a greeting. (Such as, “Hi Tom”) That person will then turn to their left and greet the third person using his/her name and a greeting. However, no one can use a greeting that was previously used. The intent is to encourage the teens to think of ways to begin speaking with someone other than just saying ‘hello’.

7:50 – 8:10: LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Leviticus 19:33-34 :: “When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.”

- They will know we are Christian by our love.

Hebrews 13:2 :: “Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels.”

- Loving our neighbor is one of our commandments

Luke 14:12-14 :: “Then [Jesus] said to the host who invited him, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment. Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

- Do not welcome expecting anything in return, but rather do it for the Lord.
- You may not see the fruits of your welcome, but do not despair.

Matthew 25:34-35 :: “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 ... a stranger and you welcomed me ... Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you ... a stranger and welcome 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.’”

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- When we welcome others, we are welcoming the Lord himself.

What can we do to welcome people to youth group? What makes YOU feel comfortable at an event?

- Learn their names and what they like (ask if you forget)
- Say hello
- Invite to play a game
- Have a good time!
- Cooperate with the leader!
- Offer food
- Find a common interest
- Create a sense of belonging
- Sending out cards after the fact
- Engage early (and often)
- Have a few topics prepared as icebreakers (clubs & sports; summer vacations)
- Ask follow-up questions
- Be willing to share information about yourself, but don't make it about you
- Don't judge others (won't fit in; too nerdy; jock; doesn't go to church, etc)

Some teens may be assigned roles to lead events or perform skits. Teens will sign-up to be official greeters.

8:45 – 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. We will not be meeting the first three weekends in August.
3. Our next meeting will be on August 30th when we will have an open Q&A for the freshmen to help them become more accustomed to high school.