



## LEADER INTRODUCTION

If you have personally studied the *Theology of the Body*, you understand its ability to transform lives. It also offers an excellent language to reach young Catholics—perhaps better than any other catechesis before. Introducing teens to this extraordinary teaching through the retreat format also presents us with a great opportunity for youth evangelization.

This *YOU: Weekend Retreat Guide* will help you to adapt the content in the *YOU* program into a weekend experience. Coupled with your own knowledge of your group and its needs, this Retreat Guide gives you a framework to help you prepare a powerful retreat experience for your teens.

Man is an integrated union of body and soul. We are not angels—with pure intellects and wills—but incarnate beings. Because we are body–souls, our ministry efforts should appeal to both body and soul. This is the teaching of the *Theology of the Body* and the traditional teaching of the Church. Therefore, our retreats need to be formative in the Faith, but also emotionally and spiritually uplifting. They should also be fun. Knowing the struggles of teens in today’s world, giving them a weekend retreat experience with the freedom and redemption found in this message can be a life-changing event.

Each group of teens is different, but they are generally the same when it comes to benefiting from a holistic experience, one that ministers to both body and soul. Striving to provide such a rich experience will require some “blood, sweat, and tears” from you and your leadership team. Do not approach the planning and running of this retreat lightly. Also, we believe the retreat should be a full weekend in length, as this amount of time is needed for teens to enter into the full experience—especially considering the nature of the *Theology of the Body* material. With material this theologically rich and spiritually and emotionally challenging, every hour of the weekend experience is important. As the weekend unfolds, it will help bring about a deep conversion on the part of the teens, helping them move closer to the union with God that each of us ultimately desires. With this said, if your only option is a one-day retreat, you can still make progress with your teens as you attempt to lead them closer to a deeper relationship with Christ and the Church.

## SCHEDULING NOTE

In this guide, we offer a specific timeline for the weekend retreat. More important than whether this particular timeline works for you is the idea of your dividing the retreat into larger blocks, breaking down the retreat into five or six main sections. These “time blocks” are as follows:

- 1). Friday Night
- 2). Saturday Morning
- 3). Saturday Afternoon
- 4). Saturday Night
- 5). Sunday Morning
- 6). Sunday Afternoon (time permitting)

Approaching the planning with these time blocks in mind will help you and your team create a schedule that fits your particular needs throughout the weekend. This schema will also help you see the “big picture,” namely how the overall retreat will flow from session to session.

## WEEKEND RETREAT FORMAT

### *YOU: Retreat Guide—A Dynamic Retreat*

Most great retreats for young people have a number of key elements within them. Some of the elements that help create a positive and truly inspiring experience for teens include:

- 1. Retreat Environment:** Make an effort to take the teens somewhere outside of their normal setting.
- 2. Flexible Schedule:** Teens want both structure and freedom. Stay balanced.
- 3. Sacraments Available:** Having a priest present on retreat is sometimes difficult, but offering reconciliation, Mass, and/or Eucharistic Adoration (yes, we have found that teens will definitely respond to this sacred devotion) are true cornerstones of solid Catholic youth retreats. If a priest is unavailable, try to arrange for a deacon to lead the Eucharistic Adoration service. If a priest is with you all weekend and is willing to hear confessions throughout the weekend, include this in your overall plans. This is a great witness of the reality of Christ’s desire to forgive us, heal us, and redeem us at every turn.
- 4. Powerful Music:** Music is a big part of teen life. Use it to your advantage and to that of the teens. Investing in skilled and enthusiastic musicians for the retreat has a worth that cannot be overstated. This is especially true if the musicians are not only able to lead music, but are gifted at leading teens into experiences of authentic worship.
- 5. Silent Time:** Young people rarely get silence these days, and they appreciate it, especially when they have guidance for how to approach it.
- 6. Various Approaches:** Shake things up by using a variety of activities and methods of interacting with the teens. This will keep teens comfortably “on their toes.” Just as we did in the *YOU* program, keep in mind the various learning styles of the teens, both individually and as a group.
- 7. Genuine Personal Experience:** Teens do not want a repeat of the classroom environment on a retreat. They are often open to going on retreats precisely because it is something different. With that said, this retreat is a bit different than most as it is intended to be formative and catechetical, not just evangelistic. Teenagers love hearing how a given message has impacted lives. The Theology of the Body provides excellent opportunities for this. Sharing real experiences and being personable while sharing the message is a must for leaders. The power of testimony should not be underestimated (but nor should it be overdone).
- 8. Relevant, Engaging, Substantive, Hopeful Talks:** It is crucial that your leadership team members be humble enough to be able to honestly assess each of their own gifts in order to choose the right speakers/presenters to really connect with a teen audience. If that person is not you, do not fret. Ask God to show you and your team the person(s) who should present. You want to keep a balance: a captivating speaker is great, but substance is imperative. Also be mindful of who will be giving specific talks: you want to match the right presenter to the right topic. Not only is the material rich and theologically challenging, its truth will be what touches their hearts deeply, especially those who are not living in accord with its truths. Be sure to tell your presenters to have an ever-present posture of hope in their presentations.
- 9. Team Unity:** Teens quickly sense division within the leadership team. Spending time planning and praying (as a team) before the retreat can enable your leaders to be on the same page, creating a positive environment from the start.
- 10. Truly Dynamic:** When it comes to retreats, “dynamic” means more than “interesting.” It means the retreat is filled with a variety of options and “moving parts.” Furthermore, you and your leaders should keep a close and discerning eye on the teens throughout the weekend—along with a prayerful attentiveness to the movement of

the Holy Spirit—so as to be able to adjust to your group’s personal dynamics throughout the experience. Do not be afraid to make a change on the spot if that is what is truly needed.

### *YOU Program Videos*

The *YOU* video segments give you the opportunity to have the authors of the program, Brian Butler and Jason and Crystalina Evert, along with other great presenters, teach the heart of each lesson to your teens. There are three segments for each of the workbook sessions. (Note: Some sessions have more video segments to account for splitting the teens into male and female groups for certain topics.)

It is unlikely you will have time to play all of the segments throughout the weekend retreat, so you should review the videos along with your team and pre-select which ones you want to show the teens. You could also rotate between presenting live talks and playing segments to best suit the needs of your group. This would take place during the “Talk” portions of the following schedule.

### *Parent Info Session*

It is highly recommended that you conduct a Parent Info Session prior to the retreat weekend. At the parent meeting, play the Parent Video.

Be sure to have ample copies of the Parent’s Guide booklet on hand to give to the parents for further study, more detailed family applications, and questions they can discuss with their teens. For more help in planning and conducting a Parent Info Session, see the free download on [AscensionPress.com](http://AscensionPress.com).

## **FORMAT AND SCHEDULE**

Considering the time parameters of your retreat, and your specific needs, you can tailor the following general framework for the weekend experience to the needs of your group.

### FRIDAY EVENING: **SESSION #1**

**7:45pm** – Opening Prayer & Talk #1: “What is my purpose? Oh yeah, to love!”

(Option: Play Introduction and Sessions One and Three from the Video series)

This talk helps teens to really think and reflect on their lives. It challenges them to explore the idea that there is a master plan for their lives—and to consider whether they are fundamentally moving toward or away from that plan. As team leaders, your goal is, in part, to build a healthy tension in the room over the question of this master plan and how teens can actually live it out in their everyday lives. You want to convey that they are persons of great dignity and great worth. God loves them. They are precious in his eyes. Their purpose in life is to love and be loved. You will then flesh out the purpose of love—to be in communion with others as they journey back to communion with God. They were created from love, by love, for love. But, they will likely ask, “What is love?” Point out the fact that love is seriously misunderstood in our culture, especially when thought of in association with sex. Love cannot happen in isolation. It involves the making a gift of self to another. In this manner, it images the very love of God toward us. Love is defined as “willing the good of another.”

[Source material for this talk—**Session One: Created for Love** and **Session Three: Love Defined**. For these and additional specific talking points within the larger framework of these sessions, consider reviewing the *YOU* Leader’s Guide, pages 16 and 78.]

### **8:30pm** – Small Groups

Throughout the weekend, arranging for small-group discussion time is important. It is best to allow teens to ask questions, share insights, and discuss relevant issues that arise from each talk. We think this time is best utilized in same-sex group settings.

### **8:50pm** – Break

### **9:00pm** – THREE OPTIONS (or combine a few)

#### **Option #1: NIGHTTIME OUTSIDE ACTIVITY**

This could include a scavenger hunt, a game of flashlight “hide and seek,” a bonfire with “S’mores,” or some other such activity. You could also have night prayer around a fire.

#### **Option #2: ADORATION, PRAYER, PRAISE**

Depending on your group’s needs, how late you want to keep the evening going on Friday, and the dynamics and maturity of your group, consider challenging them not to wait for “Saturday night” to dive into the retreat. Offering an early opportunity to go into deeper prayer can help the teens to begin their journey to hope and redemption earlier in the retreat and prevent an emotional buildup or imbalance from becoming the focus of the retreat.

#### **Option #3: JUST HANGING OUT**

If your teens have either a particular need to bond with each other or your leadership team has the particular ability to do good one-on-one ministry, one option is to provide a few hours of downtime, just playing games, having snacks, and hanging out. If your leaders are attentive to how the retreat is impacting the teens, they can look for opportunities to minister to the teens: spending time with individuals or small groups of teens, building trust, or simply offering a ministry of presence—the action of simply being present to another. This proactive type of ministry is a very wise step before asking students to go deeper on Saturday.

### **11:30pm** – Lights Out (or at your discretion)

## SATURDAY MORNING: **SESSION #2**

### **8:00am** – Breakfast

### **8:45am** – Morning Prayer (make this whatever you would like)

### **8:55am** – Icebreaker: “Lost in the Garden” (*YOU Leader’s Guide*, Appendix B, page 356)

### **9:25am** – Songs/Praise & Worship

### **9:45am** – Talk #2: “Naked Without Shame: God’s Original Plan”

(Option: Play Session Two from the Video series)

[**NOTE:** Depending on how long the icebreaker takes and whether or not you choose to do discussion immediately after, you could begin this talk with a large-group discussion based on the “Lost in the Garden” game.]

Begin this talk by building a healthy tension over the idea that if we all want peace, love, and freedom, why do we live in a world that is so broken? Are we all doomed to have bankrupt relationships and broken families? Are we bound to be a statistic? In the first part of this talk, you want to help teens explore where we are now in the history of humanity (Historical Man, continuing to cover more of Session Three). Then, as this picture becomes clear, you want to help the teens to look back to see what God’s plan was like in the beginning (Original Man: Session Two). This is a more detailed talk, fleshing out some of the concepts that are introduced in Session One.

We are all created very good. The spousal meaning of the body is uncovered here. We all have an “echo” of the original experiences of man within us. Sin has damaged our ability to see our call to love like God. However, the majority of this talk is painting the beautiful picture of God’s original plan, and inviting teens to look inside their hearts—is this what they long for? A life of chastity—love with responsibility—is possible. While we cannot get back to original innocence, what do we need to be able to get back in some sense to God’s original plan that flows from our dignity and purity of heart? Encourage teens to spiritually, mentally, and physically gear up to encounter Jesus in the sacrifice of the Mass, bringing all of their desires to offer him upon the altar, to receive their prescription from him—his own Body and Blood—to help them become authentic love.

[Source material for this talk—**Session Two: Naked Without Shame** with some material also blended in from **Session Three: Love Defined**. For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these sessions, see the *YOU* Leader’s Guide, page 50.]

### **10:30am** – Small Groups

During this group, after discussing relevant issues, it is possible to allow the teens to begin examining their consciences through using the examination provided in the *YOU* Student Workbook, page 220. (There is another silent time later in the afternoon, which you can utilize as another option for a different time of examination of conscience.)

### **11:00am** – Holy Mass

**NOTE:** If no priests are available, consider giving the teens some silent time for reflection and journaling. You may also provide them with some relevant Scripture verses to read, helping them to stay focused on the topics that have been treated so far in the retreat.

### **12:00pm** – Lunch and Free Time

## SATURDAY AFTERNOON: **SESSION #3**

**2:00pm** – Ice Breakers: “Body-Spelling Charades” (See *YOU* Leader’s Guide, page 204.)

**2:20pm** – Songs

**2:30pm** – Talk # 3: “Free, Total, Faithful, Fruitful and Language of the Body”  
(Option: Play Sessions Six and Seven from the Video series)

If we are to imitate Christ, loving like God, then we must look to Christ, learning to speak the same language that he spoke with his body. His love, spoken through his body and all of his life, was free, total, faithful, and fruitful. The body speaks a language even without using words. In this talk, invite teens to recognize ways that the body speaks, and then challenge them to use this knowledge to analyze the “words” that they personally speak with their bodies: are they truths or lies? The language of Christ’s body is a language of love. This should be the language we are speaking. In fact, this is the language of a loving spouse in marriage: Christ the Bridegroom making a free, total, faithful, and fruitful self-donation to his bride, the Church. FTFF reflects the vows and promises of marriage. Thus, the body must “say” these things in the sexual act if the act is to image the love of God. Invite teens to consider: What is the language of my body saying? Help them to consider ways that they can speak the truth with their bodies now as teenagers, as they train in faithfulness for their future vocations.

[Source material for this talk—**Session Six: Free, Total, Faithful, and Fruitful** and **Session Seven: Language of the Body**. To see more specific bullet points within the larger framework of these sessions, see the *YOU* Leader’s Guide, pages 166 and 194.]

### **3:15pm** – Small Groups

In this small group, there should be a lot to discuss! To see if the teens are understanding these concepts and able to apply them to their lives, you will want to discuss with them what the body does and does not “say” in certain sexual acts like pornography, prostitution, premarital sex, masturbation, contraception, and more. Realize that it is important to be very pastorally sensitive with teens who may be living with family members and friends who are consistently “speaking lies” with their bodies. Remember to affirm Christ’s love for all and his desire for reconciliation with everyone.

**NOTE:** If you do not want to reconvene everyone to the large group after this small-group session, you may want to send the teens out to their break from this small group with copies of an examination of conscience, leading into their time of silent reflection.

### **3:45pm** – Break

### **4:00pm** – Silent Prayer, Reflection, & Examination of Conscience

Most teens will need some encouragement to spread out during this time (outside is a great opportunity, if available) and take the challenge to stay alone and stay quiet. Often this is a real challenge if it is the first time a teen has done this. However, teens often find they enjoy the silence and may even ask for more of it again at a later time. If the teens have not received the sacrament of reconciliation by this point in the retreat, this is another good time for them to spend honest reflection time with their examination of conscience.

#### **Leaders’ Meeting:**

While the teens are in their silent time, you can take this time to gather your leaders and get a “pulse” for how they feel the teens are doing at this point in the retreat, in order to best know how to proceed with the next session (see below).

### **4:45pm** – Gather/Process/Share

This is a truly “dynamic” session in the retreat, flexibly situated to allow you to tailor it to the needs of your teens. If there are certain struggles or roadblocks coming up in small-group discussion, this session offers an opportunity to address any specific issues, or to reemphasize something that some teens are struggling to understand. It can also be used as a question and answer time for the material covered so far, or for some additional downtime for hanging out, group bonding, and allowing leaders to connect individually with teens.

**5:30pm** – Dinner & Break

**SATURDAY NIGHT: SESSION #4**

**6:30 or 7:00pm** – Ice Breakers/Games/Concert

Choose one of your favorite icebreakers for teens to insert at this point. Should you need ideas, several icebreakers are provided throughout the *YOU Leader's Guide*. However, it does not necessarily need to correspond to the upcoming session. It could be organized large-group games, or even a competition between small groups. Also, it could be an extended time for music and fun, from light stuff like doing the “limbo” to giving someone an opportunity to entertain your teens with a short concert of some type.

**7:30pm** – Songs/Praise

**7:45pm** – Talk # 4: “Hope and Redemption in Christ: We Can Be Free”

(Option: Play Session Four from the Video series)

God has a perfect plan of happiness and love for us, but it was all wrecked with original sin. In addition, we all make our own personal, selfish choices that take us further away from God's perfect plan. Ours is a journey to get back to paradise (Eden pre-Fall; heaven), but we struggle to love. How do we get back to experience the peace of the original purpose God has for our lives? Through Christ—his grace is sufficient. Instead of receiving God's love, we try to take it. Instead of giving ourselves, we hold onto our hearts, thinking they are safer in our hands than in God's. Christ comes not only to forgive us, but to redeem us. He reverses the death brought about by sin and opens the door to heaven for us, freeing us! Our lives in Christ can be more than survival; they can be purpose-filled, love-drenched, holy, and happy lives of true freedom.

Invite the teens to consider how their lives can be so much more if they will allow Christ to redeem and change them. Invite the teens to give Christ permission to purify all that is impure within them, beginning the process of redemption that will only be completed in heaven. This will possibly be the moment of greatest opportunity for deep conversion on the retreat. Do not be afraid to honestly and lovingly challenge teens to lay all they have down before Christ. Remind them of the Scripture from the Gospel of John: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32). Jesus told us that he is the Truth (see John 14:6). This night is an opportunity for teens to allow Jesus—the Truth—to set them free. At the end of this talk, you can even incorporate some type of prayer experience where teens are invited to respond to Christ individually, saying his own words back to him: “This is my body (hands, heart, soul, etc.). It will be given up for YOU.”

If the teens have not yet received the sacrament of reconciliation, again invite them to take advantage of the great opportunity for grace and healing within this sacrament at some point during the remainder of the evening.

[Source material for this talk—**Session Four: Hope and Redemption in Christ** and **Session Five: Truth and Freedom**. For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these sessions, see the *YOU Leader's Guide*, pages 110 and 140.]

**8:30pm** – Prayer/Praise/Adoration/Reconciliation

Teens need a “safe” and comfortable place to be able to maturely examine their lives and have the greatest opportunity to freely invite Christ to forgive and redeem them. It is important to spend real energy and resources creating a sacred space for this evening's culminating experience of prayer. Creating a warm environment with candles, space rugs, and Christian symbols and art will go a long way in helping the teens to be fully open with body and soul to the redemptive experience that Christ offers them.

### Eucharistic Adoration

Talk to your priest about his preference for how to set up this part of the night. We think that offering an extended time of Eucharistic Adoration, filled with alternating times of praise and silent reflection and worship, creates a great environment where the teens can process and internally assimilate all that has happened thus far in the retreat.

### Reconciliation

Offering the sacrament of reconciliation throughout the evening in the back of the room or in a room nearby offers teens a great way to sacramentally experience the redemption spoken about in the evening talk.

### Available Leaders

While you do not want to “hawk” the teens during their time of prayer, it is a good idea to intentionally let them know that your team is available nearby if they need someone to help them process and pray about what God is doing in their lives at this point. Leaders should keep an open and attentive spirit to the needs of teens who may desire to share or process with them at other points throughout the rest of the evening.

## 10:00pm – Benediction

## 10:15pm – Snacks, Free Time, and One-on-One Ministry Opportunities

## 11:15pm – Night Prayer

This time of prayer can help solidify the experience that the teens had during the evening session. The main point here is to give the teens a chance to reflect quietly on all that has happened so far, and to then allow them the opportunity to thank God for what he is doing in their lives. Encouraging them to do this out loud helps them to admit to themselves and to their peers that, indeed, God is doing something in their lives this weekend. You can structure the prayer however you desire. Sometimes a simple, large-group circle works well to represent the unity that God is also bringing about through the retreat.

Finishing with a decade of the Rosary (or another peaceful prayer) can gently bring the long and eventful day to a close, encouraging teens to entrust themselves as children of God to the care of Mary, our Blessed Mother.

This night prayer can be effective as a large-group opportunity or as an opportunity back at the dorms/cabins as a “guys only” and “girls only” group prayer opportunity.

## 11:30 – Lights Out (or at your discretion)

## SUNDAY MORNING: SESSION #5

### 8:00am – Breakfast

### 8:45am – Icebreaker: TWO OPTIONS

#### “All Tied Up” (YOU Leader’s Guide, page 237)

This simple and quick game can help students prepare to learn more about the sacrament of marriage.

#### “Trust Walk” (YOU Leader’s Guide, page 265)

This classic exercise can help teens to go into this morning session with more openness and more trust, ready to explore the different vocations to which God may call them one day. (If you choose this option, it may take more than 15 minutes. Adjust the schedule accordingly.)

**9:00am** – Songs/Praise

**9:15am** – Talk # 5: “Marriage, Priesthood, Consecrated Life, and Celibacy”

(Option: Play Sessions Eight and Nine from the Video series)

Marriage is God’s idea and creation, yet it is more misunderstood today than ever before. Help teens to apply what they have learned already to see what real Christian marriage looks like: a lifelong, loving commitment between a man and a woman with Christ at the center, giving each the strength to sacrifice for the other and to love like God. In this loving communion of persons, new life comes forth, creating a family that St. John Paul II calls the “school of love.” This school of love is the basic building block of all society. Ephesians 5 offers a “crowning” spousal analogy that helps us to see, through Christ’s love for the Church, the model for Christian marriage.

Invite teens to recognize that we are all called to marriage, but to which one? Marriage to a spouse on earth is the vocation for most people, but some are called to embrace the marriage of Christ and the Church while still on earth, living as “eschatological signs” that remind us that we are all destined for union with God in heaven. Celibacy for the kingdom is an exceptional call in which a person skips marriage to an earthly spouse in order to devote themselves in an undivided way to Christ and the Church. Consider asking a joyful priest or religious to assist with this presentation, witnessing to the authentic joy to be found in the celibate vocation, if it is God’s will. Help teens to see that we are all called to motherhood or fatherhood, which comes in different ways biologically or spiritually through each of these beautiful vocations.

[Source material for this talk—**Session Eight: Marriage** and **Session Nine: Priesthood, Consecrated Life, and Celibacy**. For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these sessions, see the *YOU Leader’s Guide*, pages 230 and 256.]

**9:45am** – Small-Group Discussion

**10:15am** – Break

**10:30am** – Talk # 6: “Dating with Purpose and Purity, Training for Your Vocation”

(Option: Play Session 10:2 from the Video series)

**NOTE:** If possible, we suggest splitting up the guys and girls into separate groups for this talk and discussion. After giving this talk, having a large-group discussion and Q&A session with same-sex groups is an ideal way to deliver this material. Generally, teens will ask more questions and delve deeper into the real issues they are facing in a split-group situation such as this. You can also offer them the chance to write questions anonymously and drop them in a designated “question box.” For younger teens or teens that are still a bit uncomfortable, this can be helpful.

Being pure is so hard for teens today. This talk is to help flesh out practical living now as they prepare for the vocations to which God may call them (discussed in the previous session). What is the real purpose of dating? How can we make dating today more resemble true courtship? Why is “How far is too far?” the wrong question, and what is the right question? Offer your teens the answers to these questions and then give them some practical tips on living lives of purity in today’s world. Help the teens to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, building an argument for learning to be good “brothers” and “sisters” within authentic friendships before moving into intense dating relationships. Offer them suggestions of how to truly train in faithfulness as they await the revelation of their vocations. Include some tips for improving their prayer lives, knowing that this will always lead to greater purity and overall faithfulness to God. If you are able to utilize the split-group format, engage teens in a discussion about how they can better support each other as brothers/sisters in the daily struggle to love as God loves.

### Q & A:

Be sure to leave some time within this session for questions and answers from the teens. Allow them to express their concerns and be sure to give them encouragement to continue to pursue lives of purity in every area. All things—pure hearts included—are possible with God!

[Source material for this talk—**Appendix A: Dating with Purpose and Purity** and the first part of **Session Ten: Friendship, Dating, and Family**. For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these sessions, see the *YOU Leader's Guide*, pages 286 and 318.]

## 11:30am – THREE OPTIONS

### Holy Mass

This is a great way to close out the retreat, especially if there is not an evening Mass available for teens back at their parish.

### Discussion and Teen Testimonies

If you do not plan on having an afternoon session, you can take extra time for the guys/girls split-discussion groups and then offer a time for the teens to share their experiences from the weekend in the large-group setting.

### Extended Time

You can skip adding a new activity here by dividing this time up and placing it back into the schedule earlier in the day, giving more time for the previous two morning talks and discussion sessions.

## 12:30pm – Lunch and Free Time

**Leader's Note:** The retreat can be successfully closed at this point, if your time format calls for dismissal. The last session below, Session #6, is a summary session meant to help teens integrate their experience and be empowered to go out and live the liberating message they have heard. Affirming them and giving them opportunities to make resolutions in the afternoon is something that can be done after returning to your school or church parish.

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON: **SESSION #6**

### 1:30pm – Icebreaker

“Let the Scales Fall” (*YOU Leader's Guide*, page 174)

This is a good game to help the teens begin to summarize and integrate the weekend experience into their own lives, acknowledging that they will be going back to their church, school, and family with a different view of things than before.

### 2:00pm – Songs/Praise

### 2:15pm – Talk/ Session # 7: “Discipleship: Life According to the Holy Spirit”

(Option: Play Session 10:3 from the Video series)

This is a summary talk and, maybe more importantly, a talk of empowerment, helping teens see how to live out the Theology of the Body in the real world. After selecting which parts of the weekend to reemphasize, spend time inspiring the teens with words of life and love. St. John Paul II believed in the youth, calling them all to be “saints of the new millennium.” Help teens to see that, if they ask, the Holy Spirit will give them power to live boldly for Christ in a virtuous and uncompromising way. Ask the presenter of this talk to consider aloud how

blessed he/she and all the adult leaders are to have young people responding to God's call the way the teens have done over the weekend (provided it is true that they have). Remind the teens that the Church needs their energy, idealism, and courage to continue its mission to preach the gospel to the entire world. Encourage them to respond to the call of Pope Francis to become "missionary disciples"—people who stay close to Jesus and bring him close to others in a "culture of encounter." It is good here to offer specific ideas for moving forward together with them, even if their family and friends do not seem to "get it" when they go back home. In your community, how can they continue to specifically live out the message of the Theology of the Body?

Point out the opportunities for involvement in Church groups, in further study, in corporal works of mercy, and in continuous Christian growth with accountability. If there is not enough available, inspire them with the idea of their beginning a new discipleship/accountability group to continue learning and applying the liberating message of the Theology of the Body in their lives. Finally, give the teens ideas for witnessing to their friends and family with humble charity, becoming part of the New Evangelization!

[Source material for this talk—**Session Ten: Friendship, Dating, and Family**. For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of this session, see the *YOU Leader's Guide* objectives on page 286, *To the Core* on pages 304 and 305, and the *Live It Out* on page 310.

### **2:45pm** – Final Small Group and Affirmations

During this final small-group discussion, encourage each small-group leader to affirm each teen in their group for the growth they have witnessed in them through the weekend. Making notes throughout the weekend may help the small-group leader. This is a powerful way to empower the teens to continue to grow. Do not underestimate the power of an encouraging word, praising the teens for their "yes" to God, however small or large it may be. This is the role of a good mentor and coach, to challenge the young person and then to affirm them and offer support all along the way. Finally, we suggest saying a short and individualized prayer with each teen in the group, allowing peers to add any prayers of their own for their friends.

### **3:15pm** – TWO OPTIONS

#### **Q & A Session:**

Offer the teens one last opportunity to get closure on any issues that remain unsolved in their minds.

#### **Resolution Writing:**

Give the teens time to spend alone, writing a letter of commitment to God and themselves, detailing some of the ways that they are going to live their lives differently.

### **3:45pm** – Closing Prayer

### **4:00pm** – Clean up and Pack/Depart

**For More Information:  
AscensionPress.com or Call 1-800-376-0520**