

Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA – Office of Evangelization

Unpacking Faith Retreat Planning Guide

Planning Guide: Three day retreat for Catholic Military-Connected High School Youth and their Parent

In him we live and move and have our being...

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- ❖ Permission to copy the *Unpacking Faith Retreat* Planning Guide, Attachment F, and the *Unpacking Faith Retreat Journal* is granted for use in Military Catholic Faith Communities.

Unpacking Faith Retreat Planning Guide

Goal

To encourage Catholic military connected youth (ages 13-18) and their parent(s) to live and move and have their being as disciples of Christ.

Format

Friday night to Sunday afternoon: off-site at a retreat center or conference center.

Retreat Team

Four parents and four youth serve as the retreat team leaders. They plan and facilitate the retreat weekend, they invite participants and they evaluate the process.

Activities

The retreat includes witness talks, group dynamics, small group discussions, prayer and journaling.

Planning Resources

Note to Coordinators	page 3
Retreat planning guidelines	page 4-8
Retreat Outline/Schedule	Page 7
Retreat planning sessions	Page 8-10
Retreat format	page 11-26
Supplies and Setup	Page 27
Resources	Page 28

Be sure to download all three documents:

- *Unpacking Faith Retreat* Planning Guide (this resource)
- Attachment F
A Pilgrimage of Faith: Jesus on the Move
- *Unpacking Faith* Participant Journal

Note to Coordinators

The Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA encourages the gift of family life. This weekend retreat is designed to bring youth and parent(s) together to grow in the Catholic faith. They will discuss some of the challenges of living a transient lifestyle. They will also discuss how the Catholic faith plays a key role in the life of military-connected families.

The retreat is divided into three sections based on the biblical reference from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 17:28) "*In him we live and move and have our being.*"

- 1) *In him we live* - Friday deals with looking back at the places we have been and revisits the highs and lows that we have experienced.
- 2) *In him we move* - Saturday looks at the reality of physically moving, experiencing how Christ moved, and reflecting on the many ways that God moves us.
- 3) *In him we have our being* - Sunday looks forward to guide us as we discern how we can become Christ for others by sharing our gifts.

The time frames designated for each session serve as a guideline. You have permission to be flexible with the times. The point is to be open to the Holy Spirit and allow fruitful sharing and prayer to be experienced. Don't rush through the retreat just to accomplish it. Likewise, uncontrolled discussions can drag on or stray off topic causing participants to lose interest.

Coordinators will need to consult with the Catholic Chaplain and/or Catholic Faith Community leaders at their installation to find a retreat center, coordinate payments, follow guidelines for permission forms, background checks and youth protection training requirements for adult leaders, as well as seeking input about inviting youth and parents to attend.

Retreat Team and Planning Sessions

To facilitate this weekend retreat well the retreat team needs to assemble first and develop a plan. The retreat team is made up of four parents and four high school youth. The team will set the example of parent and youth interaction throughout the weekend. The planning process encourages the opportunity for the team to discuss questions of faith as a small faith community. Begin by making a roster of all of the retreat team members.

Unpacking Faith Retreat Team Members

Retreat Team Members	Phone	E-mail
Parent:		
Youth:		
Parent:		
Youth:		
Parent:		
Youth:		
Parent:		
Youth:		

Gather the eight retreat team members for a social. When you invite participants make sure to remind them that they will need to bring their calendars. At the social distribute copies of this resource or give the web link to the team members and ask them to review the entire resource before the first meeting. Be sure to set dates, times and locations for all four planning sessions. *Remember that each planning session should have at least 90 minutes allocated for proper planning.*

Retreat Team Planning Session Dates

Gathering	Date(s)	Time	Location
Session 1 Planning: organization, roles, timeline			
Session 2 Planning: assign talks, responsibilities			
Session 3 Planning: practice talks, activities			
Session 4 Planning: practice talks, final details			
Retreat Weekend			
Session 5 Evaluation: create an after action report			

Retreat Team Planning Sessions

(continued)

There are four planning sessions and an evaluation session that need to be organized. All team members must make the commitment to participate in all five sessions and the retreat.

- 1) The first session is focused on prayer, organization, assigning roles, and assigning dates to the timeline.
- 2) The second session is focused on prayer, inviting participants, learning about the facility you will use, reviewing the schedule, assigning witness talks, and assigning who will be responsible for specific supplies.
- 3) The third session is focused on prayer, practicing the witness talks, and organizing the activities.
- 4) The fourth session is focused on prayer, practicing the witness talks again, a review of the participants, and final details such as phone call reminders, permission forms, etc.
- 5) The fifth session is focused on evaluation. The retreat team should plan a gathering after the retreat for prayer and evaluation. Take time to review participant evaluations and offer input regarding what was experienced throughout the retreat. Team members are encouraged to consider what changes ought to be implemented for future retreats. Be sure to make copies of your planning meetings, organization details, materials needed, facilities used and evaluations. The retreat organizers should keep a copy. The team should also present a copy to the Catholic Chaplain and/or the Catholic Faith Community Advisory Council for future use.

What makes a retreat?

In the military people are often tasked with assignments and projects. The military culture prides itself on accomplishing tasks quickly and well. This is an appropriate course of action to meet the goals of the mission. A retreat, however, is a different sort of experience. Retreats certainly require task completion, logistical coordination, and good preparation. On the other hand, all preparations must be centered first on prayer. When we pray as individuals and as a group we are opening ourselves to the movement of the Holy Spirit already present. If we rush to accomplish the tasks of this retreat without prayer we will miss the gifts of Holy Spirit nudging us and shaping our retreat experience.

The same holds true for the retreat experience itself. Those who are coordinating a retreat for the first time and those who have facilitated many retreats can fall into the trap of needing to stick to a certain time table and accomplish every single task laid out. Certainly, there are time constraints that we must work with. Such as the parameters laid out by the retreat or conference center (i.e., meal times, quiet hours, house rules, etc.) as well as the start and end time of the retreat itself. At the same time, however, we must take care to make sure that the retreat experience we plan is focused on developing relationships. We develop our relationship with Christ as we pray together and acknowledge the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We develop our relationships with one another as we recognize the presence of Christ in each another and respect everyone that has gathered for the retreat. That respect enables participants to be open to listening to the stories and experiences of one another. We develop our relationships with the retreat team members as we support each other in the witness talks, activities, and behind the scenes set up too.

Be certain to make time for prayer as you gather for each of the planning sessions, as you invite others to participate and as you facilitate the retreat experience. Our prayer shapes the way we live, the way move and the way we experience our being. May God bless all of these experiences as you prepare for and lead *The Unpacking Faith Retreat*.

What makes a retreat? (continued)

Consult with your Catholic Chaplain regarding rules of behavior expected for all participants on the retreat. Be sure that all participants (adult and youth) have a clear understanding of the retreat details including behavior guidelines.

Preparing a Witness Talk

The witness talks are key points of the retreat weekend. Sharing our faith enables others to see God working in our life. It also allows them to consider similar ways that God is connecting with them. Witness talks should be **no longer than five minutes**. Start writing your witness talk by considering the **one point** that you want listeners to walk away with based on your theme? The retreat team should be able to repeat back to you what that one point is when you practice the talk in front of them.

You may want to choose a short bible verse and a song (CD) that relate to your talk. This is a great way to find time to be comfortable in front of the group before starting your talk. It is suggested that you start by reading the bible verse as an opening prayer and then listen to the song. Have coordinating leader who introduced you play the song and then fade out the music fade out the music after a minute or so. When the music stops start your witness talk (*the three-to-five minutes begins with the talk*).

Before you start, take a deep breath and remember that all of the retreat team members are praying for you.

Cautions: the witness talk is not designed to show how God favored you over someone else rather it highlights how you recognized God present in your life through the action of others, through an experience of prayer, or through realizing later that you were not alone. These talks are to be centered on activities in our normal daily life. Extreme experiences give the impression that one can only connect with God in the most difficult of circumstances. Finally, this is not a time to share deep dark secrets. The experiences of daily living speak loudest because everyone can relate to these.

Invitation

Often times we facilitate programs in chapel settings by putting notices in the bulletin, sending out e-mail notifications and posting flyers. While all of these actions spread the word to the whole community they can easily miss the intended target audience. This section offers some ideas for the retreat team members to gain assistance in promoting the retreat weekend.

The best way to invite someone to attend a retreat is through a personal verbal invitation. When we are excited about a great movie we have just seen we can't stop talking about it. We ask everyone we meet if they have seen that movie and if they haven't we tell them all about it. That kind of enthusiasm is the sort of attitude we ought to embrace as we invite others to join the retreat experience.

It is important to first consult with the Catholic Faith Community in your area before planning the retreat and inviting participants. Meet with your Catholic Chaplain to get input on the idea of facilitating the retreat. Ask about meeting with the Catholic Advisory Council to see if they can help identify names of parents and youth that might be interested in the retreat. Consult the youth ministry leaders and religious education coordinators to get their input. Consider reaching out beyond the church walls to invite those who haven't been to church in awhile. The entire Catholic Faith Community should know about this retreat so they can keep the planning process and the retreat itself in their prayers. Be considerate of Catholic Faith Community activities that have already been planned when considering potential dates. Ask for input from the leaders of your Catholic Faith Community.

Consider drafting a list of participants to invite and figure out a way to divide the list among your team members. Members of the Catholic Advisory Council and the Chaplain may also have some people that they want to directly invite. Let those you are inviting know that you are part of the planning team and that you will be there for the weekend. Let them know what excites you about being a part of this experience. Answer any questions they may have and follow up the verbal invitation with a

Invitation (continued)

written invitation that has details and contact information so they may easily register (see **attachment H** for an invitation sample.) Please note that this is not a hard-sell tactic. You are not there to fill a quota. On the other hand a soft-sell can be so soft that it may not sound worthwhile. Be inviting and be excited – this retreat is a great opportunity.

Unpacking Faith Retreat Outline**Outline of the First Evening**

- Opening prayer and introduction: 20-25 minutes
- Suitcase exercise: 20 minutes
- *Life Graph Witness*: 60 minutes
- Break: 30 minutes
- *Family Traditions Witness*: 60 minutes
- Closing prayer

Outline of the Second Day

- Breakfast
- Create a Skit, Act it Out: 90 minutes
- Break: 30 minutes
- *Rootlessness and Restlessness*: 60 minutes
- Lunch and free time: 120 minutes
- The Call of the Journey of Faith: 90 minutes
- Break: 15 minutes
- *Pilgrimage Witness*: 60 minutes
- Dinner and free time: 120 minutes
- Guided prayer and journal: 90 minutes
- Celebration: 30 minutes

Outline of the Third Day

- Breakfast
- *Being Witness*: 60 minutes
- Break: 15 minutes
- Being discussion: 45 minutes
- Transitioning home: 30 minutes
- Evaluation: 10 minutes
- Closing Mass or prayer: 30-60 minutes
- Share a meal: 60 minutes
- Departure after lunch

Unpacking Faith Retreat Schedule

(proposed time schedule)

Days and times will vary based upon the community calendar, travel to the retreat center, the retreat center meal schedules, etc.

Outline of the First Evening

6:00-7:00pm	Arrival, room assignments
7:00-7:25pm	Opening prayer and introduction
7:30-8:00pm	Suitcase exercise
8:00-9:00pm	<i>Life Graph witness talk</i>
9:00-9:30pm	Break
9:30-10:30pm	<i>Family Traditions witness talk</i>
10:30-11:00pm	Closing prayer
11:30pm	Lights out

Outline of the Second Day

8:00am	Breakfast
9:00-10:30am	Create a Skit, Act it Out
10:30-11:00am	Break
11:00-12:00pm	<i>Rootlessness and Restlessness</i>
12:00-2:00pm	Lunch and free time
2:00-3:30pm	The Mobility of Jesus
3:30-3:45pm	Break
3:45-4:45pm	<i>Pilgrimage witness talk</i>
5:00-7:00pm	Dinner and free time
7:00-9:00pm	Lectio Divina/sharing
9:00-10:00pm	Celebration
11:30pm	Lights out

Outline of the Third Day

8:00am	Breakfast
8:30-9:30am	<i>Being witness talk</i>
9:30-9:45am	Break
9:45-10:30am	Being and transition discussion
10:30-11:00am	Evaluation and clean up
11:00-12:00pm	Closing Mass or prayer
12:00-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Departure after lunch

Planning Session One: 90 minutes

Prior to this planning session four parent leaders and four youth leaders have been recruited to serve as leaders on the *Unpacking Faith Retreat Team*. All eight participants are actively involved in the planning process and the facilitation of the retreat weekend. All eight participants agree to commit to be present at four planning sessions, the retreat weekend, and the evaluation session after the retreat.

Opening Prayer

Begin the meeting with prayer. You might use the reading of the day or the Sunday Gospel reading. Pray for the needs of your Catholic Faith Community, those on the planning team, and those who will participate in the retreat. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as your team begins to make plans.

Organization

- ✓ Make sure everyone has their copy of the *Unpacking Faith Retreat Planning Guide*.
- ✓ Go through the retreat planning guidelines pp. 8-16.
- ✓ Make sure that all of the parent and youth team members commit to be present at all of the meetings and the retreat weekend.
- ✓ Confirm the scheduled meeting, retreat and evaluation dates with all of the team members.
- ✓ Consider locations for the retreat. Be sure to check with the Military Chapel for input on facilities and costs.
- ✓ Consider the cost for each participant and how the funds will be paid. Do individuals pay; does the local Military Chapel have funds to support the weekend; are there groups in your community that offer grants for retreats and/or spiritual growth activities?
- ✓ Review all of the roles for the retreat weekend:
 - Set up
 - Hospitality
 - Witness talks
 - Prayer leaders
 - Activities
 - Supplies
 - Invitations
 - Permission forms
 - Retreat facility information

- ✓ Invite all team members to prayerfully consider which roles they would like to facilitate. At the next planning meeting there will be an opportunity to indicate which roles each participant would like to help with.
- ✓ Open the floor for questions.
- ✓ Consider names of Catholic youth and parents in the community that the leadership team could personally invite.

Closing Prayer

Conclude by stressing that as team members, parents and youth serve as models to the community and the retreat participants. The way they treat each another will serve as an example to others. It is extremely important to consider the input of all of the team members and to ensure that there is a healthy balance of active participation among youth and adult members.

Invite someone in the group to lead a closing prayer. (This enables team members to practice leading prayer in front of one another before leading prayer on the retreat.) **Assign someone to call everyone to remind them of the next meeting. Remind leaders to invite youth and adults to sign up for the retreat.**

Retreat Team Member Roles

- ___ Coordinating adult leader (CL), facilitate transitions, group directions, introduce talks and activities
- ___ Coordinating youth leader (CL), facilitate transitions, group directions, introduce talks and activities

First evening

- ___ Opening prayer
- CL Introduction of team (*done by coordinating adult and youth leaders*)
- ___ Duffle bag ice breaker (1 adult, 2 youth)
- ___ Introduce suitcase exercise – assign tables and explain activity
- ___ Witness talk (adult) *Life Graph*
- ___ Witness talk (youth) *Family Traditions*
- ___ Closing prayer

Second day

- ___ Explain skits, facilitate presentation and discussion (1 youth and 1 adult leader)
- ___ Witness talk (1 youth) *Restlessness and Rootlessness*
- ___ Organize “The Call of the Journey of Faith” experience (2 adult, 2 youth)
- ___ Witness talk (1 adult) *Pilgrimage*
- ___ Lead the (lectio divina) prayer experience (1 youth, 1 adult)
- ___ Organize the evening celebration, dessert, games, etc. (1 youth, 1 adult)

Third day

- ___ Witness talk (1 youth) *Being*
- ___ Transition Home (1 adult and 1 youth)
- CL Lead evaluation & closing prayer (*done by coordinating adult and youth leader*)
- ___ Organize details for mass or prayer

Planning Session Two: 90 minutes

Prior to this planning session make sure that all of the leaders have been called and reminded of the meeting.

Opening Prayer

Begin the meeting with prayer. You might use the reading of the day or the Sunday Gospel reading. Pray for the needs of your Catholic Faith Community, those on the planning team, and those who will participate in the retreat. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as your team begins to make plans.

Organization

This second session is a key moment because it involves assigning roles and responsibilities. Use the check the list above to invite leaders to initial, in order of preference, the three roles that they would like to take the lead on. Review the completed list for areas not taken and areas that have more than one leader. Be sure there is a balance among youth and adult leaders. Assign roles and work together as a group to ensure all tasks have leaders. (*Give a separate checklist for each leader; consolidate the final list on one*

The retreat team member roles worksheet will take a lot of time to complete. This experience will require the cooperation of all team members. Remember that the retreat is for serving the needs of the participants not the team members.

Once the completed roles are assigned the team should go through each assigned section and review together, as a team, what will be required in each segment. Team members serve as the lead agents for the specific sections they have been assigned. They may, of course, solicit the help of other team members to accomplish their task.

Closing Prayer

Remind all witness talk leaders to prepare a three to five minute witness talk using the talk sheets provided throughout the planning guide. They will present their talks at the next planning meeting. Invite someone (different than last time) in the group to lead a closing prayer. (This also enables team members to practice in front of one another before leading prayer on the retreat.) **Assign someone to call everyone to remind them of the next meeting. Remind leaders to invite participants to sign up for the retreat.**

Planning Session Three: 90 minutes

Prior to this planning session make sure that all of the leaders have been called and reminded of the meeting.

Opening Prayer

Begin the meeting with prayer. You might use the reading of the day or the Sunday Gospel reading. Pray for the needs of your Catholic Faith Community, those on the planning team, and those who will participate in the retreat. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as your team begins to make plans.

Organization

This third session is designed for the leaders to hear the witness talks from those who were assigned these tasks. This allows each witness the opportunity to practice in front of an audience. They should stand in front of a podium or table to simulate the experience of speaking to a larger group. They may use notes. The leaders are there to support each person giving a witness talk. At the conclusion of the talk first offer input on the things that speaker did well (*i.e., good eye contact, good examples, stuck to the point*) and then offer recommendations for improvement (*i.e., make sure to speak loud enough, I didn't quite understand your example, what is the connection between your bible verse and the talk or your song and the talk?*)

After all five witness talks have been given invite the group to discuss the other activities. Find out how members are progressing and where they might need help.

Closing Prayer

Invite someone (different than last time) in the group to lead a closing prayer. (This also enables team members to practice in front of one another before leading prayer on the retreat.) **Assign someone to call everyone to remind them of the next meeting. Remind leaders to invite participants to sign up for the retreat. Remind those giving the witness talks that they will practice their revised talks at the next planning session.**

Planning Session Four: 90 minutes

Prior to this planning session make sure that all of the leaders have been called and reminded of the meeting.

Opening Prayer

Begin the meeting with prayer. You might use the reading of the day or the Sunday Gospel reading. Pray for the needs of your Catholic Faith Community, those on the planning team, and those who will participate in the retreat. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as your team begins to make plans.

Organization

This fourth session is designed as a repeat of the third session so the leaders may hear the revised witness talks from those who were assigned these tasks. This also allows the witnesses an opportunity to practice in front of an audience again. They should stand in front of a podium or table to simulate the experience of speaking to a larger group. The leaders are there to support and encourage each person giving a witness talk. This serves as a great way to mentor leadership skills among youth and adult team members.

- After all five witness talks have been given invite the group to discuss the other activities. Find out how the retreat team members are progressing and where they might need additional help.
- Review the check list to make sure you have all of the supplies needed.
- Review times for gathering and any details regarding transportation, the retreat facility, important Catholic Faith Community input, etc.
- Go over the list of participants so that all of the leaders can pray for them prior to the retreat.

Closing Prayer

Invite someone (different than last time) in the group to lead a closing prayer. (This also enables participants to practice in front of one another before leading prayer on the retreat.)

Retreat Schedule

Retreat Team Members Arrive Early

It is highly encouraged that at least half of the retreat team arrives at the retreat or conference center several hours prior to the arrival of all of the participants. An early arrival will allow the retreat members to bring in all of the needed supplies, set up the meeting space with tables and chairs, and secure the rooms needed for all of the participants and meet with the facility staff to inquire about any last minute details. Some of the retreat team members should stay back and travel to the facility with all of the retreat participants. These members can call ahead to let those at the retreat center know when they will be arriving.

Outline of the First Evening

Arrival at retreat center

Facilitated by: Coordinating leaders

With a sense of hospitality welcome the participants and direct them to put luggage, pillows, sleeping bags, etc. into assigned sleeping rooms.

- ✓ *Remember that adults and youth are not permitted to sleep in the same rooms unless they are related as parent and child. This youth protection policy protects both youth and adult participants.*

After settling in, invite all participants to the general session room for the welcome and opening prayer. Consider hosting a small reception with snacks, drinks, and/or deserts. At the appropriate time invite all participants to sit down at tables and proceed with the welcome.

Opening prayer and intro: 20-25 minutes

Welcome

Facilitated by: Coordinating leaders

Give a brief description of the retreat and what will be happening that evening. Make sure all participants know about the layout of the facility, where the restrooms are, the dining area, the quiet areas, etc. Introduce the person leading prayer.

Opening prayer – (see attachment A)

Facilitated

by: _____

Introduction of the retreat team

Facilitated by: Coordinating leaders

Take the time to introduce all of the members of the retreat team. Briefly explain the planning process and share your enthusiasm for the beginning of the weekend. Introduce those leading the ice-breaker.

Ice Breaker: Duffle Bag – (see attachment B)

Facilitated

by: _____

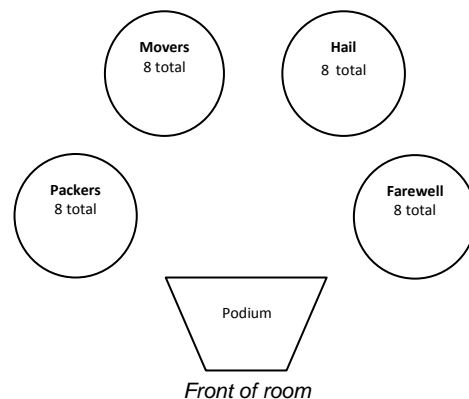
One adult leader explains the ice breaker, one or two youth leader(s) keeps track of answers and records the score to keep visual track of the winner.

Suitcase Exercise: 20 minutes

Facilitated by: Coordinating leaders

Transition the group into the next exercise by assigning participants to tables.

Room/Table Set Up for Witness Talks and Small Group Discussions



Suitcase labels - Parent/youth table groups
(one parent/youth team assigned to each table)

- The coordinating leaders call out who is assigned to which tables? There is a maximum of eight people around each table.

Suitcase labels (continued)

- Each table has an adult leader and a youth leader as well as up to three parent/youth participants. If a youth has more than one

parent attending than the leadership needs to figure out the seating chart before the retreat begins in order to avoid confusion at the beginning of the retreat. The same is true if one parent accompanies more than one youth.

- Retreat team members bring poster boards and markers to each table for this activity.
- After returning to the tables one of the **coordinating leaders** addresses the whole group to transition into the next segment by saying something like:

“All of us have packed bags many times to move to new locations. Wherever we move we have the ability to observe the things that are happening on the surface. We know we are good observers, just consider how many brand names of products we were able to come up with in such a short time. This retreat deals with unpacking our bags, spending some time reflecting on where we have been and where we have encountered God along the way. We are all good at moving forward. This weekend, however, is about slowing down to think and pray about how we are living our lives and how God is calling us to share our gifts with one another. So let’s begin by taking a look at our suitcases to remember where we are coming from.”

Places we’ve been

- Table leaders give each pair of parent and youth a poster board with the following instructions “On this poster board you are invited to draw an outline of a suitcase or duffle bag and write down all of the places you have lived. You might include symbols of those places, memorable or funny family experiences, or even favorite vacation spots as you moved from one place to the next.” You might want to use blank mailing labels to simulate location stickers that you often see on old suitcases.

**Share with members at the table**

- Once all of the parent and youth pairs have completed their suitcases the leadership team at the table invites the table to share the story of their suitcase by first sharing theirs. Make sure to include the places you lived along with a story or two about funny family experiences or vacation spots.

Life Graph witness talk: 60 minutes

Facilitated by: youth coordinating leader

The youth coordinating leader brings the focus back to the center of the room and transitions the group into the next segment by introducing the adult leader who will be giving the witness talk on *Life Graphs*.

Witness talk - Life Graphs (see attachment C)

Facilitated by adult member:

This witness talk should be **no longer than five minutes**. You may want to choose a bible verse and a song (CD) that relate to your talk. Review the guidelines on page 6 and consult **attachment C** for ideas to develop this witness talk. After the witness talk distribute copies of the retreat journal to all participants and team members.

Small group discussion facilitated by table leaders:

- What is something from the witness talk that you identified with or that you can relate to?
- What are some of the highs and lows of growing up in the military?
- Where can you turn when you are experiencing these highs and lows?

Individual Life Graph

The youth and adult team leader invite all participants to prepare their own life graph in their retreat journals. Have other team members distribute pens or pencils. These may be done at the tables or participants may find a quiet space in the room to reflect on and create their life graph on their own (this is similar to a journaling experience so you will need to set a quiet and reflective mood.)

Once completed the Life Graphs are shared in generational groups – four small groups gather to share their Life Graphs: two small groups of youth and two small groups of adults. Team leaders need to facilitate this process by first sharing their life graph and then inviting others to highlight three or four experiences on their life journey. This process allows the group to go a bit deeper beyond the locations where they have lived.

Break: 30 minutes

Be sure to provide some refreshments during this break.

Family Traditions witness talk: 60 minutes

Facilitated by: adult coordinating leader

The adult coordinator gathers the group and brings the focus back to the center of the room. Now is the time to transition the group into the next segment by introducing the youth leader who will be giving the witness talk on Family Traditions and Sacraments.

- Before this talk invite the groups to go back to their original tables of parent and youth.

Witness talk – Family Traditions and Sacraments

Facilitated by youth member:

This witness talk should be **no longer than five minutes**. You may want to choose a bible verse and a song (CD) that relate to your talk. It is suggested that you start by reading the bible verse as an opening prayer and then play the song. After a minute and a half or so have the music fade out and start your witness talk (*the three-to-five minutes begins with the talk*).

- In this talk you will want to highlight some of the high points that help you get through low points.
- This talk highlights two constants that help set the foundation for the retreat: **family and faith**.
- Therefore, you want to talk about a family tradition or two that helps you stay connected in a mobile world (i.e., my parents always had a fondue dinner on Christmas eve – it was a slow meal, no one was in a rush, we looked forward to it because it included some familiar foods and always had something new too.)
- It is also important to talk about how faith has offered some sense of consistency as your family has moved and dealt with challenges, (i.e., the military chapels are familiar no matter where we go, my prayer life has helped me to deal with meeting new people, the Catholic mass was recognizable wherever we traveled.)
- How has your family and your faith been a source of strength throughout your life of transitions?

Small group discussion

- Invite the tables to discuss one or two things in the witness talk that stood out to them and how they relate to it. The table leaders will need to pay attention to group dynamics and make sure that no one person dominates the discussion time. They will also need to make sure that both youth and adults are sharing. In mixed groups the tendency is to allow the parents to do all of the talking or in some cases parents take over the talking for their young person. Set a good example by encouraging listening and giving all participants the chance to share.

Closing prayer: (see attachment D)Facilitated by:

At the conclusion of the small group discussion invite the group to move to a prayer space. It may be a chapel in a retreat center or another room where the lights can be dimmed. Moving out of the place you have been will assist in this experience. Before the prayer begins give some instructions about rules for the evening, what time everyone needs to wake up, when and where breakfast will be held, and what time the first session begins on Saturday. Make sure to post all these times and rules somewhere near the general session room for easy reference.

The closing prayer is offered as a way to quiet down after a long, busy day. All of the participants came from work, school, home, and other responsibilities. Traveling to the retreat and jumping in takes a lot of energy. This prayer is designed as a way to quiet down and be open to the presence of God.

At the end of the prayer hand out a blank journal notebook and pen to each participant for journaling. Invite the participants to spend some quiet time with journals before leaving the prayer space. Be sure to encourage all of the participants to get a good night's sleep.

Outline of the Second Day**Breakfast**

Coordinate times with the retreat facility.

Create a Skit, Act it Out: 90 minutesFacilitated by:***The Reality of Moving: (see attachment E)***

Our prayer this morning is active. It essentially exists in the creative work and presentation of this group dynamic. This exercise is designed to get the day going. Groups work by generation, (i.e., there are two groups of adults and two groups of youth). The groups choose a title from a hat and must come up with a three to five minute skit to share with the whole group. The big twist here is that the adult groups design the skits the way they think young people would perceive the title and the youth design their skit the way they think adults would view the title.

Allow 40 minutes for the four groups to put their skit together.

Allow 30 minutes for all four groups to present their skits in numerical order.

Allow 20 minutes for the large group to process the experience using the questions in **Attachment E**.

Break: 30 minutes***Rootlessness and Restlessness: 60 minutes***Facilitated by: adult coordinating leader

The adult coordinator gathers the group and brings the focus back to the center of the room. Now is the time to transition the group into the next segment by introducing the youth leader who will be giving the witness talk on Rootlessness and Restlessness.

Witness talk: Rootlessness & RestlessnessFacilitated by youth member:

Youth presenter, no longer than five minutes, (suggest beginning with a bible verse and then a song (CD) that relates to moving or how you feel about moving.)

Rootlessness & Restlessness (continued)

- This talk deals with two issues, rootlessness (meaning having no home town) and restlessness (meaning never being really satisfied where you are.)
- Moving from place to place is challenging and can cause us to never feel as though we are truly at home.
- After a few years we feel like we ought to move because that's what we do or we are hoping for a place that will be better than where we are.
- The Catholic faith can help me feel at home because my faith is familiar no matter where I am.
- How does your faith help you when you feel rootlessness and/or restlessness?

Small group discussion:

- What is something from the witness talk that you identified with or that you relate to you?
- How have you dealt with the experiences of rootlessness and restlessness?
- Where can you turn when you are experiencing these things?

Journal time:

- What have you experienced this morning?
- How have these skits reminded you of your experiences of moving?
- How can being Catholic help you deal with the reality of rootlessness and restlessness?

Lunch and free time: 120 Minutes**The Call of the Journey of Faith: 90 minutes**

Facilitated by: _____

Gather the groups' attention and invite them into the next segment – (see attachment F)

Break: 15 minutes**Pilgrimage witness talk: 60 minutes**

Facilitated by: youth member: _____

The youth coordinator gathers the group and brings the focus back to the center of the room. Now is the time to transition the group into the next segment by introducing the adult leader who will be giving the witness talk on Pilgrimage.

Witness talk: Pilgrimage

Facilitated by adult member: _____

Adult presenter, no longer than five minutes, (suggest beginning with a bible verse and then a song (CD) that relates to being on a pilgrimage.)

- This talk moves beyond the issue of physically moving from place to place and into the idea of being a faithful pilgrim. A spiritual pilgrimage leads us to being in union with God where we can bring our questions about life and faith.
- This talk highlights one or two ways that you experience the military life as a pilgrim. What are the experiences and people that God has placed in your life in your many moves?
- How do you make room or time for God in your busy schedule?
- How does your pilgrimage encourage you to move beyond yourself and serve the needs of others or become a part of the Catholic Faith Community wherever you are?
- How has your family been an experience of Jesus' traveling companions, the disciples? (i.e., they know your true self, they can sense when you are in need, they have been present for life's celebrations and challenges.)

On beginning his pilgrimage to the Shrine at Mariazell in Austria Pope Benedict XVI said: "Pilgrimage means more than just journeying to a shrine. The journey back to our everyday life is also fundamental. Each week of our ordinary life begins with Sunday."

Small group discussion

- What is something from the witness talk that you identified with or stood out to you?
- For you, what is the difference between moving from place to place and being a pilgrim of faith?
- What is one aspect of your pilgrimage of faith that you are willing to share?

Journal time

- What have you experienced this afternoon?
- How does your baptismal call encourage you to be a pilgrim of faith?
- If you could ask Jesus one question right now what would it be?

Dinner and free time: 120 minutes**Lectio Divina and sharing: 90 minutes**Facilitated by:

Lectio Divina– (see attachment G)

- Individual journal time
- Parent and youth share life map
- Evening prayer: based on Philippians 1:3-11
- I thank God for...

Celebration: 30 minutesFacilitated by:

- Dessert and free time or games

Outline of the Third Day**Breakfast**

Coordinate with the retreat facility.

Being Witness Talk: 60 MinutesFacilitated by: adult coordinator

The adult coordinator gathers the group and brings the focus back to the center of the room. Now is the time to transition the group into the next segment by introducing the youth leader who will be giving the witness talk on Being Christ for One Another.

Witness talk: Being Christ for One AnotherFacilitated by youth member:

Youth presenter, no longer than five minutes, (suggest beginning with a bible verse and then a song (CD) that relates to moving or how you feel about moving.)

- This talk is about how being Catholic calls us to be Christ for one another.
- Share an example of someone who was Christ for you?
- What gifts do you have that enable you to share with others in need?
- How did you discover those gifts?
- How have you noticed and/or encouraged gifts in others so that they might grow?

Small group discussion

- What is something from the witness talk that you identified with or stood out to you?
- How have you experienced someone being Christ for you?
- What are some practical ways that you can be Christ for others in your community?

Journal time

This journal session is a bit different than the previous times. Spend the remaining time writing a letter to Jesus in your journal. Dear Jesus:

Journal time (continued)

- This is where I have been...
- This is why I need you in my future...
- This is the way that I see myself responding to your call to be Christ for one another...

Break: 15 Minutes**Being discussion: 45 minutes**

Facilitated by: table leaders

Small group discussion at tables

- How are we each Christ for one another in our community?
- How do we discover and encourage mission, vocation, and discipleship?
- How do we, now, view transition in light of our faith?

Large group process

Facilitated by:

- Representatives from each table shares ideas discussed for each question to the larger group.
- It is good to focus on one question at a time and invite different representatives from each table to share to the larger groups. Try to keep an even mix of youth and parent representatives.

Transitioning Home: 30 minutes

Facilitated by:

How to transition back into daily living – Large group discussion led by a youth and adult facilitator.

- Discuss ways that you may return from this retreat mode back to daily living.
- What will help participants focus on continuing to Live, and Move, and have their Being in Christ?
- How can you contribute to the Catholic Community of Faith so that others will see your enthusiasm?

Be gentle with one another:

- Not everyone was on retreat this weekend.
- Returning to daily living can easily distract us from finding the time to pray. We are called to live our faith daily. Our Catholic faith influences the decisions and choices we make.
- Do not hold words or experiences over each other's heads (i.e., "*On the retreat you finally acted like someone I could connect with but now that we are back home you have just returned to your 'old self.'*") The shared experiences on this retreat are a gift to celebrate not a threat to hold over one another.

Evaluation and clean up: 30 minutes

Facilitated by:

Closing Mass or prayer: 30-60 minutes

Facilitated by:

Mass: If a priest is available to preside at a closing mass at the retreat center coordinate a time to celebrate the liturgy. Make sure the priest or the retreat team has everything needed to celebrate mass.

Prayer: In some cases a priest will not be available due to pastoral requirements with the Catholic Faith Community. The retreat team needs to coordinate these possibilities in cooperation with the Catholic Chaplain at your military installation.

- Find out if the retreat center has a priest that would be able to preside at a closing mass.
- Locate a Catholic Church in the community near the retreat center so all participants may attend mass together.
- Organize the retreat in such a way that the entire group returns to the Chapel for the celebration of mass.
- Ask the Catholic Chaplain what other options for prayer might exist.

Lunch: 60 minutes**Departure after lunch**

Attachment A**Opening Prayer for first evening**

After the initial welcome and an explanation of the retreat center facilities invite the group to begin with prayer.

Leader:

We begin our retreat with prayer so that together we may open our hearts and our minds to the presence of Christ. [Pause for a brief moment.]

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN

Lord, tonight we gather, taking a break from our busy schedules. Help us to briefly let go of worries and obligations we have at home, at school, at work, and all of the issues going on in the lives of our family and friends.

Guide us through this retreat experience so that we may continue to discover the gifts you have given us. Help us to see the many ways you have been close to us throughout our lives and allow us to be open to the Holy Spirit.

As we pause and examine the ways that we live and move and have our being in Christ, open our hearts and our minds to the many ways you continue to call each one of us.

We pray all these things through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Reader:

Listen to these words that are prayed during one of the Sunday prefaces in Ordinary Time at Mass. (A preface is a prayer that is prayed by the celebrant prior to the words of the Eucharistic Prayer.)

*Father, all powerful and ever living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you
thanks.*

*In you we live and move and have our being.
Each day you show us a Father's love; your
Holy Spirit, dwelling within us, gives us on earth
the hope of unending joy.*

*Your gift of the Spirit,
who raised Jesus from the dead,
is the foretaste and promise
of the pascal feast of heaven.*

*With thankful praise,
in company with the angels,
we glorify the wonders of your power:*

Reader: *Together we pray:*

Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Leader:

Guide us Lord as we continue to live and move and have our being in you.

Attachment B

Duffle Bag Ice Breaker¹

Supplies needed

One duffle bag or overnight bag with the following items inside:

- Box of cereal (for the practice round)
- Roll of toilet paper
- Tube of toothpaste
- Bottle of shampoo
- Bottle of hair gel
- Bar of soap
- Bottle of perfume or cologne
- Can of shaving cream
- Bottle of mouthwash
- Bottle of eye drops
- Bottle of hair spray
- Dental floss
- Any other items you can think to add that people use to get their day started, try to have an odd number of items in case you need a tie breaker (i.e., 7, 9, or 11).

Explanation

Divide the group into two groups, one group of parents, and one group of youth. The adult leader holds up a small bag with all of these items that people use to start their day with the following explanation.

"In this bag are several items we use each day. The goal for each group is to shout out a brand name of the product I pull out of the bag. For example, if I had a box of Cheerios your group could shout out any brand of cereal. Don't shout too many names though because we will alternate back and forth between the parent group and the youth group. The parent group might say Raisin Bran and the youth group might say Frosted Flakes. The group can consult all of their participants to come up with an answer. The round keeps going back and forth until one of the groups cannot come up with any other names or repeats one of the names already said or says the actual brand name pulled out of the bag. I will serve as the time keeper (it is up to the leader to decide how

much time to allow, we suggest no more than 15-20 seconds). The youth team leader will record in two columns all of the brand names given to keep track (this can be put on a chalk board, poster board, or even written in a notebook which would be more challenging since the groups can't consult the list.) Each round has one product and the session alternates between groups giving answers until one group can't think of any more brand names or they make a mistake by repeating one of the words. "

"Let's do a practice round with a box of cereal to see which group gets to go first."

After the practice round say: "This is a fast paced game so pay attention because here we go."

The youth leader must be able to listen well and write fast for this game to work well. You might have two youth leaders, one to listen and the other to record.

Teams get one point for each winning round. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins. The youth leader keeps track of the team points and records them on a poster board for all to see.

Parents	Youth
IIII	III

Scorecard

Raisin Bran	Cheerios
Corn Flakes	Frosted Flakes
Wheaties	Special K

List of answers are recorded for all to see

Award the winning team with congratulations or a small prize (i.e., new toothbrush, small hotel bars of soap, etc.), then have the groups return to their tables.

¹ Special recognition goes to Karen Laroche of the La Salette Center for Christian Living Retreat Center in Attleboro, MA for her contributions to the development of this exercise for youth retreats.

Attachment C

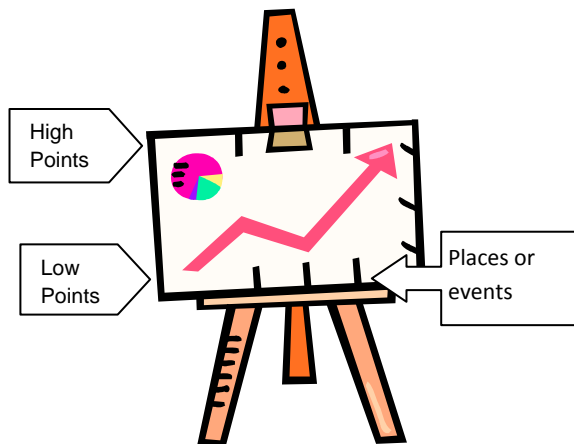
Witness Talk Life Graph

An adult leader prepares this witness talk. It should be no longer than five minutes. The idea is to give the participants insight into developing their own life graph by sharing your own. This is a condensed way to share your life story. The life graph includes key moments that include both high points and low points. For those that move from place to place in the military it is easy to chart a graph based on location.

For example:

The witness talk can refer to high points and low points of the witnesses Life Graph or the young person giving the witness may choose to actually chart out their Life Graph on a chalk board or poster board and put titles on the high points and low points. (i.e., best friend moved when I lived at Fort Hood, I completed a certificate at Camp Pendleton, felt close to God at this location, sacrament, experience, felt far away from God at this location, sacrament, experience, etc.) This is not a time for charting deep dark secrets and getting others in the group to reveal their secret past. Rather this process is an honest assessment of highs and lows in their life so far. The Life Graph should have *High Points* and *Low Points* on the vertical axis and *Places* or *Events* on the horizontal axis (the events title allows for those in your group that may not have moved).

Life Graph – chart it out.



Additional thoughts for the witness:

Having just completed the suitcase exercise you might want to use the idea or image of a baggage handler for this witness talk. Our life can feel as though it is being tossed around like baggage at the airport carousel, it can also feel as though it is being handled with care. In real life we fluctuate between both of these extremes.

Iyer Pico has a great quote that deals with life waiting to be claimed:

Airports are among the only sites in public life where emotions are hugely sanctioned, in block capitals. We see people weep, shout, kiss in airports; we see them at the furthest edges of excitement and exhaustion. Airports are privileged spaces where we can see the primal states writ large—fear, recognition, hope. But there are some of us, perhaps, sitting at the Departure Gate, boarding passes in hand, watching the destinations ticking over, who feel neither the pain of separation nor the exultation of wonder; who alight with the same emotions with which embarked; who go down to the baggage carousel and watch our lives circling, circling, circling, waiting to be claimed.²

² Faith Eidse and Nina Sichel, Editors, *Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global*, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth, Maine, 2004, 16-17.

Attachment D **Closing Prayer**

Invite all of the participants to sit comfortably. Quietly light a candle. An adult and a youth leader explain that we will be ending the evening with prayer. It has been a long day and now it is time to thank God for the gift of this time to share, to reflect, and to pray. *(Pause silently for 1 minute and then begin).*

Youth Leader: God of our life's journeys, we gather here at this retreat to celebrate the gift of life and to ask your blessing on our transitions of faith. May the care of your love that you have placed in our hearts continue to be a bond that unites us, wherever we may be and may the power of your presence bless this moment.

Reading – Adult Leader: Philippians 1:3-11, New American Bible, *I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you...* **The Word of the Lord, R/Thanks be to God.**

Youth Leader: Let us give thanks for the gifts we remember tonight, our response is **Lord hear our prayer.**

Cut these petitions on the dotted line, fold them and put them in a bowl. Pass the bowl around to various participants to read these petitions. The order does not matter as long as all of the petitions are read.

We give thanks to our families who allowed us the time to be here this weekend. With gratitude for the gift of their sacrifice, we pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

We give thanks to our Catholic faith community that supports us in faith through prayer and action. May we respond generously to the needs of our community. We pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the many places we have lived, the many people we have met, and the many high and low points that have shaped our lives. We pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the leaders of our church, the bishops and priests of the Military Archdiocese and all those who willingly give their time to share their faith. We pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for those who serve our country, those in uniform and their loved ones who support them so that they may serve well, guide them to make good decisions and protect them from harm. We pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the gift of our parents even in the times when we do not understand one another, grant us patience hearts so that we may care for one another. We pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the gift of our children even in the times when we wonder what it is that they are doing, grant us understanding hearts so that we may listen well. We pray to the Lord, **R. Lord hear our prayer.**

Youth Leader: Lord God we pray that our journey continues with you... Be with us as we journey onward, may we support and appreciate one another... As we experience the pain of change and the insecurity of moving on, may we also experience the blessing of inner growth... As we meet the poor, the pained, and the stranger on our journey, may we see in each the face of Christ... As we walk through the good times and the hard times, may we never lose sight of the shelter of God's loving arms... If we question our decisions and wonder about the fruit of our choices, may the peace of God reign in our hearts... We praise and thank you Lord, God and we entrust our retreat experience to your loving care, knowing that you are always the Faithful Traveler and Companion on our way. We pray all these things in the words our savior taught us as together we say, Our Father...

We pray all these things in your name. AMEN.

Attachment E

Second day morning skits

Instructions: Divide the group into four groups. There should be two groups of adults and two groups of youth. Cut the instructions out below and let each group pick one from a hat.

Give the groups **40 minutes to prep a 3 to 5 minute skit.**

Remember the twist: Adults need to design and act out their skit from the perspective of how they think youth would deal with the topic. Youth need to design and act out their skit from the perspective of how they think adults would deal with the topic.

1. Orders to Moving Van

What happens in family life from the time your family receives orders to the time the moving van arrives? (*Remember the twist!*)

2. Departures to arrival

What happens in family life from the time you depart your assignment to the time you arrive to your new assignment? Consider the experience of billeting or hotels and dealing with the unknown. (*Remember the twist!*)

3. Moving van to feeling settled in

What happens in family life from the time the moving van arrives at your new home to the time that you begin to feel settled in. (*Remember the twist!*)

4. Left behind: Your friends move but your family stays at the same installation

What happens in family life when good friends move but your family stays at the same location? How does the family adapt in the same place? (*Remember the twist!*)

After the prep time reconvene the groups and have each group act out their skit in numerical order to simulate the process of moving.

Allow 40 minutes for all four of the skits to be presented. This allows for minor transition and set up time for each group.

Take 25 minutes to process the experiences of the skits.

Initial Questions

- What did you see?
- What did you agree with?
- What did you disagree with?
- What else could have been added to each of the skits?

Going Deeper

- What is hard about moving?
- When have you experienced something positive during a move?
- Where or to whom can you turn to when the reality of moving is driving you crazy?
- How can our faith make a difference as we deal with these stages of moving?

Attachment F**A Pilgrimage of Faith: Jesus on the Move**

This attachment is posted online as a separate document. Download all three resources for this retreat.

- 1) Retreat Planning Guide (this resource)
- 2) Attachment F
- 3) Participant Journal

Attachment G (1 of 3)

Lectio Divina, Parent & Teen Sharing

Introduction – this part of the retreat brings together all of the elements of the past two days. It serves as an opportunity for the participants to dive deeper into prayer. It also affords a safe environment for teens and parent(s) to share experiences and insights. Setting the right mood for this experience is extremely important. What is needed is a comfortable space where lights can be dimmed and/or candles can provide enough light to read and to write in a journal.

All of the participants will have just come from dinner and a long break. It will take some time to settle the group down. One of the best ways to set the mood is by explaining the activities for the evening and the opportunity for everyone to quietly listen to God and to one another. It is also helpful if you are able to use a chapel or prayer space for this activity. Any space other than the room you have been in all day would be helpful.

Welcome – after a long day of activities and reflections we spend some time tonight slowing down to pray and listen. This time is set aside for us to consider how God is calling us and how we are encouraging one another. Tonight we will relax, pray through the use of biblical reflection (lectio divina), spend some time with our family member(s) sharing thoughts and experiences, and finally celebrate with one another.

In order to begin I will, in a minute, invite you to gather with your table group. If everyone is comfortable sitting on the floor we encourage you do so (please make sure that no one lies down as this tends to encourage sleeping rather than attentiveness.) It is important to sit comfortably and be relaxed. (It would probably be helpful to indicate where you would like each group to sit so that they are apart from one another. Calling one table at a time also dims the chaos of everyone getting up at the same time and helps to instill a slower pace.)

Lectio divina is a prayer with scripture. It is something we can do on our own or in small groups. This style of prayer is slow and

contemplative. It helps us to enter into a different pace than what we normally deal with day to day. In this experience your group will be invited to read the bible story from the Gospel of Luke three times. Each time we will be invited to listen anew.

Before we begin choose three different readers in your group and assign an order, 1st, 2nd, 3rd. The first reader is invited to open the bible to Lk 2,41-52 and place the bible in front of them. Before reading we will begin with a quieting exercise.

Again, where you are seated I invite you to sit comfortably...to be relaxed... and if you are comfortable to close your eyes or look down at the floor in front of you. In the quiet, listen attentively to your own breathing... Slowly allow yourself to enter into the silence of this space... for just a few moments allow yourself to enjoy the silence.

- 1) *In a moment, the first reader will be invited to slowly and gently read the bible story from the Gospel of Luke. As you listen to God's word the first time notice what you are **hearing**. Focus on one word or passage that touches your heart. After the reading there will be a moment of silence. Just silently recite to yourself the word or passage that spoke to you. The first reader may now slowly read. (After 30-40 seconds of silence, invite everyone in the group to say their word or passage.) Now I invite everyone in the group to share their word or passage in their group. This is a prayer. It is not a time to explain why the word spoke out to you but only a time to say it out loud in your small group.*
- 2) *Now hand the bible to the second reader. This time the bible story is read slowly and gently so that we may each **hear or see Christ** in the text. As the story is read consider a word or phrase which helps you to hear or see Christ. After the reading use the time of silence to silently recite to yourself that word or phrase over and over again. (This time allow the groups to sit with the phrase in silence for 40-60 seconds.) Invite everyone in the group to share the word or phrase that helped them to hear or see Christ.*

Attachment G (2 of 3, continued)

Lectio Divina, Parent & Teen Sharing

- 3) *The third reading is for us to experience Christ “calling us forth” into doing or being in the coming week. This time as the text is being read consider what Christ is calling you to do or become. After the silence each person shares with the group how Christ is calling them into doing or being in the coming week. (This time allow the groups to sit with the phrase in silence for 60-75 seconds.) We conclude this prayer by inviting each person to pray for the person on their right and bless them with the sign of the cross on their forehead, similar to the blessing that parents and godparents give to those being baptized.)*

Lk 2, 41-52, The Boy Jesus in the Temple
The Catholic Youth Bible, NAB, 2002

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

Individual time – Journal experience

In silence, write down the three words or phrases you heard from praying with scripture tonight. In your own words explain why those phrases jumped out to you and how your time for reflecting gave you the opportunity to learn more.

Family life is about love and growth but misunderstanding and conflict are also present. Like the Holy Family, our family is reminded that love and faith help in moments of conflict and crisis.

- 1) What are some conflicts that our family has survived in the past?
- 2) What are some areas of conflict in your family life that could use some love and faith right now?
- 3) How can prayer help your family resolve conflicts they experience in everyday life?

Going Deeper - Parents and Teens Share

On the first evening of the retreat all of the participants were invited to graph out a life map. Those life experiences were shared but not between parent and teen. The going deeper section is an opportunity for teens and parents to spend some time together sharing their life graphs and some of the answers they wrote in their journal. It is important to stress that this is a listening session. It is not a time to correct one another or to make plans but purely a time to share experiences, to listen and to reconcile those areas that may need to be repaired.

Parent(s) and teen find a place in the retreat center where they can talk privately and spend 30 minutes together without being disrupted. Encourage them to begin with the opening prayer in the Parent and Teen Share section of their journal. When the 30 minutes are over ask all of the participants to return to the prayer space for closing prayer.

Attachment G (3 of 3, continued)

Lectio Divina, Parent & Teen Sharing

Closing prayer introduction:

First, invite all participants to sit in a circle.

This evening we have opened ourselves to God's word and to one another. Taking the time to reflect, to really listen to the relationships that matter to us most, helps us remember what is most important: our family and our faith. We do disagree at times. We do allow our misunderstandings get in the way. We do forget that our lives are not always all about us. When we get off course we do well to remember that we are not alone. God is always with us. Our family, who travels with us, always knows who we are and loves us for just being us. Knowing all of these things we have much to be grateful for. So we begin our prayer of thanksgiving with a reading from the Book of Philippians 1, 3-11. In this reading Paul writes to his friends in Philippi and expresses his gratitude for their friendship and encourages them to be committed to one another.

Read Philippians 1, 3-11

Paul writes about friendship. In many ways he could be writing about our relationship with Jesus Christ and our relationships with those in our families. Paul takes the time to express well his love of those he cared for. Paul recognized those with whom he shared ups and downs throughout his life. Paul gave thanks for those who truly wanted the best for one another.

As a group of parents and teens together on retreat we take this moment to thank God for the gift of one another, the gift of this special time apart and the gift of being present to Christ in the midst of our family. As a community of faith we are each invited to give thanks to God for one thing we have realized on this retreat or one thing that this retreat has helped us to remember.

The prayer leader begins with their petition first.... (i.e., I give thanks to God for remembering how important it is to compliment my parent/son/daughter. We pray to the Lord, **R/ Lord hear our prayer.**)

Each person has the opportunity to share a petition of gratitude. Go around the circle until each person has had the opportunity to share one petition of gratitude. When all of the petitions have been prayed conclude with the following:

As a people of faith we have followed and been led. We have taught and we continue to learn. Thankful for the many ways that God has given life to our families we pray in the words Jesus taught us:

Our Father....

To conclude our prayer this evening we invite parents and teens to bless one another with the sign of the cross on each others' foreheads.

After the blessing remind everyone about the details for breakfast and the gathering time for the next morning. Then invite everyone to a dessert celebration. You may want to offer board games for those who would like to stay up longer.

Attachment H**Unpacking Faith Invitation**

(Check web site for invitation resource that may be edited with your community details.)



The *Unpacking Faith Retreat* Team in our Catholic Faith Community invites youth and parents to the

Unpacking Faith Retreat

Date:

Location:

Cost:

Point of
Contact:

Phone:

Join us on as we unpack our experiences of moving and faith on a retreat for high school youth and their parent(s).

Resources

- 1) This retreat was based on the following book:

Mark T. Moitoza, *Unpacking Faith: A Resource for Catholic Military Connected Adolescents and their Parents*, Cloverdale Books (an imprint of The Victoria Press), 2007

- a) *Unpacking Faith* offers reflection questions on living, moving, and being which may further assist those writing witness talks.
 - b) *Unpacking Faith* serves as a follow up resource for youth and parents to continue their discussions after the retreat.
 - c) *Unpacking Faith* may be used for small group discussions for those that would like to continue youth and parents sharing.
- 2) Catholic Youth Ministry resources for military Catholic Faith Communities are posted on the Office for Youth Ministry web site in the Youth Ministry Leaders section/documents, www.oymmilarch.org.
- 3) Lisa-Marie Calderone Stewart, *Teens and Parents: Sessions for Growing in Faith Together*, St. Mary's Press, 2004
- 4) *Generation of Faith Online* resource developed by the Center for Ministry Development offers lifelong intergenerational resources for Catholic faith communities, www.generationsofffaith.org.
- 5) *To Teach* is a free monthly newsletter developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Each newsletter provides resources for teaching and sharing faith. There is a special section for parents. Sign up online: http://www.usccbpublishing.org/client/client_pages/toteach.cfm

Additional Notes

- [illegible]

Unpacking Faith Retreat Evaluation

Before you arrived what were you expecting from this retreat experience?

What was a high point for you during this retreat?

What is something that you found challenging to connect with?

If you could make one recommendation to the retreat planning team to improve upon this experience the next time it is facilitated what would you suggest?

Would you be interested in being part of a retreat planning team in the future?

What can you do to share your gifts in the Catholic Faith Community?

Other insights: