

ENCOUNTER CORE TEAM

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN
ONE LIFE TODAY



HELLO!

Although we may be biased, we believe that working with our students can be life changing. They need adults like you to join the Core Team for Encounter, the high school youth group, at Christ the Redeemer. Not only will you feel fulfilled making an eternal impact on young people, God will teach you more about yourself, your faith and you'll have an awesome time doing it.

This booklet will detail the incredibly significant role that Core Team members play in this ministry. **YOU** have potential to be used by God to make a lasting investment in a student's faith by being a part of their journey through these pivotal years of life.



- Rachel and Bryan

WHAT IS ENCOUNTER?

Encounter is one night a week for our high school youth. Our goal is to lead all youth into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ so that they know His unconditional love for them.

Before Encounter starts, we make time for students and Core Team members to visit, eat together and meet new people. We start with large group, which has some sort of game, praise and worship and a teaching. Then, students connect in small groups (based on grade and gender) to apply the teaching to their lives. We break into smaller groups to help build community and to make sure no child slips through the cracks.

WHAT DOES A CORE TEAM MEMBER DO?

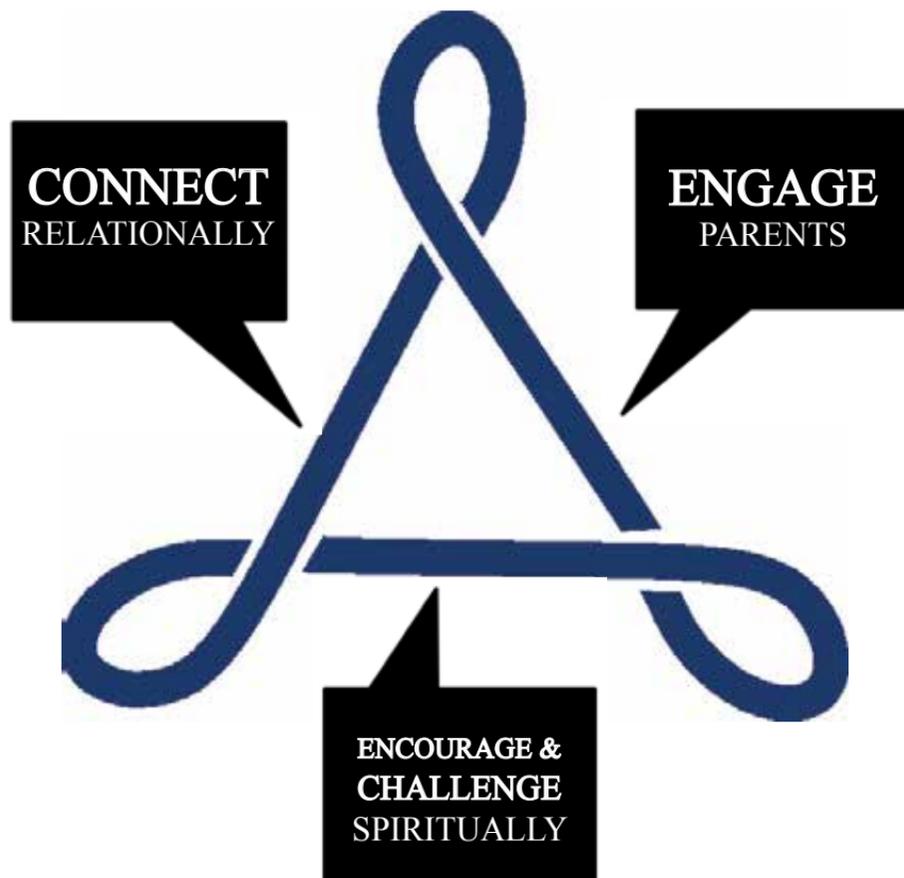
A Core Team member helps us accomplish our mission statement broken down into the four main points:

- Open the hearts of high school students, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform them into authentic lifelong disciples.
- Build a family of believers who encourage and spur each other on to heaven.
- Equip them to become full, active, conscious participants in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church.
- Empower them to become leaders, witnessing the Father's love to the ends of the earth.



Accomplishing these four objectives is a tall order. We can do this together through the method explained in this booklet. As you read these pages, ask yourself questions like “Is God calling me to serve in this way?” “Would I enjoy doing this?” and “Is this something I can see myself being good at?” As a Core Team member, you will be given a specific small group of the same students each week to run for the year.

CORE TEAM MEMBER STRATEGY



CONNECT RELATIONALLY

Relational ministry is the way Jesus ministered to the people. Jesus gave Himself to His 12 disciples. He ate with them, taught them, learned about their interests and became part of their lives. We listen to and mentor teens, accept them for who they are, and walk with them in this journey toward Christ. Students learn through relationships and are more likely to open up and ask questions to an adult they trust. Learning in community, being loved and valued, and having a great time happens when Core Team members **connect relationally** with the students. We set aside time to grow real, authentic relationships.



What does this look like at Encounter?

- Hang out with the students before the session and talk with them about life.
 - Seek out your small group students to talk with them about their week.
 - Be on the lookout for students who are sitting alone and introduce them to others.
- Play the games with them, don't be a spectator - be yourself!
 - Sing during praise and worship.
- Sit with them during the teaching - help with crowd control and set a good example.
- Connect personally during small group.
 - Ask how things are going with their family and lives.
 - Listen to students talk about extracurricular activities.

ENCOURAGE AND CHALLENGE SPIRITUALLY

We introduce students to God and teach them how to become a fully active Catholic. Along the way, we encourage their individual spiritual growth. Teens need Jesus, and we can serve them and their families best by **encouraging and challenging** them spiritually to take steps to become closer to God. Through spiritual disciplines, teens can grow with God and find meaning and strength in the sacraments. Challenge the students to pray and continue learning about the Catholic faith.

What does this look like at Encounter?

- Pray and sing during praise and worship.
- Facilitate a discussion during small group time that will help the students learn and apply the message. Ask questions like,
 - What did the presenter say?
 - What one part of the talk did you find cool/interesting/intriguing?
 - What does this mean for us? How can we apply this to our lives?
 - What does that practically look like?
 - What are we going to do this week?
- Pray together as a small group.
- Look for individual opportunities to encourage and challenge a student personally.
- Pray for your small group during the week (Seriously, pray for them by name every day!).



ENGAGE PARENTS

Catholic parents are the primary catechists and spiritual influences on their children. We want to do everything we can to partner with parents to help them in this journey of raising teens. We understand it takes a village to raise a child and we want to **engage parents** as much as possible.

What does this look like?

- Introduce yourself to the parents of your small group students. You can meet their family before/after Mass, random run-ins at the store, etc.
- Encourage your students to continue conversations with their parents about information we cover in Encounter.
- Encourage communication and relationship with their parents. Support parents and don't make them into the bad guy.
- Brag to the parents about their child.
- Keep parents informed if your group is planning something outside of Encounter. Make sure students check in with their parents to ask permission to attend.
- Communicate via email, phone, texting, social media, etc. However you can get in touch with them!



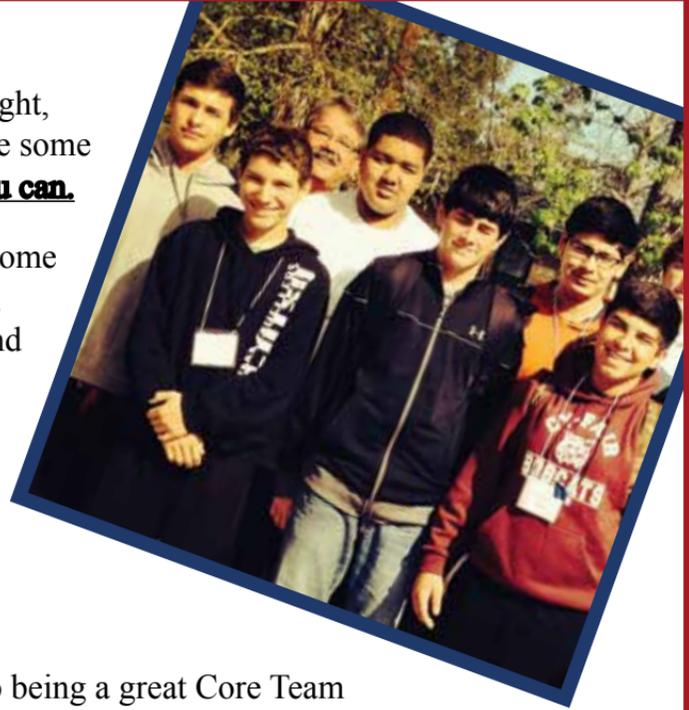
WHO CAN BE ON CORE TEAM? YOU!

Maybe as you read through this, your heart started racing and thought, “Sign me up!” Some of you might have felt a little differently, have some more questions or wonder if you really could do this. We know **you can**.

Here’s why: there is not just one type of Core Team member. For some reason, people often think we are only looking for the cool, young, trendsetting, hip leader. In reality, we want adults who love God and like high school teens. Think about it - it could be anyone.

Grandparents, single dads, football players, stay-at-home moms, engineers, teachers, computer analysts, Aggie fans, Texan fans, circus performers, empty nesters, parents of teens, lawyers, baristas, sales reps, bikers, gardeners, college students, readers, golfers.... You get the point.

If you love God and like high school teens, you are on your way to being a great Core Team member at Encounter because.... **YOU’RE NOT IN THIS ALONE**. It’s true that we are asking for a big commitment, but we believe high school students deserve our best. Don’t you agree? We want the best for our students and for their leaders. The next couple pages will briefly explain how we help.



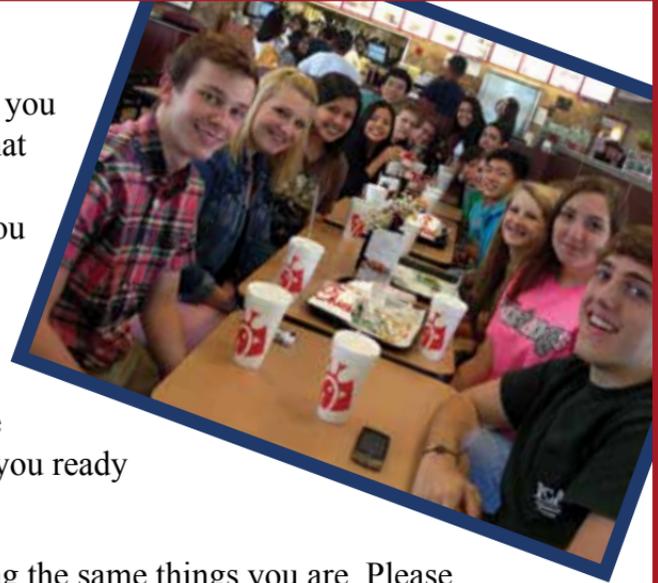
HOW AM I EQUIPPED TO LEAD?

Small Group Talk Sheet: This is a tool we provide each week to help you lead your small group. It will give you an outline of the night and what information we'll be covering a week in advance so you'll be able to prepare for your small group time and look up extra information if you feel weak on the subject.

Core Team Retreat: We will host a retreat for you in August! We will get you those dates. This will be a great weekend where you will hear information on where we're going and have time to prepare yourself to serve. This should be an inspiring weekend that will get you ready for the 2014-15 year of Encounter.

Community: You will meet many other adults who are currently doing the same things you are. Please use each other to grow! We all have different gifts, talents and strengths to share. Through sharing our joys and struggles with each other, we're able to learn and develop together.

Core Team Meetings: We meet for half an hour after each night to talk about how the night went and to go over the next week. We're able to share tips, strategies and challenges in working with the teens.



WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

Retreats/Events: Our Core Team members participate in at least one retreat during the year and we strongly encourage you to attend a summer trip. We use our retreats and events to build community and God does amazing things in the lives of the teens when they are away from their normal routines.

Service and Small Group Events: We highly encourage your small group to hang out twice a year outside of Encounter. Every student is in extracurricular activities, so this is an easy way to support a member of your small group. Service work is also an excellent way to bond as a group and challenge individuals spiritually. A Lenten service project would be great!

Investment: With any activity you participate in, we get out what we put into it. It's very important for you to come each week because the students expect to see you there. Be ready to share in the ups and downs of a relationship. These are teenagers and they don't always share how excited they are to have you as a small group leader. Oftentimes, they appear to be apathetic because they're still trying to feel you out and decide if you are authentic. Invest in their lives.

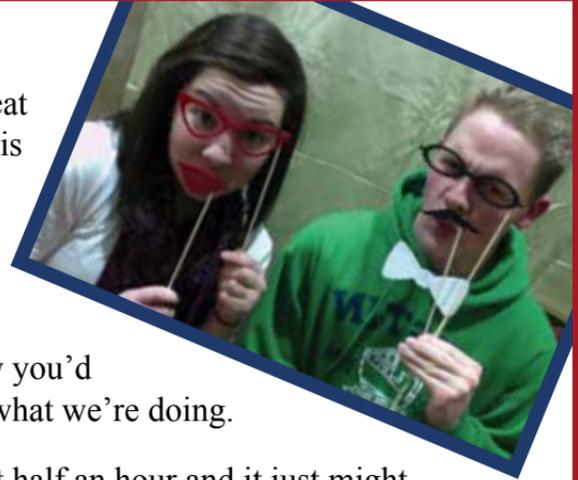
Discernment: We're here to help you discern where your gifts would fit best. You're not in this alone! Know that we are praying for you and God is going to do incredible things with your life whether that means joining Core Team or not. We desire His will above all else.



NOW WHAT?

Thank you for reading through this booklet. Hopefully it helped paint a great picture of Encounter and the importance of the Core Team members. Here is what you need to do now:

1. Pray and ask God if this is something He may be calling you to do.
2. Visit Encounter. Contact one of the youth ministers and let us know you'd like to visit. We'll walk you through the night and let you observe what we're doing.
3. Schedule an interview with Rachel or Bryan. It will only take about half an hour and it just might be the best half hour of your week.



Thank you again for your interest in serving as a Core Team member for Encounter. We can't wait to see what God does in and through you and our high school students this year. Please contact us with any questions you might have.

We look forward to connecting with you soon!

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