

# THEOLOGY OF THE BODY *for Teens*

## RETREAT GUIDE

### 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 *Weekend Retreat Guide* will help you to adapt the content in the *Theology of the Body for Teens* program into a solid 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.

## 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 that of the teens. Having skilled and enthusiastic musicians for the retreat is an investment whose worth 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 *Theology of the Body for Teens* curriculum, 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 who will be able to really connect with a teen audience. If that person is not you, don't 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. Your team should spend 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. Don’t be afraid to make a change on the spot if that is what is truly needed.

### The *Theology of the Body for Teens* DVD Set

The *Theology of the Body for Teens* DVD set gives you the opportunity to have the authors of the curriculum, Brian Butler and Jason and Crysalina Evert, teach the heart of each lesson to your teens. In the DVD set there is one segment for each of the 12 workbook chapters, as well as two guys-only and two girls-only segments for going deeper, time permitting. Each DVD chapter segment runs approximately 20-25 minutes.

It is unlikely you will have time to play all DVD chapters throughout the weekend retreat, so you should review the DVD set and pre-select which ones you want to show the teens. You could also rotate between presenting live talks and playing the DVD chapter segments to best suite 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 Overview on DVD four. In the Parent Overview, the curriculum authors explain the entire *Theology of the Body for Teens* study to the parents, discuss the resources, give practical Family Applications and run through the five most Frequently Asked Questions.

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 [www.TOBforTeens.com](http://www.TOBforTeens.com)

## Theology of the Body for Teens Program Components

**4 DVD Set** (12 lessons) . . . . . \$99.95

12 core lessons plus 4 guys and girls only lessons  
40-minute parents video

**Student Workbook** (12 lessons) . . \$14.95

216 pages, 8.5 x 11 • *Bulk discounts are available*  
Each teen should receive his or her own Student Workbook.

**Leader’s Guide** . . . . . \$29.95

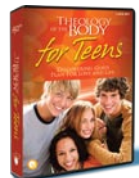
396 pages, 8.5 x 11  
Each facilitator should have his or her own Leader’s Guide.

**Parent’s Guide** . . . . . \$6.95

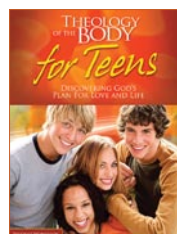
80 pages, 5.5 x 8.5 • One per family • *Bulk discounts are available*



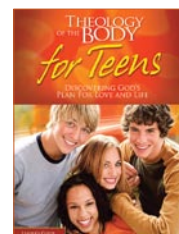
Parent’s Guide



DVDs



Student Workbook



Leader’s Guide

## Format & Schedule:

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

### FRIDAY NIGHT: SESSION #1

6:00pm – Arrive & Settle In

6:45pm – Introductions & Expectations

7:00pm – Icebreaker: “Bet You Didn’t Know” (Make Copies from the *Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 195)

- Even for a group that knows each other fairly well, the above icebreaker can help them learn a few new things about each other. Or use some other effective “get to know you” or “name game” to get the teens to interact with each other.
- The above icebreaker should only take 10-15 minutes. After this, choose another icebreaker to keep the teens moving and get them “loosened up” for another 15-20 minutes.

7:30pm – Songs

- Follow the general flow through the weekend of “icebreaker/music/talk.” This flow helps them to be physical with, to use energy, and interact with each other, keeping the teens engaged. All the while you are focusing their energy on their growing relationship with God through song. The goal is to then have them enter into a focused and receptive posture for the upcoming talk. It is a good idea here to use energetic music to involve the teens early in the retreat. It is also wise to always have the last song before a talk be slower and more reflective, enabling the teens to enter into a peaceful and attentive mood.

7:45pm – Opening Prayer & Talk #1: “What is my purpose? Oh yeah, to love!”  
(Option: Play Intro/Chapters 1 & 2 from the DVD 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 towards 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 every day 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’ll 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 towards us. Love is defined as “willing the good of another.”

[Source Material For This Talk: Chapter 1 - *Created for Love* and Chapter 2 - *Love Defined* – For these and additional specific talking points within the larger framework of these chapters, consider reviewing the *Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, pp 5L and 19L.]

**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. For additional thoughts on our thinking on this issue, consult the Leader's Introduction to the *Theology of the Body for Teens Leader's Guide*, p viii-ix.

**8:50pm –Break****9:00pm – THREE OPTIONS (or combine a few)****1.) Option #1: NIGHT-TIME 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.

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

Depending on your group's needs, how late you want to keeping 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 build up or imbalance from becoming the focus of the retreat.

**3.) 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 down-time, 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 pro-active 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”** (*Leader’s Guide*, p 38L-39L)

**9:25am – Songs/Praise & Worship**

**9:45am – Talk #2: “Naked Without Shame: God’s Original Plan”**  
(Option: Play Chapter 3 from the DVD 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 upon 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 chapter 2). 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 – chapter 3). This is a more detailed talk, fleshing out some of the concepts that are introduced in chapter 1.

We are all created very good. The nuptial/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: Chapter 3 “Naked Without Shame” with some material also blended in from Chapter 2 “Love Defined: Giving versus Using.” For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these chapters, see the *Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 37L.]

**10:30am – Small Groups**

During this group, after discussing relevant issues, it’s possible to allow the teens to begin examining their consciences through using the examination provided in the *Theology of the Body for Teens Student Workbook*, p 207-210. (There is another silent time later in the afternoon, which you can also 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”** (*Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 82L)

**2:20pm – Songs**

**2:30pm – Talk # 3: “Language of the Body + Free, Total, Faithful, Fruitful”**  
(Option: Play Chapters 6 & 7 from the DVD series)

The body speaks a language even without using words. Invite teens in this talk 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? Invite them to consider that 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 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 Materials for This Talk:** Chapter 6 – “Language of the Body” + Chapter 7 – “Free, Total, Faithful, Fruitful.” *To see more specific bullet points within the larger framework of these chapters, see the Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide, p 81L & 95L.*]

**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, pre-marital sex, masturbation, contraception, etc. 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. Often, however, teens 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, it can also be used as some additional down time 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 – IceBreakers/Games/Concert**

Choose one of your favorite icebreakers for teens to insert at this point. 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 & Redemption in Christ: We Can Be Free” (Option: Play Chapter 4 from the DVD 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. Don’t 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 set you free” (Jn 8:32). Jesus told us that He is the Truth (see Jn 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:** Chapter 4 – “Hope and Redemption in Christ” and Chapter 5 – “Truth and Freedom.” For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these chapters, see the *Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 51L and 67L.]

### **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 culminating evening experience of prayer. Creating a warm environment with candles, space rugs, and Christian symbols/art will go a long way in helping them 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, is 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.

#### **Leaders Available**

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 & 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 to 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**

1.) **“All Tied Up”** (*Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 112L)

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

2.) **“Trust Walk”** (*Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 144L)

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 & Religious Life”**

**(Option: Play Chapters 8 & 9 from the DVD series)**

Marriage is the primordial (original) sacrament. It 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 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:** Chapter 8 – “Marriage” and Chapter 9 – “Celibacy and Religious Life” *For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these chapters, see the Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 111L and 127L.]

**9:45am – Small Group Discussion**

**10:15am – Break**

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

**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 the 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:** Chapter 11 – “Dating with Purpose and Purity” and Chapter 10 – “Finding Your Vocation” *For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of these chapters, see the Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide, p 159L and 143L.]*

### 11:30am – THREE OPTIONS

#### 1.) 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.

#### 2.) Discussion & 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.

#### 3.) 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: TWO OPTIONS

1.) “Let the Scales Fall” (*Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 180L)

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.) “Total Lap-Sit” (*Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 96L)

This game takes much less time than the first one, and has a different point. By coming together as a team, teens discover they really need to support each other as they go back out, trying to live a life of love as members of one body in Christ.

### 2:00pm – Songs/Praise

### 2:15pm – Talk # 7: “Living the Good (& Free) Life!”

(Option: Play Chapter 12 from the DVD series)

This is a summary talk and, maybe more importantly, a talk of empowerment. After selecting which parts of the weekend to reemphasize, spend time inspiring the teens with words of life and love. 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 by offering specific ideas for moving forward together, even if their family and friends don’t 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: Chapter 12 – “Living the Good and Free Life!” For additional specific bullet points within the larger framework of this chapter, see the *Theology of the Body for Teens Leader’s Guide*, p 179L.]

### 2:45pm – Final Small Group + 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. Don’t 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**

- 1.) **Q & A Session:** Offer the teens one last opportunity to get closure on any issues that remain unsolved in their minds.
  
- 2.) **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**





# THEOLOGY OF THE BODY FOR TEENS



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