



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS YOUTH MINISTRY CORE TEAM APPLICATION

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY

Full Name _____ Birthday / / Sex _____.

Complete Address _____.

Primary Phone _____ E-mail _____

Sacraments Received (Check): Baptism _____ First Communion _____ Confirmation _____

T-Shirt Size (Adult): S M L XL 2X Other: _____

Work Status: Part-time Full-time Student **Marital Status:** Single Married

AVAILABILITY

Please list any activities or commitments, which might prohibit your availability to help with retreats, including school, work, activities, other volunteer efforts, family commitments, etc. Please note that our Confirmation prep, Middle School, and High School ministries have different time commitments respectively. Refer to the online calendar or speak to the Youth Director for more details.

I am interested in volunteering for the following ministry:

- CONFIRMATION PREP [8th Grade – 12th Grade]**
(Meets on Select Saturdays 3-5pm, not including setup-cleanup time)
- MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY [6th Grade – 8th Grade]**
(Meets on Sunday Afternoons 4-5:30pm, not including setup-cleanup time)
- HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH MINISTRY [9th Grade – 12th Grade]**
(Meets on Sunday Evenings 6-8pm, not including setup-cleanup time)

Here are a few important facts about being a member of the CORE Team:

Team members must continue to possess the mentioned qualities throughout the duration of their commitment. Team members are free at any time to unconditionally terminate their relationship as a Core Team member. At the same time, the ministry of STAY retains the option to ask you to step out of this ministry if it becomes clear to us that the Lord is not calling you to this specific ministry, or if mitigating circumstances make it unwise for you to continue in this ministry.

The information contained in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I, the undersigned, agree to commit my time and talent to serve in the designated Youth Ministry program from now until the end of the academic school year, and understand my role and expectations given by the Parish. I also give my authorization to St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the Diocese of San Jose or its representatives to release any and all records or information relating to working with minors. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and the Diocese of San Jose may contact my references and appropriate government agencies as deemed necessary in order to verify my suitability as a minister/volunteer worker to the youth. I understand that the personal information in this application will be held confidential by the professional parish staff.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you.” John 15:16

Core Team Member Responsibilities

Position Summary: A Core Team Member is simply responding to their baptismal call to serve. The Core Member is an adult (or qualified high schooler), who will be an important role model in the lives of our youth. The approach to ministry should be rooted in service, commitment, and dedication to the Church and the youth we serve. Core Members are one of the most vital parts of the Youth Ministry Programs. First and foremost, Core Members are role models to all our Youth knowing that how you live and act makes a strong impression on youth. Core Members work under the supervision of the Youth Minister for the purpose of assisting in the fulfillment of the Mission of our ministries.

Foundational Core Team Leader Behaviors:

1. Always develop your spiritual relationship with God.
2. Be present to the youth.
3. Be a defender & protector of youth' holiness.

#1 – Core Members CANNOT lead youth to a level of spirituality that they have not yet personally experienced. As a Core Members, your personal spirituality is critical.

#2 – Do not just preach; but rather, listen and guide. You must be present and willing to relate to them, know “where they are at,” in order to build relationships with youth that will lead them closer to **CHRIST**.

#3 – You will learn specific ways to detect whether the relationships you are building are healthy. Our youth ministry programs must be an environment for everyone involved, and it's up to you to protect the holiness of the youth. This responsibility is not trivial, and many people (parents, priests, teens, youth minister) are entrusting you with this duty.

Core Team Leader Qualifications:

What the Youth Director looks for:

- 1) You love Jesus
- 2) You love the Church
- 3) You are willing to be stretched in your talents and knowledge of the Catholic faith.
- 4) You love working with youth.
- 5) You can effectively balance outside priorities with your time commitment to the Core Team.
- 6) You can be trusted in the presence of our young people

Core Team Job Responsibilities

Core Members minister to youth through the following ways:

- **Youth Ministry Gatherings (Sessions)**
- **Special events**
- **Relational outreach ministry**
- **Core Team planning meetings**
- **Retreats**

The Mass:

Each week youth gather for the Eucharist at Mass. Here is a list of things Core Members do before, during, and after the Mass as we minister to the youth of our community:

- Prepare your heart before coming to Mass. Pray for the success of our Ministry Gatherings. Pray before Mass begins. Pray for the youth and the power of the Mass.
- Be inside the Church early with your focus on God and the youth. It is imperative that we continue to reach out to our youth who are not active in our youth ministries.
- Foster hospitality. Make youth feel accepted by helping them find a seat with Core Members if they are not sitting with their families.
- Sit with young people who are alone or “out of place”.
- Participate fully in the Mass by singing, praying, and praising God, especially during the Eucharistic prayer.
- If necessary, **demand respect from the youth in a loving yet firm manner**. If youth are acting inappropriately
 - Support your fellow Core Members in disciplinary actions. If you have a problem with how a Core Member has handled a situation, address it after the kids have departed, and/or have the YM discuss the situation with both Core Members.

Youth Ministry Gatherings (Sessions):

- Be present to all designated Core meetings to discuss the various details of upcoming sessions. These meetings give you an opportunity to interact with other Core Members and spiritually strengthen the bond to the team.
- Be prepared for each session by reading the outlines, summaries, and any other supporting documents including the relevant Catechism and related Scripture references related to the specific topic. This will help you in understanding more of what the topic is for that night.
- Attend and participate in the sessions. If for any reason you can't attend, be sure to notify the Youth Director in advance.
- During the welcoming and gathering times, usher in and welcome each youth to the session. *This transition time may be your only chance to reach certain kids.*
- Mingle with the new youth instead of staying within the comfort zone of established relationships. Introduce and create dialogue between new youth and consistent youth.
- Create that Catholic-Christian environment where openness and depth are embraced. This is done through the attitude you bring to the night, the way you prepare for the night, and the way you interact with people.
- Work as a team to clean up at the end of a session, in an efficient, joyful manner.
- Participate regularly on a session planning team as needed by your fellow Core Members.

Retreats:

Retreats are offered for each of our 3 ministries. Often these weekends lead to powerful moments of conversion and evangelization through talks, small group sharing, and the Sacraments. Core members at this time are not expected to commit to serving on a retreat, but if they choose to, much effort will be demanded. As a Core Member it is often the free time you share, or time in small groups, that help develop your relationship with teens. Teens will likely be spiritually refreshed as they head back to “reality” and the time you had together will not be forgotten. Expectations and behaviors that will make retreats successful and safe:

- Attend all necessary planning meetings for the retreat. Retreat preparation will begin 3-4 months in advance before the retreat. Be open to additional planning meetings besides session planning meetings.
- **Arrive at the retreat prepared for any presentations you might be doing.** If you prepare during the retreat, time spent doing so will take away from any relational ministry.
- Responsibilities for retreats are the same as Youth Ministry Sessions.
- Be aware of youth’ current needs and personal spiritual challenges so the topic of the retreat effectively reaches and relates to them.
- During retreats the kids are more vulnerable. Be aware and avoid any conversation that might take away from the spiritual responsibility you might have. Always when speaking with kids alone, stay in sight of another Core Member or Youth Minister.

Core Interaction:

Being on a Core Team is being part of a small faith community. Your fellow Core Members will pray with you, talk with you, spend a great deal of time with you. They will learn your strengths and weaknesses. Since we are not all perfect, be willing to:

- Praise your fellow Core Members when they work hard and accomplish their goals.
- Give positive feedback to other Core Members.
- Graciously accept compliments from fellow Core Members
- Accept the feedback and suggestions of others and take seriously their concerns about you and your ministry.
- Confront other Core Members when concerned about them and their ministry.

Because we are such a close knit team, friendships will naturally develop. Keep the following expectations in mind:

- Meeting a significant other at Church is great, but not everyone can separate service in a ministry and their personal love life, so there is a standard policy that two core members cannot date and both remain on core team at the same time. One or both must take a leave of absence. Rejoining after a period of time *might be an option* and is at the discretion of the YM.
- Be inclusive of all Core Team Members. There’s no place for cliques in the Youth Ministries and the same goes true for the Core Team.

Outreach Ministry:

The C² model is a simple component of a successful youth ministry program but especially the greater Church. Go in pairs. Jesus sent out His disciples by two and we ask you to do the same. It just makes sense for the sake of safety, hospitality, and relational ministry.

- C² means you and a partner (another Core Member or the YM) plan, schedule, and attend your outreach activities together.
- Outreach is an important opportunity as a Core Member when available. Through effective outreach, youth recognize they are valuable and worthy of God's love and of your own, not only at Church, but also out in the community.
- Make outreach ministry a high priority in your weekly planning.

Time Commitment:

The responsibilities of a Core Team Member are held in high esteem. ***There is no other volunteer position at St. Thomas Aquinas more demanding than Core Team.*** Because of this the labors of the vineyard are heavy, but so are the fruits of the harvest. The hours during each week will vary throughout the year. However, including Events, Youth Ministry Sessions, Core meetings, and C² outreach ministry, this position asks about 5 hours per week, depending on which ministry you are involved in. The joy and gifts given are small in comparison to what is received in return for working in youth ministry.

Core Team Performance Review:

Core Members will have "check-in/Check-up" periods with the Youth Minister. These meetings are designed to assess the Core Member's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. The possibility of "unscheduled check-ups" from the Youth Minister will also occur as needed.

High School-Aged Core Members

For applicants under 18 years old and/or still in High School:

You will need your parent/guardian's signature before you turn in this application. Read and go over this application completely with your parents. Make sure that your parents/guardians fully understand the commitments of being a part of our Core Teams, including the need to be present to meetings/Edge Nights on time. This will require a reliable source of transportation throughout the year (if you don't have your own car/license).

As a high school-aged Core Member, it is necessary to balance your service to the youth with your own spiritual growth in the Catholic Faith and spirituality. You will be asked to maintain involvement with St. Thomas Aquinas Life Teen, the high school ministry program for teens. This includes regular attendance of Life Nights, an effort to attend Life Teen Retreats and events, etc. The high school youth minister will work with you to make sure you are feeding yourself spiritually.

Attached to this application is a recommendation form if you would like to provide additional references (optional). Please note that any reference(s) turned in to me may be contacted for your evaluation.

St. Thomas Aquinas Youth Ministry Reference for High Schoolers

_____ is applying to become a Core Team Member with the Youth Ministry at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and has given your name as a personal reference.

The person in this ministry position will be in close contact with students, and we want to ensure that these relationships will be healthy ones. Please complete the form below and use the enclosed envelope to send us your evaluation of this person's character and integrity. Your response will remain confidential

1. Describe your relationship with this person:

2. How long have you known this person?

Please use the following scale to respond to questions 3 through 8:

1 – low 2 – below average 3 – average 4 – very good 5 – excellent

How would you rate his/her ability in the following:

3. involvement in peer relationships?
4. emotional maturity?
5. resolving conflict?
6. following through with commitments?
7. ability to relate to youth?
8. spiritual maturity?
9. maturity?
10. what are this applicant's greatest strengths?

11. Do you have concerns regarding this person working with students? If so, please explain.

Thank you for taking the time to fill this out. If you have any questions regarding this reference, please contact the Youth Ministry Office.

Your Name

Date

Phone

Email

CORE COVENANT

I, _____, am honored to respond to my baptismal call by serving in St. Thomas Aquinas youth ministry. STAY Ministries are a Eucharist-centered, relational ministry striving to lead youth closer to Christ. We serve youth by building Christian friendships with them and leading them, by example, into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. I understand that much is asked of me, including the following:

COMMITMENT TO MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND THE CHURCH

I will develop my personal relationships with God through prayer and the Sacraments. I understand that the youth ministry programs can be very challenging and I will succeed only by the grace of God through prayer.

I will abide by the teachings of the Catholic Church. Because I am a representative of the Church and co-responsible for leading the members of Christ's Church, I will actively study to understand the teachings of the Church, especially if I have an issue with a certain Catholic teaching. I will pray for wisdom and obedience in seeking the truth. If a youth shares a Catholic teaching concern with me, I will invite them to explore the true Catholic teaching with me.

I will actively seek opportunities to pray with friends, youth, and other Core Members.

If I am a teenager in high school, I will commit to spiritual growth through regular involvement of the St. Thomas Aquinas Life Teen Ministry, including Life Nights, Retreats, etc.

As a Core Member, I understand that I am called to live a Christ-like life above and beyond my peer group. There are sacrifices that we make because of our love for God and our desire to serve youth: I will not use drugs. I will not drink irresponsibly. I will not smoke at any youth ministry function and will never smoke with or around middle school or a high school youth.

In light of my position as a role model for youth and a person who is seeking the fullness of God's love, I will be careful of the influences I put into my mind and body including the movies and TV that I watch, the music that I listen to, the language that I use and the way that I talk to and about others (gossip, sarcasm, etc).

COMMITMENT TO AUTHENTICITY/ONLINE LIFESTYLE

I will live out my lifestyle in such a way that is consistently and authentically Christian — with the mindset that the way people see me on Sundays is the same on all days of the week. I understand that youth are sensitive to authenticity, and that they are carefully observing our lifestyles at all times.

I will pay close attention to what I share, say, and do publicly online through *e-mail, and all other social networking tools*. I will always consider that a teen may be the unintended recipient of what I share or post. I will be extremely careful of the language I use, opinions, statements, pictures, and comments I publish, knowing that I may cause irreversible damage to my relationship/trust with youth. I understand that accepting a "friend" or "follower" request from a youth is an invitation into my personal life, which includes the people who are a part of my life and other outside influences.

I will abide by the diocesan internet policies regarding social network outreach with youth. Under no circumstance will I place a youth in danger by misusing the tool of social networking, nor cause scandal toward a young person.

COMMITMENT TO CORE

I will develop Christian relationships with all the members of our Core Team, knowing that the youth will model the relationships that they see and experience with the Core. I am committed to living relationships characterized by compassion, patience, forgiveness, reconciliation, service and charity.

I will seek opportunities to do relational ministry with other Core members – especially Core that I do not know well. I will be inclusive of all Core members and be careful to avoid establishing cliques.

I will abide by the policy that two core members cannot date and both remain on core team at the same time.

I understand the importance of our Core Team functioning as a unified team, a model family of God. If I have a conflict with another Core Member, either personally or in ministry, I will lovingly confront that Core Member individually. If I cannot resolve the conflict one-on-one, then I will bring my concern to the Youth Director.

If I am unable to attend a meeting or I am going to be late, I will call/notify the Youth Director as early as possible.

I will make every effort to attend spiritual and social gatherings for the Core Team including Core Trainings and Retreats.

COMMITMENT TO YOUTH

I will develop Christian relationships with youth. All my relationships with youth will be Christ-centered and above reproach. I will follow all Diocesan policies regarding youth ministry.

I will make outreach to new kids a priority in my ministry. At all times I will be developing new relationships with kids and fostering old ones.

In the area of crisis intervention, if a youth shares something with me where that youth or someone else may be in danger of being hurt, then I will let that youth know of my obligation to tell the Youth Director. If I am not sure, then I will tell the Youth Director.

COMMITMENT TO SUNDAY MASS

I will regularly attend Sunday Mass. I will make an effort to reach out to youth and their families to help them feel included and welcomed. I will fully participate in the Mass and invite youth to do the same.

COMMITMENT TO SESSIONS (CONFIRMATION, EDGE, OR LIFE TEEN)

On Session Nights, my focus will be to lead youth closer to Christ. I will make every effort to grow in relationship with youth during this time. I understand that this is not the time to catch up with old friends, past youth or even other Core.

The function of Sessions are to provide a safe environment for youth to explore their faith, grow in community, and fall more deeply in love with Christ. It is vital that we as Core give these nights the time and energy that the youth deserve. As a part of my commitment to the teens, I will attend the sessions of ministry and plan the nights assigned to me. I will do my best to be a team player. I will focus on the youth in the planning process from the first meeting through the cleanup of the session.

I will help youth understand that they are expected to come on time and stay through the closing prayer of the session. After the session, I will mingle with youth and introduce myself to those I don't know. I will seek out the youth who look disconnected or alone. I will help clean up after each session.

DURING THE WEEK

During the week, when I have time, I will make an effort to minister to youth beyond sessions. I will abide by Safe Environment policies set in place for such opportunities. I understand that my primary function is to reach out to youth and let them know that they are loved. The youth who are not at church need just as much as the kids who are at church with other Core. *The power of invitation is important*; if I am planning to go to a youth's event, I will notify and invite fellow Core members to join me.

DISCIPLINING YOUTH

Disciplining youth is one of the most difficult things that we do because we do not want to be parental or authoritarian. The best scenario in disciplining a youth is to have a good relationship with them and to address the issue with the youth individually. If these conditions cannot be met, I will do my best as a representative of the Church to lovingly redirect the energies of the kid(s). I will stand behind my fellow Core members when discipline becomes necessary.

RETREATS/OTHER EVENTS

I will make an effort to participate in retreats, which may involve taking a day off of work and attending all retreat planning meetings. I will also try to attend other retreats and overnight events as my schedule allows.

COMMITMENT TO THE COVENANT

In response to my baptismal call, I commit to serving the youth of St. Thomas Aquinas as a Core Member for the coming academic year. I understand that this position comes with high expectations and is a great privilege. If my commitment changes before the end of the year, I will meet with the Youth Minister to discuss my position.

I understand that the failure and/or inability to keep the above commitments warrant re-evaluation of my call to continue to serve within the ministry. I further understand that a serious violation of the Core Covenant and Safe Environment policies is grounds for immediate dismissal from the CORE Team, and that such decisions are to be made by the Youth Director to safeguard the holiness and wellbeing of the youth and fellow CORE Members.

Signature

Date