

Show-Me Lutheran

**TEENS
ENCOUNTER
CHRIST**

A retreat for youth

Since 1980

Show Me Lutheran TEC INFORMATIONAL PACKET

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I Introduction

This Pastors Information Packet on Show Me Lutheran Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) is designed to allow professional church workers and other lay leaders within the congregation to take a critical look at what the TEC retreat program is all about. The information provided is intended to answer questions and instill confidence that the program is rooted in Holy Scripture and the content of the retreat is Christ centered and cross focused.

While a great deal of information is found on the pages of this packet, the best way to evaluate the TEC retreat program is to participate in a weekend yourself (first hand). However, if you have further questions you need answered prior to considering to attend a TEC retreat, please do not hesitate to write or contact us in one of the following ways.

Show Me Lutheran TEC
c/o Concordia Lutheran Church
505 S. Kirkwood Road
Kirkwood, Missouri 63122-5925
www.showmetec.org

J. Scott Yaeger
President of Show Me Lutheran TEC
10533 Anton Place
St. Louis, MO 63128
314-849-6705 (H)
314-707-7858 (M)
ms_yaeger@hotmail.com

Jim & Marcy Scholl
1326 Stone Run
Baldwin, MO 63021
636-391-0859 (H)
314-941-1676 (M)

II The Essentials of the Teens Encounter Christ Retreat Program

A. The Basics and Purpose of TEC

Show Me Lutheran TEC is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization or community that hosts three day retreats for young people. Show Me Lutheran TEC operates under a complete constitution and set of by-laws. The organization is led by an elected Board of Directors consisting of LCMS adults, clergy and youth along with an appointed set of Advisors and Loving Task individuals. All positions, elected or appointed, are volunteer. The organization is self supported by retreat fees and charitable donations. Show Me Lutheran TEC also has a copyrighted manual that is used to facilitate each retreat and ensure consistency.

The retreats themselves are led by LCMS clergy and LCMS lay adults and are held three or four times per year at local LCMS congregations in the metropolitan St. Louis area. The target participants are Lutheran youth between the ages of 16 and 20 although Christians of all ages are welcome to attend.

The purpose of a TEC weekend is to enable older youth, at a time when they are making life decisions, to encounter the presence of Christ in their lives and to commit themselves to a life under Him.

A TEC retreat is intended to strengthen the faith of those who attend and to encourage them to exercise Christian leadership in their daily living.

The TEC weekend leads participants from where they are when they arrive to a personal encounter with Jesus and the implications of that encounter for daily living.

B. The Themes of Each Day

Saturday – DIE DAY

THEME: Lent – As Christ died, so we die to self

Scripture References

- A grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies (John 12:24)
- By our baptism, then, we were buried with him and shared his death (Romans 6:4)

On DIE DAY we build a community of faith with everything leading to the personal encounter with Christ in confession and absolution.

Sunday - RISE DAY

THEME: Easter – As Christ rose, so we rise to new life

Scripture References

- If a grain of wheat does die, then it produces many grains (John 12:24)
- Just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life (Romans 6:4)

On RISE DAY we build a community of love and worship with everything leading to the personal encounter with Christ in Holy Communion.

Monday - GO DAY

THEME: Pentecost – As Christ sent disciples, so he sends us

Scripture References

- As the Father sent me, so I send you (John 20:21)
- You will be witnesses for me ... to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)

On GO DAY we build a missionary community to go forth to spread Jesus' Gospel in today's world. We stress the necessity of prayer which overflows into action.

C. The Schedules of Each Day – DIE DAY

MORNING: Opening mixers, introductions, interviews and table assignments, Orientation talk, basic rules, etc.

AFTERNOON: IDEALS talk: a personal look at one's own ideals for life. We ask the TECites to clarify their own goals. Religion is not mentioned in this first talk. Entrance of the Word and SACRED SCRIPTURE talk: The importance of Scripture is brought into the weekend. Personal ideals are evaluated in the light of Scripture and The Ideal: Jesus Christ. UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT DIES talk is the keynote talk for the day. The speaker emphasizes that we must die to ourselves (be buried with him and share his death—confession and the death of pride) before our new life in baptism can grow in love toward God and one another.

EVENING: METANOIA/CHANGE OF HEART talk focuses on the importance of confession in dying to self. In confession, forgiveness (absolution) is experienced. Confession and absolution are at the heart of our daily use of baptism. Service of Confession and Absolution, containing the LOST SON talk, includes much time for personal prayer. The EASTER VIGIL talk and service: This brief talk introduces the background and symbolism of the service, especially light and water as they point us to our baptism.

SATURDAY SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------|--|
| 7:30 am | Morning Devotions |
| 8:00 am | BREAKFAST |
| 9:30 am | TECites begin arriving |
| | Music Director: Opening mixer games and songs in the gym |
| 9:45 am | Lay and Spiritual Directors: Interviews |
| 11:00 am | Spiritual Director (Call to Order, Lead to the conference room, Welcome) Lay Director (Orientation; rules; etc, Introduction of Resources, Table assignments, Introduction of TECites and Team, Naming of tables) |
| 11:55 am | Break |
| 12:00 pm | LUNCH |
| 12:45 pm | Group picture |
| 1:00 pm | IDEALS talk; Question/Discussion/Poster Presentation |
| 2:25 pm | Break |
| 2:30 pm | ENTRANCE OF THE WORD ceremony |
| 2:35 pm | SACRED SCRIPTURE talk; Distribution of Bibles; Question/ Discussion/Poster optional |
| 3:20 pm | Lighting the CHRIST CANDLE |
| 3:30 pm | Recreation |
| 4:30 pm | UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT DIES talk; Question/Discussion only; Wheat Letters |
| 5:30 pm | Writing WAY OF THE CROSS meditations at tables; Wheat Letters |
| 6:00 pm | DINNER; Wheat Letters |
| 7:00 pm | METANOIA/CHANGE OF HEART; WAY OF THE CROSS |
| 8:00 pm | PRODIGAL SON talk; SERVICE OF CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION with ashes |
| 8:30 pm | Private Confession and Absolution |
| 10:45 pm | WAY OF THE CROSS Meditation #11 |
| 11:00 pm | Break |
| 11:15 pm | EASTER VIGIL talk and service |
| 12:00 pm | Resource and Team meetings |
| 12:30 pm | Lights out |

C. The Schedules of Each Day – RISE DAY

MORNING: Morning devotion with GOD IS HERE talk focuses on the presence of the resurrected Jesus. GOD IS LOVE talk focuses on God as our loving God as revealed in Jesus. His love is in Jesus, his Son. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE talk clarifies that the Christian life is living our life in the resurrected Jesus. Baptism is our resurrection to new life in Christ. (Romans 6:4) An introduction to open prayer.

AFTERNOON: CHURCH: THE PEOPLE OF GOD talk discusses the Christian's life as part of the community of Christian believers. In the SIGNS talk, we review the ways God communicates with his believers individually and in community: through signs and through the Word and Sacraments as means of grace. This talk prepares the TECites for Holy Communion. Service of Holy Communion.

EVENING: Fellowship, Group prayer flowing out of our encounter with Jesus. A VOCATIONS PANEL during which TECites interview selected team members about their Christian life in whatever vocation. The panel serves as a bridge from Rise Day to Go Day. Evening devotions with the THREE GLANCES OF CHRIST talk focusing on Christ's forgiveness as it touches our lives.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------|--|
| 7:00 am | Rising. Wake up by the Lay Director. |
| 7:30 am | Morning Prayer; HE IS HERE talk |
| 8:00 am | BREAKFAST |
| 8:30 am | Music Director: Learn ARISE SONG; Wheat Letters |
| 8:45 am | GOD IS LOVE talk; Question/Discussion/Poster Presentation |
| 10:15 am | THE CHRISTIAN LIFE talk ending with chapel visit; Question; Discussion and Poster; Presentation of posters |
| 12:00 pm | LUNCH |
| 12:45 pm | Recreation |
| 1:30 pm | Showers and dress-up |
| 2:15 pm | Wheat Letters |
| 2:30 pm | CHURCH, THE PEOPLE OF GOD talk; Question/Discussion/Summary |
| 3:10 pm | Wheat Letters |
| 3:30 pm | SIGNS talk; introduction of WHEAT TEAM; Question/Discussion only |
| 4:20 pm | Music Director: Rehearse music for the Eucharist Service |
| 4:30 pm | Eucharist Service |
| 6:00 pm | AGAPE MEAL |
| 7:00 pm | Hoot/Reunion |
| 8:00 pm | Candlelight Prayer Service |
| 9:00 pm | Vocations Panel |
| 9:45 pm | Snack Break |
| 10:15 pm | Skit preparation |
| 10:45 pm | Presentation of Skits; Wheat Letters |
| 11:30 pm | THREE GLANCES OF CHRIST devotion; Spiritual Director: Concluding prayer Lay Director: Announcements |
| 11:45 pm | Meeting with Resources and Team |
| 12:30 pm | Lights out |

C. The Schedules of Each Day – GO DAY

MORNING: Opening devotion with the talk I HAVE CHOSEN YOU which serves to introduce the theme of the day. The UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS challenges TECites to see their overriding vocation as a life of holiness giving of self, dying to self, sharing love with others. Group prayer

AFTERNOON: The CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD talk explains the Christian life as one that involves going forward in Christian leadership and maturity whatever the TECites' vocation may be. The speaker personifies, "It can be done and I'm trying to do it." A Confirmation Renewal Service calls forth intentions to hold fast to the faith and to serve the Lord. Packing and clean up. The BEYOND TEC talk helps the transition of leaving the weekend and plugging in back home and in the TECites' congregation. A final Holy Communion Service. Goodbyes.

MONDAY SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------|--|
| 7:00 am | Rising. Wake up by the Wheat Team. |
| 7:30 am | Morning devotion and talk: I HAVE CHOSEN YOU |
| 8:00 am | BREAKFAST |
| 8:45 am | UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS talk; Question/Discussion |
| 9:30 am | Making banners |
| 9:45 am | Chapel visits by tables |
| 11:30 am | LUNCH |
| 12:15 pm | CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD talk; Question only |
| 12:40 pm | Confirmation Renewal Service |
| 1:20 pm | Packing and clean up |
| 2:05 pm | BEYOND TEC talk/Question |
| 2:30 pm | Explanation of banners |
| 4:15 pm | Eucharist |
| 5:30 pm | Closing the Bible, destroying posters, etc. |
| 5:40 pm | Bestowal of TEC crosses, etc. |
| 6:00 pm | Return to parents |

D. The Talks & Meditations of the TEC Weekend

DIE DAY Meditations:

Meditation #1: IDEALS

Speaker: Resource

Time: Saturday 1:00 p.m.

Length: 15–20 minutes

Purpose: To encourage the TECites to think about where they are “coming from” and where they are going in life (not their future vocations but their personal characteristics and qualities.) Although we use words, new TECites will not trust what is said at this time; therefore, the words must be genuine and true for you, personal experiences you want to share—in order to allow the new TECites to relate to your words. This talk will allow new TECites to use words to look at themselves and to think about their own ideals (personal characteristics and qualities) in life. God and religion are not mentioned in this first talk; we simply ask the TECites to clarify their own ideals (and goals) in life.

1. What do you think about most of time? What occupies your thoughts?
2. What do you do in most of your free time?
3. On what do you spend most of your spare money?
4. What gives you the biggest satisfaction in life?

Question: Am I moving toward the ideal that I really want to reach? Why or why not?

Meditation #2: SACRED SCRIPTURE

Speaker: Church worker

Time: Saturday 2:35 p.m.

Length: 20 minutes maximum

Purpose: To introduce the spiritual dimension of the TEC weekend. The previous talk asked the TECites to begin identifying their own ideals. The Sacred Scripture talk introduces the Scriptures as the guide for Christians in discovering our ideals. Our ideal is life under God, lived by the power of the Spirit, in Jesus Christ. We see the ultimate expression of that ideal in the person and work of Jesus, whom we see and experience in the Word, the Scripture.

Scripture: I John 2:6, Genesis 12:1–3, Exodus 20:1–3, Isaiah 43:1–2, Psalm 66:16–19, Galatians 4:4–7, Romans 10:14–17, Ephesians 2:17–22, Revelation 21:1–7, Romans 10:14–17, John 6:68.

Conclusion: God has given these words to us, and so we give to each of you, your personal copy of God's Word (*each participant receives their own Bible during or following this talk.*)

Question: How important is the Word of God? How does it make me feel?

Meditation #3: UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT DIES

Speaker: Assistant Spiritual Director

Time: Saturday 4:30 p.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose: This talk introduces the theme for the TEC weekend: "By our Baptism, then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from death by the glorious power of the Father, so also we might live a new life." (Romans 6:4). Christians are saints and sinners at the same time. That causes us to experience tension between the life of the "old sinful nature" and the "new creature in Christ." That tension is resolved only in Christ. "Our old being has been put to death with Christ on the cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin. . . If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him." (Romans 6:6, 8) That old sinful nature must daily die in order that the new creation in Christ can arise to grow in our understanding of who God is and who we are—God's workmanship. Wheat Letters (letters from former TEC participants to this weekend) are introduced and explained as evidence of the care, concern and sacrifice of other Christians for the benefit of TECites and Adult Observers. They are examples of Christians who are dying to self in order to share the love of Christ.

Scripture: John 12: 23–26, Galatians 2:20, Romans 6:4–8

Question: How do I feel about dying to myself today?

Meditation #4: METANOIA/CHANGE OF HEART

Speaker: Spiritual Director

Time: Saturday 7:00 p.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose: This talk flows from the previous one, "Unless a Grain of Wheat Dies." Since by Baptism we are plunged—buried with Christ into His death—we also must "die" in order to rise. In this talk we prepare for the death, which is our confession of sin, and for absolution, which is our reconciliation with God.

Scripture: Luke 22:55–62, Matthew 10:39, Matthew 22:37–39, I Corinthians 12:26

Question: No discussion question follows this talk.

Meditation #5: THE LOST SON

Speaker: Resource

Time: Saturday evening, approximately 7:45 p.m.

Length: 20 minutes maximum

Purpose: 1. To focus on the change of heart in confession-repentance, and on its joy. 2. To touch on the "over-generosity" of the father who gives and waits, the younger son who squanders and needs to receive again forgiveness, and the older son who doesn't understand repentance or love. 3. To overcome our reluctance to repent by highlighting the expected love and forgiveness of the Father.

Scripture: Luke 15:11–32

Question: No discussion question follows this talk.

Meditation #6: THE VIGIL OF EASTER

Speaker: Spiritual Director

Time: Saturday 11:15 p.m.

Length: 5 minutes maximum

Purpose: To prepare TECites for the symbolism in the Vigil of Easter service. Lead straight from this 5-minute talk into the service.

Conclusion: Tonight we reaffirm our Baptism and our commitment to live in the Spirit—to strive to live the ideal of Christ by the power of God.

Question: No discussion question follows this talk.

RISE DAY Meditations:

Meditation #7: HE IS HERE

Speaker: Resource

Time: Sunday Morning Devotion, approximately 7:30 a.m.

Length: 10 minutes

Purpose: To set the theme for Sunday, RISE DAY—EASTER CELEBRATION! To focus on the risen Christ. He is among us also, here in His worshiping community of believers, to give us joy, peace, and love through His Word, Sacrament, and through each other.

Scripture: Romans 6: 4, John 20:11–17, Luke 24:13–30, Luke 24:36–48, John 20:24–27, John 21:1–7, John 20:18, Luke 24:32–34, Luke 24:52–53, John 20:28, John 21:7b and 15–17, Matthew 18:20

Question: No discussion question follows this talk.

Meditation #8: GOD IS LOVE

Speaker: Adult Team Member

Time: Sunday 8:45 a.m.

Length: 20–30 minutes maximum

Purpose: Since TECites have come to encounter Christ, we introduce them to Jesus, the Son of God, who is love. To encounter the resurrected God is to encounter the essence of God (which is love). If we are to live God's love, we must experience that love in Jesus.

Scripture: 1 John 4: 7–11, 1 Corinthians 13:11, *Acts 17:22, Psalm 139, I Corinthians 12:25–27, John 8:3–11, Ephesians 4, I John 4:16, Genesis 1:31, Romans 5:8, Romans 1:2–4, John 14:6–11, Hebrews 1:1–6, Matthew 9:1–26, Luke 10:30–37, Mark 8:1–9, 1 John 3:23–24, I Corinthians 12: 23, Matthew 7:7–11, I John 3:11, 16, Matthew 22:34–40*

Question: How do I know God loves me? OR How do I feel about accepting God's love?

Meditation #9: THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Speaker: Lay Director

Time: Sunday 10:15 a.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose: This talk should help clear the mind of the participants of any false images they may have of the Christian life. These false images must give way to the concept that the ideal Christian life is Christ living in us (Galatians 2:20). This talk should be deeply personal and should involve an examination of the speaker's own living of the Christian life, as well as, the fact that no one is perfect.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1–13, Galatians 2:19–20, Philippians 3:8–9, John 21:2–23, Colossians 3:12–17

Question: What does it mean to be a Christian?

Meditation #10: CHURCH, THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Speaker: Assistant Lay Director

Time: Sunday 2:30 p.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose: The Christian life is not lived in isolation, but among people. God called us to live in community, among His people, the church. Although the true church is the invisible Body of Christ (the whole number of believers in Christ), each congregation (with the Word and Sacraments) is a human expression of that invisible body.

Scripture: Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 10:17, 1 Peter 2:9-10, I Corinthians 12:26, Ephesians 4:2–6, 16, Exodus 19:6, 1 Corinthians 12: 4–6, 11–31, 1 Peter 2: 9b, Galatians 6: 2, Ephesians 2: 8-10

Question: What is my unique role in the Body of Christ? OR If arrested for being an active member of Christ's body, what evidence could be brought against me?

Meditation #11: SIGNS

Speaker: Church worker or Wheat Team Director

Time: Sunday 3:30 p.m.

Length: 30 minutes maximum

Purpose: As a community of believers, the body of Christ, we communicate God's love with each other, sharing the love of God we have in Word and sacrament, and sharing our love with each other.

This talk also serves as the introduction to the celebration of Holy Communion and introduces the Wheat Team. The introduction of the Wheat Team does not come at the end of the talk, for then the fun of the introduction would hinder the TECites' preparation for Holy Communion. Rather, after the Wheat Team introduction, continue with other signs in the community of God's people, leading up to God's signs in the Sacrament: the Word, bread and wine. Note that God's signs not only point to what they mean but also contain the meaning itself. For example, the Sacrament not only points to forgiveness but contains forgiveness. God's Word not only points to His love but contains it.

Scripture: Genesis 9:12–17, Colossians 3:12–17)

Conclusion: We too are signs to others as we return to our homes, schools, and our congregations. What communication will we give through our words, songs, body language, things, and actions?

Question: What sign has God given to me that he loves me? OR What sign can I show to others that God loves them?

Meditation #12: THREE GLANCES OF CHRIST

Speaker: Resource

Time: Sunday Evening Devotions, approximately 11:30 p.m.

Length: 15 minutes

Purpose: To focus on Peter's joy, overflowing into love and service. To see the resurrected Christ as our reason for living. To provide an initial transition from RISE DAY to GO DAY.

Scripture: John 20:19–21, John 21:2-7, John 21:15-19

Question: No discussion question follows this talk.

GO DAY Meditations:

Meditation #13: I HAVE CHOSEN YOU

Speaker: Resource
Time: Monday Morning, approximately 7:30 a.m.
Length: 15 minutes maximum
Purpose: To focus on a Pentecost theme: confidence in the resurrected Christ, confidence that comes from God's Holy Spirit. To see the resurrection community built yesterday as a missionary community with Christ as the head, strengthened through prayer. To be challenged to go to the world to share God's love in Christ.
Scripture: John 20:21, Acts 1:8, Mark 4:3–9, Mark 4:31–32, John 14:26, John 14–17,
Question: No discussion question follows this talk.

Meditation #14: UNIVERSAL CALL TO HOLINESS

Speaker: Adult Team Member
Time: Monday 8:45 a.m.
Length: 30 minutes maximum
Purpose: Monday TEC theme is to GO: 1. Go back into everyday life as one in whom Christ is living; and 2. GO forward in faith, in growth in Christ; 3. GO to follow Jesus in the sanctified life, in holiness, to which every Christian is called.
Scripture: Ephesians 4:1, 22–24, Matthew 4:18–22, Ephesians 4:24, Ephesians 4:22–24; 5:1–2, Matthew 19:3–6, Matthew 19:12, Ephesians 4:11–12, Ephesians 4:16, Philippians 3:12–15a, Philippians 4:6–7; Galatians 2:19–20, James 5:13–18, Ephesians 5:1–2, Philippians 4 :4, Ephesians 4:1, 22–24; Colossians 3:12–17
Question: What does it mean to me to be holy, to put on my new self?

Meditation #15: CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD

Speaker: Adult Team Member
Time: Monday 12:15 p.m.
Length: 20 minutes maximum
Purpose: Most TECites are anxious to be active Christians, but they have some hesitation because of the obstacles they fear they will face. This talk should tell them in a practical way, "It can be done, and I'm trying to do it." Don't down-grade life "out there." Rather, explain in a modest and truthful way how you are trying in daily life to exercise Christian leadership.
Scripture: Galatians 6:9–10, Romans 6:4, Romans 6:8–11, Matthew 28:19–20, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, Matthew 25:30; Galatians 6:9–10, Matthew 25:40, Galatians 6:9
Question: How can I be a Christian in this world?

Meditation #16: BEYOND TEC

Speaker: Resource
Time: Monday, approximately 2:05 p.m.
Length: 15 minutes maximum
Purpose: To introduce the "Fourth Day" of TEC. Do not be tempted to "put down" life "out there" as compared to a TEC weekend. The purpose of TEC is to help people more fully express their life in Jesus at home, school and in their congregation. Since many of the main ideas are printed in the Arise Book participants won't need to take notes—but should follow along in the book.
Scripture: Matthew 5:14–16,
Question: What did I get out of TEC?

E. The Interconnection of the Weekend

The TEC weekend is not a collection of unrelated events but rather a flowing and united whole. As the weekend progresses, talks and activities all build on each other. In effect each talk is “interconnected” to the talks that preceded and the talks that remain. Much like a puzzle, the talks and activities fit together to provide a clear picture once all of the pieces are in place. In whole, the talks and activities of each day point to and effectively communicate the themes of the weekend.

As a unified experience, the weekend leads participants from where they are when they arrive to a personal encounter with Jesus and the implications of that encounter for daily living.

For this reason, prospective participants are strongly encouraged to select a TEC weekend when they can fully commit to all three days and experience the retreat in its entirety.

F. How TEC fits into youth ministry of your Church

TEC is not a substitute for a parish's youth program or ministry but is a one time retreat. TEC is not meant to compete with a parish youth ministry program but rather to supplement or complement what is already taking place. We want TEC to be a tool that is utilized by pastors, DCEs and youth directors to strengthen the faith of young people and to foster spiritual growth within youth groups of local congregations.

TEC is no substitute for parents, youth directors, DCEs and pastors who look out for the spiritual well being of their youth on a continual basis. When youth return following a TEC, it's best if teens have a strong church to return to for several reasons. First, TEC points youth back to the church to continue to be fed through Word & sacrament ministry of their local church. Secondly, youth often seek additional ways to grow spiritually and many seek a greater role of service in church or youth group. And finally, DCEs, pastors and lay leaders can help youth continue to process what they have learned and experienced on TEC.

III The History & Background of TEC

Where did the TEC Retreat Program come from?

The TEC retreat was developed by a group of Roman Catholic educators in Battle Creek, Michigan. In the fall of 1964 their diocese asked this group to develop a retreat for high school seniors. During that year, the weekend gradually developed into its present day form of TEC.

The thanks for the effort of that first year and the final program go to Sister Concetta RSM, to Father Matthew Fedewa and to more than 1,000 youth who attended and shared of themselves.

The enthusiasm of the youth and adults that have attended TEC spread the program across the United States. Over 49 Catholic Dioceses now sponsor 58 Catholic TEC Centers throughout the US. In addition, there are two TEC centers in Canada and six international TEC centers. TEC arrived in St. Louis in 1973, as the Gateway TEC Center started hosting TEC retreats. Over the years, thousands of youth and adults have participated in TEC retreats conducted by the Gateway TEC Center.

How did TEC start in the Lutheran Church?

Show Me Lutheran TEC saw its earliest beginnings in 1979, as a group of Lutherans, who had attended a retreat hosted by Gateway (Catholic) TEC in St. Louis, began meeting monthly as a home Bible study group. These individuals were excited about the TEC retreat's focus on Christ, its emphasis on God's Word and its effectiveness in touching the lives of young people.

In hopes of possibly starting a Lutheran TEC program, they began to recruit potential leaders to attend subsequent Gateway TEC retreats. This core group laid the foundations for the new Lutheran TEC center. The families involved in preplanning for the first Lutheran TEC program included; the Scholl's, Lanius', Broleman's, Marquardt's, Oehlert's and Roma's among others. This group of Lutheran clergy and lay leaders adapted the weekend to a Lutheran setting and into Lutheran theology, while retaining the essence of the TEC program.

On June 21, 1980, the first Show Me Lutheran TEC retreat was held at Salem Lutheran Church in Affton, Missouri. The Show Me Lutheran TEC Center has assisted several other Lutheran TEC Centers start up throughout the United States. At one point in time, the number of Lutheran TEC centers numbered around 13. Thousands of young people in this country and abroad have benefited from TEC weekends.

IV Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

What is a TEC weekend?

A TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) weekend is a three day retreat program for young adults between 16 and 21 years of age. Within those three days a schedule of activities are carried out to help the participants strengthen their relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Adults are also welcomed as observers.

What is the purpose of a TEC weekend?

The purpose of the TEC weekend is to enable older youth, at a time when they are making life decisions, to encounter the presence of Christ in their lives and to commit themselves to a life under Him. Use of Word and Sacrament under the power of the Holy Spirit is the primary means by which the purpose of TEC is fulfilled.

What to expect if one of your youth or adult members attend?

Each individual responds to a TEC retreat differently. Because the retreat is infused with Holy Scripture throughout the weekend in its talks and activities, most attendees leave having experienced a spiritual growth spurt. Jesus makes the most of these three days set aside by participants.

Following a TEC weekend, it is not uncommon for youth to return to their churches and youth groups seeking opportunities to get involved in study and service. Youth often have a greater appreciation for the Word and how it speaks to their life. TEC can be a “mountain top” experience for some youth and they may exit the weekend very excited about their faith and relationship with Christ.

Adults who attend a TEC retreat often are capable of absorbing more and taking even more away from a TEC retreat because of their maturity level. Adults also come away with a positive experience with the youth and often express encouraging remarks regarding the future of the church. Many adults continue participate in the TEC program through service and leadership. Their volunteer effort is essential to the program’s continuance.

How will you know if one of your members attends a TEC weekend?

Participants must apply to attend a TEC retreat. Part of the TEC application includes acknowledgement of where the participant attends church and who their pastor is. The application also calls for the pastor’s signature.

If a person discloses where they attend church and their pastor’s name, Show Me Lutheran TEC registration process includes a letter sent to the pastor to notify them that one of their members will be participating on a TEC weekend.

Youth are also encouraged to talk about their experience on a TEC weekend with clergy or DCE from their church (in addition to their parents) upon completion of a weekend.

Show Me TEC takes this matter very seriously and considers it a privilege to have one of your sheep attend a TEC retreat. We treat the matter with the utmost care and strive to provide notice to pastors but admit that we are not perfect in this regard.

We are always delighted when it is at the suggestion of the Pastor or DCE that a youth comes to TEC. We desire to provide you with any additional information or references that can build your understanding and confidence of the TEC program.

What is the theology of TEC?

The theology of TEC can best be described by looking at the spiritual themes of the three days of TEC. The first day of the weekend, Saturday, is called [Die Day](#) and focuses on Lent. The second day is called [Rise Day](#) and focuses on Easter. The third and final day is called [Go Day](#) and its focus is on Pentecost.

How do participants “encounter” Christ on a TEC weekend?

It is altogether appropriate to explain what is meant by “encounter” on a TEC weekend. Merriam /Webster has three definitions for “encounter” and something can be lifted something from each of these as to how encounter is exemplified in TEC.

- 1 a : to meet as an adversary or enemy b : to engage in conflict with
 - 2 : to come upon face-to-face
 - 3 : to come upon especially unexpectedly
- intransitive senses : to meet especially by chance

The first definition, to engage in conflict, does not apply directly to TEC, although this kind of encounter does take place. On Die Day, participants are encouraged to see their sin as their enemy. Christ is not certainly presented as an adversary or enemy, but as their Savior from sin. But the sense of conflict does exist as participants are asked to die to self. This is often a struggle as well as a highlight for many on the weekend. The opportunity for private confession and absolution is given on Saturday evening.

The second definition, “to come upon face to face”, perhaps most captures the essence of encounter on the TEC weekend. The pinnacle event in the TEC schedule is the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion on Sunday, Rise Day afternoon. This “encounter” with the real presence in the body and blood of our Lord is the epitome of encountering Christ. Alongside Holy Communion, the other primal way of encountering Christ on the weekend is through the Word of God. Each participant is given a copy of Holy Scripture on the first day of the weekend. Holy Scripture is treated with utmost respect on the weekend. To highlight this, there is an Entrance of the Word ceremony when the Word of God is first introduced on the weekend. In these encounters we are particularly reminded that our relationship with Christ are always at his behest and doing, we are but grateful recipients. Secondary to Word and Sacrament, other aspects of encountering Christ include opportunities for absolution, worship, prayer, and observing Christ’s love through the service and sharing of other Christians.

The final definition, “to come upon especially unexpectedly”, is one of the best surprises of the TEC weekend. Participants make a major commitment from their busy lives to set aside three days for a retreat with Jesus and find themselves being pleasantly surprised by how they are blessed through the weekend. It starts by focusing on Lent, with a day called Die Day. But then as the TEC weekend unfolds, the great joy in our Risen Lord and His call to us on our life gives a fresh of sense of excitement to our faith that is unanticipated.

Is Holy Communion celebrated on a TEC weekend?

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is an integral part of every TEC weekend. Holy Communion is celebrated on the second day of the retreat and on the last day. Both Services use an Order of Liturgy titled: “The Chicago Folk Service”. The Chicago Folk liturgy makes use of several musical instruments including guitars and piano among others. Much of the service is chanted by the clergy Officiant and the participants use a printed book and song book in the worship. This wonderful event is regarded as the pinnacle of the weekend. The worship is considered a most significant activity on the weekend. Celebrating clergy are vested and care is taken to provide an appropriate atmosphere for worship within the context of the facilities at hand. A designated Sacristan helps make preparations for the worship services. All participants on the Show Me Lutheran retreats secure the signature of their individual parish pastor prior to attending the weekend, making them aware of the celebration of Holy Communion. There is proper and formal preparation and information given about the sacrament on the weekend retreat.

Show Me TEC weekends are held at various St. Louis LCMS congregations and honor is given to the practices of the hosting congregation. Responsibility lies with the weekend Spiritual Director, an LCMS clergy, to see that this practice is faithfully followed. Before the weekend is held, the host congregation pastor normally speaks with the TEC Spiritual Director reviewing policies and practices for the weekend.

On the retreat weekend, the TEC Spiritual Director meets privately with non-LCMS participants (those who will not commune) prior to the Service. This allows for private consultation as well as the opportunity for witness, comfort and information about the sacrament. The entire matter is treated with a high degree of care and sensitivity.

How can the Show-Me Lutheran TEC retreat program compliment my congregation's youth ministry?

TEC is a one-time retreat that relies on the local parishes to continue the nurturing process and the task of overseeing the spiritual growth of the soul over the long run. TEC is not a church, nor does it replace a church youth program. TEC counts on the youth's home church and youth program to help continue to process things learned on the retreat.

Having acknowledged that TEC is not a church nor does it replace the function of the church's youth program, a TEC retreat can help pastors and DCEs provide an intensified spiritual growth opportunity for youth that are ready. Sending youth on a TEC retreat can help draw them in to the youth program in a fuller sense, develop them as a leader within your youth group and make them more open and excited about the spiritual dimensions of your youth ministry.

We recommend that pastors and DCEs attend a TEC weekend themselves to gain a total comfort level with the program and then subsequently try to slot two or three kids from your church to attend each TEC weekend that follows.

Some of my youth have been to more than one weekend. What's that about?

Having said that TEC is a one-time experience, youth and adults can return to serve. They can serve on the presenting team where they facilitate a table of youth discussion and other activities and are assigned a talk to present. There are four preparatory meetings they attend where they workshop their talks and receive additional training for the weekend. They may also return to serve on the "service team" (called Wheat Team in TEC). Here also they attend four preparatory meetings before the weekend. Their weekend experience parallels the weekend with a focus on joyful service and prayer.

What are the some opinions and thoughts from Pastors who have participated on TEC weekends?

Mandatory on every TEC weekend is a member of the LCMS Lutheran clergy as the Spiritual Director of the weekend. His overall responsibility is for the theological content of the weekend. He attends preparatory weekends to participate in reviewing the talks and provide theological instruction. On the weekend he oversees the spiritual direction of the weekend (i.e. introduces spiritual theme of the day, presides over confession/absolution services, prepares and leads worship services, etc.). He selects an assistant spiritual director for the weekend, so normally there are at least two LCMS clergy on each weekend. In addition, there is a place for a seminary student to participate on the weekend. Over the years, many clergy have participated and served on TEC weekends. We can provide letters of reference upon request. For additional questions or to discuss further, feel free to contact Rev Ron Roma or Rev Gary Dehnke.

Who can attend a TEC weekend?

Young adults between the age of 16 and 21 may attend. Adults are welcome and encouraged to attend as observers. There does not need to be a certain level of spiritual maturity to attend, but if someone has significant fundamental doubts about the Christian faith, this is probably not the best choice of a retreat weekend for them to attend.

Non-Lutherans are also welcome to attend. The application form does ask for church affiliation and the spiritual director meets individually with any non-LCMS participant regarding Holy Communion. Also note that this is a liturgical weekend and anyone from a non-liturgical background will find various aspects of the weekend unfamiliar. (Pastors vest for services, references to Lent, Easter, Pentecost, liturgical colors

used, Easter Vigil Service, the Chicago Folk Service liturgy is used for communion services, Confirmation Renewal, etc.)

After attending once, both adults and youth are provided service applications they can fill out submit back to TEC in order to return and serve in some capacity on a subsequent weekend.

Can I participate in a TEC as a pastor or DCE?

We welcome and encourage your participation in the weekend. You can come as an observer and use that experience to evaluate the program and know first hand what your youth experience. Opportunities also exist to serve the program in various capacities if you would ever so desire. Our hope would be that you would find a comfort level with the program and encourage members in your own congregation to attend.

Who leads these retreats?

The leaders of the weekend are a LCMS lay person/married couple and LCMS pastor who have attended previous weekends and are selected by the Show Me TEC board for leadership. Their titles on the weekend are Lay Director and Spiritual Director respectively. In addition to the two directors, teams comprised of both youth and adults serve on the weekend.

What is the big secret?

There are no big secrets. There are some surprises on the weekend that, like finding out ahead of time what a birthday gift is removes some of the delight in a gift when it is actually received. Different people handle concealing the TEC surprises with different approaches. Unfortunately, sometimes the effort taken to conceal the surprise aspect is overemphasized and makes it sound more secretive than surprise. There is really no event on the weekend that cannot be told to a participant ahead of time. This may diminish the fun of one or two events, but will not effect the spiritual impact of the weekend.

Where are TEC weekends held?

Weekends are held at various LC-MS church/school facilities in the St. Louis area.

How many youth are involved?

There are places for a maximum of thirty-six first time youth attendees on a weekend. The number of youth who return to serve on each weekend is around sixteen.

Is it true that they will take my watch?

Yes. And they will take your cell phone, Ipods, blackberry, walk-man, and some other items as well, if you bring them. We discourage participants from bringing such items because they are not needed. If items are collected, the purpose for this is twofold - removal of distractions and security. First, there is a purposeful effort made to alter the physical surroundings in order to promote focus on the spiritual. For watches, the distraction of "what time is it?" is removed. Needs to know time for specific reasons, such as taking medication, are accommodated. Other items such as cell phones and Ipods are taken for the same reason. Secondly, there is also the concern for security, as valuable some items would be left unattended in sleeping areas and may be a temptation for the weaker brother/sister. Items taken are stored in a secure place for the duration of the weekend and returned upon the close of the weekend. Again participants are strongly encouraged to leave such items at home because Show-Me TEC would prefer to not have to take responsibility for these types of articles.

Is every weekend the same or different?

Weekends are all alike in that the exact same schedule of events are followed on every weekend, but because the teams of people serving and first time attendees are new each weekend, every weekend takes on its own unique personality. So while life stories of the participants make each weekend different, the TEC schedule never varies from weekend to weekend. Weekend to weekend TEC follows a rigorous, very ordered, three day schedule full of varied activities, each day correlating to a liturgical season, each event building upon the previous events making the entire weekend a robust experience from beginning to end. A TEC weekend is not a place to catch up on pleasure reading or sleep. The weekend is a fulltime activity.

What if individuals or churches can't afford the expense to attend a weekend?

TEC has two scholarship funds. One is a general fund and the other is specifically for pastors, seminarians and their families. If financial assistance is needed please note on the application and/or contact one of the Show Me TEC Board members at the time of application.

There is no official policy governing the requirement for the distribution of these funds. Requests are dealt with on a case by case basis. We certainly do not want to turn anyone away because of financial limitations. We will work with any applicant on this issue.

What role does prayer play in the weekend?

Prayer is a vital part of the TEC weekend. There are two aspects of prayer on the weekend. One is prayer support for team and participants before and throughout the weekend. The second is the effort during the weekend to strengthen the participant's personal prayer life through example and practice.

Prayer begins early on in the TEC process as directors and teams are selected for the weekend. The preparatory meetings include prayer time for the upcoming weekend. The service team on the weekend is the prayer warriors for the weekend. For example, they pray with each speaker before their talks, during the presentation, and again with the person after the talk is complete. Prayer support for the weekend is crucial.

With regard to the personal prayer life of participant on the weekend, there are several activities that highlight prayer. First, the lay director provides an example of personal prayer to the participants. Second, there is a prayer service where the participants have another opportunity to hear personal prayers. Last, there is an activity called a "chapel visit" when small groups, have a time for personal prayer.

How is Scripture incorporated/used in the weekend?

Scripture is the foundation of the TEC weekend. This can be seen in more detail in the weekend schedule. But to briefly highlight, each day has a theme based on a scripture verse which the spiritual director reviews every morning. Also, on the first day participants are given a bible which is theirs to use as reference on the weekend and take with them when they leave. The talks have multiple scripture references throughout. One of the talks called "Sacred Scripture" is entirely focused on scripture itself.