

SION CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOR EVANGELISM

Sion Youth Mission

Pre-mission Manual

2016-2017



S.E.N.T. Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9BX Telephone Number +44 (0) 1277 215 011

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Sion Youth Pre-Mission Manual 2016/2017

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Introduction

A Sion Youth Mission is a time for a school community to revisit its mission as a Catholic school and to have the Gospel proclaimed in a dynamic and accessible way to both staff and pupils within the school context.

It is also a time to establish stronger links with the feeder Parishes of the school, and to enable pupils who want to return to a Parish to make that journey.

The Sion Community's aim and vision for Mission is to help people encounter God and grow in understanding of the Catholic faith.

The aim of the Sion Community visiting before a mission is to facilitate the school's preparation for the mission week. One of the priorities of this preparation period is to ensure both staff and pupils are equipped and empowered to fully participate in the week itself and to lead the school forward after the Mission.

This manual contains recommendations and guidance specific to the work prior to mission and is an aid to realising the aim established above. While schools are asked to work within the recommendations as far as possible, your Pre-mission Coordinator will be open to discussing your school's particular needs and the procedures normally used may be modified. Your Pre-mission Coordinator may be part of the team delivering the mission and the team leader will be present at one of the pre-mission visits.

The Sion team will normally consist of 5-9 members, a mixture of experienced members and young people engaged in peer ministry who have received appropriate training.

The preparation for mission week is essential. The Sion Youth team have learnt from years of experience within a wide variety of schools that the visible fruit of the Mission is dependent upon how the school prepares for it beforehand.

The Pre-mission process

There are various aspects of preparation for the mission, the suggested timing for the practicalities can be found in the Mission Week Preparation Checklist (listed in the accompanying manual), but as well as the practicalities and ongoing preparations it is suggested that the school should prepare by:

- a) Facilitating 2 visits to the school by the Pre-mission Coordinator.
- b) Establishing a core team which meets regularly to discuss the progress of the on-going mission preparations.
- c) Contacting the Diocesan Youth Officer to inform and invite them to the mission.

Pre-mission visits:

1) Initial visit (one or maybe two team members in attendance):

In this initial consultation the Pre-mission Co-ordinator will provide information regarding the usual format of missions and will seek to discover the vision established by your core team and help you develop it. Therefore this meeting will be split into two parts.

a.) The initial part of the meeting usually requires between sixty and ninety minutes to allow time to talk through logistics as well as your vision.

b.) The aim of the second part of the meeting is to enable you and the core team to partake in a vision development day whereby we will facilitate you in thinking about the wider pastoral plan for the faith of your school. In other words we would like to help you develop a greater context for your mission so it can bear more fruit. Thus we hope that the mission will act as a launch pad into a new season of growth in your school. It would be hugely helpful if your local clergy and diocesan youth officer were also present at this day. In our experience schools can sometimes only take into account the forthcoming mission week and do not spend enough time thinking about follow up. We are a ministry that not only believes in seeing fruit, but fruit that lasts. This part of the meeting typically last again about sixty to ninety minutes.

2) Second visit (two to three team members in attendance):

This is a full day visit, the aim of which is to meet with pupils and staff, to inform, exhort and begin to share the Good News. The usual structure for the day would include:

- An hour long meeting *at the beginning of the day* with the Core Team to discuss practicalities.
- 20 minute assemblies (including movement time) where we will see every year group. Please do not start the day with assemblies as depending on where your school is in relation to our location, we can often be travelling from a great distance and there is always a possibility of traffic problems.
- A session to meet and train three groups of students. These three sessions will run simultaneously in separate rooms. We advise that you invite 20 upper school students for these training sessions who are already involved in the spiritual life of the school or their parish and are open to the Christian faith. The three training sessions include (explanation of these activities are on pages 6 and 7):
 - o Prayer4U training.
 - o Alpha training. A screen and sound will be needed.
 - o Lightfever training in the chapel with access to the Blessed Sacrament where possible.

Please note: If you have a 6th form, please integrate key students as leaders into the above groups as appropriate.

- A session with musicians and singers who would like to help with the music during the liturgies on Friday (instruments are not needed for this session). The purpose of this session is to explore what it means to worship and why we use music for this. A competent pianist, drummer, guitarist, bassist and choir would be ideal.
- Staff and Governors' meeting (approx half an hour); a presentation on mission to inform and some time either before or after to socialise and have an opportunity to ask questions, it is often beneficial to have light refreshments available. A screen and sound will be needed.
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Establishing a Core Team

The school is advised to create a core team who will be coordinating the Mission. This should include the Head Teacher, the member of senior staff involved in timetabling, the RE department, staff involved in chaplaincy, a member of the local clergy and, where possible, the diocesan youth officer. This is a good opportunity to involve staff who are not usually involved in the spirituality of the school, but may like to be or who you know have an active faith. The overall aim of this group is to share the responsibility for the practicalities of the mission, and also for enabling the longer-term vision of the School to be achieved. This vision process will be addressed in more detail on the 1st pre mission visit. The different possible role descriptions can be found in the accompanying manual

What are the Core Team's primary on-going preparatory responsibilities?**1) Dialogue with Parishes**

The support of local Parishes is vital to the Mission. As early as possible the School is advised to begin dialogue with Parishes regarding welcoming pupils or Staff who want to return to a Parish community after the Mission, as well as considering how to deal with enquirers to the Catholic faith. The preparation period can therefore be a catalyst for developing the Youth Ministry of the Parishes. This will be explored further in the 1st pre mission visit.

2) Prayer

Ensuring that the community is praying for the Mission whenever possible, remembering both school and team alike, in their preparations. We recommend that Schools create a Mission Prayer, a copy of which can be given to pupils, staff, parents and parishioners. This could be selected from prayers that pupils have written, again involving them in the preparation of the week. An example can be found in the accompanying manual on page 5. It may also be worth contacting your nearest religious order about interceding for the mission.

We also suggest that in order to prepare your core staff team spiritually for mission you run "the prayer course" once a week, six weeks prior to the mission in whatever format is suitable for your context. It can be found here for free: <http://www.prayercourse.org/>

3) Core student team

In order to invest and prepare your student core team, it is recommended that you run the Alpha Youth Film series ten weeks prior to the mission. This will enable and empower the core student body to help you launch Alpha for the rest of the school after the mission. It follows a very simple format of faith, food and fun, and can be run in a variety of different ways which are appropriate for you context: <http://run.alpha.org/login>

4) Publicity

This should begin as early as possible, and can initially be in the form of announcements or updates in assemblies and parish masses, so as to raise awareness of the mission but later it is beneficial to move on to more visual and detailed forms of publicity, examples for which can be found in the accompanying manual. The school may also choose to begin exploring the idea of 'Mission' or relationship with God/personal faith, in PSHE or RE.

The main aim of these sessions is for Sion Youth team members to build relationship with the young people and for the young people to feel that they are getting to know the team. The team members might use icebreaker games; share some of their personal story; answer questions or lead the group in prayer to facilitate this. This is a key area to make sure staff are well informed of what we will be doing.

Lunch	Lunch to be provided by the school Sign up for optional workshops in the hall
Afternoon	Classroom visits (20 minutes in every class)
After school	Staff and Governors social time with team

This is a great opportunity for Staff members to spend time with the team (30 minutes) and to have an opportunity to participate in a short prayer experience (10-15 minutes) taking the form of Lightfever (see Tuesday lunch time). An alternative that has gone down very well in several schools is to start an Alpha Course for staff.

5.00pm – 6.30pm	Team rehearsals and pray (access to the chapel required)
6.30pm	Team return to host families for evening meal

Tuesday

7.00 am	Team arrive to rehearse and pray
Morning	Staff Prayer Mission assemblies
Break	Sign up for optional workshops in the hall
Late Morning	Team time after the assemblies Optional Workshops for year 7

These workshops are an opportunity for pupils to get more involved in the activities of Mission week and are aimed around pupils having a prayer experience in each workshop. They may look at themes such as team work, self esteem, chastity and prayer. For workshops we ideally need 5 different spaces including three classrooms with a laptop or DVD and projector, an art space and access to a hard play (the hall and chapel can also be utilised if you are pushed for space). It is preferable to have a member of staff allocated to be available during workshops for registration and discipline purposes. As the workshops are optional, there is a chance that some pupils do not sign up. We therefore suggest that you collapse the timetable for that year's period and for those who do not participate, they can do school work in a supervised classroom.

Lunch	Lunch to be provided by the school 'Lightfever' - voluntary prayer time for pupils and staff in the chapel
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Lightfever is a prayer model used for introducing people to the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. A monstrance will be required for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and we will have Eucharistic ministers on the team who can facilitate this

time. Pupils and staff will be invited to come and light a candle in the chapel and spend time in Jesus' presence, while gentle worship is provided by the team.

	Collection of Prayer for You cards in the hall
[Afternoon	Optional Workshops for year 8]
Last lesson	Prayer 4 U (Prayer for You)

Prayer for You is a time when the Mission Team members are available to spend a short time praying with individual pupils for a new openness to the Holy Spirit, and the grace to move forward with God. This will need appointment cards with allocated times-usually 8 every 10 minute interval. It is the time in the week where most people say that they experience God in some way, for some people it is an emotional experience and so it may be appropriate for a member of staff (probably the mission contact) to be around during this time. It will take place during last lesson Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

4.00pm	Team rehearsals and prayer (access to the chapel required)
6.30pm	Team social- will return to host families later than usual (evening meal will not be required)

Wednesday

Priests available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (running through most of the day to be run by school).

Wednesday of the Mission is given over to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In the morning assemblies the pupils and staff will be encouraged to receive this Sacrament. We ask you to invite as many local clergy to the school as possible to hear individual Confessions throughout the day. You may wish to use appointment cards given out at break and lunch, or send runners around to classes to invite people to attend.

7.00 am	Team arrive to rehearse and pray
Morning	Staff Prayer Mission assemblies
Break	Sign up for optional workshops and collection of Prayer for You cards in the hall
Late Morning	Optional Workshops for years 8 and 9 [9 and 10]
Lunchtime	Lunch to be provided by the school 'Lightfever' voluntary prayer time for pupils and staff in the chapel
[Afternoon	Optional Workshops for year 10]
Last lesson	Prayer 4 U
After school (3.30pm-4.45pm)	Alpha Launch Party (pizza to be provided by the school)

Alpha is a practical introduction to the Christian faith, aimed particularly at non-churchgoers and new Christians. The Alpha Youth Film Series is designed to give young people (11-18 yrs) the opportunity to explore life and faith. The Launch Party will be facilitated by the team and core students however there is then an opportunity for older students or staff to continue the course in the weeks after mission. To receive all the materials and support needed to run the youth film series, please register your course for free online by visiting: <http://run.alpha.org/login>

Our heart is to see young people running The Alpha Youth Film Series and giving their friends the opportunity to explore life and faith. We would love to encourage you to empower your older students to go for it, host the sessions and lead the small groups. We will provide training for this on the second pre-mission visit. This follow up will need careful planning prior to the mission week.

The Hall and the Chapel are normally used for this time.

5.30pm	Team rehearsals and prayer (access to the chapel required)
7.30pm	Team return to host families for evening meal

Thursday

7.00 am	Team arrive to rehearse and pray
Morning	Staff Prayer Mission assemblies
Break	Sign up for optional workshops and collection of Prayer experience cards in the hall
Late Morning	Optional Workshops for years 11 and 6 th form (Depending on how individual schools are structured)
Lunchtime	Lunch to be provided by the school 'Lightfever' voluntary prayer time for pupils and staff in the chapel
Last lesson	Prayer 4 U
After school	Team rehearsals and prayer (access to the chapel required)
6.00 – 7.30 or 7.00 – 8.30 pm	'The Mission Showcase' including refreshments

This event is an opportunity for the whole of the school community to come together to celebrate mission week. Parents, students, teachers, governors, local clergy and parishioners are all invited to this event. It is to be held in the school hall where most of the mission activities will have been and will be a showcase of faith based acts. Students will be invited, in the weeks prior to the mission, to enter in for one of the five categories (solo, group, dance, drama and other). In the build up to the mission it is necessary for there to be an overseer of each of the 5 performances to ensure that they

are coming together. This will obviously help in building expectation for the mission. On the actual evening the Sion Youth Team will lead those present in a celebration of mission week, involving an opportunity to respond and reflect. Following this there will be an interval with light refreshments. After the interval in when the students will showcase their acts. Testimonies of the week from staff and pupils will also be shared between the acts. Each act should express and explore a Christian theme and be no more than 5 minutes long.

8.30pm Team return to host families for late evening meal

Friday

7.00 am Team arrive to rehearse and pray

Morning Staff prayer

Liturgy prep

Whole School Liturgy

The week culminates in a Liturgy or Liturgies on the Friday. The vision behind this comes from our experience of many students being inspired by mission week, yet finding the Mass something difficult to enter into. We also acknowledge that the Mass is not an evangelistic tool and is for catechised disciples which these days, tends to be the minority of the school body. Please note that this is a non-negotiable item in the timetable and we would ask that you trust us in our discernment. In our experience when schools have deemed themselves to be an exception to the rule this has not been beneficial for the students. The liturgy will contain music led by the team and students, student involvement in mime and drama, an exhortation and 5-10 minutes of led Eucharistic adoration, all exploring the theme for Friday.

Optional Mass

This is a chance for any students or staff who would like to attend Holy Mass in thanks giving for the week and to continue to pray for the students and for the protection of the fruit of the mission. Those interested will join the Sion Youth Team either at lunch time or within a lesson for the celebration of The Mass. A member of the team would normally give a faith sharing/exhortation before the start, but we ask that the main celebrant of the mass is asked to give a short homily (3-4 minutes) at the appropriate time. A running order for the mass, including the chosen readings and music, can be sent in advance of the mission week.

Afternoon Follow-up meetings with SMT, RE, Chaplaincy staff and Clergy representative (The Core Team)

The meeting with staff is to evaluate the Mission week itself and to discuss follow up plans in light of the week and the pupils' response to it.

3.30pm approx. Mission Team depart

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Your Mission Coordinator will send you a draft timetable adapted to the timings and particulars of your school.

Themes of the Week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Evening	Friday
Theme	‘Choose Life’	‘Who’s ya Daddy?’	‘He will Rock you’	‘Life to the Max’	‘The time is now’	‘All for One and One for All’
Content	God has chosen and called us individually and asks for a response	God the Father The Father has a plan for each of us and loves us into being who He made us to be	God the Son (Jesus Christ) Jesus is the word of God, fully God and fully man, and is the key to our personal relationship with God- He is the rock.	God the Holy Spirit The Holy Spirit is the messenger of God and shows the power of God in our lives	Summary of week, call to commitment and turning back to God.	The Church Called to belong, we need personal and corporate prayer
Scripture	This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live- Deuteronomy 30:19	1 John 3:1- How great is the love that the Father has lavished upon us that he calls us children of God, and that is what we are.	2 Corinthians 5:18- Through Christ God made peace between us and himself. John 3:16- God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that who so ever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.	John 10:10- He came that we might have life and have it to the full. 2 Corinthians 3:17- Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.	Mark 1:15- ‘The time has come’ he said, ‘the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the good news.’	John 6:47- 48, 51, 53- 56 John 17:22- Jesus’ prayer that we may all be one.

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Practicalities

Areas of Responsibility (for details please see accompanying manual)

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Post-Mission

The follow up to the Mission is crucial to the depth of the impact of the mission. Sion Youth aims to ensure that your School is able to continue to develop the fruits of the mission in its own way and so will endeavour to recommend suitable plans and resources for the continuation of the individual school's journey.

The key areas of mission follow up are:

Post Mission events

As part of the spiritual development of individuals that really benefit from mission Sion Youth offers a number of places on their annual events for schools who have received a mission. We offer D-weekend for the lower school (years 7–9) and Summer Camp for the upper school (years 10–13). Both D-weekend and Summer Camp is held during term time on a weekend. For each school who has had a mission in that academic year we offer 15 places for students and two for staff. The vision is for young people who have been blessed and inspired by mission, to have the chance to delve deeper into their faith surrounded by friends and familiar faces as well as peers from across the country to equip them to help you spread the gospel in the school environment. All publicity and booking forms for Summer Camp and D-Weekend can be found on our website <http://www.sionyouth.org.uk/book-a-group-for-summer-camp.html>

Post Mission in the local parish

One of our main concerns is that we build a strong link between the local parish and the school community by feeding the pupils into parish life after the mission has finished. To facilitate this we would recommend running the Holy Spirit day, which is part of the Alpha Youth Film Series, as a retreat day in your local parish. You may also want to think about training some older students and staff to give some short testimonies of their experiences in their local parishes in the weeks following the mission. We can provide training resources for you if you require them.

Post Mission Evaluation

Evaluating the Mission is helpful for both the School Community and for Sion Community. We recommend that time is set aside either on the Friday of Mission or sometime soon after (perhaps on the Post Mission Day) to ensure that this happens. An evaluation form can be completed by pupils and staff on our website:

<http://www.sionyouth.org.uk/mission-evaluation.html>. An evaluation form can also be found in the areas of responsibility manual for the core team to complete, either individually or together, in the week after the mission. Ideally these would be completed by the post mission day so we can take them away with us.

□ Resources

One of the main things that young people would like to see carrying on, after the Mission, is the use of different media and innovative ways to portray Gospel values, but many schools do not know where to find resources to facilitate this. A wealth of resources designed just for you can be found on our website: <http://www.sionyouth.org.uk/resources.html>

