



Gathered Session 1: Parent/Guardian and Young Person Introductory Session (60 minutes)

Overview

We know you are excited to start *Called to Mercy* in your parish, and we know the importance of helping the parents/guardians and young people understand how the program works. Here's an outline for an introductory session you can hold with the parents/guardians and the young people to explain the goals and unique approach of the program, the tools that each young person will need in order to participate, and the calendar of dates you have created for the program's gathered sessions, service day, and retreat. We suggest holding this session at least two weeks before the date you want the young people to begin the online learning modules. That way they have time to log in for the first time and confirm that their accounts are properly set up.

Suggested Structure

Time Frame	Activity
5 minutes	Welcome
5 minutes	Program's Big Idea
5 minutes	Unique Approach
10 minutes	Program Schedule and Flow
2 minutes	Materials Needed for the Program
15 minutes	How to Log In
5 minutes	How to Pay
10 minutes	Q & A
3 minutes	Closing Prayer

Practical Considerations

Preparation

- Make a copy of the handout “Program Schedule and Flow” (Document #: TX005808) and fill in the dates by which you would like the young people to complete each learning module, as well as the dates for each gathered session, the service day, and the retreat.

Materials Needed for This Session

- copies of the handout “Program Schedule and Flow” (Document #: TX005808), with dates filled in, one for each family
- copies of the handout “Log-In and Access Code Information” (Document #: TX005809), one for each family

The Session

Welcome (5 minutes)

When all of the participants have arrived, begin the session by sharing the following words:

- Welcome to *Called to Mercy*. The purpose of this meeting is to introduce you to our Confirmation preparation program and to provide you all the information you will need to sign up and begin the program.

Program's Big Idea (5 minutes)

Continue by offering a big-picture view of the program:

- At the heart of the formation experience of this program are Jesus' teachings and the Church's call to live as people of mercy. All the online learning modules for this program lead down this singular path: to understand what it means to be a person of mercy and to commit our lives to living mercifully toward others. This is what Pope Francis means when he says, “This is the Lord's most powerful message: mercy” (homily, March 17, 2013).

Unique Approach (5 minutes)

Give a brief description of the program's approach:

- *Called to Mercy* combines online learning modules that the young people will complete on their own with five gathered events.
- The online learning modules are accessed through a website application, using any type of device that can connect to the Internet.
- The gathered sessions include three community-building gatherings, a day of service, and a retreat.

Program Schedule and Flow (10 minutes)

Distribute the handout “Program Schedule and Flow” (Document #: TX005808) and walk the participants through it. Point out that there are 10 online e-learning modules that the young people will complete on their own by the dates indicated on the schedule. Also point out the dates of the gathered sessions and retreat.

Materials Needed for the Program (2 minutes)

Share that each young person will need two things in order to complete the online e-learning modules:

- a smartphone, tablet (such as an iPad or Kindle), laptop, or desktop computer (The modules are accessed through a website, so any web-enabled device that can access the Internet will work.)
- Internet access (modem, Wi-Fi, or cellular connection)

Answer any questions the participants might have regarding the technology needs.

How to Log In (15 minutes)

Distribute to each family a copy of the handout “Log-In and Access Code Information” (Document #: TX005809). Walk them through the following steps as they follow along on their handout:

1. Go to *mlearn.smp.org/enroll*.
2. Enter access code: _____.
3. Enter parent/guardian information and young person information.
4. Read and agree to the terms of service. If the young person is under 13 years of age, a parent/guardian must agree to the terms.
5. Receive a confirmation e-mail. (Both the parent/guardian and the young person will receive this.)
6. Open the e-mail and click on the link to reset your password. Create a new password and save changes. Then click “Continue.”
7. Log in with your e-mail address and password.
8. Select your course and begin with learning module 1.
9. Move through the 10 modules sequentially, completing them by the dates indicated on the handout “Program Schedule and Flow” (Document #: TX005808).

How to Pay (5 minutes)

Share that the young people will not have to enter any payment information if the parish is paying for their registration. They will simply enter the access code provided by the parish and follow the log-in instructions.

If parents/guardians are paying for the young people’s registration directly, share that after they agree to the terms of service they will be prompted to enter their personal information. They will then be directed to a payment page, where they may pay using any major credit card.

Q & A (10 minutes)

Ask the participants if they have any questions or concerns before the session concludes. (Reference the “Frequently Asked Questions” section of the *Called to Mercy Director’s Manual* for answers to commonly asked questions.)

Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

Thank everyone for coming, and then close with the following prayer:

- Let us remember we are in God's holy presence.

Lord, we ask your grace, your blessing, and your guidance as these young people begin their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. May this journey through *Called to Mercy* be a time of true openness of our minds and hearts to the Great Commandment of Jesus: To love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul; and to love our neighbors as ourselves. The greatest message of Jesus is the call to mercy—to bring healing, compassion, hope, charity, and justice to a broken and hurting world; to bring kindness and goodness to our relationships each day at home, at school, at work, and in our neighborhood. May we all take up this call and the invitation of Pope Francis to embark upon a “revolution of mercy” for the healing of the world.

For this we pray in your Son's name, Jesus, the One who showed mercy to all he encountered, the One who calls us to the same.

Amen.