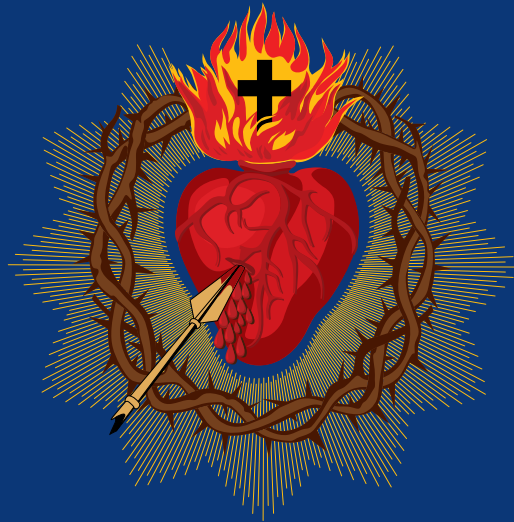


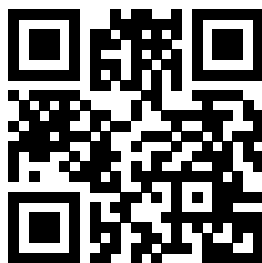


HEART OF THE GOSPEL LEADER GUIDE



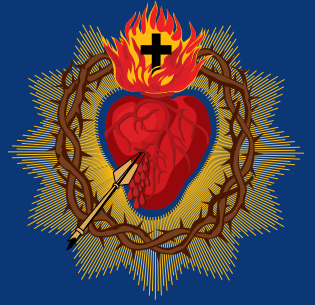
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Connect with everything you need today!

Scan the QR code or visit kojc.org/gospel to view the digital version of this guide and easily access links to valuable resources.

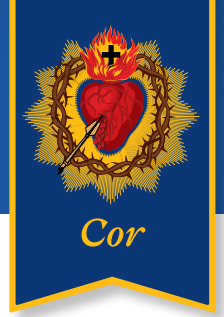


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HEART OF THE GOSPEL LEADER GUIDE

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Our world needs Good News, and not just any good news, but the Good News – the Gospel that Jesus proclaimed nearly 2000 years ago and that the Church continues to preach to this day. So often we see the suffering and confusion of a world that has lost sight of God's plan. Men today are searching for purpose and identity, but the world's answers are shallow.

You and I, though, have received the Gospel and know what a great gift it is. It draws us into a more powerful encounter with the Lord and with our neighbor. It challenges us to foster conversion of heart. It confronts us with the truth about our mission as adopted sons of the Heavenly Father, who made us for greatness.

We cannot achieve Christian greatness, however, without recognizing our place in the story of salvation. The Heart of the Gospel retreat empowers men to know that story and find their place in it. A man who understands and faithfully lives his purpose – his vocation – is a better son, brother, husband or father. Through Christ, he can become truly great.

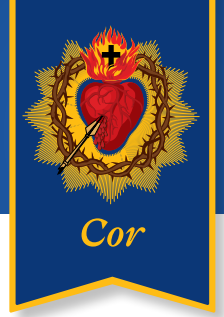
I urge each of you to aspire to greatness. Lead your brothers on this retreat to know the Gospel and love the Lord. Accompany them as they find their place in the great story of salvation. Continue to invite them into the Christ-centered brotherhood of Cor. Encourage them as they learn to become missionary disciples.

Your leadership can make all the difference in a man's life. Thank you for choosing to lead the Heart of the Gospel retreat for the men at your parish. May God bless your efforts and make them bear abundant fruit.

Vivat Jesus!

Patrick Kelly
Supreme Knight
Knights of Columbus

Introduction



Worthy Brother,

Thank you for your desire to help lead the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat at your parish. It is noble and generous of you to offer this spiritual service to the men with whom you worship every Sunday.

You and your leadership team have the opportunity to facilitate a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ for the men of your parish. This leader guide is meant to help you navigate through the retreat's planning, preparation, execution, and follow-up phases. Please read it in its entirety so that you understand the full scope of the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat.

Prayer is the heart and foundation of any successful retreat. We urge you to pray every day, by name, for yourself, your family, your pastor, your leadership team, your volunteers, and for the men who will going on retreat. Ask the Lord to bless all of you so that your hearts may be opened to experiencing the power of the Gospel in a transformative way.

The Heart of the Gospel retreat requires preparation to be successful. This work should be shared by a team of at least three committed retreat leaders who are regular attendees at Cor or another men's group at their parish. Preparation should begin early and progress consistently in the months leading up to the retreat. This guidebook is an invaluable preparation tool, so please make thorough use of it.

As Knights of Columbus, you and your brothers have the leadership and organizational skills necessary to provide an excellent retreat to the men of your parish. We have great confidence in you, and we commend you for desiring to bring this proclamation of the Good News to your Brother Knights and brothers in Christ.

Vivat Jesus!

Supreme Council Evangelization and Faith Formation Team



Retreat Talking Points/Fast Facts



- The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat for men (18+) is a compelling proclamation of the Good News presented by Fr. John Riccardo of the ACTS XXIX: Mobilizing for Mission apostolate.
- ACTS XXIX is a reference to the New Testament book, Acts of the Apostles, which has 28 chapters. The name means that Catholics today should be continuing the work of the apostles, symbolically 'writing' a '29th chapter' of the book.
- Fr. Riccardo leads men through the story of salvation in a dynamic way by emphasizing the explosive power of the Gospel and transforming their understanding of what it means to say, "Jesus is Lord!"
- The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat is a great way to introduce the men of your parish to *Cor*. A man does not need familiarity with any KofC content to benefit from the retreat.
- Looking for something new for *Cor*? The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat serves as the perfect follow-up to the original *Into the Breach* series and the *Mission of the Family* series, and it beautifully complements the *Men of the Word: The Good News* Bible study.
- The retreat contains 7 videos, a comprehensive leader guide, and a helpful participant guide, all provided free of charge at kofc.org/gospel.
- By following the retreat leader guide, council Evangelization and Faith Formation directors and their leadership teams will be able to facilitate a powerful retreat for the men of their parish.
- Facilitating the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat is a unique leadership opportunity for Brother Knights, and it will foster the growth and development of the team that leads *Cor* at the parish.
- In addition to the retreat materials, there are pre- and post-retreat *Cor* sessions to help men prepare for the *Heart of the Gospel* and to help keep their hearts on fire afterwards.
- This retreat is facilitated primarily by Brother Knights but is open to all men of the parish, just like *Cor*. This retreat is provided as a service to our brothers in Christ with whom we worship every Sunday, and we want to invite them to deepen their devotion to the Lord together, with us.
- The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat is a great way to enrich Advent or Lent for the men of your parish, but it can be held any time of the year to supercharge *Cor* and attract new men into your brotherhood.
- The talks Fr. John delivers are deeply insightful and moving, but what really moves the hearts of men towards greater conversion is experiencing this retreat with their brothers.
- Brother Knights who want to hold the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat at their parish must first provide retreat resources to their pastor and request his permission. Just like starting *Cor* at a parish requires the permission of the pastor, this retreat requires his permission, too.
- The retreat is not a new Faith in Action program, but holding the retreat can provide credit for the Spiritual Reflection program, assuming the requirements of the program are satisfied.
- The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat for men is available at kofc.org/gospel.

Preparation For The Retreat



The checklist below summarizes all the responsibilities you have as a retreat leader leading up to the date of the retreat. Please refer to it as often as necessary to ensure that you and your team understand the obligations of the retreat and can meet them effectively.

Note: this guide assumes you are already involved with the leadership team facilitating *Cor* at your parish, and that members of the team will be facilitating the retreat. If you do not yet have a leadership team running *Cor* at your parish, it is prudent to first introduce *Cor* following the steps in the [Cor Leader Guide](#) before offering the retreat.

Following the checklist is a description of the duties associated with each item. Please be sure to read these descriptions in their entirety.

The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat relies on video content. While streaming this content is possible, we encourage you to download the videos so that playback will not be affected by your internet connection. Ensure your device has approximately 75GB of storage available for video files downloaded at 1080p resolution.



Retreat Checklist

1. **Introduce the Retreat to Parish Leadership**
 - a. Meet with your grand knight for initial approval
 - b. Meet with your pastor for initial approval
2. **Pray about Facilitating the Retreat**
 - a. Individually
 - b. Together as a team
3. **Review Leadership and Retreat Materials**
 - a. Read leader guide
 - b. Watch leader video
 - c. Review retreatant guide
 - d. Watch pre-retreat *Cor* session video
 - e. Watch retreat videos
 - f. Watch post-retreat *Cor* session video
 - g. Make final decision about facilitating the retreat
4. **Obtain Your Grand Knight's Full Approval**
 - a. Present retreat to council at business meeting
 - b. Request council sponsorship
 - c. Request initial budget approval
5. **Obtain Your Pastor's Full Permission**
 - a. Explain retreat schedule
 - b. Detail exact parish space, equipment, and time requests
 - c. Clarify liturgical needs and respectfully request pastor's assistance
6. **Schedule the Retreat**
 - a. Identify parish staff member(s) responsible for parish calendar and space use
 - b. Schedule retreat, accounting for setup and clean up time

Preparation For The Retreat

After this point, the following items should be pursued simultaneously throughout the runup to the retreat.

A. **Continue Conversations with Pastor and Grand Knight**

- a. Regularly report progress to pastor and grand knight
- b. Amend budget requests to council as needed
- c. Keep in contact with parish staff as appropriate

B. **Generate Interest**

- a. Invite council members and men of *Cor*
- b. Invite men of the parish through parish communications

C. **Identify Needs**

- a. Materials
- b. Volunteers

D. **Delegate Responsibilities**

- a. Marketing/publicity and sign-ups
- b. Regularly communicating with pastor, parish staff, council, and *Cor*
- c. Acquiring retreat materials
- d. Coordinating retreat volunteers
- e. Facilitating the retreat
- f. Executing retreat follow-up

For more information consult pages 11 – 13.

Retreat Checklist Details

The first three steps of this checklist constitute ‘practical discernment’ about offering the retreat. Your decision, pending your pastor’s approval, should not be made until the end of step three.

1. Introduce the Retreat to Parish Leadership

You need to introduce your grand knight and pastor to the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat before offering it at your parish. Use the following resources when you do:

- The talking points (page 3) and FAQ (page 46) in this guide
- The trailer at kofo.org/gospel
- A copy of the retreatant guide
- A copy of this leader guide

The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat works best when sponsored by your local council.* Sponsorship goes beyond approving the budget for the retreat. It means your council affirms that it is offering the retreat to the men of the parish as an act of spiritual service.

Before presenting the retreat at a council business meeting, talk with your grand knight and do the following:

- Explain that the EFF director and his team will be facilitating the retreat.
- Provide a rough estimate of the expected number of attendees.
- Provide a rough estimate for the budget.
- Provide a rough estimate of the number of volunteers needed.

Preparation For The Retreat



Your pastor is responsible for the souls of his parishioners. Therefore, **he must give his clear permission for you to offer the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat at your parish.**

Schedule a meeting with him and, in addition to the points above, do the following:

- Confirm all members of your leadership team have completed diocesan safe environment training and background checks in addition to compliance with Knights of Columbus safe environment policies, and that you can provide the dates of completion to your pastor upon request.
- Communicate that the *Heart of the Gospel* is a kerygmatic retreat; its content is a proclamation of the Gospel.
- Explain that the content comes from Fr. John Riccardo of the [ACTS XXIX](#) apostolate.
 - ACTS XXIX focuses on helping Catholics understand the Gospel so they can proclaim it in their daily lives.
- Emphasize that you are requesting tentative approval for the purpose of doing more preparation; tell him you understand that, after he grants tentative approval, he might ultimately decide not to allow you to offer the retreat at your parish.

- Clarify that the retreat is for all men of the parish who are at least 18 years old, not just Brother Knights.
- Indicate that the retreat would benefit from his or another priest's participation. Mass, confession, and Eucharistic Adoration are integrated into the schedule if a priest is available.
- Suggest a possible date, range of dates, or month/season for the retreat. The season of Lent is strongly encouraged.
- Offer to give him any additional information he might want.
- Ask for his initial approval.

If your pastor tells you no, then you will not be offering the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat at your parish. Use this conversation as an opportunity to better understand your pastor's vision for the parish and how your council can continue to support that vision.

That said, it is very likely he will grant you initial approval. Express your gratitude and give your pastor a timeframe for when you will return to him to ask his full permission to hold the retreat.

Preparation For The Retreat

At this point, you should quickly move to making appropriate time in your schedule to progress to the next step in the checklist.

**If you are holding Cor at a parish that does not yet have a council, you may skip this step and future steps related to council approval.*

2. Pray About Facilitating the Retreat

Prayer is the foundation of true evangelization. Therefore, you must offer your intention to hold the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat at your parish to God. Is it God's will for you to facilitate the retreat?

You and each member of your team must pray individually about the retreat, but you also must pray together, ideally in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Do not over-spiritualize the decision about offering the retreat, but be sure to bring your intention before the Lord and ask for His blessing.

Have candid conversations with your team members before and after praying together. If all team members are united about holding or not holding the retreat, act accordingly. If the team is divided, consider if it is reasonable to hold the retreat with only a portion of your leadership team. It may be advantageous for some team members to focus on providing Cor at your regular cadence while other team members focus on preparing for the retreat.

It is recommended that your *Heart of the Gospel* leadership team have at least three motivated and active members. More may be needed depending on the size of your parish, but we recommend not exceeding six core leadership team members.

3. Review Leadership and Retreat Materials

Retreat leadership team members have many duties. One duty that must be highlighted is related to **mandated reporting**. Mandated reporting refers to legal obligations individuals may have to inform proper authorities about suspected abuse or neglect. Though all retreatants will be adults, it is still possible that information triggering mandated reporting requirements about vulnerable adults may be revealed. Read Appendix H on page 50 for more details.

In the interest of clarity, here is a brief list of what will be required for successfully facilitating the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat:

- Having a dedicated team of at least 3 retreat leaders
- Fully reviewing the leader guide and retreatant guide
- Watching all the *Heart of the Gospel* videos
- Assembling volunteers in advance for the day(s) of the retreat
- Coordinating with your grand knight and pastor for budget, volunteers, space use, A/V equipment, liturgical elements of the retreat, etc.
- Promoting the retreat
- Acquiring all materials needed for the retreat
- Continuing to offer Cor as you prepare for the retreat
- Praying daily throughout the process of preparing for the retreat
- Following up with your grand knight, pastor, and retreat team after the retreat

Preparation For The Retreat

This list is representative not exhaustive. You and your team members should be able to envision completing all these goals. Honestly ask yourself if you can do so, and, if you can, proceed to the steps below.

1. Review the schedules for the retreat on pages 20 through 24. The suggested schedules are ready to use with little or no modification. If you want to significantly modify the retreat schedule, consult the breakdown of the retreat into its component parts on page 25.
2. Watch the short training video for running the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat. This video will help to reinforce the points in the leader guide, and it will offer some helpful insight related to the retreat videos.
3. Individually watch the retreat videos before coming together in step four, below. There are approximately four hours of retreat videos, so schedule time accordingly. It is advisable to watch all the videos relatively close together, over the course of a week or two.
 - a. After watching the videos, review the times of prayer and discussion in the schedule. Read the passages of Scripture that are the focuses of prayer after Talks 1 and 2, and consider where at your parish would be the best place to offer the Holy Hour (i.e. the main church, a side chapel, a chapel elsewhere on parish grounds, etc.).
4. Schedule time for all leadership team members to gather in person to have a frank and fraternal discussion about what it would take to offer the retreat. Be sure to include in your discussion the following questions:
 - a. What do we think of the retreat?
 - b. Will the retreat benefit the men of our parish?
 - c. Can we continue to offer *Cor* effectively while preparing for retreat?
 - d. Can we reasonably project having enough volunteers and attendees at the retreat on the proposed dates?

If, after this review process is complete, your team is committed to offering the retreat, proceed to the next step.



Preparation For The Retreat

4. Obtain Your Grand Knight's Full Approval

Obtaining approval from your grand knight is crucial for several reasons, including:

- You cannot claim to be acting on behalf of your local council without (minimally) the approval of your grand knight.
- The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat can provide credit for the Spiritual Reflection program if all the program's requirements are met; ensure your grand knight knows that and allows it.
- Your grand knight can assist you in asking your council to defray or, ideally, completely cover the cost of food and other materials for the retreat.
- If your grand knight supports offering the retreat, his approval will help you rally council members as attendees and volunteers.
- Addressing your council about the retreat will be much easier with the prior approval of the grand knight – don't surprise him!
- Other useful resources can be made available to you by your grand knight.

Contact your grand knight and:

1. Ask him to allow you to present the retreat to your brothers at the next council business meeting.
2. Request that, at the meeting, you can ask the council to officially sponsor the retreat.
 - a. This means you can mention your council by name and say that the retreat is being offered by your council in your communications.

3. Present an estimated budget for the retreat to him and request that the budget be presented to, approved by, and funded by the council.
 - a. The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat ideally will be free for the men attending it. In this way, the council is providing a significant spiritual service to the men of the parish. If the council cannot cover all costs of the retreat, ask for it to cover a portion of the retreat cost.

After the council meeting, thank your grand knight for his support, and continue to keep him updated about your progress on the retreat, especially regarding the recruitment of retreatants.

5. Obtain Your Pastor's Full Permission

Request a meeting with your pastor to ask for his full permission to hold the retreat. For this meeting, be sure to provide your pastor:

- Copies of this leader guide and the retreatant guide
- Names and contact information for all retreat leadership team members
- The desired retreat date and a backup date
- A fully outlined retreat schedule (see examples on pages 20 – 24)
- Specific dates and times you will need him (or another priest/deacon as appropriate) for the retreat
 - Indicate he is welcome to attend as much of the retreat as he desires; tell him you want to respect his time

Preparation For The Retreat

- Specific space-use requests
 - Space for prayer, confession, videos, discussion, meals, food storage and preparation, etc.
 - Estimated durations of use
- Specific equipment-use requests
 - Tables and chairs
 - A/V equipment
 - Estimated durations of use
- Estimated budget (with breakdown)
 - Indicate council support as appropriate
- Estimated attendance number, including an attendee hard cap number (i.e. we expect XX men for retreat and will not take more than XX men)

Be prepared to answer any questions about the retreat he may have. It is possible he may have additional requirements for you to fulfill. If so, be sure to note in detail what those requirements are and when they need to be completed.

If your pastor says no to your request, you will not be facilitating the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat at your parish. If he says yes, thank him, and then ask him the following questions:

- Whom do I contact about booking parish facilities?
- May I promote the retreat through parish digital communications (text, email, bulletin, other)?
 - If your parish has a school, ask if you can contact the faculty, staff, and families of students to promote the retreat.

- Is it acceptable to make an announcement about the retreat after all Masses on [DATE]?
- Do you want to limit the retreat to men from this parish, or is it open to men from other parishes?
 - Your pastor may need to speak to other local pastors if the retreat is open to men from other parishes.
- If relevant information comes to light during the retreat, is there anything you'd like us to be aware of regarding mandated reporting requirements at our parish?

Tell your pastor that you and your team will regularly follow up with him and his staff about the retreat. Ask him if he would like to receive these updates via in-person meetings, calls, emails, or some other way.

6. Schedule the Retreat

Contact the parish staff member(s) responsible for booking parish facilities and schedule the retreat. It may be beneficial to meet in person with that staff member to explain details and ensure that all spaces and equipment will be reserved.

When the retreat is scheduled, confirm the date of the retreat with your pastor and grand knight.



Preparation For The Retreat

Simultaneous Action Items

Due to their nature, the following action items should be carried out at the same time as circumstances allow. Begin carrying them out as soon as Step Six has been completed.

A. Continue Conversations with Pastor and Grand Knight

Determine a cadence for how frequently you will regularly update your pastor and grand knight about your progress preparing for the retreat. Use their preferred method for updates, be it emails, calls, teleconferencing, or in-person meetings. Ensure your updates are clear, concise, and accurate.

Not all leadership team members need to be involved with preparing the regular updates or be present at the update meetings, but all should be aware of the information shared with your pastor and grand knight.

B. Generate Interest

- Recruit men for the retreat through every method available to you. Consider:
 - Directly inviting the men of *Cor* at your parish to attend the retreat, both in-person and through normal communication channels
 - Inviting the men of your council to attend the retreat, both at a business meeting and through regular council communications
- If your parish has other men's groups, contact their leaders, explain the retreat, and request to attend their meetings to invite their members to the retreat.

- Ask your pastor to include the retreat in Mass announcements, and if you could make a special appeal at all Masses one weekend.
 - Have leadership team members present at church doors to invite men to attend the retreat and answer their questions in person.
- Ask your pastor to communicate to men of the parish about the retreat through normal parish communications.

C. Identify Needs

Since the *Heart of the Gospel* is a video retreat, you need appropriate and reliable A/V equipment. For smaller groups, a large screen TV and sound bar, or a small set of speakers, is likely appropriate. For larger groups, you may need a projector, a screen, and a more robust sound system. What is available at your parish? Can your council assist if help is needed? Answer these questions as part of your work scheduling the retreat.

You may need volunteers (men and women) for the following duties:

- Retreat setup and cleanup
- Meal preparation, service, and clean up
- Retreat day(s) registration and welcome
- Room setup and break down between retreat sessions
- Liturgical assistance (if Father desires it)
- Runners/gofers
- Continual prayer for retreat leaders and attendees

Preparation For The Retreat

Keep a database of volunteer contact information (but do not use it for any purpose unrelated to the retreat). See page 49 for a sample volunteer registration form.

Materials needed for the retreat include:

- Pre- and post-retreat *Cor* videos and retreat videos downloaded to a local device
- Pre- and post-retreat *Cor* session guides
- A/V equipment, including necessary cables/wires and speakers sufficient for the room
- Tables (round is ideal) and chairs
- Retreatant guides
- Name tags, pens/pencils
- Prayer materials: rosaries, prayer cards, etc.
- Food and drink
- Plates, napkins, cups, flatware
- Garbage and recycling receptacles

D. Delegate Responsibilities

Determine who is ultimately responsible for the following aspects of retreat preparation:

- Marketing/publicity and sign-ups
- Regularly communicating with pastor, parish staff, council, and *Cor*
- Acquiring retreat materials
- Coordinating retreat volunteers
- Facilitating the retreat
- Executing retreat follow-up

Marketing/Publicity and Sign-Ups

This team member is responsible for promoting the retreat via attending in-person meetings, sending emails/texts, announcements at Masses, etc. He also is responsible for maintaining a full database of the men who have signed up for the retreat (this database should not be used for any purpose unrelated to the retreat, and all data contained in it should be deleted/destroyed after the retreat). See page 49 for more information.

Regularly communicating with pastor, parish staff, council, and *Cor*

The team member in charge of communication must establish a regular communications cadence with key stakeholders: parish pastor, parish staff, council grand knight and other officers, and *Cor* leaders and participants. Retreat team leaders should be CCed on communications as appropriate. This team member should also ensure that retreat team leaders are communicating with each other and meeting in person as necessary.

Acquiring retreat materials

One man must be ultimately responsible for physically procuring the items needed for retreat. This includes printouts of retreatant guides, writing implements, food and drink, prayer materials, etc. This team member should maintain a list of all items needed and regularly update it as resources are acquired. He should also ensure that adequate storage for retreat supplies is established, ideally at the location of the retreat. If his council will reimburse the cost of materials, he is responsible for keeping his receipts and requesting reimbursement in the appropriate way.

Preparation For The Retreat

Coordinating retreat volunteers

This team member is responsible for soliciting retreat volunteers and maintaining a database of people who sign up to help (this database should not be used for any purpose unrelated to the retreat, and all data contained in it should be deleted/destroyed after the retreat). He will assign duties and answer questions. He will maintain regular communication with volunteers. He also will confirm that volunteers will be present on the day(s) of the retreat. Both men and women can be volunteers. See page 49 for more details.

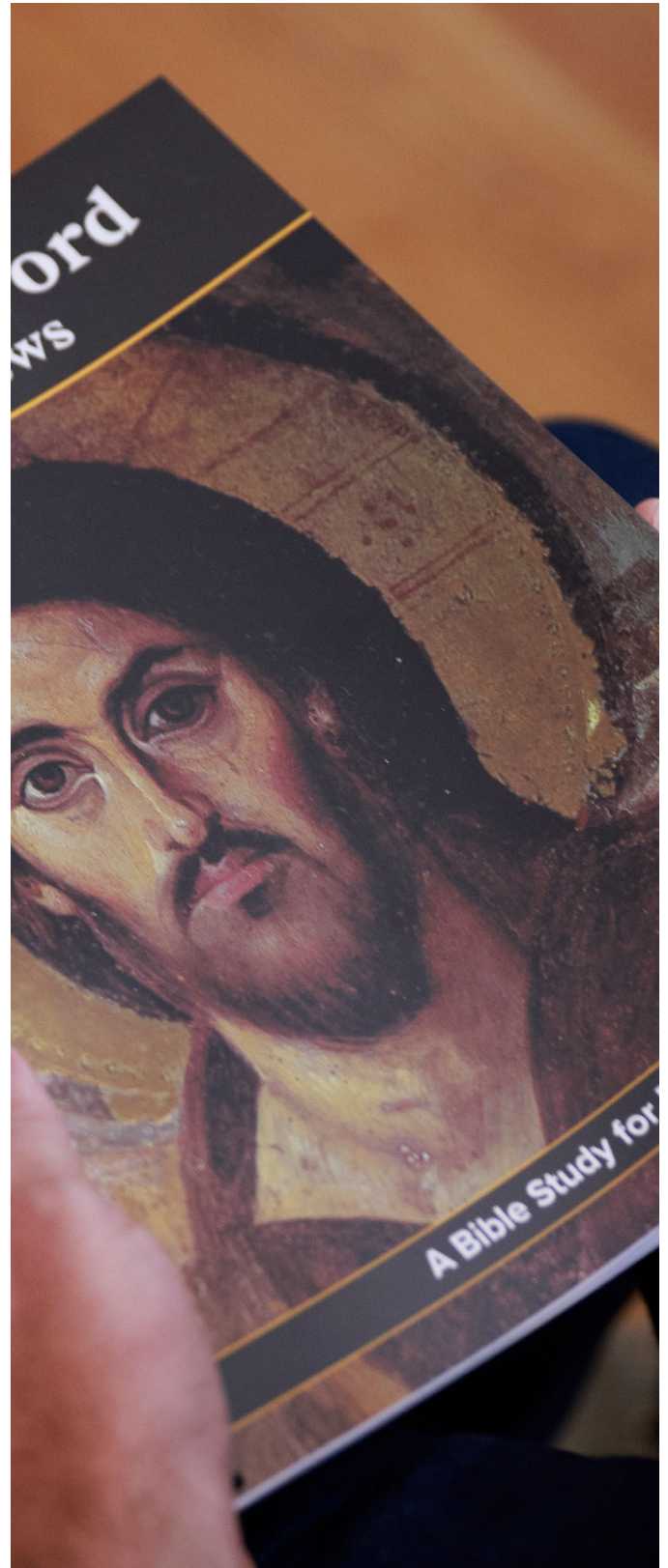
Facilitating the retreat

Though all retreat leadership team members are responsible for facilitating the retreat, one man must take point. This team member must ensure that setup is complete before the retreat, A/V equipment works, the retreat location is accessible (i.e. doors unlocked, all leaders have scripts and know which parts of the retreat they will enact, if any; in short, he must attend to every detail of the setup, execution and cleanup of the retreat.

It is crucial that the retreat videos be shown in order. The structure of the retreat will not make sense, nor will the retreat flow naturally, if the order of the videos is not maintained.

Executing retreat follow-up

Between two and four weeks after the retreat, a feedback meeting should be held so that key parish stakeholders can meet to discuss the retreat. At the end of the retreat, you will solicit feedback from retreatants and prepare a simple analysis of the data you collected to be shared at the meeting. See page 50 for more information.



Cor Sessions Before the Retreat



Please visit kofc.org/gospel for access to resources for these sessions.

The two *Cor* sessions scheduled before the retreat should be dedicated to retreat preparation. The first session should utilize the What is a Retreat? How can I Prepare for One? video and accompanying PDF. This video provides general formation about spiritually preparing for any retreat and is of general utility to any man, even if he is not attending the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat.

The second video and PDF are specific to the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat – though a man who is not attending could still find the content edifying. In this video, Fr. Riccardo introduces men to an icon of the resurrection called the Anastasis. He explains the icon in a first-century Christian context and connects it to the meaning of the statement, “Jesus is Lord.”

The true meaning of the phrase, “Jesus is Lord”, is foundational to the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat. Reflecting on Fr. Riccardo’s exhortation prior to the retreat will help men to start opening their hearts to the work that God intends to accomplish in them on the retreat.

The PDFs for the two pre-retreat *Cor* sessions are included in this leader guide and can be found below.



Pre-Retreat Cor Session 1:

What is a Retreat? How Can I Prepare for One?



Men need to care for their souls. One of the most effective ways they can do that is by going on retreat. But many men – even men who **want** to go on retreat – have not had the chance to seriously consider the nature and purpose of a retreat. Nor do they necessarily know how to prepare for one effectively.

This *Cor* session is meant to give men the chance to think deeply about a retreat and have an intentional discussion about the purpose of a retreat. It also serves as a guide to preparing for a retreat, both spiritually and practically, so it can be useful for men to repeat this session each time they are getting ready for a retreat.

This session is intended to occur no more than two months before an upcoming retreat that the men of *Cor* at your parish plan to attend. If you are using this session before the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat, please ensure you schedule it before scheduling the *Heart of the Gospel*-specific pre-retreat *Cor* session, *Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel*. It is recommended that you offer *Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel* as close to the date of your *Heart of the Gospel* retreat as possible.

You will need:

- A rosary and rosary guide (#4772) for each participant
- A copy of the session guide (reverse) for each participant
- Appropriate A/V equipment

Cor Key Elements for this session:

- Prayer: Begin with the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, then prayerfully read the Scripture verse. Conclude with the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius Loyola, the patron of spiritual retreats.
- Formation: Watch the session video [*What is a Retreat? How Can I Prepare for One?*](#)
- Fraternity: Use the discussion questions to prompt conversation. Add a shared meal or other suitable activity if more fraternal time is desired.

Pre-Retreat Cor Session 1:

What is a Retreat? How Can I Prepare for One?

Pray:

The Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Read the following Scripture passage:

“The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in a boat by themselves to a deserted place.” (Mark 6:30-32)

Watch:

[What is a Retreat? How Can I Prepare for One?](#)

For Discussion

1. What is a retreat? What is a retreat’s purpose?
2. What kind of retreat is your favorite? Why?
3. What are some of your best retreat experiences?
Are there any preparations you can make to help your next retreat be one of your best?
4. Think about the first time you went on retreat.
Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself about preparing for that first retreat?
5. What are some ways men can keep the “fire” of a retreat burning in their hearts after they’ve come back from one?
6. Do you feel prepared for your upcoming retreat?
Why or why not?
7. What would you need to feel comfortable leading a retreat or retreat-like spiritual event for the men of your parish?

Closing Prayer

The Suscipe Prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola, Patron of Spiritual Retreats. The name of the prayer is the Latin word meaning, “receive”, and it is a request that God receives from you everything you offer Him in the prayer. Please find the text below in both English and Latin.

Take, Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me. Amen.

Suscipe, Domine, universam meam libertatem. Accipe memoriam, intellectum, atque voluntatem omnem. Quidquid habeo vel possideo mihi largitus es; id Tibi totum restituo, ac Tuae prorsus voluntati trado gubernandum. Amorem Tui solum cum gratia Tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis, nec aliud quidquam ultra posco. Amen.

Pre-Retreat Cor Session 2:

Preparing to Receive the *Heart of the Gospel*



Jesus Christ is Lord! Understanding what that means is crucial to ensuring that the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat makes a real impact on the lives of the men attending it. This *Cor* session is intended to open the hearts of the men participating in it to a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ while on retreat.

In the main video for this *Cor* session, Fr. John Riccardo provides an in-depth explanation of the meaning of the phrase, “Jesus is Lord!” He does so by reflecting on the theological meaning of an icon of the Resurrection exploring the historical meaning of specific Scripture passages, and considering the implications of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises at the Easter Vigil.

It is recommended to offer *Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel* as close to the date of your *Heart of the Gospel* retreat as possible. If you are unable to offer *Cor* before the retreat, send retreatants this *Cor* session guide and ask them to pray, watch the videos, and consider the reflection questions on their own before the retreat.

You will need:

- A rosary and rosary guide (#4772) for each participant
- Appropriate A/V equipment

Cor Key Elements for this session:

- **Prayer:** Begin with the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, then prayerfully read the Scripture verse. Conclude with the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius Loyola, patron of spiritual retreats.
- **Formation:** Watch the session videos, [*Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel: Introduction*](#) and then [*Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel*](#).
- **Fraternity:** Use the discussion questions to prompt conversation. Add a shared meal or other suitable activity if more fraternal time is desired

Pre-Retreat Cor Session 2: Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel

Pray:

The Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Read the following Scripture passage:

“When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter said in reply, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’”
(Matthew 16: 13-16)

Watch:

[Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel: Introduction](#) and then [Preparing to Receive the Heart of the Gospel](#).

For Discussion

1. What does it mean to say, “Jesus is Lord,” today?
2. How is Jesus the Lord of your life? How is He the Lord of your family?
3. What areas of your life are hard to submit to the Lordship of Jesus? Why?
4. What do you think were the most challenging things Fr. Riccardo said in this video?
5. Why are you going on the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat? What do you want to get out of it?
6. What does your prayer life look like leading up to the retreat?
7. What effect do you want the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat to have on the men of your parish as a group? Individually? Why?

Closing Prayer

The Suscipe Prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola, Patron of Spiritual Retreats. The name of the prayer is the Latin word meaning, “receive”, and it is a request that God receives from you everything you offer Him in the prayer.

Take, Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me. Amen.

Suscipe, Domine, universam meam libertatem. Accipe memoriam, intellectum, atque voluntatem omnem. Quidquid habeo vel possideo mihi largitus es; id Tibi totum restituo, ac Tuae prorsus voluntati trado gubernandum. Amorem Tui solum cum gratia Tua mihi dones, et dives sum satis, nec aliud quidquam ultra posco. Amen.

The Retreat



Below you will find a suggested schedule for a one-day retreat, two-day retreat, and three-day retreat, a division of the retreat into parts to facilitate the creation of a unique retreat schedule, a brief guide to *Lectio Divina*, and the script for the retreat that assumes the one-day format.

Whatever schedule you use, it is imperative that the retreat be given in the order presented. Do not present the parts of the retreat out of order. Fr. Riccardo has precisely structured the talks, and that structure must be maintained so that his dynamic proclamation of the Gospel can be properly presented and received.

Similarly, the times of prayer that are associated with Talks 1, 2, and 4 should not be disassociated by being moved sooner or later in the schedule. Maintain the prescribed order, even if the retreat takes place over multiple days.

It is intended that the time of prayer after Talk 4 take place during Holy Hour. See [this video](#) for more information.

Remember to test all A/V equipment before the retreat.

The Intro video can be played during a meal, but it is not recommended to play any other video during a meal. The other videos should not be competing for attention with anything while they are being played; they are the main formative component of *The Heart of the Gospel* retreat.

It is acceptable to play videos immediately before or after a meal should it be advantageous to your schedule. The times of prayer associated with Talks 1, 2, and 4 should not be separated from their respective talks by meals.

Periods of discussion can be readily combined with meals.

Combining discussion times with meals can help prevent the retreat schedule from becoming overwhelming. It is not advisable to combine discussion times with bathroom breaks; if you do so, wait until later in the retreat schedule so you do not set the precedent early in the retreat, and try to do so sparingly.

Do not combine scheduled times of prayer with meals. If there will be a meal before the retreat Mass, be sure to warn men to stop eating in time to observe the one hour fast before receiving Communion.

You are strongly encouraged to use printed copies of the script rather than read it from a device during the retreat.

Before starting the retreat, be sure to complete registration. At least one volunteer should stay at the registration area for 30 minutes after the start of the retreat to welcome and register late arrivals. If men are still missing after 30 minutes, a leader should call the men who have not yet arrived to determine if they will be coming.

Round tables with 6 to 8 seats per table is the preferred setup. Men should see name cards or pre-printed nametags at their tables. Be sure you have the group lists and table assignments available for reference. Escort men to their tables if they have trouble finding their seats and remind them that they will be sitting with their group for the duration of the retreat; sharing fraternity with their brothers in this way is a major part of the retreat experience.

The retreat is for men who are at least 18 years of age. Do not allow children to attend the retreat.

Sample One-Day Schedule:

The schedule assumes a Saturday retreat at a parish with an afternoon vigil Mass. Slight adjustments to the schedule may be necessary due to your particular circumstances.

FRIDAY EVENING

Leadership Team and volunteers arrive for room setup

SATURDAY

6:30am – Leadership Team and volunteers arrive for remaining setup

7am – Doors open, registration begins; coffee available

7:30am – Retreat starts: welcome and explanation; icebreaker questions on tables

7:35am – Opening Prayer, Breakfast is served

7:50am – During breakfast, Intro is played

7:55am – Intro Questions discussed at breakfast tables

8:10am – Start clearing breakfast

8:20am – Introduce Talk 1, play it, have discussion

9:30am – Prayer about worldview (Lectio on Romans 12:2); discussion

10:15am – Break

10:30am – Introduce Talk 2, play it, have discussion

11:20am – Lectio on Psalm 8 and discussion

12:05pm – Lunch

1pm – Introduce Talk 3, play it

1:45pm – Discussion

2:10pm – Introduce Talk 4, play It

3pm – Holy Hour and Confession

4pm – Bathroom break

4:10pm – Discussion

4:30pm – Introduce Talk 5, play It

5:45pm – Dinner and Discussion

6:30pm – Stop Eating, play the Outro; more discussion, volunteers begin to clean up

7:10pm – Retreat Mass

8:00pm – End Retreat, begin break down and cleanup

8:30pm – Finish break down and cleanup; leadership team and volunteers depart

Sample Two-Day Schedule:

The schedule assumes a Friday-night-through-Saturday retreat at a parish with an afternoon vigil Mass. Slight adjustments to the schedule may be necessary due to your particular circumstances.

PRIOR SETUP: do as much as possible before 6pm Friday given the schedule at your parish.

FRIDAY

6:00pm – Leadership Team and volunteers arrive for remaining setup

6:30pm – Doors open, registration begins; dinner available

7:00pm – Retreat starts: welcome and explanation; icebreaker questions on tables

7:05pm – Opening Prayer; Play [Intro](#) video

7:10pm – Intro Question Discussion

7:30pm – Break

7:40pm – Introduce [Talk 1](#), play it, have discussion

8:50pm – Prayer about worldview (Lectio on Romans 12:2); discussion

9:35pm – Conclude evening; remind men of start time; thank and dismiss men; prep for **Saturday**

SATURDAY

8:00am – Leadership team and volunteers arrive

8:30am – Doors open, coffee and donuts provided; registration begins

9:00am – Welcome retreatants to second day of retreat; pray Opening Prayer again

9:05am – Introduce [Talk 2](#), play it, post-talk discussion

9:55am – *Lectio* on Psalm 8 and discussion

10:40am – Bathroom Break

10:50am – Introduce [Talk 3](#), play it

11:35am – Post-Talk discussion

12:00pm – Lunch

The Retreat

- 1:00pm** – Introduce Talk 4, play It
- 1:50pm** – Holy Hour and Confession
- 2:50pm** – Bathroom Break
- 3pm** – Discussion
- 3:30pm** – Introduce Talk 5, Play It
- 4:45pm** – Discussion
- 5:00pm** – Serve dinner, discussion continues
- 5:15pm** – Play Outro, dinner continues
- 5:25pm** – Discussion, dinner continues
- 5:45pm** – Stop eating, discussion wraps up, bathroom break, volunteers begin to clean up
- 6:00pm** – Before Mass, ‘soft’ conclude retreat, adapting last two pages of script; if time permits, lead men in pre-Mass rosary or other devotion
- 6:30pm** – Retreat Mass
- 7:20pm** – End retreat, begin break down and cleanup
- 8:00pm** – Finish break down and cleanup; leadership team and volunteers depart

Sample Three-Day Schedule:

The schedule assumes a Friday-night-through-Sunday-Morning retreat at a parish with a typical Mass schedule. Slight adjustments to the schedule may be necessary due to your particular circumstances.

PRIOR SETUP: do as much as possible before 6pm Friday given the schedule at your parish.

FRIDAY

- 6:00pm** – Leadership Team and volunteers arrive for remaining setup
- 6:30pm** – Doors open, registration begins; dinner available
- 7:00pm** – Retreat starts: welcome and explanation; icebreaker questions on tables

The Retreat

7:05pm – Opening Prayer; Play Intro video

7:10pm – Intro Question Discussion

7:30pm – Break

7:40pm – Introduce Talk 1, Play it, have discussion

8:50pm – Prayer about worldview (*Lectio* on Romans 12:2); discussion

9:35pm – Conclude evening; remind men of start time; thank and dismiss men; prep for Saturday

SATURDAY

8:00am – Leadership team and volunteers arrive

8:30am – Doors open, coffee and donuts provided, registration begins

9:00am – Welcome retreatants to second day of retreat; pray Opening Prayer again

9:05am – Introduce Talk 2, play it, post-talk discussion

9:55am – *Lectio* on Psalm 8 and discussion

10:40am – Bathroom Break

10:50am – Introduce Talk 3, play it

11:35am – Post-Talk discussion

12:00pm – Lunch

1:00pm – Introduce Talk 4, play It

1:50pm – Holy Hour and Confession

2:50pm – Bathroom Break

3pm – Discussion

3:30pm – Conclude retreat for the day; set up for Sunday

The Retreat

SUNDAY

8:00am – Leadership team and volunteers arrive

8:30am – Doors open, coffee and donuts provided, registration begins

9:00am – Welcome retreatants to third day of retreat; pray Opening Prayer again.

9:05am – Introduce Talk 5; play it

10:20am – Discussion

10:50am – Bathroom Break

11:00am – Play Outro

11:10am – Discussion

11:40am – Before Mass, ‘soft’ conclude retreat, adapting last two pages of script; if time permits, lead men in pre-Mass rosary or other devotion.

12:00pm – Retreat Mass - likely a parish Mass at which you have asked Father to adapt his homily.

After Mass – End retreat, begin break down and cleanup; finish break down and cleanup; leadership team and volunteers depart



Retreat Parts in Order:

- Does not account for meals and breaks.

If you want to format the retreat schedule differently than the schedules on pages 20 - 24, use the information below to help plan appropriately. Consider your parish schedule, local community schedule, and other relevant calendars when developing your own schedule.

Part 1: Welcome, Opening Prayer, [Play Intro Video](#), Intro Video discussion questions

- No less than 30 minutes

Part 2: Introduction to Talk 1, [Play Talk 1](#), Concluding Conversation re: Talk 1,

- No less than 70 minutes

Part 3: Worldview Prayer (*Lectio* on Romans 12:2), post-prayer discussion

- No less than 45 minutes.

Part 4: Introduction to Talk 2, [Play Talk 2](#), Discuss Talk 2, *Lectio* on Psalm 8 and discussion

- No less than 95 minutes

Part 5: Introduce Talk 3, [Play Talk 3](#), Discuss Talk 3

- No less than 70 minutes

Part 6: Introduce Talk 4, [Play Talk 4](#), Holy Hour and Confession, Discussion

- No less than 135 minutes

Part 7: Introduce Talk 5, [Play Talk 5](#), Discuss Talk 5

- No less than 90 minutes

Part 8: [Play Outro Video](#), Discuss Outro Video

- No less than 30 minutes

Part 9: Retreat Mass and Conclusion

- No less than 45 minutes

The retreat has over ten hours of content, not including breaks.

- With meals and breaks, the retreat will be longer.
- If you do not have some discussions during meals, you will need even more time.
- Built-in mealtimes are not necessary depending on how you schedule the retreat, but they add a strong fraternal element that should not be lightly discarded.
- Other components can be added into the retreat if desired: witness talks, music, more prayer, daily Masses, etc.; that said, sometimes simplicity is best.
- Be sure to include your pastor, grand knight, and leadership team in the discussion about the retreat schedule if you want to create your own.

A Short Guide to Lectio Divina:

Begin by placing yourself in the presence of God. Allow for the group to sit in silence before God. If it is helpful, focus on your breathing and allow distractions to pass out of your mind.

Ask the Holy Spirit to be present and to open your heart to the Word of God. Ask Mary, the Mother of the Word made flesh, to guide you to her Son who is made known to us in the Sacred Scriptures.

- 1. LECTIO [Reading]** - Begin Lectio Divina with a slow, but natural, reading of the passage of Scripture. While the passage is being read, each person should listen attentively and ask themselves, “What does the biblical text say in itself?” After a few moments of silence, the passage should be read a second time, and even a third time if desired.
- 2. MEDITATIO [Meditation]** – During a period of silence, begin to ask yourself, “What does the biblical text say to me?” Is there a word or sentence that sticks out to you? Is God trying to say something directly to you as you are reading? It is important to remain faithful to the text itself and allow it to move and challenge you.
- 3. ORATIO [Prayer]** – This is your response to God’s Word and to what was happening during the previous meditatio step. What do you have to say back to God? Words of petition, intercession, thanksgiving, praise? This too can be done in a period of silence with only limited guidance from the facilitator of the group.
- 4. CONTEMPLATIO [Contemplation]** – Allow God to show you His own vision and ask yourself, “What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?” Sit in silence and be open to how the Word of God can transform your life. Pope Francis describes this part of Lectio Divina by saying, “Words and thoughts here give way to love, as between lovers for whom sometimes it is enough to just look at each other in silence. The biblical text remains, but like a mirror, like an icon to be contemplated. And in this way, there is dialogue.” This period of prayer should be as long as needed.

Notes on the Retreat Script:

Notes for facilitators are written in italics.

Lines meant to be read aloud are written in this way:

“An example of plain black text intended to be read aloud.

“When there are multiple paragraphs meant to be said aloud one after another, quotation marks will not close until after the final paragraph.”

Important actions to perform are written in this way:

This text is red, indicating that you should do (not say) what is written.

Some notes will indicate that certain text or actions are only to be read or done in certain contexts. These notes will always look as follows:

IF you are having a meal before Mass...

Skip these notes if they do not apply to you. Feel free to cross them out if doing so will help.

There will be times when the lines to be spoken indicate where you should fill in specific information. These lines will look like this:

“My name is [NAME], and on behalf of [COUNCIL NAME & NUMBER], welcome to the retreat!”

Do not read aloud the words in brackets; replace them with the correct information as you speak.

You will find small boxes in this script in which you can write in the time when certain lines should be spoken or actions undertaken. The boxes look like this:



These boxes are placed for your convenience.

Feel free to write notes in the script.

The Retreat

There is no language in the script regarding breaks. Please amend the script as needed for the break times and, if applicable, meals in your schedule.

The first page of the retreatant guide has a brief introduction with some prompts for discussion. The introduction in the retreatant guide is not a mandatory part of the retreat, but you can direct men to read it and discuss the prompts to help them prepare for the retreat and to fill the time between their arrival and the scheduled start of the retreat. These prompts can supplement any icebreaker

questions you provide men as they arrive before the retreat is scheduled to begin.

Depending on his schedule, your pastor may be present for all, some, or only a little of the retreat. Prior to the retreat, work out with him how he would like to participate when he is present. He may desire to lead prayer, offer his insight, or propose some discussion prompts of his own. Honor his vocation and freedom by asking him what he would like to do when he is present at the retreat; amend the script as necessary.

The Heart of the Gospel Retreat Script

Before you start, be sure that the Intro video is cued and ready to play.

At , say:

“Welcome, brothers! It is good to be with you on the Heart of the Gospel retreat today! My name is [NAME], and on behalf of [COUNCIL NAME & NUMBER], welcome to the retreat!

“Let’s begin by turning to page 2 of your retreatant guides and praying the opening prayer. Please, turn to page 2 and pray with me our opening prayer:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Loving Father,
You created us for fellowship with You and each other.
Through Adam’s fall we were captured by the enemy,
But Your Son, Jesus, rescued us from slavery to sin and death,
And makes us His brothers through Baptism.
Renew in our minds and hearts
A sense of wonder and awe
At what Jesus has accomplished for us
By His suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
Enflame our hearts with love for Jesus,
So we may respond to His sacrifice with tireless devotion.

The Retreat

Equip us for the mission You have in store for us.
Make us into the heroic men You desire us to be.
Pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us
So that we may serve You
As You renew the human family.
We ask all these things in the most powerful Name of Jesus.

“Amen.

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“It is good to pray together with you! Thank you, brothers! As I said, my name is [NAME], and I will be facilitating the retreat.”

IF there are multiple facilitators, say:

“Joining me will be [NAMES OF OTHER FACILITATORS], who will be co-facilitating the retreat with me.”

Other facilitators should stand, wave, or otherwise indicate who they are when their names are said.

Say:

“You are seated in groups, and these groups will remain the same for the duration of the retreat. You’ll talk together, eat together, and pray together. In this way, you will build trust and rapport with your brothers in Christ here today and have a better experience.

“This retreat has three primary parts: times of prayer, formation talks in video form, and fraternal discussion with your brothers. These parts mirror the three elements of *Cor*: prayer, formation, and fraternity. You can think of this retreat as one big *Cor* session, and I invite you to bring the same prayerful, open, and attentive mindset to the retreat as you would at *Cor* or any other men’s group in which you participate.

“Remember that there is an expectation of confidentiality around all our discussions. Respect the trust that other men place in you. That said, group discussion is not the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so you may want to keep to yourself specific details best mentioned in the confessional.

“We’ll start things off with a brief video that introduces Fr. John Riccardo, our retreat leader, and the goals of the retreat. After the video, we’ll have some time for discussion at your tables.

The Retreat

If a meal is ongoing, say:

“Please continue to enjoy the meal while the video is playing and discussion is happening.”

Say:

“Discussion questions are in your retreatant guide; please be sure to keep the guide handy throughout the retreat. And now, Fr. Riccardo.”

Play the Intro Video.

Stop the Intro Video when it concludes. Be sure to manually stop it so that you do not accidentally autoplay another video.

Say:

“For this discussion, and for all discussions during the retreat, please designate a discussion leader for your table. A discussion leader’s role is to facilitate conversation by reading the questions aloud as necessary throughout the discussion. Each discussion can have a different leader, or the same leader; it is up to you. Turn to page 2 of your retreatant guide and use the questions there to start, but don’t feel limited by them.”

Discussion should end at [redacted].

During this discussion, you or another leader should ensure the video for Talk 1 is cued and ready to play.

After that is done, you and other leaders can visit tables to help promote good discussion if necessary and perform any additional tasks that need to be done.

At [redacted], say:

“All right, brothers, we’re going to move to the next part of the retreat.

“The main body of the retreat is structured around five talks Fr. Riccardo delivered on March 22nd, 2025 in Lafayette, Louisiana, during Lent.

“Father’s team of missionaries was with him for the talks, so he will refer to different people on the team who do not appear in the videos.

“You don’t have to take notes during the talks, but if you want to, please use your retreatant guide.

The Retreat

“The first Talk is called, ‘The Importance of Stories’. Let’s begin.”

Play Talk 1.

Pause the video when all the questions have appeared on screen at the end of the video.

Say:

“Brothers, let’s begin discussion at our tables now with the questions on screen, which are also in your retreatant guide on page 3. Please turn to page 3 and discuss the questions together.”

Discussion should end at [redacted] .

During discussion, leaders should prepare for Lectio Divina, gently guide table discussions if needed, and perform any other necessary tasks.

Approximately 5 minutes before it is time to end discussion, prepare the video for Talk 2.

At [redacted] , say:

“All right, men, we’re going to conclude our discussions now. Thank you.

“Questions about how you see the world and how you understand God are important to answer. Hopefully you have a better sense of your own worldview and image of God now.

“But, knowing how you see God and the world, while good, is just the start. Jesus calls us to something more than self-knowledge, and that’s what we’re going to focus on during our first time of prayer together.

“We’re going to pray in a way called, ‘Lectio Divina’, which in really simple terms is an ancient way of prayerfully meditating on Scripture. The Scripture passage we will use is from St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, chapter 12, verse 2:

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

“The verse is in our retreatant guide, as is the script for prayer we will be following. During periods of silence it is appropriate to read and re-read the verse. Now, brothers, let’s begin.”

The Retreat

For Lectio, pray:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Lord Jesus Christ, we come before you to learn more about you.
In the silence, open our minds and hearts to your Holy Spirit.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Blessed Mother, we ask you to lead us to your Son. Holy Spirit, enter our minds and hearts so that we, like Mary, can bring Jesus to the world. Amen.

“For this first step, called lectio, ask yourself this question: ‘What does the reading say in itself?’ Here is our reading:”

Slowly, clearly, and deliberately, pray:

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Once again, our reading:

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“For the second step, called meditatio, we now ask ourselves the questions, ‘What is the passage saying to me? What really sticks out to me?’ These questions can help us understand what God might be saying to us through this verse. We will now have a longer period of silence.”

Maintain five full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“We move now to the third step, called, oratio. Think about what God just communicated to you during the second step. What do you want to say back to him in silent prayer? Speak to Jesus in your heart now.”

Maintain five full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“The fourth and final step is called contemplatio. During this time, we simply open ourselves to God’s presence and be with Him. You can ask yourself, ‘What conversion of mind, heart, and life is God asking of me?’ But you may also simply enjoy God’s loving presence.”

The Retreat

Maintain five full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Let us pray together:

“We thank you, Lord Jesus, for this time in prayer with you. Please continue to open our minds and hearts to the power of the Gospel during this retreat. Help us to draw closer to you and to each other. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Thank you, brothers, for your prayer. On page 5 in the retreatant guide, you’ll find some prompts for reflection. Please turn to page 5 now and share your thoughts with your brothers at your table.”

End discussion at [] .

During discussion, leaders should gently help facilitate discussion at tables where such help is needed.

At [] say:

“Please finish your discussions, brothers. We’re going to move to the next part of the retreat. Thank you so much.

“We’re going to watch Fr. John’s next talk now, which is titled, ‘Created’. After the talk, we’ll have more discussion and another time of prayer so that we can more deeply understand what it means to be created by God.”

Play Talk 2.

Pause the video when the final questions fully appear on screen.

Say:

“Brothers, please take time now to discuss these questions at your tables. Please turn to page 6 in your retreatant guide to find them.”

End discussion at [] .

Five minutes before the end of discussion, prepare the video for Talk 3.

At [] say:

“We’re going to move to another time of prayer now. Would you please conclude your conversations? Thank you.

The Retreat

“We will again pray Lectio Divina, but this time with a much longer passage: almost the entirety of Psalm 8. Please turn to page 7 in your retreatant guide. We’ll follow the same format as last time, but give more time for prayer. Let’s begin.”

Pray:

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

“Lord Jesus Christ, we come before you to learn more about you. In the silence, open our minds and hearts to your Holy Spirit.”

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Blessed Mother, we ask you to lead us to your Son. Holy Spirit, enter our minds and hearts so that we, like Mary, can bring Jesus to the world. Amen.

“For the first step, lectio, ask yourself this question: ‘What does the reading say in itself?’ Here is our reading, which is Psalm 8 verses 2-10:”

Slowly, clearly, and deliberately, pray:

**“O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!
I will sing of your majesty above the heavens
with the mouths of babes and infants.
You have established a bulwark against your foes,
to silence enemy and avenger.
When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and stars that you set in place—
What is man that you are mindful of him,
and a son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god,
crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
put all things at his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!”**

The Retreat

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Once again, our reading:

**“O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!
I will sing of your majesty above the heavens
with the mouths of babes and infants.
You have established a bulwark against your foes,
to silence enemy and avenger.
When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and stars that you set in place—
What is man that you are mindful of him,
and a son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god,
crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him rule over the works of your hands,
put all things at his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord,
how awesome is your name through all the earth!”**

Maintain one full minute of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“For *meditatio*, the second step, we now ask ourselves the questions, ‘What is the passage saying to me? What really sticks out to me?’ These questions can help us understand what God might be saying to us through this verse. We will now have a longer period of silence.”

Maintain seven full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“We move now to *oratio*, step three. Think about what God just communicated to you during the second step. What do you want to say to Him in silent prayer? Speak to Jesus in your heart now.”

Maintain seven full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Now, during our final step, *contemplatio*, we simply open ourselves to God’s presence and be with him. You can ask yourself, ‘What conversion of mind, heart, and life is God asking of me?’ But you may also simply enjoy God’s loving presence.”

The Retreat

Maintain seven full minutes of silence. Continue with script after silent time ends.

“Let us pray together: We thank you, Lord Jesus, for this time in prayer with you. Please continue to open our minds and hearts to the power of the Gospel during this retreat. Help us to draw closer to you and to each other. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

When Lectio Divina concludes, say:

“I am very grateful that we prayed together again, Brothers. Thank you. We will now have a brief discussion. Questions can be found on page 8 of the retreatant guide. Please turn to page 8 now.”

End discussion at  *.*

During this discussion, leaders should be actively and frequently checking in on discussions at tables (by listening, not by interjecting) to see how conversations are going. Also, double-check that Talk 3 is ready to play.

At [TIMEBOX] say:

“Let’s conclude our discussion now, brothers. Thank you.

“Fr. John’s next talk is titled, ‘Captured’, and it can be understood as the ‘bad news’ that comes before the ‘good news’. As such, Fr. John focuses on the themes of sin and evil, which we rightly find difficult and disturbing to contemplate. If, during this talk, you feel the need to step away for a moment, please feel free to do so. Similarly, if you would like to take a moment to speak privately with a member of the leadership team, just let me or another team member know.

“It is important to remember that, even when we are focusing on what’s wrong with the world, there is something good we can learn from the Lord. Let’s open our minds and hearts to what God wants to reveal to us through this next talk.”

Play Talk 3.

Pause the video when the final questions appear.

Say:

“For this discussion, brothers, we have questions for you on page 9 of the retreatant guide. They are a great place to start, but please do not feel limited by them. There’s a lot to consider from this talk, and if something Fr. John said that is not covered by the questions is really stirring your heart, go ahead and discuss it in a respectful way.”

The Retreat

End discussion at [redacted] .

During this discussion, leaders should be actively and frequently checking in on discussions at tables (by listening, not by interjecting) to see how conversations are going. Also, be sure that Talk 4 is ready to play.

At [redacted] say:

“My brothers, we’re going to move to the good news soon, so please bring the discussions to an end. Thank you so much.”

“In our fourth talk, titled, ‘Rescued’, Fr. John will tell the story of Jesus’ sacrifice for us in a way that sheds new light on who Jesus really is. After the video, rather than have another discussion immediately, we’re going to move directly into a time of prayer so we can talk to Jesus before talking with each other.”

“Now, on to the fourth talk.”

Play Talk 4.

Pause the video when all the questions have appeared.

Say:

“These prompts on the screen are available on page 11 of your retreatant guide, along with other prayer suggestions, and we ask you to consider them during Holy Hour. Feel free to bring a pen and the retreatant guide with you during Holy Hour.

“That said, when you come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, please do not feel limited by the prompts. Speak to Him honestly in the silence of your heart. Tell Him about what’s happening in your life, and ask Him to give you the grace you need to do His will. Don’t be afraid to just sit in silence and listen to what Jesus wants to tell you in your heart, too.

“If you want, you can pray the rosary or your other favorite devotions, meditate on Scripture, or kneel before the altar; however you choose to pray, try to focus entirely on Jesus, and invite Him to enter your heart.

“We will have the chance to go to Confession during Holy Hour. I invite you to go to Confession and encounter the saving mercy of God if you are moved to do so.

“Now, let’s go to Jesus.”

Lead the men to the Holy Hour.

Pray.

The Retreat

End Holy Hour at [redacted]. Or as close to it as possible. Be sure to inform your pastor (or whoever is providing Holy Hour to you) of the time when Holy Hour should end. If the priest hearing confessions is also responsible for reposing the Blessed Sacrament, be sure to work out how to ensure Holy Hour concludes in a timely manner beforehand in the event he has a long line at the confessional.

While the majority of the leadership team should pray during Holy Hour, at least one member of the leadership team should stay back to cue up Talk 5 and make any other preparations necessary at this time before going to Holy Hour.

Provide #2075 (A Guide to Confession) and #4772 (A Guide to Praying the Rosary) to your men. Make sure rosaries are available.

If you are offering a set program of prayer for Holy Hour, like a group rosary, sung hymns, or a short witness (which needs to be pre-written, and pre-approved by your pastor), inform the men that they will be invited to pray in that way, and consider providing them a printout with the information.

When Holy Hour ends say:

“Brothers, let’s head back to our tables for discussion.”

Lead the men back to the tables for discussion.

When everyone has returned say:

“Please turn to page 13 on your retreatant guides to find prompts for discussion. It is not necessary to share your prayer experience in Holy Hour if you don’t want to do so.”

End discussion at [redacted].

Leadership team members should check in on the discussion by briefly listening to conversations happening at tables. Any tasks that need to be completed should be completed. If you have not yet cued up Talk 5, do so now.

At [redacted] say:

“Brothers, please finish up your discussion now. Thank you.

“We’re going to start our fifth talk now, titled, “Response.” In this talk, Fr. John is going to lay out different ways we can respond to what Jesus has done for us. In other words, we’re going to get a sense of our mission as Catholic men. Let’s see what Fr. John has to say.”

The Retreat

Play Talk 5.

Pause the video when all the questions have appeared.

Say:

“Fr. John has given us a clear explanation of the heart of the Gospel, and a clear vision for some ways we can respond to what Jesus has done for us. He gave us some thought-provoking examples, and used some language meant to get us to take seriously how we can serve the Lord.

I want to reinforce what Fr. Riccardo said: being an ‘Agent of Resistance’ is a fundamentally peaceful mission. Our spiritual ‘weapons’ are truth, faith, hope, and, of course, charity, unity, and fraternity.

Now, let’s turn to page 14 in the retreatant guide and use the prompts there to begin discussion.”

Discussion should end at  .

If you are serving a meal before Mass, be sure to warn men to stop eating at least 45 minutes before Mass begins. Food should be packed up and put away by that time, which you can mark here:

 .

Check in on table discussion by briefly listening to conversation. Prepare the Outro video and perform any other necessary tasks at this time.

At  say:

“My brothers, please bring your discussions to an end now. Thank you.

“In our final video of the retreat, Fr. John lays out a particular mission for Catholic men. This mission is simple, though it might not be easy, and is something that can be done – and should be done – in your home. Fr. John will explain.”

Play the Outro.

When the Outro ends, turn off the screen.

The Retreat

Say:

“We can evangelize at home, brothers, and it does not take years of training and extraordinary effort. If we make our homes places where Jesus Christ clearly reigns as Lord, and if we live as His disciples, we can draw more people to the Church.

“Now, we’ll have our final discussion of the retreat. Please turn to page 16 of the retreatant guide and review the prompts together.”

End discussion at [REDACTED].

During discussion, check in on conversations by listening. Perform other necessary duties as well.

At [REDACTED] say:

“It’s time to finish our conversations now, brothers. Thank you.

“The last part of our retreat is Mass. Let’s go together to worship the Lord Jesus and receive Him in Holy Communion.”

Lead the men to Mass.

Worship God together.

When Mass ends, lead the men back to their tables.

Say:

“Brothers, thank you. The Heart of the Gospel retreat is ending, but our mission is just beginning. Like Fr. John said, you don’t have to do this mission alone. Join your brothers in Cor to become better equipped for the mission.

“Cor at our parish meets [REGULAR DAY TIME AND LOCATION OF COR]. Our next Cor, which is on [DATE OF NEXT COR], will be a special retreat follow-up, so we really hope you attend.

“Before we all depart, there are some people we need to thank.”

The thanks section is not scripted, as it can vary widely. Be sure to thank your pastor and other parish clergy, parish staff, your grand knight and council, all your volunteers, your leadership team, and the men who attended the retreat. A round of applause at the end of the thank-you list is appropriate.

The Retreat

IF leaders of other men's groups assisted with the retreat in any way, thank them, as well.

When finished with the above expression of gratitude, say:

"We also want to express gratitude for everyone who helped us to be here on retreat: our wives and children, other family members, our friends, and everyone who was praying for us. Let's give them a round of applause."

After applause, say:

"One more item of importance: we'd like your feedback about this retreat. Please complete our survey by [EXPLAIN HOW TO ACCESS SURVEY]. If you can complete it today, we'd really appreciate it.

"And now, my brothers, please join me in our final retreat prayer, found on page 17 of your retreatant guide."

Pray:

"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

"Loving Father,
We praise and thank You
For the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ,
And without fear we proclaim
Jesus is Lord.
Jesus is Lord of creation.
Jesus is Lord of all nations.
Jesus is Lord of our hearts.
Give us the grace we need
To grow in virtue
So that we may accomplish,
In cooperation with You,
The mission of bringing all whom we meet
Into Your Church, which is Your family.
Help us to grow closer to one another
In charity, unity, and fraternity,
So that, as brothers in Christ,
We may support each other in fulfilling this mission.
We ask all these things in the most powerful Name of Jesus.
"Amen.

The Retreat

“In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”

Say:

“God bless you, brothers, and Vivat Jesus!”

Bid farewell to all retreatants who are leaving, but do not be afraid to ask them for help cleaning up if necessary.

When you have finished cleaning up and restoring to order every space you have used, ensure A/V equipment is off, doors and windows are shut and locked as appropriate, and lights are off.

Then depart.

Congratulations! You have completed facilitating the Heart of the Gospel Retreat!

Cor After the Retreat



Please visit kofc.org/gospel for access to resources for these sessions.

Fr. Riccardo offers a very clear mission to the men on the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat: make their homes into centers of evangelization.

He gives some very simple and effective examples of how to do that in the retreat's Outro video. This *Cor* session expands on what Fr. Riccardo said, and it directly connects to *Cor* itself and what it means to believe Jesus is Lord.

Men need to support each other in this mission, so regular attendance at *Cor* should be stressed as a major pillar of strength for successfully accomplishing it. Men also should be encouraged to work together. They can help each other prepare their homes as Fr. Riccardo has directed, and they can also be present at each other's homes to support one another directly during events that can be opportunities for evangelization.

Inviting new men to *Cor* can be an effective way to begin to evangelize male friends and family members, too. If a man who has never been to *Cor* commits to attending it on a certain date, *Cor* leaders and regular attendees should be informed so that every effort can be made to welcome the new man as warmly and generously as possible. Ultimately, Jesus is the one reaching out to these men through you, so remember that evangelization is God's work. But Authentic, joyful, Christ-centered brotherhood can be powerfully attractive, so strive for excellence in the way you offer *Cor*.

In short, you are cooperating with God for the salvation of souls, and the endeavor requires both humility and magnanimity.



Post-Retreat *Cor* Session: Evangelizing at Home



There are many details to consider if you want to make your home a center of evangelization. Fr. John Riccardo explained the essentials of the mission to evangelize at home at the end of the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat, but it is worthwhile to consider details beyond what was raised during the retreat.

The main video for this session raises specific, concrete points to think about and discuss regarding the mission to make your home a center of evangelization. The video is meant to be watched from start to finish in one viewing, but it is divided into three parts in case a series of shorter viewings is better for your men. The discussion questions assume the entire video has been watched in one viewing.

This *Cor* session should be offered within a week to a month after the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat, depending on your session cadence. Though it is a direct follow-up to the retreat, men who did not attend the retreat can still find it beneficial and should be welcomed to this *Cor* session. The mission to make one's home into a center of evangelization is for every man in your parish.

You will need:

- A rosary and rosary guide (#4772) for each participant
- Appropriate A/V equipment

Cor Key Elements for this session:

- **Prayer:** Begin with the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, then prayerfully read the Scripture verse. Conclude with The Prayer of Pope Francis to Mary, Star of the New Evangelization.
- **Formation:** Watch the session video, [*Evangelizing at Home*](#).
- **Fraternity:** Use the session discussion questions to prompt conversation. Add a shared meal or other suitable activity if more fraternal time is desired.

Post-Retreat Cor Session: Evangelizing at Home

Pray:

The Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Read the following Scripture passage:

“The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshipped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:16-20)

Watch: [Evangelizing at Home](#)

Additional Prompts for Discussion

1. What specific points from the video most stood out to you? Why?
2. How has the mission to make your home a center of evangelization been going since the time you attended the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat?
3. Have you discussed the mission to make your home a center of evangelization with your family? How do you plan to carry out further conversations?
4. What is the most effective way you can make your home a center of evangelization right now?
5. What are some of the biggest challenges you face trying to carry out this mission?
6. How are you and the men of Cor at your parish working together to make your homes centers of evangelization?
7. What sorts of changes to your prayer life are you making to help you carry out this mission? Why?

Closing Prayer

The Prayer of Pope Francis to Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, from the Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium.

Mary, Virgin and Mother, you who, moved by the Holy Spirit, welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith: as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One, help us to say our own “yes” to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus. Filled with Christ’s presence, you brought joy to John the Baptist, making him exult in the womb of his mother. Brimming over with joy, you sang of the great things done by God. Standing at the foot of the cross with unyielding faith, you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection, and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit so that the evangelizing Church might be born. Obtain for us now a new ardor born of the resurrection, that we may bring to all the Gospel of life which triumphs over death. Give us a holy courage to seek new paths, that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman. Virgin of listening and contemplation, Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast, pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are, that she may never be closed in on herself or lose her passion for establishing God’s kingdom. Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world. Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God’s little ones, pray for us.

Amen. Alleluia!



The following pages contain helpful information. Please make use of them.

The PDFs for this leader guide and the retreatant guide are available at www.kofc.org/gospel.

It is recommended to print or copy appendices (and other pages) as needed.

Appendix A: Heart of the Gospel FAQ

Q: What is the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat?

A: The *Heart of the Gospel* is a retreat for men developed by the Knights of Columbus together with Fr. John Riccardo and the ACTS XXIX: Mobilizing for Mission apostolate. It is a free, video-based retreat that *Cor* leaders can facilitate at a local parish with their pastor's permission.

Q: Why should I attend the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat?

A: You should attend because Fr. Riccardo presents the Gospel in a dynamic way that you are unlikely to have experienced before. In addition to excellent formation, you'll have times of prayer to encounter the Lord in Scripture and Sacramentally, and plenty of chances for fraternal discussion with your brothers in Christ.

Q: Why should I facilitate or volunteer at the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat?

A: The *Heart of the Gospel* retreat is meant to help men become more devoted disciples of Jesus Christ. That's a good cause to support! More specifically, facilitating the retreat is a unique leadership

opportunity that will help you and your team draw closer in friendship and improve as leaders. Not only will you be helping men know and love Jesus, but you'll be honing your abilities as a leader, too.

Q: Who can attend?

A: The retreat is offered to any man (18 years or older) of your parish. If men from other parishes and councils want to attend, you should ask your pastor and grand knight if that is acceptable. You want to ensure that parishes and KofC councils in the same area maintain good relationships, so it is important to check with your pastor and grand knight and follow the lead of your pastor.

Q: What should retreatants bring to the retreat?

A: Typically, all necessary materials for the retreat will be provided to you. If you prefer praying with your personal rosary beads or Bible, you may wish to bring them, but you generally are not required to bring anything with you. In certain circumstances – if you volunteered to bring specific materials, for instance – you may need to bring something with you if it could not be delivered prior to the start of the retreat.

Appendices

Q: What is the cost?

A: The retreat materials are available at no cost, and local councils are encouraged to defray materials and food costs associated with the retreat. The goal is for the retreat to be provided for free, but it is possible a cost will be associated with the retreat, though the cost should be minimal.

Q: Will retreatants be asked to join the Knights of Columbus during the retreat?

A: The retreat script contains nothing related to KofC membership requests. Individual men on the retreat could in theory ask you to join the Order, but they would be doing so of their own initiative, not as a part of the retreat proper. You will be invited to participate in *Cor*, but you do not have to be a Knight to do so.

Q: Do retreatants need to attend *Cor* to attend the retreat?

A: No, but there are special *Cor* sessions before and after the retreat that will help you make the most of your retreat experience. It will be helpful to attend *Cor* before and after the retreat to benefit from these sessions, as well as to meet many of the men who likely will be attending and helping to facilitate the retreat.

Q: You posted the retreat videos online, so why should I come to the retreat in person?

A: While watching the videos by yourself could be beneficial, the experience of hearing Fr. Riccardo's

presentations in the company of the men of your parish, praying with them, and having fraternal discussions with them is what makes the retreat. You would be missing out on so many of the most important aspects of the retreat if you simply watched the videos by yourself, and you would be depriving other men of your presence and the unique contributions you can make to their experience of the retreat.

Appendix B: Sample Supplies List

- Printed Retreat Scripts and Schedules
- Food and Drink
- Tablecloths
- Plates
- Napkins
- Cutlery
- Cups
- A/V Equipment
- Laptop or Smart Device that can connect to A/V equipment
- HDMI or other cables
- Chargers and cords
- Printed Retreatant Guides
- Pens/Pencils
- Name Tags
- Pre-printed icebreaker questions for tables at start of retreat
- Rosaries
- Rosary Guides (#4772)
- Confession Guides (#2075)
- Silent timer for Lectio Divina

Appendix C: Sample After-Mass Announcement

The announcement below makes several assumptions that may not be true in your specific case. Be sure to adjust the announcement as needed.

Hello! My name is [NAME], and I'm here to invite the men of the parish to join us for the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat on [DATE] here at [PARISH NAME].

The *Heart of the Gospel* is a dynamic retreat focused on who Jesus is and what he has done for us. It presents the explosive power of the Gospel in a way that deeply resonates with men today. Talks from Fr. John Riccardo of the ACTS XXIX apostolate are the main formation element, and there will be plenty of time for prayer and fraternal conversation, too, just like during *Cor*.

All men of the parish are welcome to attend, and there is no cost. Our local Knights of Columbus [COUNCIL NAME AND NUMBER] is covering all expenses.

We really want you to experience this retreat. I promise you it will help you understand better what it really means to say, "Jesus is Lord."

My Brother Knights will be at the doors, and I will be in the vestibule if you want more information or want to sign up. Thank you so much for your attention.

God bless you, and Vivat Jesus!

Appendix D: Sample Copy for Pre-Retreat Texts/Emails

Let the liturgical calendar do part of the work for you: offer appropriate messages related to Mass readings, feast days, and the current or upcoming liturgical season.

Examples for Advent:

As you prepare to receive the gift of the infant Jesus, pray that God will overwhelm you with his grace now and on the [DATE] when you attend the Heart of the Gospel retreat.

On [DATE], the Heart of the Gospel retreat will help you to stand with John the Baptist and be a Herald of Jesus Christ.

Examples for Lent:

We started Lent by receiving ashes and admitting we desperately need the grace of God to save us. At the Heart of the Gospel retreat on [DATE] we will experience in a new way just what Jesus did to rescue us from sin, death, and hell.

If the retreat in Lent is near the Solemnity of St. Joseph:

Ask St. Joseph to intercede for you and your fellow retreatants as you near the time for the Heart of the Gospel retreat and prepare to celebrate Easter.

Other Examples:

Jesus is Lord! Soon you'll have the opportunity to come to a deeper understanding of that truth with your brothers in Christ at the Heart of the Gospel retreat.

Pray for the men who will be facilitating the Heart of the Gospel retreat at our parish, that God will bless

them and remove any obstacles that might prevent them from bringing the men of our parish closer to Jesus.

The Heart of the Gospel retreat is in X days. Are you ready? Come to Cor tomorrow to prepare for the retreat with your brothers.

Appendix E: Sample Questions for Retreat Sign-Ups

Ask retreatants for the following information:

- First and Last Name
- Cell Phone Number
- Email Address
- Parish

Additional optional questions may include:

- Are you Catholic?
 - If not, how would you describe your religious identity?
- Are you a member of the KofC?
 - If so, what council?
- Do you attend Cor or another men's group?
 - If so, where and how often?
- Do you have any medical conditions like allergies or physical disabilities?
 - If so, please describe them so we can better meet your needs.
- How did you hear about this retreat?
- What do you hope to get out of this retreat?

Include the following disclosure for acknowledgment.

"By submitting this registration, I confirm that I am an adult (18+) man, and I consent to the retreat

organizers contacting me via text, phone call, and/or email about the retreat or matters related to it."

The retreat will take place on [DATE] at [TIME]. We will meet at [LOCATION].

Appendix F: Questions for Volunteer Sign-Ups

Ask volunteers for the following information:

- First and Last Name
- Cell Phone Number
- Email Address
- Parish
- Sex
- The retreat takes place at [Location] on [DATE] from [TIME] to [TIME]. When are you available to volunteer? Please provide a range of time (i.e., 'From 12pm to 3pm')
- Are you Catholic?
 - If not, how would you describe your religious identity?
- Are you a member of the KofC?
 - If so, what council?
- Do you attend a faith sharing or fellowship group, or a Bible study?
 - Where?
 - How often?
- Do you have any medical conditions like allergies or physical disabilities?
 - If so, please describe them so we can better meet your needs.
- How did you hear about this retreat?
- Why do you want to volunteer for this retreat?

- Have you completed the diocesan safe environment training and background check? What date were they completed?

Include the following disclosure for acknowledgment.

“By submitting this registration, I confirm I am an adult (18+) and I consent to the retreat organizers contacting me via text, phone call, and/or email about the retreat or matters related to it.”

Appendix G: Sample Questions for Post-Retreat Feedback Survey

Create a QR code that will take people directly to the survey when scanned, and encourage retreatants to take the survey immediately when the retreat has ended.

Use the language below to preface your questions:

“Thank you for attending the *Heart of the Gospel* retreat! We would be very grateful if you took a few minutes to respond to this anonymous feedback survey. Thank you so much!”

The questions below should be among the questions you ask in the survey. The open-ended questions should not be flagged as required.

- Did you attend the Heart of the Gospel retreat at [PARISH] on [DATE]? (Yes/No)
- Did you know anyone who attended the retreat? (Yes/No)
- Did you know anyone who facilitated the retreat? (Yes/No)
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “very poor” and 5 being “very good”, how would you rate Fr. Riccardo’s talks? (1 to 5 scale)
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “very poor” and 5 being “very good”, how would you rate your experience of the times of prayer? (1 to 5 scale)
- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “very poor” and 5 being “very good”, how would you rate your experience of the times for fraternal discussion? (1 to 5 scale)
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all likely” and 10 being “extremely likely”, how likely are you to recommend this retreat to a man in your parish who did not attend? (1 to 10 scale)
- How could this retreat be improved? (open-ended)
- Do you have any other feedback? (open-ended)

APPENDIX H: Mandatory Reporting

Retreat leadership team members may have potential legal obligations that may arise from certain disclosures that could occur during a retreat. These potential obligations vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. One legal obligation that could arise is the duty to report suspected abuse or neglect of minors or other vulnerable persons to local or state authorities. Though all retreatants are adults, it is still possible that information about vulnerable persons – minors, adults with special needs, the elderly, etc. - may be revealed, which may trigger a duty to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Retreat leadership team members should review local mandatory reporting laws as part of their

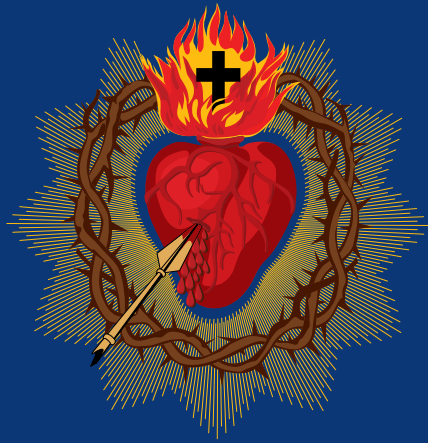
team's preparation for the retreat. In the United States, mandatory reporting laws for each state can be found using an online resource from the Child Welfare Information Gateway - [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect | Child Welfare Information Gateway](#). A list of specific state child abuse and neglect reporting numbers can be found here - [State Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Numbers | Child Welfare Information Gateway](#). In Canada, information about reporting obligations can be found here - [Provincial and Territorial Assistance | Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal](#). All suspected abuse and neglect must be reported to state and local authorities as required by law, and there can be legal consequences for failure to report. Reports to authorities are confidential.

Anyone with information related to suspected abuse involving a child or vulnerable person that may constitute a crime should contact local law enforcement and submit tips through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's cybertip line at cybertipline.org; in Canada - cybertip.ca/en/report

Given that many retreats will occur in the context of parishes within dioceses, retreat leadership team members should check with their pastor and diocese to learn about and understand local diocesan safeguarding standards, policies, and procedures, including reporting obligations. Where abuse is suspected, it will be necessary to notify the pastor of a parish in which the retreat is taking place, as well as the local diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP). In addition, notification of suspected abuse must be made to the Knights of Columbus using its dedicated helpline - **1-844-563-2723**. If a report is made to any law enforcement or child protective authority, be sure

to also notify the pastor, the local OCYP, and the Knights of Columbus immediately.

Notification of church personnel and/or the Knights of Columbus of suspected abuse – while required – does not fulfill the legal obligations of a mandatory reporter to report to local and state authorities. Mandated reports should be made consistent with legal obligations in accordance with local and state law.



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The Heart of Our Mission

