

Esto Vir

Individual Platoon Curriculum

2017 – 2018

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I. The Purpose

The purpose of this curriculum is to offer a guideline for Platoon Leaders in leading the men in their platoon into fuller communion with Jesus Christ. Our overall goal is to become saints by being followers of Christ in and through our vocation. “*Esto Vir*” is Latin for “Be a man”; with the impetus of Bishop Olmsted’s Exhortation *Into the Breach*, the platoons of *Esto Vir* – the initiative of St. Joan of Arc – will encourage each other, challenge each other to grow in holiness, and to call forth to mission each member according to his vocation.¹ In order to achieve the fruit needed to become saints, routine meetings need to take place in every platoon. These meetings should act as rich soil, where each man’s formation has the opportunity to grow and flourish.

II. The “Platoons”: The Basic Structure and Responsibilities of a Platoon Leader

- A. While each Platoon leader has the freedom for organizing their meetings, a basic structure needs to be in place that includes three areas of formation: the human, the spiritual and the intellectual. These three areas make up an integral whole for forming men to become effect disciples of Jesus Christ.

1. Human Formation

The purpose of human formation is to assist each man in his task of becoming a man of integrity with the personality necessary to serve his family and the Church. These can be ordered to assist men to grow in true freedom, to develop a solid moral character, to be well-oriented to the truth, to become a man of communion, to evidence affective maturity, to be respectful of every person, to exercise appropriate care for his physical well-being, to be a good steward with respect to temporal goods, and to be a confident leader.

2. Spiritual Formation

In the area of spiritual formation, men seek to grow in their relationship with Christ through a prayer, fasting and contemplation. In this relationship, they encounter the overwhelming love of God in their lives and share His merciful compassion as Jesus tells us, “*No greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*” (John 15:13).

¹ Cf. *Into the Breach (ITB)*, 2: “I offer this Exhortation... for every willing man in the Diocese of Phoenix: priests, deacons, husbands, fathers and sons, grandfathers and widowers, young men in preparation for your vocation – that is, *each and every man*.”

3. Intellectual Formation

In the area of intellectual formation, men seek to encounter faith through study (e.g. the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with Sacred Scripture; Magisterial documents). They are transformed through the renewal of their minds (cf. Romans 12:2), thinking about reality with the mind of the Church. In this they will increase their capacity for authentically proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. John 14:6) to all they encounter.

- B. Communication is essential. Effective communication will demonstrate our commitment of including men in our band of brotherhood as friends in Christ.
- C. Platoon Leaders must strive to create an accountability among the platoon, a brotherhood where each man has a stake in each other's human, intellectual and spiritual formation². (cf. Gen 4:9: "Where is your brother...?").
- D. Each platoon is expected to foster real relationships, where trust can be built with the hope of creating openness in the heart of the man.
- E. Each platoon should be unique. With respect to the continuity of *Esto Vir's* overall identity, each platoon leader should not stray too far from the basic structure. There may be times when a member will need to switch platoons, so the structure must be recognizable among all platoons. While the structure must be consistent, it is not the intention to constrict the creative process in regards to each platoon's unique character.

The Basic structure of a platoon meeting:

1. Minimum of once a month. Every two weeks is optimal.
2. Initiation –
 - Start with a prayer, the simpler the better.
 - Thank them for being there – Some sort of encouragement
 - Introduce new members (if applicable)
3. Formation –
 - *Human* – Make time for interaction among the men. (Catching up on each other's lives and socializing softens the heart and aids in openness).
 - *Spiritual* – Come prepared to share some form of prayer in the beginning and at the end.
 - *Intellectual* – Be prepared to challenge your platoon to some sort of study.
4. Conclusion –
 - End on time – very important.
 - Schedule your next meeting.
 - Thank them for coming.
 - End with simple prayer.

² Cf. *Into the Breach (ITB)*, 14: What a blessing to have the presence of good faithful friends to provide the encouragement and accountability we need to be free! Indeed, as the Scriptures tell us, "as iron sharpens iron, so one man must sharpen another" (Proverbs 27:17).

III. Suggestions and Resources

A. Prayer

The Saint Joseph Prayer³ could be used to either open or close a Platoon meeting. Other forms of prayers could also be used (e.g. the rosary; chaplet of divine mercy). Platoon leaders will decide how best to open and close their meetings with prayer. (Note: It is encouraged that the St. Joseph Prayer somehow be used).

B. Formation: Human, Spiritual and Intellectual

There are several resources available for providing integral formation; Platoon leaders are free to utilize what works best. Beginning 2017, the “*Virtue Series*” and the “*Stewardship Series*” through “Kapaun’s Men⁴” will be available for use during platoon meetings. This will give the men a great opportunity to learn about their *human formation*. *Spiritual formation* could occur by going to Adoration or Mass together as men, in addition to reciting prayers together. In terms of *intellectual formation*, there is Bishop Olmsted’s Exhortation *Into the Breach*⁵ which could be read, or other documents from the Church (e.g. the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, papal encyclicals, etc.).

C. Other Suggestions

Meeting at one’s home or a restaurant for a meal could be a good way to come together. As mentioned above, platoons can also meet for (daily) Mass. Rooms are available on St. Joan of Arc’s campus.⁶

³ This is on the “*Esto Vir*” prayer card. Ask Fr. Kline, Brian or Andy about obtaining copies. Here is the prayer:

“St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the Throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires. O St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ, Our Lord; so that having engaged here below Your heavenly power I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers. O St. Joseph, I never weary of contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms. I dare not approach while he reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine Head for me, and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, patron of departing souls, pray for us. Amen.”

⁴ *Kapaun’s Men* unites men in prayer, formation and discussion in order to help them courageously respond to God’s universal call to holiness and become better husbands, fathers, leaders and friends. See www.kapaunsmen.org.

⁵ There is a resourceful website associated with the Exhortation available here: <http://www.intothebreach.org>.

⁶ Ask Brian, Andy or Fr. Kline about reserving space for platoon meetings at St. Joan of Arc.