



# BASE CAMP

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ARCHDIOCESE *of* MILWAUKEE

TREKKING GUIDE BOOK

A person wearing a dark jacket and red pants stands on a snowy mountain ridge, looking out over a vast mountain range. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The foreground shows deep snow and shadows cast by the person and nearby trees.

# VERSO L'ALTO

[to the heights]

## **Are you ready to climb?**

In mountaineering, when climbers ascend to a summit they usually aren't doing it from the bottom of the mountain. Those who have made it as far as Base Camp, just below the summit, find a supportive community of climbers who encourage and help each other acclimate and prepare for their final ascent.

Brew City Catholic's Base Camp is 90 days of encouragement and strengthening for your ascent to the heights of holiness within a community of committed climbers. It's a concentrated season of encountering Christ, becoming more firm in your faith, and emerging more confident in sharing the Gospel than ever before.

**You will be challenged, but you won't climb alone.**

**Commit to the ascent.**

# Base Camp Practices

## TIME FOR GOD.

### Daily Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day praying with Scripture passages provided on your *Prayer Guide Card*.

### Nightly Examen/Journaling

Examine each day and journal with your Examen Card

### Frequent Confession

Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation once a month.

### More Mass

In addition to Sunday Mass, attend one daily mass more than you would normally.

## TIME FOR CONNECTION.

### Weekly Accountability Group

Meet weekly with 2-3 other climbers for accountability and encouragement.

### Weekly Formation Session (Via Zoom)

Every Sunday evening at 7:30pm zoom in for a 20-30 minute virtual formation session related to prayer, building friendships, and finding deeper purpose in life.

### Monthly Gatherings (In-Person)

Every month join an in-person prayer gathering to grow in prayer, friendship, and purpose. (optional)

## TIME FOR EXCELLENCE.

### Keep your phone out of your room.

Charge it elsewhere. Use the alarm clock from your Base Kit.

### Abstain from all social media.

Use your extra time to read a good book and exercise three days per week instead.

### Commit to doing small things with great love.

Wake up, say a quick prayer, make your bed. Have one home cooked meal per day. Wash every dirty dish right away - no dish left behind!

### Have "eyeball time" every day.

Spend time with people! Spontaneous or planned relational time 1-1 or in community everyday.

**Will this be easy?** *Probably not.*  
**Will you grow more in love with God?** *For sure!*

**No one can do the heavy lifting for you - but we're here to support you and we'll be praying for you all the way up.**

*Let's do this!*

# Training Schedule

Below is the virtual/in-person schedule for Base Camp. These sessions provide deeper formation in various areas of Catholic discipleship. The BOLD sessions are planned to be in-person formation sessions at St. Robert Parish in Shorewood, WI (more details to come).

All other sessions are via Zoom.

**See your confirmation email for the zoom link.**

Sunday, January 3rd | Introduction & Disposition | Fr. Jordan Berghouse

Sunday, January 10th | Created for Worship | TBA

Sunday, January 17th | The Role of the Holy Spirit | Pete Burak

**Friday, January 22nd | In-Person Gathering on Prayer**

Sunday, January 24th | Seasons of Prayer | Fr. Joe Laramie

Sunday, January 31st | Building Authentic Friendships | Sarah Swafford

Sunday, February 7th | Accompanying Others | Sarah Kaczmarek

**Friday, February 12th | In-Person Gathering on Friendship**

Sunday, February 14th | Poverty, Chastity, & Obedience in Daily Life | Fr. John Burns

Sunday, February 21st | A New Paradigm | Fr. Enrique Hernandez

Sunday, February 28th | Healthy Boundaries | Andrew & Colleen Billing

Sunday, March 7th | The Cost of Discipleship | Fr. Luke Strand

Sunday, March 14th | Your Life's Witness | Mari Pablo

**Friday, March 19th | In-Person Gathering on Purpose**

Sunday, March 21st | Discerning How to Serve | Fr. John LoCoco

Sunday, March 28th | Joyful Invitation | Jamie Cleaton

**Friday, April 9th | In-Person Resurrection Party | TBA**

# PRO-TIPS: Preparing for Base Camp

Between now and January 3, take some time to prepare. Ask Jesus to help you follow the Holy Spirit; he is the best teacher!

## SET A TIME FOR DAILY PRAYER & EXAMEN

- The best time for you to pray is the time that you will actually do it, so find the time that works for your life.
- Plan 20 minutes when you can give God your undivided attention --we recommend making this the first thing you do when you get up in the morning.
- Plan for another 15-20 minutes sometime before bed to give God your undivided attention for your daily examen and journaling.
- Doing it at the same time each day is helpful if this is possible for you.
- Put these times in your calendar. Set a reminder.

## READY YOUR PRAYER SPACE

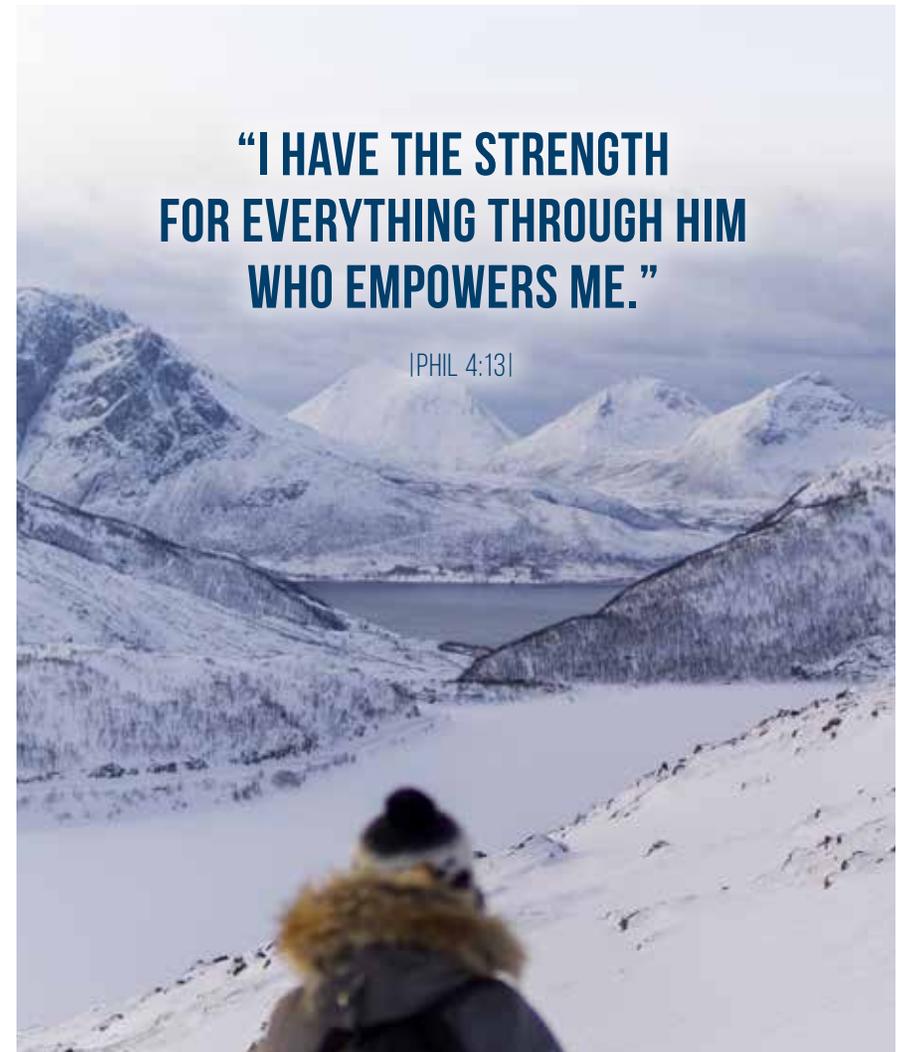
- Find a quiet spot with limited distractions where you won't be interrupted.
- Find a location where you do not usually work, sleep, or watch Netflix. If that's not possible, try to arrange it in a new way to make it a space you are excited to use and is more conducive to prayer.
- Make sure it has comfortable seating and good lighting.
- Consider adorning the space with a crucifix, a favorite image of Scripture or a Saint, and a votive candle to light during prayer.
- Set up your space with your Bible, *Prayer Guide Card*, journal, *Daily Examen Card*, and a favorite pen.
- Let others in your household know when you are taking your prayer time and ask them to respect your time of quiet prayer--or to join you for it! They may enjoy it!

## ASK FOR WHAT YOU DESIRE (BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND)

- Take some time to consider what you desire to be different when you finish:
  - What would you like your relationship with God to be like?
  - What good habits would you like to have established in your life?
  - What virtues would you like to have strengthened?
  - What do you want God to do for your loved ones and the world?

- Jesus is able to accomplish far more than we ask or imagine (Eph 3:20). Ask Him for the grace to grow in these ways and to answer your prayers for others.
- Write down what you asked. Keep it handy. Ask Jesus for this grace regularly. This can help you to stay committed to your time of prayer when it gets tough.

Remember, if you miss a day, don't get discouraged. Simply return to Jesus the next day and ask Him to help you to try again. His grace is renewed each morning (Lam 3:22-24).



# Gear Up

A successful climb requires the proper gear and knowing how to use it. This Base Kit contains:

**Alarm Clock** - so you can get up on time without your phone and start the day right.

**Bible** - for reading your daily Scripture; feel free to write in it and make it your own.

**Journal** - for processing and logging your progress.

**Prayer Guide Card** - gives you coordinates for your daily prayer with Scripture and a guide for how to use your 20 minutes in prayer. We suggest keeping this in your Bible.

**Daily Examen Card** - gives you a guide for reviewing your day, a checklist of our Base Camp Practices to monitor your progress, and suggested journaling prompts. We suggest keeping this in your journal. Notice that there are a few blank lines on the checklist of daily practices. This is in case you or your accountability group set specific goals that you wish to add.

**Good Books** - to read when you're not using social media.

We included a couple to get you started.

- *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales - intellectual & spiritual formation
- *Lift Up Your Heart* by Fr. John Burns - practical how-to prayer
- *Set All Afire* by Louis DeWohl - good story of great saint

**The Ultimate Relationship** - a short and useful guide for sharing the Gospel

**Mug & Tea** - for hydration and that cozy feeling as you read Scripture or your good books

**Scrabble Tiles** - for connecting with your accountability group

**Salt** - for those home cooked meals

**Dish Soap** - so NO dish is left behind

**Stickers** - because who doesn't love a Brew City Catholic sticker



# Your Climbing Group

Base Camp will help you connect with an accountability group of 3-4 fellow climbers to share your journey called a "climbing group".

Reach out to them soon to find a day/time that works for you all to meet either in-person or virtually once a week for 60-90 minutes.

Here's how to spend your group time:

## WEEKLY CLIMBING GROUP ITINERARY

- 2 minutes Open in Prayer asking God to bless your time in your own words
- 5 minutes Community Building Warm Ups  
(at least first few weeks--see suggested Warm Ups on p.11)
- 10 minutes How are you?
- 10 minutes How are you and God? How's your prayer?
- 10 minutes How are you doing with our daily/weekly/monthly commitments?  
How can we help each other with this?
- 12 minutes What stood out for you from this week's Formation Zoom?  
What do you think God is trying to teach us through that?
- 10 minutes Closing prayer  
How can we pray for you?  
(Not only for others in your life, but for you?)  
Then pray for each other in your own words.
- 1 minute Confirm our next meeting day/time.  
Anything else we need to remember for next week?  
Upcoming In-Person Gathering?  
Important dates like Ash Wednesday?

## 3 PRACTICES FOR CLIMBING GROUPS

### Be Connected

*adjective: brought together or into contact so that a real or notional link is established.*

- Show up. As simple as it sounds, simply committing to be with each other for your weekly meetings is the foundation of building community and encouraging each other to grow.
- Invest your attention in people as if you are holding their climbing rope. Attention is often the greatest gift you can give someone.
- Recognize in each other the desire for holiness. The most life-giving friendships are those based on the common goal of Holiness.

## Be Sincere

*adjective: saying what you genuinely feel or believe; not dishonest or hypocritical.*

- Don't accept a label in place of a story. Avoid putting people in boxes. Each person is a unique and unrepeatable child of God. Seek to know their story over their attributes/gifts/weaknesses.
- Value honesty over vulnerability. We can sometimes idolize vulnerability as the goal of sharing. This can put pressure on how we share. Don't seek to match others in your group but share at the level you are comfortable. Trust comes from honesty not vulnerability.
- Treat the soul like a wild animal. Recognize that when someone is sharing something vulnerable your response has an impact. Empathize, encourage, and keep confidentiality. Be trustworthy.

## Be Accountable

*adjective: required or expected to justify actions or decisions; responsible.*

- Be very explicit with what your commitments are. Make sure to talk through the commitments you're each making even if you think they are clear.
- Make sure you are all clear on the why of each commitment. This is where motivation really kicks in.
- Be responsible for one another. Decide on exactly how you are going to keep track of commitments and when you are going to ask each other about them. (Suggestion: use the app HabitShare) Accountability will fail as soon as you stop giving each other the specific opportunity to "account" for commitments. If it fails, seek to re-establish through honest conversation.
- Be creative. Come up with creative and fun ways to encourage accountability. For example, if you want to get to bed at a certain time, make it a tradition to play a game of cribbage, or watch an episode of The Office right before bed with a roommate.
- Celebrate failure: If you complete a daily commitment 3 days a week that you previously were doing 0 days a week, celebrate the 3 wins rather than dismiss the week because of the 4 fails. The process of growth necessarily involves failure.



## COMMUNITY BUILDING WARM UP QUESTIONS

1. What superpower do you wish you had?
2. What animal do you hope is in heaven?
3. What sport do you wish you were good at?
4. What book would you like to read (other than the Bible)?
5. What movie should everyone watch and why?
6. Who are two people (alive or dead) you would like to have dinner with?
7. What skill would you like to have?
8. What is your favorite restaurant and your favorite dish there?
9. If you were stranded on a desert island what one book and one TV show would you bring?
10. What is your favorite full album?
11. What is your favorite ice cream/gelato/fro yo flavor?
12. What is your favorite souvenir you have brought back from a vacation?
13. If you could have an unlimited supply of any one thing what would it be?
14. Pick three people you'd like on your zombie apocalypse team.
15. Who was your childhood actor/actress/singer crush?
16. What is your favorite and least favorite kitchen item to clean?
17. What is your favorite board game?
18. What is your favorite cookout food?
19. What is your favorite sandwich?
20. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
21. Use your scrabble letters:
  - a. What could you say about yourself using those tiles? For example, if your tiles are DOM and you love modern decor, you could arrange to MOD. Or you might rearrange to DMO if you are someone who Does My Own thing. If your dog is super cool, you could rearrange to OMD, for OhMyDog is amazing. You could come up with many ways that those 3 letters express who you are. You should do that... you never know. There could be a contest...
  - b. What if you put all of your letters together?
  - c. What if you put all of your letters together and had use of the letters "COMMUNITY"?

# How to Share Your Story

**Conversion or "Metanoia"** is a change of heart that happens through the Holy Spirit. It is the beginning of a continual, on-going conversion. We participate in this conversion when we are effective witnesses to the workings of God in our own lives, sharing stories of God acting in our lives.

**An Effective Witness** is an account of a *specific* encounter with the Lord in one's life

- We see in our lives the places God has become incarnate and we make Him known by proclaiming the story.
- We personalize the Gospel to help others understand that God is at work today in our lives.
- Our story gives others something to connect to – the personal experience of truth lived out.
- It can be used anywhere: retreats, small groups, one-on-one conversations
- Three to four minutes is ideal. It is succinct and memorable.
- A witness always glorifies God. He is the main character.
- The focus of your witness is to share what God has done in your life.
- Tell the truth.

## The Three Main Parts to an Effective Witness

### 1) Part One: Before 'Metanoia' or Conversion

- This is where you share what your life was like before conversion.
- Try to be concise and avoid unnecessary details – too many details distract from your main point.
- Do NOT glorify the sin that was in your life – there is no need to speak specifically about sinfulness (keep it general like, "I was in an impure relationship," "I was struggling with an addiction").
- Own up to your mistakes, do not blame someone else

### 2) Part Two: Conversion Point

- Paint a picture of the scene: be very detailed.
- What were the circumstances?
- What happened that helped you turn to the Lord? What did the Lord do?
- What was the crux issue of why you said "yes" to the Lord?

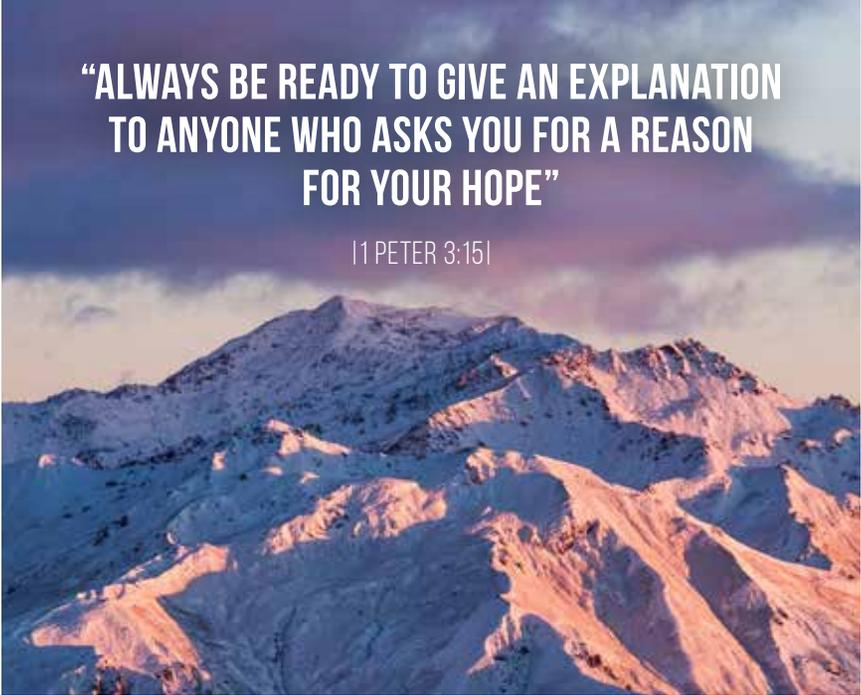
### 3) Part Three: Life in Christ

- You are still human, so do not make it sound like everything is perfect now that you met Jesus. Share that you are still growing and learning.
- Give concrete differences in your life (try to connect something from Part One)
- Offer an invitation, not a command (love Jesus, follow Christ, go to confession, etc.)
- End with a strong conclusion.

## Finished Writing?

Some good questions to ask:

- Does your witness glorify sin?
- Does it have Jesus as the main character?
- Is there a main 'theme' throughout your story?
- Do you use too many 'buzz' words? Or insider language others would not understand?
- Is it concise?
- Does your main point come across?
- Is it relatable?
- Does it paint a picture?
- Do you have a closing invitation/challenge?

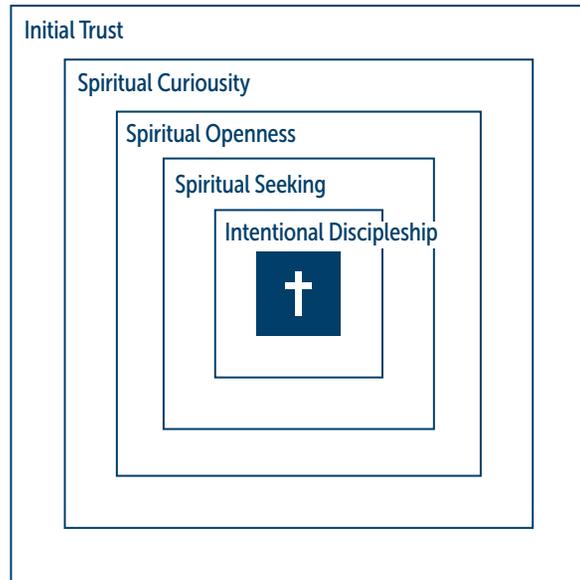


**"ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE AN EXPLANATION  
TO ANYONE WHO ASKS YOU FOR A REASON  
FOR YOUR HOPE"**

[1 PETER 3:15]

# Thresholds of Conversion

## Non-believing, Non-trusting



**Non-believing, Non-trusting:** *"I don't believe in God. I don't trust what the Church says about God"*

How to help people cross the next threshold: Pray for them. Love them. Be a good friend who happens to be Catholic.

**Initial Trust:** *"I've had a few positive experiences with the Church, a Catholic or a Christian, but I'm not sure I believe what they say about God"*

How to help people cross the next threshold: Continue praying for them and being a loving friend. Let God use your life as bait. Love and live in a way that awakens their curiosity. When appropriate, share stories of how God has acted in your life.

**Spiritual Curiosity:** *"Why do you do that Catholic thing you do? Why do you believe \_\_\_\_? Could it be possible that God loves me and wants me to know Him like you seem to know Him? I'm not really open to changing, but I am interested in your experience."*

How to help people cross the next threshold: Continue praying, being a loving friend, and sharing stories. Answer their questions simply (don't drown a teaspoon of curiosity with a gallon of answers). If you don't know answers, find them. Do not assume their questions mean they're seeking and do not push them. When appropriate, invite them to "come and see" your faith, community, service, prayer, etc.

**Spiritual Openness:** *"If you're out there God, show me. If you want to have a relationship with me, I'm here, I'm open to it"*

How to help people cross the next threshold: Continue praying, being a loving friend, sharing stories, answering questions, and inviting them to "come and see." Affirm their openness and invite them to "come closer" to God. Gently help them to understand that if they want to know God, they need to actively look for Him and His answers to their questions.

**Spiritual Seeking:** *"I want to get to know God if I can. I'm looking for God and His answers to my life questions. How do I pray? How do I get to know God?"*

How to help people cross the next threshold: Continue praying, being a loving friend, sharing stories, answering questions, inviting them to "come and see" and "come closer." Help them to understand the gospel message, wrestle with personal sin, find God's healing for wounds, and choose to have faith and follow Jesus. Encourage them to enter RCIA if not Catholic or make a good confession to return to their Catholic faith.

**Intentional Discipleship:** *"I'm all in. I believe Jesus is with me and I choose to follow Him in His Church. I'm willing to drop things which separate me from Him and I want to grow in relationship with Him, live my purpose, and take up my part in God's mission."*

How to help people continue growing as a disciple (because there's always more): Continue praying, being a loving friend, sharing stories, answering questions, inviting them to "come and see," "come closer," wrestle with personal sin, find healing, and choose to live their faith. Accompany them as they learn and live the anatomy of a Catholic Disciple.

## Listening Evangelism: Having Threshold Conversations

1. Do you believe in God? or Where is God for you in that? or What has been your experience of God?
2. What kind of God do you believe in? (Personal or impersonal)
3. Do you believe in the possibility of a relationship with this God?
4. Do you have a relationship with this God? What kind of relationship?
5. Are you a part of a religious tradition? Which tradition? Are you Christian?
6. Do you have a positive association with Jesus or the Faith?
7. Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? Do you pray? How do you pray?
8. Is your faith something that causes you to change how you live your life?
9. If you could ask God one question and know the answer, what would it be?

*Adapted from Forming Intentional Disciples by Sherry Weddell*



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