

September 2007

Dear Parents:

I'm pleased to introduce you to Ignatian Teens (IT), an expansion of the monthly service program Judy Choix began in **2004**.

IT is a group for teenagers who want to take their faith more seriously, learn to minister to those in need and to each other, and together create a new "culture" of adolescent relationships and social engagement. There will be opportunities for these students to put their faith into action, reflect spiritually on their lived experience, interrogate their faith tradition when questions arise and help shape and plan future events. I have found that ministry to this age group is not solely about planning activities for them, but creating space for reflection and discernment so that they can make choices that lead to the flourishing of their human potential rather than to its diminishment. To this end I hope to function more as mentor and facilitator than a director. My hope is that the students will see themselves as collaborators in this project.

An exciting feature of this new program is the construction of a website. Our vision is to include teenagers in the design and content for this site, and your son or daughter may be asked to write an article, create a blog, or do other journalistic tasks. Their generation is far more comfortable with virtual communities than older generations are, and I will always have them check with you first to give them permission to write for this site. This new site is scheduled to launch in January 2008.

In a recent sociological study of teenage faith experience, Notre Dame Professor Christian Smith discovered that the most influential figures in the religious lives of adolescents are their parents. This report suggests that IT will be most successful if I work with you, and if you encourage the teenager in your life to participate, show interest in their involvement and perhaps even get involved when I make direct appeals for parent leadership and hospitality. Ideally, we will strike a balance between opportunities for the teenagers to be with each other without their parents, and events that are better because you are a part of them.

If you have any questions, please check the Ignatian Teens website (Q&A, 'Parent Page,' Events Calendar). If you need to reach me directly, it is best to try my e-mail: [donohuea@saintignatiusloyola.org](mailto:donohuea@saintignatiusloyola.org). I am only in the Parish office one day a week, but I check email regularly and respond as quickly as I am able.

I look forward to meeting you and working with you this year.

Yours,

Alison Donohue

