

Extreme Faith Camp 2019

Jesus calls to each of us, "Come Follow Me." (Matthew 4:19). On Saturday, June 29th, 2019 more than a hundred middle-school youth, from eight parishes, did just this as they piled on two buses in the Saint Henry parking lot. They were headed up to Extreme Faith Camp for a week that would change their lives. After a two-and-a-half-hour trip, the buses pulled into camp and were greeted by another group of a hundred energetic high-school, young adult, & adult leaders who had arrived two days earlier to prepare camp for their arrival. Jesus had called each of them to follow Him to Extreme Faith Camp.

Extreme Faith Camp (EFC) is a 5-day camp for middle-school youth where we seek to encounter Jesus and learn to live as His disciples! EFC is a multi-parish effort that is led by youth ministers with the help of high-school, young adult, & adult volunteers, divided into three teams: Prayer Team (9th grade, behind-the-scenes prayer warriors), Extreme Team (10th-12th grade, small group leaders), Dream Team (college-age, program leaders). This year, the Church of Saint Henry came together with seven parishes: Divine Mercy, Good Shepherd, Saint Andrew, Saint Ignatius, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Timothy. Our week of EFC included over 200 campers & leaders—40 of which were from Saint Henry.



Extreme Faith Camp 2019 – Saint Henry Group

The week of Extreme Faith Camp includes extreme-fun and extreme-faith. Surrounded by northern Minnesota beauty, we had the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of outdoor activities such as swimming, canoeing/kayaking, fishing, low-ropes course, zip line, archery, field games, and an EFC tradition called "Wacky Olympics". But ultimately what impacted us the most at camp was the extreme love of God. We met for morning bible studies, listened to talks by the youth minister, gathered for small group discussion, experienced various forms of prayer, took in moving dramas, received God's Mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and received the Eucharist in daily Mass. For the second year in a row, we were blessed to have our pastor Fr. Tony VanderLoop serve as the camp priest for EFC! The climactic experience of camp for many was a special time of Adoration and procession of the Blessed Sacrament, where each teen was blessed individually. Many were moved to tears during this powerful and personal encounter with Jesus. God's loving call echoed in their hearts: "Come Follow Me." Here is what our middle-school campers and high-school, young adult, & adult leaders say about EFC:

"My experience at EFC was super fun. I made lots of new friends from my parish and other parishes. I loved Adoration and my small group. My cabin was super nice and the leaders were great! I learned more about my faith through the skits and talks that were given to us throughout the week. EFC has been the highlight of my summer. I have also helped create a bible study group with the friends I made during that week." – Avril, *Camper*

"This year extreme faith camp was very good. It was my first year on Extreme Team, so I was a small group leader with a group of kids. There were so many things to do at camp like laser tag, swimming, paddle boarding, carpet ball, and so many more. My small group had very good conversations and they really enjoyed Adoration. After camp, my prayer life has been much better. I have been doing more daily prayer and going to Confession." – Anthony, *Extreme Team*

"During camp I liked free time, rotations, the waterslide, polar bear and wacky Olympics because they were fun. I also liked adoration, confession, a daily mass because they changed me for the better and helped me grow in my faith. I didn't like bedtime because we didn't have AC and we didn't go to bed till 11. EFC was a great experience and I will never forget it so I want to thank the parish programs for helping pay for me to have the time of my life at EFC 2019!" – Aaron, *Camper*

"Thank you to the parish of St Henry's for your financial and spiritual help. You have blessed me with the opportunity to go to EFC. If I had to say what I liked the most at EFC I would have to say adoration. Adoration was so incredible for me because it was the first adoration where I felt a real connection to God. After a while in adoration, I had started to cry, but what was different was that my voice wasn't shaky, so I was still able to sing and praise the Lord. Then, sometime towards the middle of adoration I was slain by the spirit which was a wonderful gift to receive. I feel so much closer to God and I can't wait for EFC next year." – Katharine, *Camper*

"My experience at Extreme Faith Camp was amazing. There were so many fun outdoor activities like swimming, a waterslide, zip line, paddle boarding, and so many more. Adoration was so wonderful; I felt the presence of Jesus there with me as I was praying. There were very inspiring talks that impacted my life. Extreme Faith Camp has definitely changed my prayer life, I pray more often and I pray more from the heart. I can't wait to go back next year!" – Lucy, *Camper*

"My favorite part of camp was Adoration. Everyone is worshipping together. The music makes the experience better. In the end everyone is closer to God" -Angie, *Prayer Team*

On day 1, my favorite part was when I had free time and I got to play knocker ball. Day 2 my favorite part is when we did rotations and did the petting farm and pet cats. Day 3 my favorite part was when we did adoration. I have not gone in a while, so it was nice. Day 4 my favorite part was the dance, they had good songs. Day 5 I was sad to leave. What I got out of it was I got deeper into faith and met some great friends. I did a lot of things I've never done before." – Braeden, *Camper*

"It was a total blast at EFC this year. When I went to adoration my whole body went cold and I felt like I got closer to God. At EFC when I went to Mass the whole Mass changed afterwards; It was fun and an amazing experience" – Zach, *Camper*

"I thought that EFC is a great way for the students to encounter our Lord and be uplifted in the Faith to find out what it means that we are Catholic and why it is wonderful." – Peter, *Adult Leader*

"I am so blessed to attend a parish that grants such support for us as youth both spiritually and financially to be able to attend events such as Extreme Faith Camp. This year was my third year going to EFC, but this year was such a new experience as we were not only at a different campsite, but I was on prayer team rather than being just a camper. Prayer team was a life changing experience. I spent the majority of my week being cloistered, which gave me the opportunity to grow with those around me who were also on prayer team. I had the opportunity to spend hours at a time in adoration, which was beautiful. I received so many great gifts from my experience. I have grown so much in my prayer life and have felt the joy of the Lord within me. I feel prepared to spread the joy of the Lord in my life. I love EFC and can't wait for next year!" – Mary, *Prayer Team*

"I attended Extreme Faith Camp this year for the first time. As an adult, I was part of the prayer team, whose purpose was to support the campers and the leaders of the EFC camp by praying for them, cloistered in a chapel with our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. It was prayer of sacrifice, silence, praise, song and various talks. The fruits of it was seeing the youth experience and come alive with the Love of the Lord and the Eucharist at Mass and give back that Love with praise and song, etc. Jesus showed himself to each person, individually, including myself. It was truly God's unbelievable, overflowing, unbounding, unconditional, inconceivable everlasting love for each of us to the "EXTREME"! What a gift this week was. I look forward to next year!" – Grace, *Adult Leader*

"This year at camp was unlike any other. I was on prayer team for camp this year, so I spent most of my time in Eucharistic Adoration with about 40 other teens. Prayer team had about 10 hours of Adoration a day (not in a row) which we spent most of in prayer. We would pray the Liturgy of the Hours, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and sing praise & worship every day. We also had a petition box that we prayed for. The only times we left the chapel were for meals, bathroom breaks, Mass, at night, and a few times where we went to help set up/take down chairs. But even at night, we had at least two people from Prayer Team in the chapel too. The girls took the first and third nights, and the guys took the second and fourth nights. Although it was challenging for me at first (I was pretty upset that I didn't get to go and do anything for the rest of camp was doing) I slowly got used to it and really enjoyed it by the end of camp. I never realized what a gift prayer is before camp. I even bought a Breviary a few weeks later so I could pray the Liturgy of the Hours. I am so thankful for God, our parish, and our community, for helping me get to camp this year. It changed my life in so many different ways. Please come to camp when you get old enough. You won't regret it!" – Lexie, *Prayer Team*

Thank you to this parish community of Saint Henry and everyone who supported us, financially and spiritually, to go to EFC 2019! You changed many lives!