

BLAZE Coordinator, cont.

Purchasing kits and leaders guides

Each girl needs a BLAZE Kit, and placing one bulk order will save on shipping. BLAZE Kits should be shipped to one central location.

Some organizations choose to purchase an extra BLAZE Kit to have on hand in case a girl joins after registration ends.

Each Lesson Leader should have their own Leader's Guide. Some groups purchase an additional copy of the Leader Guide's to have available in the event a Lesson Leader is sick (and her Leader's Guide is home sick with her).

Planning the Assembly Party

We strongly encourage you to gather a group of women to help assemble the KITS after they arrive. If you attempt to do this alone, it will take so much more time (and be sort of lonely). Plus, it's FUN and a great way to get parents and leaders more engaged.

Sharing fruits of the program as you go

The most successful programs will keep the principal or pastor (or primary champion) in the loop! This may mean grabbing a testimony from one of the girls and sharing it, forwarding the weekly parent email or inviting your principal or pastor to one of the meetings. In one case, the Principal hosted a meeting of all the BLAZE leaders and parent helpers to simply check in and hear how the program was going. You may want to consider facilitating a meeting like this for your BLAZE program.

BLAZE Parent Helpers

The BLAZE Parent Helpers do much of the behind-the-scenes work. This includes:

- Gather and store room decor to transform space
- Pair girls in groups of 2 for prayer partner time. Send list to Lesson Leaders before first lesson.
- Establish who will set up and take down the room each week
- Send weekly emails to parents (Don't panic! We've already written the emails.)
- Be a second adult in the room for classroom management
- Act as a back-up Lesson Leader in a pinch
- Ensure the integration of a BLAZE Kit if a girl joins after the first lesson
- Host an Assembly Party

The Assembly Party

Okay. Take a deep breath. This is NOT as crazy as it sounds!

An Assembly Party is simply an opportunity to cultivate fellowship among the parents, and get organized in a fun and casual atmosphere! Once the BLAZE Kits arrive, break out the chips and salsa, and start assembling the takeaway gifts by LESSON for each group.

You were fine up until the chips and salsa, but now you are overwhelmed, aren't you? Don't be! We got your back. Read on...

Here is what you are going to do:

1. Pick a date and invite middle school parents, lesson leaders and anyone in your community who has a heart for leading girls to Christ.
2. Pick a location where you can be messy, spread out and ideally be close to where you will store all your materials (think: parish basement near a storage closet).
3. Bring 2 important items to your party: 1) your Leader's Guide 2) several oversized reusable grocery bags or boxes to separate each lesson.
4. Open all the BLAZE Kits and start to group "like" items together. So, if you purchased 20 kits, you will grab all 20 journals from the various boxes to make a pile of 20 prayer journals. You will continue to group like items into piles (20 bookmarks in a pile, 20 magnets in a pile) until you have all similar items in piles.
5. Using your Leader's Guide to match items to lessons, label your piles by lesson (lesson 1, lesson 2, etc.)
6. As you sort, you will see that some lessons have supplies for an icebreaker. Place the necessary icebreaker items with their corresponding lesson (yes, your pile is getting bigger).

7. As indicated in the Leader's Guide, some lessons have a LABEL that is to be affixed to the takeaway gift. Sort all of those labels into the right piles by lesson.
8. Following the directions in your Leader's Guide, it's now time to wrap the gifts in the packaging provided and for some items, attach a label.
9. Pack all of the items for a lesson together in a box or reusable bag.
10. Store and label your boxes by lesson (and by grade if you are offering to more than one grade).
11. Your Lesson Leader now has all the materials needed for a session each time she leads.

We promise—you really don't need a degree in engineering to throw this party!

But you know what you really do need? A heart that is called to get parents on board and involved in their daughter's faith journey! This "party" is not only for the purpose of getting a job done quickly, but a chance for others, who may have yet to encounter Christ, to see Him alive in you. It's a win-win, wouldn't you say?

Here are volunteers at work assembling lessons for 50 girls in three grades.



One final note on assembly: If a new girl joins after the first lesson, the Parent Helper should be responsible for ensuring that the items from that girl's KIT make it into the correct lesson boxes. This ensures that the Lesson Leader has all she needs for every girl for every lesson!

BLAZE Lesson Leaders

The key to a vibrant and healthy BLAZE group is choosing an energetic, fun-to-be-around Lesson Leader! Lesson Leaders are women in your community who are witnesses to the faith. With a gift of fostering a community that is safe, respectful and hopeful, your Lesson Leaders quickly become mentors in the lives of your middle school girls. Do not be afraid to bring in a teen Lesson Leader; we found the closer in age, the more powerful the dynamic!

Her responsibilities may include:

1. Preparing for the lesson

Read ahead every week to prepare spiritually, uncover the key point of the lesson, and consider ways to engage the girls. Based on time allotted (and how chatty girls are), it may not be possible to get through everything every time. Engaging the girls in the material is more important than finishing every last point in the lesson.

Create ways for the girls to help. They can help lead an icebreaker, pass out materials, reveal the takeaway gift, write scripture and saint quote on a whiteboard, reassemble room after the meeting, read closing prayer, light the candle, or do your laundry. Just kidding on the laundry. But you get the picture—be creative.

2. Managing time during the lesson

Take a minute to review the tools available in the Running Your BLAZE Sessions section of the Middle School Leadership Tools on our website. Included is a timed agenda for meetings. The timed agenda can help you stay on track. You may even set an alarm on your phone to allow for prayer partner time at the end.

3. Being ready for Prayer Partners

You have a list of how the girls should be paired for prayer partner time from the Parent Helpers. Consider having girls sit next to their prayer partners during BLAZE. If you have a mixed age group, many have found it successful to pair a younger girl with an older girl.

It's OK to be flexible to accommodate the needs of your group. In one case, a school had 26 girls in one room participating in BLAZE. They decided to wait until Lesson 2 to begin the prayer partner element, as Lesson 1 took some extra time to set expectations of the program, gain engagement and manage a group of this size.

4. Pulling together useful supplies

Lesson Leaders have found it helpful to have extra post-it notes, pens, candy, mini markers, glue and scissors on hand during BLAZE meetings.

5. Distributing the takeaway gift every week

When a girl misses a lesson, we HIGHLY recommend distributing the takeaway gift to a friend for delivery rather than holding onto the gift until the next session. If you hold on to it, you will spend precious lesson time the next session distributing gifts from previous sessions. That is, if you even remembered to bring last session's leftover gifts and can remember who is missing gifts.

blaze

3. Be On Top of the Details

Walking with Purpose offers two 20-lesson BLAZE Core programs: BLAZE Masterpiece (Formerly Blaze Year One) and BLAZE Belong. There is no order to the two programs so you can begin with either. *Some extra preparation is needed ahead of some lessons in both programs.*

BLAZE Masterpiece:

Lesson 4

This ICEBREAKER requires balloons with scripture quotes inside. Prepare the balloons AHEAD of the lesson. Consider borrowing an electric pump (or buying one on Amazon to use at your next birthday party). Allow extra time to prepare the balloons ahead of time as each balloon will have a lovely piece of paper with scripture on it. An extra prayer for patience wouldn't hurt either. When lesson day arrives, you might warn teachers in neighboring classrooms about the POPPING that will take place during the lesson.

Lesson 5, Lesson 10, Lesson 11, and Lesson 13

Each of these lessons have a VIDEO in the ICEBREAKER. This requires extra time to ensure technology is working, password isn't blocking the Lesson Leader from streaming, sound is on, video is projected, etc. The patron saint of technology is St. Isidore of Seville, FYI.

Lesson 6

In this ICEBREAKER, the girls make a collage that depicts beauty. Glue and scissors are provided in the BLAZE Kit, but Lesson Leaders will need to supply the magazines (People, Us Weekly, Seventeen) and some oversized poster boards (think Dollar Store) if you would like to girls to make a combined collage.

Lesson 8

This ICEBREAKER requires a bowl and a family-sized bag of skittles.

Lesson 9

As noted in Leader's Guide, it is helpful to have the actual book, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, for the ICEBREAKER. We recommend borrowing from the library or your own bookshelf.

Lesson 10

This lesson requires three pairs of gloves. One pair should be work gloves.

Lesson 14

To keep the small “Joy” charm from getting lost in the melee, tie it to a length of ribbon before putting it into the cellophane bag.

Lesson 16

Rather than try to fit the solar flower into a cellophane bag, simply slip the Lesson 16 label into the clam shell that already encapsulates the flower.

BLAZE Belong:

Lesson 2, Lesson 4, Lesson 6, Lesson 12, Lesson 17, & Lesson 18

These lessons all require that you show a VIDEO. This requires extra time to ensure technology is working, password isn't blocking the Lesson Leader from streaming, sound is on, video is projected, etc. The patron saint of technology is St. Isidore of Seville, FYI.

Lesson 9

This lesson requires a brownie and a crisp \$1 bill for the ICEBREAKER. In the Leader's Guide, we encourage Lesson Leader's to personalize the takeaway gift by writing the name of each individual girl on the outside of the envelope.

Lesson 11

This ICEBREAKER requires 2 boxes of plastic wrap and scissors, and an index card for each girl is needed for the LESSON.

Lesson 13

Double-check that your icebreaker is ready (the assembly party used a paper cutter). And, be ready for a great deal of excitement from the girls with the paint that is involved.

blaze

4. Communicate with Parents

Bridging the gap between what happens during BLAZE and what makes it home to parents is important. We are so passionate about this that we have written a summary paragraph to send parents after each lesson.

Sample emails for every lesson are available in the “Running Your BLAZE Sessions” section of the Middle School Leadership Tools on our website.

Here is an example email:

Dear Parents,

This week, we introduced BLAZE and reminded the girls that they are God’s masterpiece and that He created them uniquely for a reason. We also explained the name BLAZE, which is based on a quote of St. Catherine of Siena; “Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.” The idea was this: if each girl embraces the way in which she was authentically created by God, she can make a huge difference in the world!

To continue the conversation at home, ask your daughter:

- 1. What did you learn in BLAZE this week?*
- 2. What are you most looking forward to in BLAZE this year?*
- 3. What are you not looking forward to in BLAZE this year?*



5. End Strong

When you close your Leader's Guide after the 20th lesson, we pray that you rest in the incredible investment in your girls. You have planted seeds whose fruits you may have already witnessed! In other cases, the seeds you have planted may not sprout for a month, a year or 20 years. Job well done, fellow sister!

If you are feeling on fire about this work, consider sending a 'Come & See' note to parents. This type of invitation has been very successful in other groups. These leaders simply invited the PARENT to join the last BLAZE meeting. Don't worry...nothing to assemble at this party! Just another opportunity for parents to witness the power of the program first hand. Plus, this is an excellent way to recruit more parent helpers and lesson leaders.

Here is a sample email you can use to invite parents to join you.

Dear BLAZE Parents,

I'd like to invite you to join us to sit-in on the final BLAZE lesson on (insert date). You would observe the lesson in action from the back of the room. If time allows, we would love if you could stay after the lesson for 20 minutes or so for a discussion about this year and next. I will also have Walking with Purpose resources on hand in the event you want to continue your faith journey at home. Mark your calendars for (insert date and time)!

Additional BLAZE Leader resources

Walking with Purpose has developed additional resources that are found under [Leadership Tools](#) on walkingwithpurpose.com. Be sure to check out both the TOOLS and the TRAINING tabs!



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Who We Are

Walking with Purpose is a ministry of Jesus Christ.

Why We Exist

We exist to help all women and girls to know Jesus Christ personally by making Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church relevant and applicable.

Our Mission

Our mission is to help every Catholic woman and girl in America encounter Jesus Christ through our Bible studies.

Our Vision

Our vision for the future is that as more Catholic women and girls deepen their relationships with Jesus Christ, eternity-changing transformation will take place in their hearts—and, by extension—in their families, in their communities, and ultimately, in our world.