

Schoenstatt University

Men - Branch Membership

Revised Nov 26, 2024

Foreword

The purpose of this document is to help clarify responsibilities and expectations for the members of the Schoenstatt University Men. These guidelines should help members strive for sanctity in an organic manner, according to their state of life.

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Membership Expectations

As a member of the Schoenstatt University Men's Branch I, uphold myself to the following expectations:

- Attending bi-semesterly branch retreats
- Attending weekly life group meetings (if applicable)
- Serving the greater community through a branch, life group or personal apostolate

Branch Retreats

These are the most important moments for the member of SUM. We have four retreats per year, at the beginning and end of each semester. A branch retreat is typically broken down in two parts; spiritual formation and a round table discussion. It is led by the Branch leader and his core team, with the accompaniment and guidance of the Moderator. Spiritual formation can involve spiritual exercise, silence, formation talks and community prayer. Round table discussions typically involve the discernment of the signs of the times, life streams or other branch-wide related topics.

Branch Capital of Grace

The contributions to the Capital of Grace are essential for the life of the branch as we offer our efforts to the Blessed Mother. This should be either a prayer, physical act, or a combination of the two which is usually represented symbolically in some form.

Life Group Meetings

These meetings are the cornerstone of deeper formation. During these meetings each life group is responsible for the growth of their faith and apostolic preparation.

Apostolate

What use is having so much formation if we as men don't give ourselves in service to our community. An apostolate doesn't have to be something grandiose, but should be done at least once a month and serve a need in the Diocese of Madison.

Roles and Responsibilities

Moderator

As moderator, you will commit to leading the branch in spiritual formation through formation talks and branch retreats. Moderators are appointed by the National Schoenstatt Movement Director.

Branch Leader

As branch leader, you are responsible for the life of the branch. You will plan all of the logistics for major events throughout the year and help lead the branch towards sanctity. This includes, but is not limited to: appointing roles, attending Schoenstatt Diocesan meetings, reserving events in calendar, and leading branch retreats. (1 year term)

Life Group Leader

As life group leader, you are responsible for leading the life group meetings and fomenting a safe environment for personal sharing. A life group leader can be decisive to encouraging the growth of relationships within the life group both inside and outside of meetings. (1 year term)

Mentor

It is usually a more experienced SUM or a former SUM. He is responsible for assisting with Life Group formation.

Core Team Member

The core team is composed of our moderator, branch leader, and those SUM members appointed by branch leader. The core team will meet when the branch leader requests a meeting to discuss important branch details, like planning retreats, discussing branch apostolates, outreach or proposing operating changes to the branch.

Community Life

Life Stream

The life stream of the branch is supposed to represent the current life (apostolates, ideas and ideals) of the branch. It should be a response to the voices of the times and help guide us in making branch decisions. It should also spark joy into each of the members to pursue sanctity and to fight for the Blessed Mother.

Socials

Branch members are encouraged to hang out outside of meetings to share life together. Although we strive for sanctity, that doesn't mean that we do it alone. Which is why it's important to **spend time as brothers in healthy ways**.

Schoenstatt Shrine

The Shrine is a special place of Grace. The Blessed Mother dwells in the Shrine and distributes three main graces: feeling of home, inner transformation, and apostolic zeal. It's important that each branch member spends sufficient time praying in the Shrine as it is fundamental to our Schoenstatt Spirituality.

Forming Life Groups

Requirements

The main requirement to form a life group is having at least 6 people who will commit to each other for weekly meetings for a year. After the first semester of a new life group, new members are not usually admitted to this group unless overruled by the life group itself. This encourages a more stable small group community where a safe and trusting atmosphere may grow over time.

Purpose and Content

The purpose of a life group is to go deeper into Schoenstatt Spirituality. It should be a place where each member grows in their relationship with God through the Blessed Mother. The group is also meant for support in fighting personal battles, which is why this is a closed group.

Life Group Leader

Each life group should have a life group leader who is supposed to help lead the conversation in whatever topic is being discussed. A life group leader is chosen by majority vote and will serve a one year term, unless otherwise specified by the life group. Voting procedures are detailed in a separate document.

Covenant of Love

What is the Covenant of Love?

The Covenant of Love is the core of Schoenstatt Spirituality. It is a commitment to Mary in a total exchange of hearts. Through the covenant you give your entire self without reserve as an instrument in the hands of Mary.

How to Seal Covenant of Love

The Covenant of Love is sealed after growing in a deeper and personal relationship with Mary. There is no specific way in which this can be done, but there are readings that can be used to facilitate the process. The sealing of the Covenant is usually done during a mass and involves writing a letter to the Blessed Mother.

Administrative Functions

Elections

Branch leader elections occur at the end of Spring Semester branch retreat. The candidate must be nominated and voted by the rest of the branch. Voting procedures are detailed in a separate document.

Amendments

In order to preserve continuity and structure this document can only be amended during a branch retreat with a two-thirds majority vote needed to pass. The moderator does have the power to veto any changes, but should only be done for valid reasons.

Schoenstatt Terms and Definitions

Schoenstatt Movement

Founded in 1914 by Fr. Kentenich, Schoenstatt is an Apostolic Movement of renewal for the Church. It seeks to reconnect faith with daily life, especially through a deep love of Mary known as the Covenant of Love.

Movement Structure

The Schoenstatt movement is composed of branches, each one fulfilling a different need. For example, the SUM and SUW are the university branches, which are for young men and women ages 18-24. Through these branches the movement is tasked with renewing the Church through apostolates and service.

Covenant of Love

Christianity is a covenant-based religion. The covenants of the Old and New Testaments are the very core of God's revelation about how he saves us and draws us to himself. The Covenant of Love is a consecration to Mary that helps us deepen our relationship with God. This is the core of the Schoenstatt spirituality, which we seek to live out in our daily life.

Capital of Grace

The Church teaches that we have the ability to cooperate in Christ's work of salvation. In Schoenstatt, the capital of grace represents our sacrifices and prayers offered to Mary for her mission in the service of Christ (see treasury of the Church, CCC §§1476–1477).

MTA

Mother Thrice Admirable or MTA, is the title given to Mary as Queen of Schoenstatt. Its main interpretation is as Mother of God, Mother of the Redeemer, and Mother of the redeemed.