## **Bridges Retreat in Daily Life**

## **MY STORY Packet**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please check your site preference**: \_\_\_Webster Groves Christian Church (weekly Wednesday a.m.) \_\_\_Sacred Heart Parish, Valley Park (weekly Tuesday eve) \_\_\_St. Louis University High (monthly 1st Saturday a.m.) \_\_\_ St. Matthew the Apostle Parish (monthly 2nd Saturday a.m.) \_\_\_ Online Group (weekly Wednesday eve)

Current Church Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I learned about Bridges from: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Process**

**Step One:** Get to know us and what we’re about.

* Familiarize yourself with the information on the Bridges Foundation website at <http://bridgesfoundation.org/programs/bridges-foundation-retreat/>.
* Attend an Information Session: <http://bridgesfoundation.org/information-sessions/> or email [executive.director@bridgesfoundation.org](mailto:executive.director@bridgesfoundation.org)

**Step Two:** Complete registration and make deposit via “What’s Next?” page.

**Step Three:** Review “Blessed History Questions” and write your story. Follow the directions below.

**Step Four:** Answer theadditional “Application Considerations” questions.

**Step Five:** Email or mail your Blessed History AND the consideration questions to the address below:

[executive.director@bridgesfoundation.org](mailto:executive.director@bridgesfoundation.org)

**Executive Director**

**Bridges Foundation**

**331 North New Ballas #410275**

**St. Louis, MO 63141-9998**

All the information in this packet is kept confidential. It will be seen only by the executive director, the site team that will pair you with a prayer companion and, ultimately, your prayer companion. It will be erased, destroyed or returned to you after that process is complete.

The contents of this packet:

* Blessed History Questions
* Application considerations
* Financial considerations

After the full application is received, a consult with a prayer companion from the site you have chosen will be scheduled.

**Application deadline**:

The completed application, including Blessed History and Application Considerations, must be completed and received by **Friday, August 25, 2023**. In special cases, the application date can be extended. Questions? Contact [executive.director@bridgesfoundation.org](mailto:executive.director@bridgesfoundation.org)

The content of this packet will help the Bridges prayer companions and site coordinators prayerfully pair you with your Bridges prayer companion. This pairing is important, as you will spend at least 34 hours one-to-one with the companion.

**Blessed History Questions**

Please pray *Psalm 139* before you begin writing your history.

**As you prepare your Blessed History, please consider and write about these questions:**

* What and who are the significant people, experiences, and events that have led me into a deeper relationship with God?
* How has my spirituality progressed? Describe the journey.
* How have the following influenced my relationship with God: my family of origin: my parents, my birth, my gender, my culture/ethnicity, my place in my family?
* When do I most feel God’s presence? His absence? What is my response to those feelings?
* When do I feel most present to God? Most absent? What do I perceive is God’s response?
* How do I feel God’s presence in the struggles of my life? In the good times?
* What qualities do I particularly like about myself? What qualities do I find challenging?
* How do I connect with God? What is my relationship to God?
* Am I praying daily now? What has prayer been for me? If and when I experience dryness in prayer, how do I respond to that experience?
* How/where do I find God in the needs of others?
* Can you describe: what has brought me to desiring to participate in the Bridges Retreat in Daily Life?

**About writing your story:**

We hope that by writing your personal faith autobiography you will see where God’s presence has been throughout your life and how you have been led to this point of wanting to receive the Bridges Retreat in Daily Life. This is not meant to be a laborious, anxious process, but more of a prayerful reflection.

After prayerfully considering your history, record the most important parts -- the ones that shaped you spiritually and brought you to this point in your life. Do not be concerned or challenged; some of the questions will become answered during the retreat. Please make your Blessed History more than facts and dates. This can be done as you pray and write, by including the meaning of your experiences.

This history will be used by you during the Preparation Days of the Bridges Retreat in Daily Life. The Preparation Days format includes five to six weeks of daily prayer to prepare for considering the Principle and Foundation, the great introduction to the retreat by St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Preparation Days help you find a daily prayer routine, gain a deeper understanding of Ignatian Spirituality and develop a relationship with your Prayer Companion.

**Application Considerations**

**Please take time for prayer and reflection with the following questions and answer as completely as you can.**

1. What is your hope/desire that has brought you to apply for participation in the Bridges Retreat in Daily Life? Has there been a special event or personal invitation to bring you to this desire?
2. Participation in the Bridges Retreat cannot be just another involvement. It may be necessary to set aside other commitments and activities during the eight months of the retreat. Please give thought to what present activities you may need to set aside. Can you list them here?
3. How do you connect with God? Describe how long you have enjoyed a regular prayer life.

(Include your prayer experience—such as experience with Scripture; devotionals like the Rosary; prayer of petition or gratitude; conversation with God--speaking and listening; Contemplative Prayer).

1. Please indicate if you are or you have been a member of an Ignatian Community, such as Christian Life community, Manresa community, Ignatian Volunteer Corps, or other?
2. What experiences have you had with spiritual director? (This can include a prayer

partner, a directed retreat, or formal direction)? If none, just indicate “Not Applicable.”

1. What qualities would you find helpful in a spiritual Prayer Companion? Please be as specific as you can. This information will help in the prayerful matching process to pair you with your Prayer Companion.
2. What support do you have with family and/or friends? Have you explained the commitment required of a retreatant? Will they be able to support your efforts?

After this consideration, I have discerned that:

\_\_ I am ready to make the Bridges Ignatian Retreat at this time. I have prayed and reflected on the application questions and filled them out as completely as possible.



**Financial Considerations**

Pay what you can. Everyone who desires to participate in the retreat and commit to the prayer exercises will be admitted into the Preparation Days of the Bridges Retreat in Daily Life. In order to make the program affordable to all, you are welcome to enroll at any level of payment that you choose, even if it is at no cost to you.

As you consider what you can pay, know that we desire your participation more than your money! Some pay more than our cost and their generosity ensures that we can continue to offer the retreat to those who can only afford to pay less. By the grace of God, things always balance out!

The cost per retreatant to the Bridges Foundation is approximately $880.00. We are blessed with grants and generous donations from our benefactors making it possible for all who wish to participate to do so, regardless of ability to pay.

Please be assured the Foundation is satisfied with whatever amount you can afford. A payment schedule can be arranged. If you pay the Bridges Foundation more than the cost of sponsoring one retreatant, the excess amount will be acknowledged as a donation. One person helps another and, thus, no one is turned away due to their financial circumstances.

At the completion of the Preparation Days (mid-October), all participants will be asked to complete a Letter of Commitment to indicate the total they pledge to pay for their retreat. This amount is used for budgeting purposes and is viewed only by our financial officers, is not binding, and is kept confidential.