

Walking with Jesus – Youth Session

By: Jane Angha

Time: 90 minutes

Purpose

This faith learning session is designed to bring young people a little closer to Christ during the Lenten season, focusing on authenticity. Participants will look closely at a map for life, their journey and which direction they are headed.

Catechism References

CCC # 512

Session at a Glance

Gathering and Welcome (5 minutes)

Community Builder (20 minutes)

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

The Walk – Being Authentic in Our Faith (30 minutes)

True North – Jesus Guides Our Journey (15 minutes)

Closing Prayer and Announcements (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Small compass (one for every 4-5 people)
- Paper
- Clipboard
- Pencil
- Paper with an “X” on it and paper with “Start Here”
- Markers, post- it notes, stickers
- Items for Activity 2: satchel for the journey (suitcase or back pack), clothes, shoes, toothbrush and toothpaste, etc.
- Friendship-type bracelet for each participant

Prepare in Advance

1. Make a copy of the “X “and “Start here” handouts for each group (with four to five in a group).
2. Make copies of Handouts 2, 3 and 4 for each participant.
3. Set up a prayer space by covering a table with a cloth. Place a Bible, candle, compass and cross on the table with matches or lightstick.
4. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with check-in sheet and nametags and registration information (have a few extra packets on hand for walk-ins). **Hospitality is important!** As the leader, spend the arrival time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.
5. Invite a musician to assist in selecting music and leading the singing for the opening prayer and closing prayer.
6. Ask four people to read for the opening prayer. Mark their place in the Bible. Give them a chance to practice.

Session Outline

Gathering and Welcome (5 minutes)

Warmly greet and welcome young people as they arrive. Let them know where to go and make sure there is someone to mingle and visit with them. Invite them to make a name tag.

Once all have arrived, invite them to the gathering space and welcome them again.

Welcome! We are really glad you have joined us! We have a lot of great things planned that will help you on your Lenten journey and give you a sense of purpose and direction. That is a little hint: direction...purpose! Let's begin our time with prayer.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. Lord, we gather together, bound by our belief in you, baptized in water, signed with oil. We are a community on a journey. Be with us as we learn more about you, find ways to grow closer to you, and make plans for Lent that keep you as our priority. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus. Amen.

Reader 1:

"Show me your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation ..." (Psalm 25:4)

Reader 2:

"Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go.' " (Isaiah 48:17)

Reader 3:

"For this is God, our God forever and ever; He will be our guide even to death." (Psalm 48:14)

Reader 4:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5)

Teach us your ways, Lord, help us to lean on you and to let you guide our lives and our futures. We ask this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen.

Community Builder - Direction Challenge (20 minutes)

Teams will use a compass to create a trail for another team to follow.

Divide the group into teams of 4-5. Using the compass, each team will determine a trail for another team to follow (e.g., North 10 steps, NW three steps, East 34 steps). The trail should take the other team to the end where X marks the spot!

Tell the teams that someone in their group should take notes and write down the directions for the trail. This list will be given to another team to follow. They must also come up with a prize at the end of the trail for the other group to find.

This activity can be done outside or inside and the prize can be a message or something fun.

Alternates for virtual/video streaming retreats

- Play a variation of the above game using Google Street View, perhaps starting at the church building. Have some directions be based on visual clues (e.g. turn right right after you see the pink house), so they are not trivial to follow based on the regular map view. Group participants using breakout rooms or separate video chat sessions.
- Play the online game Zoomtastic (ZoomtasticGame.com). Share a screen with game and have all participants compete to chat message the answer to a leader. You could assign different point based on who is first, second, third, etc. for each round. Or group participants into breakout rooms and have them guess cooperatively as a team.

Jesus—The Right Direction (30 minutes)

This activity is about making a map for the six weeks of Lent. Give each participant Handouts 2 and 3. Give the following instructions:

Most of us remember Lent as being time when we gave up something like candy, soda or video games. Maybe you took time to pray more, or attend more things at church. But this Lent will be a little different. This Lent we will follow the example of saints who came before us by doing an examination of our life and then deciding what we will do to make the six weeks a powerful time of faith. So, take your map, the list, and your phone if you need it. Map out a plan for your six weeks of Lent.

Begin with a prayer for openness, for God to show you where you need to grow, what you need to get rid of, where you might want to grow. Then, choose some of the things on the list or think of a few ideas of your own. Put them on your map. Remember, a map helps find out how to get somewhere, so you will need to choose your current location and your destination. Then choose the right things to help get you to your destination. You may have to do a little research, ask some questions, or stop to pray. Let's get started!

When participants are finished, gather them back for the next activity.

Satchel for the Journey (15 minutes)

This activity will be done in small groups of three or four. Each person will share his or her map with the others and come up with ways to sustain the Lenten journey.

For this activity, have the small suitcase and items for a trip laid next to it (e.g., clothes, shoes, toothbrush, toothpaste, brush or comb).

Have you ever planned a trip? Packed luggage? How do you go about doing that? What are some things you have to do? Let youth come up with ideas. So we need things for the trip – plans, money, clothes and such. They make the trip a little easier, more relaxing, and hopefully more fun or meaningful!

You just mapped out your Lenten Journey and you also need to pack your bags for this adventure. What will you need to sustain you for six weeks? How will you keep up your great plan and follow through? Do you need prayer? Community support? A great playlist? Solitude? You decide.

The next activity will help you. You will get into groups of four, share your maps and then, with each other's help, come up with ways to sustain the journey each of you has planned. When ready, use stickers, post-it notes or markers to add these to your maps. You will have 15 minutes to get this done!

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Opening Song: *40 Days* by Matt Maher

Leader: Lord we thank you for our time together to really think about Lent this year. Help us to not let it slip by but to make it 40 days that will make us new again and change our little part of the world.

Reader: Give us courage and strength to make this Lent one that radically changes us in some way.

All: For this we pray.

Reader: Help us to go deep into our hearts and our souls to find out what we are really made of, Lord. Walk with us.

All: For this we pray.

Reader: Give us the courage to ask for help when we have lost our enthusiasm or have met challenges this Lent.

All: For this we pray.

Leader: I invite you each to come forward to take a bracelet from the basket. When you wear it this Lent, may it remind you that your map for Lent is a good one. You have the love and support of our community and we choose to travel with you.

Closing Song: *Humble* by Audrey Assad

Take time for announcements, thank all who helped with the evening, and say good bye!

Websites and links in this session were accessed successfully on December 6, 2020.

This session was written by Jane Angha, Project Coordinator for Young Neighbors in Action with the Center for Ministry Development.



Handout 1: Start and X Marks the Spot

**START
HERE!**



Handout 2: Map



Handout 3: Map Ideas

These ideas are simple and easy to do, even the ones that might require some work. You have research tools at your fingertips. Just search any of these ideas and you will find a whole world of ideas that can change your view of Lent! Choose a few to put on your map for Lent.

1. Pray each day for someone in particular. Make a list of people and pick a day for them.
2. Learn a new prayer or prayer style – walking a labyrinth, Ignatian or Franciscan Spirituality, Taizé prayer, Lectio Divina, the Divine Office, the Rosary or the Stations of the Cross.
3. Do a simple act of kindness each day– without letting anyone know!
4. Read the biography of a saint. Check out <https://www.catholic.org/saints/> for options.
5. Choose to give up something for someone else – give up soda or coffee and use that money to lend on www.Kiva.org or www.CRS.org.
6. Read a papal encyclical – one from your favorite Pope.
7. Check out Catholic websites or blogs and find out who is on Twitter. Get something new coming into your feed each day, such as: Pope Francis, www.USCCB.org, www.youthministry360.com, or www.crs.org.
8. Mend a relationship. Take time to pray, talk, listen and make amends with an old friend or family member.
9. Attend a special service at church during Lent, one that you never have experienced. Check out the parish website to see what is offered.
10. Volunteer to help with something in your parish. Find out what is going on, pray and then sign up!
11. Write a letter to a grandparent or favorite aunt, uncle or cousin.
12. Make some cookies for someone at school who could use a friend.
13. Let a teacher, coach or leader know he or she is appreciated.
14. Do something thoughtful for each person in your family.
15. Take a look at your lifestyle and see if there is something that needs to be changed, let go of, or forgiven – then do it.
16. Take a day to clean your room and get rid of things that don't fit you anymore like clothes, music, and stuff. Bring them to a local St. Vincent de Paul thrift store. While you are there, see about volunteering for a day.
17. Grab some friends and invite your pastor out for coffee or pizza.
18. Make a little prayer space in your room. You will need a table, candle, Bible and items you find meaningful – pictures, mementos etc. Make a promise to use it each day.
19. Download a song from a great Christian artist... they are on iTunes, too.
20. Read some incredible stories from Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org) and see what our Church is doing in the world!