



Diocese of Buffalo

Department of Lifelong Faith Formation

A member of the Division for Evangelization and Catechesis

I. Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ

Rationale: Adolescents are ready to explore what being a Christian, a Catholic, and a person of faith means. It is through learning about Jesus Christ that we will be able to most fully respond to the Gospel challenge as a person of faith.

Goals: That youth participants accept and celebrate who they are, as created in the image of God and be able to grow in this reality and develop a conviction that they possess an inherent dignity through learning about Jesus Christ.

Objectives:

- To assist youth participants in developing and maintaining a positive attitude toward themselves and their ability to grow as disciples of Jesus.
- To understand Jesus Christ's revelation about God as key in their own growth as a person of faith.
- To identify the challenges related to adolescence and to examine the skills needed to respond to these challenges as disciples of Christ.
- To recognize faith as a response to God's invitation into relationship with him.
- To encourage the youth participants to grow in a life of faith by developing a personal prayer life and by participating in the liturgical life of the Church.



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Outline	Activities	Critical Reflection
<p>I. The Journey Toward Maturity: A Time of Change</p> <p>A. Characteristics of Adolescent Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. physical2. psychological3. spiritual4. social5. feelings and emotions6. intellectual <p>* Saints, Heroes, Heroines of the Faith: Charles Lwanga and Companions, Maximilian Kolbe, Margaret Mary Alacoque, Martin Luther King. Jr.</p>	<p>(The sexual abuse awareness curriculum mandated by the Diocese can be integrated into these initial gatherings.)</p> <p>Compose a prayer thanking God for the wonderful person that you are.</p> <p>Describe yourself. e.g. how you look, your feelings, your worries, your dreams for the future, etc. You may want to begin a journal with this reflection.</p> <p>Write down some things about yourself now that you don't want to forget in the future.</p> <p>When do you think you will know everything there is to know about yourself?</p> <p>Describe or sketch an object or situation that reminds you of God's loving presence in your life.</p>	<p>Discuss: "People are as good as their teachers."</p> <p>How does society influence the way teenagers feel about themselves? Name some positive influences. Name some negative influences.</p> <p>Reflect on a time when you felt the presence of God. What impact did this have on you? What were your feelings at this time?</p> <p>How would the world be different without you? Why do you think it is so hard to believe that you are unique and special to God?</p>



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<p>B. Personal Identity – You Are Unique</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. each person is unique2. effects of family background3. cultural/social influences4. gifts and talents5. limitations and weaknesses6. positive and negative attitudes7. self-esteem8. belief in love of self: physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual self	<p>Prepare a collage or poster explaining your gifts, talents, and limitations.</p> <p>Write two short descriptions of yourself, one called “My Present Self” and one called “My Future Self.” The second one should be a description that is a realistic hope of the person you would like to be.</p> <p>Read 1 Sam 16:7. Do you think our world looks at a person’s appearance or into his/her heart? Why is this true?</p> <p>Read Ps 139:1-8 and write a prayer based on the meaning of this passage. Pray this prayer each day you are in this course.</p>	<p>Discuss: “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” Eleanor Roosevelt</p> <p>Read 1 Cor 12:4-11. How do you use your gifts, talents, and unique qualities for the community? How will you continue to use them in the future?</p> <p>Explore the meaning of this quote from the philosopher, Seneca: “What you think of yourself is much more important than what others think of you.”</p> <p>Discuss some practical ways that young people can love themselves, their neighbor, and God.</p>



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<p>II. Faith: Developing a Relationship with God</p> <p>A. The Nature of Faith</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. definitions of faith 2. relationship between faith and religion 3. faith as response to God’s love (self-Revelation) 4. doubt and struggle <p>B. The Trinity: The Mystery of God</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Father 2. Son 3. Holy Spirit <p>C. Images of God</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priest, Prophet, King 2. Messiah 3. Son of Man 4. Bread of Life 5. Teacher 6. Storyteller 	<p>Create a power point expressing significant events in your personal faith history.</p> <p>List ten ways in which your spirituality has been nurtured in your life. Name the person who has had the most influence and how they have helped you on your journey of faith.</p> <p>Compare these differing images of God.</p> <p>Write a letter to God exploring your personal faith journey up to this point. Tell God what your image of him is at this time and how it has changed over the years.</p>	<p>How is your relationship with Jesus similar to a human friendship? How is it different?</p> <p>The more complex and technological society becomes, the more people have to live by faith. Do you agree or disagree? Why?</p> <p>Identify experiences in our culture which lead to skepticism and doubt concerning faith. Identify those experiences which encourage faith. Which type of experience is more common?</p>



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<p>* John Baptist de LaSalle; Edith Stein; Thomas, Apostle</p> <p>III. The Searching Spirituality of the Adolescent</p> <p>A. Process of Faith Development (Conversion Cycle)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. hunger 2. search 3. awakening 4. response <p>B. Elements of the Spiritual Life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. study and learning about faith 2. prayer and worship - private and communal 	<p>Keep a Scripture-based journal in which you connect the Scripture to your everyday life. Use the Sunday Gospel readings to begin.</p> <p>Work with others to create a 3-D display of human signs and/or natural signs that speak to you of God’s loving presence. Share your work with the class.</p> <p>Read Mt 6:5-15, Mt 18:19-20, Lk 11:9-13. What do these passages say about prayer?</p>	<p>Why is it sometimes difficult to say “yes” to God? Have you ever had an experience like this? What was the result?</p> <p>How do people in our culture deal with quiet? How can we benefit from quiet time? How can we make this time meaningful?</p> <p>Discuss one time when you felt the healing presence of Jesus. Can you describe this experience?</p>



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<p>3. active involvement in community life 4. service to others</p> <p>* Catherine of Siena, Aloysius Gonzaga, Mary of Magadala</p> <p>C. The Role of Prayer in the Faith Journey</p> <p>1. prayer as experiencing the presence of God 2. importance of silence and sacred space 3. types of prayer: formal informal reading and reflecting on Scripture meditation journaling 4. forms of prayer: blessing and adoration thanksgiving</p>	<p>Make a retreat or participate in parish mission or day of reflection.</p> <p>Encourage the use of a prayer journal.</p> <p>Ask participants to subscribe to the “Daily 3-minute Retreat” at www.loyolapress.org . Ask for reactions from those who were faithful to it for 1-2 weeks.</p> <p>Read Lk 9:29-36 and Lk 22:39-46 to find out some of the places where Jesus prayed. Describe your favorite place to pray and tell why you’ve chosen this place.</p> <p>Jesus challenges us to live lives that are holy. Read Thes 4:2-8. As disciples, what are we instructed to do? How can we best reach this objective?</p>	<p>What are some daily experiences which people would identify as moments when they recognize or feel the presence of God? Name some feelings that accompany these experiences.</p> <p>Read Lk 5:15-16. Do you have a “desert place?” How and why did you choose this place? When and why do you go there?</p> <p>What is meant by day-to-day holiness? Do you consider yourself a holy person? What makes a person holy?</p> <p>Discuss the difference between private and communal prayer. In addition to liturgy, what other ways can you participate in communal prayer. Why is this important?</p>



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<p>praise petition & contrition intercession 5. praying with the Church benefits of communal prayer and worship Eucharist as source and summit Sacraments as encounters with Christ the liturgical year</p> <p>IV. Jesus as the Model of Friendship</p> <p>A. The Nature and Meaning of Friendship</p> <p>1. definition and meaning of friendship 2. qualities of a good friend</p>	<p>Prepare a group liturgy. Select an appropriate theme, readings, and music.</p> <p>What do these passages say about friendship? Sir 6:5, 14-17; Ps 36:11; Prv 17:17; Jn 15:15; Rom 13:10; 1 Jn 4:7, 11; Mt 22:39</p> <p>Compose a song/poem about the importance of having a true friend.</p>	<p>How have your friendships changed over the years? What qualities are more important to you now than in the past? Why?</p> <p>How does it feel to be teased or bullied? How would Jesus respond in this situation? What can you do in your school to correct this type of behavior?</p>



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<p>3. Jesus' friends: Mary, Mother of Jesus The Apostles The Disciples Mary Magdalene Martha, Mary, and Lazarus</p> <p>4. managing conflict in relationships</p> <p>5. dating relationships</p> <p>* Martha, Mary, Lazarus, Philip, James, John, Matthias</p> <p>V. Challenges of Adolescence</p> <p>A. Family relationships</p> <p>B. Peer pressure</p> <p>C. Communication</p>	<p>Compose a proverb about being a good friend.</p> <p>In a small group develop a list of qualities you feel are most important in friendship.</p> <p>Develop a list of qualities that may limit or destroy friendship.</p> <p>Spend time identifying appropriate boundaries in dating relationships.</p> <p>Create a thank-you note for your parents/guardians. In the card specify five things about them for which you are grateful. Give the card to them.</p> <p>Write your "Ten Commandments of Good Communication." Post them in a public space in your parish.</p>	<p>What are some kinds of conflict which arise in teenage friendships?</p> <p>Discuss your approach to managing conflict. Is it a healthy way to respond? Why/why not?</p> <p><i>(The sexual abuse awareness curriculum mandated by the Diocese can be integrated into these initial gatherings.)</i></p> <p>Identify three instances in your life when you conformed to peer pressure. What were the outcomes?</p> <p>Identify three instances when you tried to resist peer pressure. What were the outcomes?</p>



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<p>D. Influence of media</p> <p>E. Stress</p> <p>F. Prejudice and stereotypes</p> <p>G. Drugs and alcohol</p> <p>H. Sexuality</p> <p>* Maria Goretti, the Holy Family, Bernadette</p> <p>VI. Discipleship</p> <p>A. Our baptismal call to discipleship</p> <p>B. Meaning of Discipleship</p> <p>C. Call to service</p>	<p>(The sexual abuse awareness curriculum mandated by the Diocese can be integrated into these gatherings.)</p> <p>Make a list of positive / negative things a teenager can do to relieve stress.</p> <p>Discuss bullying, including cyber-bullying. How can we put a stop it?</p> <p>Reflect on the words of Mary in the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-56). How do these words apply to your call to discipleship and mission?</p> <p>Write a prayer telling God what it means to you to be his disciple.</p> <p>List the ways you show that you are a Christian disciple of Christ.</p>	<p>According to popular culture, what makes a person's life meaningful?</p> <p>According to the Gospel message, what makes a person's life meaningful?</p> <p>Have you ever been in a situation in which you found it difficult to stand up for your belief in Christ? Describe the situation and how you handled it.</p> <p>If you were a modern missionary in your community, which methods would you use to effectively spread the Gospel to today's young people?</p>



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<p>D. Membership in a faith community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. home and family 2. church/parish 3. school 4. local community 5. global community <p>* Marguerite D'Youville, Father Nelson Baker, Bishop Oscar Romero, Elizabeth Ann Seton</p> <p>VII. Catholic Christian Moral Life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Ten Commandments B. Beatitudes C. Freedom and grace D. Virtue and character <p>* Frances Cabrini</p>	<p>Read Mt 5:3-12. Which Beatitude best describes someone your age who is a follower of Jesus?</p> <p>Choose a contemporary moral issue. Write a skit/create a 3 minute video in which you play out an inner dilemma of a person being tempted to do wrong and being directed by God to do right.</p> <p>Read Lk 19:1-10. How does the story of Zacchaeus relate to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?</p>	<p>In what areas of your community, school, and parish is the message of Jesus most needed? What can you do to help spread the Gospel message?</p> <p>In his time, Jesus said to various individuals, "Come, follow me." If Jesus came to you today and extended the same invitation, what would be the biggest obstacle to accepting his invitation?</p> <p>Reflect on the Beatitudes in Mt 5:3-12. What would the world be like if people lived this way?</p> <p>What is good about being Catholic/Christian? How does your faith affect your everyday life?</p> <p>Read Ex 20:1-17. Name a value that is proclaimed in each Commandment. How can you best live these values?</p>



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	<p>Read Col 3:12-17. List five virtues you need to have as a disciple of Jesus. Why are these virtues important?</p> <p>Make list of the most popular programs on MTV. Compare and contrast the values and images portrayed with Catholic values and moral standards.</p>	<p>Read the Beatitudes - Mt 5:3-12. Rate yourself on how you are living each of the Beatitudes. How do your choices now shape who you will be in the future?</p> <p>Do you think young people your age should be free to do anything they want? Why? Why not?</p> <p>How do you know if a person has good character? Name some virtues and qualities a person with good character would possess.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Rev. 2011</p>