



GOYA

Y²AM
Ministry Plan
2019-20

Finding Christ
Through Service (November 2019)



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LEARNING SESSION ONE

NOVEMBER 2019

Finding Christ Through Service

MONTH:

November 2019

GOAL:

To learn about service

OBJECTIVE:

To identify and describe the difference between fixing, helping, and serving

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. blank paper for each participant
2. pen for each participant
3. cup for each participant
4. two bottles of water
5. two iced tea packets
6. two pitchers
7. a copy of the article for each participant

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, allow us “to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice,” one that is, “holy and acceptable to God for this is Your true and proper worship.” Allow us “not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of our minds.” So that we may be able to “test and prove what is God’s will, His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Amen.

(a passage from Romans 12:1-2)

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ICEBREAKER:

10 minutes

Tell us your name and what is your favorite thing to fix?
Why?

Remember:

It's always helpful to start with an activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what's happening in the group. This is an opportunity to encourage participants to share their honest opinions and thoughts, as well as listen to those of others. Take this time to connect with what's important to them, and to understand what they've connected with.

ACTIVITY 1:

10 minutes

Split the whole group into 3 small groups.

Give **Group 1** one iced-tea packet, a pitcher, and half the cups.

Give **Group 2** a pitcher, a water bottle, and the other half of the cups.

Give **Group 3** a water bottle, an iced-tea packet, and no cups.

Tell each group that they need to make iced tea and share it with all participants (in the whole group, not only their small group), so that everyone is able to have some.

Note: *The trick is, small groups must work with each other to accomplish the activity, as no one group has all of the necessary materials. Please do not tell the small groups this trick. The goal of the activity is for the small groups to figure out on their own that they must serve each other in order for the activity to be successful.*

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Debrief:

- How did the activity go? What was it like for you?
- What did you need in order to complete the activity?
- Were you thinking of serving the other as you were trying to accomplish the task?

ACTIVITY 2: DISCUSSION

10 minutes

Pass out a piece of paper, a pen, and a copy of the article to each participant.

Read the following article together:

Helping, Fixing, or Serving by Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

In recent years the question how can I help? has become meaningful to many people. But perhaps there is a deeper question we might consider. Perhaps the real question is not how can I help? but how can I serve?

Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what's going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who's not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am. People feel this inequality. When we help we may inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem, their sense of worth, integrity and wholeness. When I help I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even

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our darkness can serve. The wholeness is us serves the darkness in others and the wholeness in life.

Helping incurs debt. When you help someone they owe you one. But serving, like healing, is mutual. There is no debt. I am as served as the person I am serving. When I help I have a feeling of satisfaction. When I serve I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different things.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix a person I perceive them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix I do not see the wholeness in the other person or trust the integrity of the life in them. When I serve I see and trust that wholeness. It is what I am responding to and collaborating with.

There is a distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All judgment creates distance, a disconnection, an experience of difference. In fixing there is an inequality of expertise that can easily become a moral distance. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected, that which we are willing to touch. This is Mother Teresa's basic message. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

If helping is an experience of strength, fixing is an experience of mastery and expertise. Service, on the other hand, is an experience of mystery, surrender and awe. A fixer has the illusion of being casual. A server knows that he or she is being used and has a willingness to be used in the service of something greater, something essentially unknown. Fixing and helping are very personal; they are very particular, concrete and specific. We fix and help many different things in our lifetimes, but when we serve we are always serving the same thing. Everyone who has ever served through the history of time serves the same thing. We are servers of the wholeness and mystery of life.

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The bottom line, of course, is that we can fix without serving. And we can help without serving. And we can serve without fixing or helping. I think I would go so far as to say that fixing and helping may often be the work of the ego, and service the work of the soul. They may look similar if you're watching from the outside, but the inner experience is different. The outcome is often different, too.

Our service serves us as well as others. That which uses us strengthens us. Over time we burn out. Service is renewing. When we serve, our work itself will sustain us.

Service rests on the basic premise that the nature of life is sacred, that life is sacred, that life is a holy mystery which has an unknown purpose. When we serve, we know that we belong to life and to that purpose.

Fundamentally, helping, fixing, and service are ways of seeing life. When you help you see life as weak, when you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole. For the perspective of service, we are all connected: All suffering is like my suffering and all joy is like my joy. The impulse to serve emerges naturally and inevitably from this way of seeing.

Lastly, fixing and helping are the basis of curing, but not of healing. In 40 years of chronic illness I have been helped by many people and fixed by a great many others who did not recognize my wholeness. All that fixing and helping left me wounded in some important and fundamental ways. Only service heals.

Rachel Naomi Remen, In the Service of Life, Noetic Sciences Review, Spring 1996. This was edited from a speech given by Ms. Remen at the 1996 Temple award ceremony. Ms. Remen with her husband, won a McArthur Award for their work with Commonweal, a holistic cancer treatment facility in Bolinas California and is a professor of medicine.

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Debrief:

- What is fixing? Helping? Serving?
- What is one new thing you learned through reading this article?
- What is your current relationship with serving others? (Do you try to? Would you like to? How do you feel about it?)
- When we stop trying to fix or help someone, what does that look like?
- What are some ways to serve the other without fixing or helping?

ACTIVITY 3: SCRIPTURE

10 minutes

Read the following passage:

Matthew 14:13-21

“13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” 16 Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” 17 They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.” 18 And he said, “Bring them here to me.” 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.”

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Debrief:

- Did Christ fix, help, or serve in this story? How?
- How did Christ serve all of the people there?
- Christ took the little offering of the disciples and made it something great; what does that say about how Christ can work in our lives? Do you have any personal examples of this?

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP

5 minutes

Go around the circle and ask each individual to name one new idea they learned during the session.

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“Christ my God, set my heart on fire with love in You, that in its flame I may love You with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul and with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself, so that by keeping Your commandments I may glorify You, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.”

Amen.

LEARNING SESSION TWO

NOVEMBER 2019

Finding Christ Through Service

MONTH:

November 2019

GOAL:

To learn about service

OBJECTIVE:

To participate in true service for the other

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

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SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. Divine Liturgy books
2. blank paper for each participant
3. pen for each participant
4. a few copies of the Saint story below
5. a few copies of the debrief questions

Note: *Activity Three is a service project (of your choice). Please have a service project prepared for the session or use the session time to brainstorm possible service projects for the future.*

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, allow us “to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice,” one that is, “holy and acceptable to God for this is Your true and proper worship.” Allow us “not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of our minds.” So that we may be able to “test and prove what is God’s will, His good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Amen.

(a passage from Romans 12:1-2)

ICEBREAKER:

10 minutes

Ask participants to sit in a circle, with one person in the middle. The person in the middle will walk up to someone and ask, “Do you love your neighbor?”

That person will respond, “Yes, except for [insert your own criterion here].” For example, “Yes, except for people wearing red.”

Everyone in the circle who matches the criterion needs to get up and find a new seat while the person who was in the middle tries to steal (sit) in someone’s seat. The person left standing becomes the new person in the middle.

Remember:

It’s always helpful to start with an activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what’s happening in the group. This is an opportunity to encourage participants to share their honest opinions and thoughts, as well as listen to those of others. Take this time to connect with what’s important to them, and to understand what they’ve connected with.

ACTIVITY 1: SAINT STORY

10 minutes

Pass out a piece of paper and a pen to each participant. Break the larger group into three smaller groups (depending on how many Youth Workers are present to facilitate a discussion). Give each group a copy of the article below and the debrief questions.

Instruct groups to read the story and work together to answer the questions. After a few minutes, have the groups come back together into one and have each group share their answers.

On Serving God And Neighbor by Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica
(Source: *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*)

When we talk to our fellow men and they tell us about their troubles, we will listen to them carefully if we have love for them. We will have compassion for their suffering and pain, for we are God's creatures; we are a manifestation of the love of God. However, we often consider this a great burden, for we are oppressed by our own cares, worries, and weaknesses. We need to rest from all these cares, but only God can give us rest. He is the Bearer of all our infirmities and weaknesses. That is why we must always turn to Him in prayer. That is our only source of comfort. Then we will be relieved of our burdens and the burdens of our neighbors' troubles as well, for we will have taken all of them to the Lord.

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As we take more concern for our neighbors' cares and problems, they soon become our own. And our thoughts immediately become occupied with them.

If we listen to our neighbor with only half our attention, of course we will not be able to answer them or comfort them...We are distracted. They talk, but we do not participate in the conversation; we are immersed in our own thoughts. But if we give them our full attention, then we take up both our own burden and theirs.

If we have a burden beyond our bearing, we must turn to the Lord immediately, like this: "O Lord, I cannot even bear my own infirmities, yet now I must bear the burden of so-and-so. I cannot cope with all this responsibility. I cannot do this myself, and, because I feel that I have no desire to cope either, all this weighs even more heavily on my conscience. I wish to help my fellow man, but I don't have the means. My neighbors think that I don't want to help, and that is an additional burden to me."

When we pray to the Lord from our heart and bring all our cares and troubles to Him--as well as the cares and troubles of our fellow men--He takes this burden from us, and we feel lighter immediately. Whereas before we were entangled in the net of our own thoughts, now we are relaxed and at peace, for we have given everything over to the Lord. If we do not learn to do this, then we will become more and more burdened each day, and there will come a time when we will not even be able to talk to our fellow men. Why? Because we are overstressed. And we think to ourselves, "Go away! I can barely cope with my own hardships--I cannot cope with yours as well." That is why we must learn to be at peace in our thoughts. For, as soon as our thoughts begin to oppress us, we must turn to God and take to Him our cares and the cares of our neighbor. I always take my problems and the problems of those who come to me for advice to the Lord and His Most Holy Mother for them to resolve. And that is what they do. As for me, I cannot help even myself. How, then, can I help anyone else?

When our neighbor comes to us with his troubles, we take part in them, but if we do not know how to relax--to give all our infirmities and those of our neighbor to the Lord--then we bear this cumbersome burden in our own

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minds and hearts and, over time, we become unbearably stressed and nervous. We become irritable; we cannot stand our own selves, let alone other people around us--our family members and, of course, our co-workers. Our life becomes miserable and stressed, and our nerves become strained. This is because we have not taught ourselves to let go of our thoughts. When our thoughts are at peace, our body rests too.

Our plans and interests often interfere with our lives. We make all these plans, believing that we will never succeed in anything unless we arrange everything meticulously. We truly must try to do everything as our conscience tells us, but we must not do anything in haste. It is when we are in a hurry that the enemy (Satan) traps us. In haste we cannot be aware of whether we have said something to offend our fellow man or whether we have ignored him, because we have no time to think of him; we are too busy with the plans inside our head. In this manner it is easy to sin against our neighbor. And when we sin against our neighbor, we are actually sinning against God, for God is everywhere. He dwells in the souls of each and every one of us. Our relationship toward our fellow men defines our relationship toward God.

It seems that we do not understand one thing: It is not good when we return the love of those who love us, yet hate those who hate us. We are not on the right path if we do this. We are the sons of Light and Love, the sons of God, His children. As such we must have His qualities and His attributes of love, peace and kindness toward all.

Debrief:

- How does this story relate to the theme of service?
- What is one thing we can do to help our friends when we do not know how to help them?
- What is the connection between prayer and serving?
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- How can we follow this as an example and practice this type of service in our daily lives?
- What is the lesson learned from this story?

ACTIVITY 2: DIVINE LITURGY

10 minutes

Read the following lines from the Divine Liturgy and then ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

“Let us go forth in peace. Let us pray to the Lord.”

Debrief:

- Who is the “us” in this petition?
- Where are we “going forth” to?
- How are we told to depart?
- What makes that departure more meaningful than just leaving a place as we normally would?
- How can we obey this petition and serve the other?

ACTIVITY 3: SERVICE PROJECT

10 minutes

Pick a service project before the session and allow this time for the participants to work on it. If you do not have a project, have the participants come up with their own action plan to serve over the next few weeks. Be available as the Youth Worker to help support them as they serve. Keep in mind the words from Martin Luther King, Jr, “Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?’”

Ask participants to sit quietly for a few minutes to reflect on the quote, then ask the following debrief questions, *facilitating a discussion*:

Debrief:

- “What are you doing for others?” currently?
- What service project are you thinking of doing?
- What steps will you take to complete the task?
- Will you be fixing, helping, or serving?

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the circle and ask each individual to name one new idea they learned during the session.

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“O Lord, You who steadied the hand of Peter as he began to sink on the stormy sea, if you are with me, no one is against me. Grant to me the shield of faith and the mighty armor of the Holy Spirit to protect me and guide me to do Your will. The future I put into Your hands, O Lord, and I follow You to a life in Christ.”

Amen.