



JOY

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, 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, we want to help You make the world a place where everybody loves You, and we all love each other. Help us to keep our attention on You and Your will for us. Help us to avoid getting distracted by the things that lead us away from You. Have mercy on us, Lord, and keep us always close to You.

Amen.

LEARNING SESSION:
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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?
- Where are 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

(This is an article adapted from an article by Rachel Naomi Remen, MD)

Jesus came not to be served but to serve, according to the Gospel chapter written by Matthew and Mark. But what is serving, exactly? Is it like helping?

At home you might help your younger brother or sister with their homework. Or you might help your parents get dinner on the table. Think about how that happens. Does somebody ask you to do it, or do you offer? Do you enjoy doing it, or do you find it annoying? Do you feel better afterward? Maybe more important, does the person you helped feel better or worse when you're done?

When you're helping, sometimes there's a feeling of being forced to do something, which doesn't make you feel good, or maybe you feel smarter or stronger than the person you're helping, which doesn't make them feel good. Serving is different. When we're serving someone else, both people

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are better off. I am as served as the person I am serving. If we're working on homework together, we should both feel like we learned something when we're done. If we're working together to feed our family, we should share a sense of satisfaction when they come to the table and enjoy that meal. Serving is also different from fixing. If I fix your homework, that means there was something wrong, and I needed to step in and fix that wrong thing. When I fix your work I do not see everything you did right, everything you already know about the subject. When I serve, I see and respect your knowledge and experience. That is what I am responding to and working with.

Helping and fixing both happen when there is a distance between us. Serving happens when we're connected by love. This is a message given to us by a famous nun, Mother Teresa. We serve the ones we love not because they are broken but because they are made holy by the love of God. Service is a kind of holy mystery. It requires us to give up what we might want in order to lift up our loved ones. It requires us to love and respect the one we're serving. When we serve, we know that God is using us, and we're willing to be used in the service of something greater, for the benefit of the one we love. Fixing and helping are okay at certain times. We will all fix and help many different things in our lives, but when we serve we are always serving God. Everyone who has ever served through the history of time serves the same One. We are servers of the mystery of love.

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. We might even go so far as to say that fixing and helping may often be the work of the self, and service the work of the soul. They may look similar if you're watching from the outside, but they feel very different. The outcome is often different, too.

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It turns out that our service to others serves us as well. Serving God by loving others makes us stronger. Instead of getting tired, when we serve, the grace of God will sustain us.

Service is based on the idea that people are sacred, a holy mystery. When we serve, we know that we are connected to that mystery by our love for the ones we serve. We are all connected: Everybody's suffering is like my suffering and all joy is like my joy. The wish to be of service comes to us naturally from this way of seeing, and God will send us opportunities to serve throughout our lives. These opportunities will bring us closer to God and to each other.

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 is a professor of medicine who won a MacArthur Award with her husband for their work with Commonweal, a holistic cancer treatment facility in Bolinas, California.

Debrief:

- What is fixing? What is helping?
- What does it mean to serve?
- What do you think are some ways you can serve others (without fixing or helping)?
- How can you help others without fixing them or their problems?

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?
- Can you think of any examples of this, from your own life or from a story you've heard?

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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

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
(for the facilitators)
5. a few copies of the debrief questions
(for the facilitators)

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.

“Christ our Lord, You gave sight to the blind man and wisdom to simple fishermen. Give to our minds the grace of the Holy Spirit. We ask for understanding to learn and choose to do good works to glorify You.”

Amen.

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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.

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ACTIVITY 1: SAINT STORY

10 minutes

Read the following article below. Next, break up the large group into three small groups.

Youth Workers can read the story again to their group and work together to answer the debrief 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*)

Note: Story adapted below for JOY age readers.

Remember the last time your best friend told you about a problem they were having? You listened really carefully, didn't you? You care about your best friend, and when they're hurting you feel a little bit hurt right along with them. But, sometimes it is hard to listen to our friend's problems because we have our own cares, worries, and weaknesses. We might feel like we need a break from all these issues. Ready for the good news? God can give us rest. He can be the one who carries all our problems, cares, worries, and weaknesses. All we have to do is turn to God in prayer. God is a great source of comfort. We don't have to carry the load of our problem after we pray about it, and we can let go of our friends' problems as well, for by praying we will have taken all of our problems and their problems to the Lord.

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The more we worry about our friends' cares and problems, the more they become our own. And our worrying mind immediately becomes full of problems. If we are only half-listening to our friends, we will not be able to comfort them because we are distracted. They talk, but we don't really listen; we are stuck in our own thoughts. But if we give them our full attention, then we take on both our own problems and theirs.

When we have a problem that is too hard for us, we must pray to the Lord right away, like this: "O Lord, right now I cannot even handle my own problems, and now I have to take on the problems of my friend. This is too big a job for me. I can't do it by myself; it all weighs too heavily on me. I want to help my friend, but I don't know how. Now my friend thinks that I don't want to help, and that is another problem."

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 friends, He takes this weight from us, and we feel lighter immediately. Before we felt tangled in 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 weighed down each day, until we can't even talk to our own family and friends. That is why we must learn to be at peace in our thoughts. As soon as our thoughts begin to bother us, we must turn to God and tell Him about our cares and those of our loved ones. 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 a friend comes to us with her or his troubles, we get involved in them, but if we do not know how to relax--to give all our worries and cares to the Lord, then we bear this burden in our own minds and hearts and, over time, we become very stressed and nervous. Our life becomes miserable and stressed. This is because we have not taught ourselves to let

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go of our thoughts and give all our problems to God through prayer. When our thoughts are at peace, our body rests, too. We are children of the Light and Love of God. And we must practice having the qualities of God: love, peace, and kindness toward all people.

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?
- How can we follow the example and practice this type of service in our daily lives?
- What is the lesson learned from this article?

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: PRACTICE

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 makes service important?
- Why do we serve others?
- What service project are you doing/thinking of doing?
- What steps will you take to complete the task?
- Will you be fixing, helping, or serving?

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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.

“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.