**Theme:** Becoming Human by Finding Christ through **Discipline**

**Materials:** paper, pens, pitchers or clear plastic cups (enough for each participant to have one), pebbles or marbles (enough for each participant to have multiple)

**Goal:** JOY will learn about discipline.

**Objective:** JOY will identify practice as discipline.

**Opening Prayer:**

In the name of the Father, Son, and 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.

**Ice Breaker:** Tell us your name and something you want to get better at.

**Activity 1:** Pitcher/Cup Activity

Pass out a piece of paper and a pen to each participant.

Next, remind participants of the last session on stillness. We filled the pitcher with our distractions and through silence we were able to empty the pitcher.

Pass out an empty pitcher to each participant, and a small cup of marbles.

Ask participants to think about all of the choices they made yesterday.

When they made a good choice (excelled at a virtue), ask them to add a marble to their pitcher. When they made a wrong choice (were tempted by a passion), ask them to take a marble out of their pitcher. The goal is to fill up our spiritual pitchers with goodness (marbles) through exercising discipline.

Note: Participants may or may not be familiar with the word “discipline,”defined as “the practice of training,”not as punishment. Please explain that you are not talking about punishment, but a practice (like fasting) to get closer to God.

**Debrief:**

* What is discipline?
  + the practice of training
* What was your day like yesterday? Easy? Challenging? What made it that way?
* How many marbles did you add to your pitcher? Were you surprised by the number? Why or why not?
* How can discipline help us fill and keep our pitchers full?

**Activity 2: Discussion**

(Whole-group discussion or small break-out groups, depending on how many Youth Workers are present to facilitate the discussion.)

Promp: Fr. Thomas Hopko has 55 maxims. Number 27 is “do the most difficult things first.” What does that mean to you?

* What does this quote mean to you?
* What kinds of things do you leave for last or avoid doing?
* What would your life be like if you “did the hard things first”?
* How can you give or offer your time and put God first?

**Activity 3: Scripture**

1 Corinthians 9: 24-27

“**24** Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. **25** Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. **26** So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; **27** but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.”

**Debrief:**

* What is happening in this passage?
* How is discipline shown in this passage?
* What kind of discipline or training does an athlete need?
* What kind of discipline or training do we need in our spiritual lives?
* What does discipline or training lead to for an athlete?
* How can we practice discipline in such a way that it leads to a closer relationship with God?

**Conclusion:**

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

**Closing Prayer:**

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

“Thank You, Lord, for Your strength and guidance in my work. You are the fulfillment of all good things. Fill also my soul with joy and gladness, that I may praise You always.”

Amen.

**Learning Session 2:**

**Goal:** JOY will learn about discipline.

**Objective:** JOY will identify ways to practice discipline.

**Materials:** smartphone or laptop, paper, pens, liturgy books, a few copies of the debrief questions (at least 3)

**Opening Prayer:**

In the name of the Father, Son, and 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.

**Ice Breaker**: If God was going to give you a superpower tonight, what would you want it to be?

**Activity 1:** Saint Story

([Symeon Ascetics of the World)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPpumAzqcm0) - Be the Bee #81 - “Pray Simply, Pray Always”

<https://youtu.be/xPpumAzqcm0>

**Debrief:**

* What is holiness?
* How did your view of holiness change from reading the story?
* What did this daily discipline do to Symeon’s soul?
* How did it affect him?

**Activity 2:** Liturgy Discussion

“Let us be attentive”

**Debrief:**

* Who is the “us” in this line from the Divine Liturgy?
* What does it mean to “be attentive”?
* Why are we being called to “be attentive” or pay attention so many times in the Liturgy?
* How can attentiveness help us in our practice of discipline in our daily lives?

**Activity 3: Practice the Discipline of Silence**

Pray with the group for a few minutes. Pray the Trisagion Prayer and then the Lord’s Prayer. Then read 1 Kings 19:11-13 and try to practice stillness for 3-5 minutes.

*11 “And he said, “Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.”*

**Debrief:**

* What was that like for you?
* What was going on in your body and mind as you were trying to be still?
* What could you do differently next time to help yourself?

**Conclusion:**

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

**Closing Prayer:**

In the name of the Father, Son, and 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.