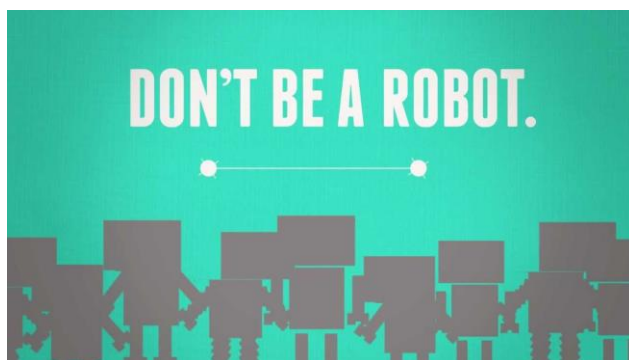


ONEWITH

OneWith community, OneWith faith, OneWith Christ.

April 11, 2021

Reflection Break Outline Grade 9 ~ Session #12



Session Goals

Scripture Unpacked:

Reading and understanding Sacred Scripture is critical for spiritual growth and enlightenment.

- Articulate the meaning of a Scripture passage from the Sunday readings (or homily).
- Reflect on *and articulate* at least 1 way these lessons could apply to contemporary life.

Catholicism Unpacked:

Too often, the words of the Creed are monotonously recited at Mass. The over-familiar words and predictable cadence can easily lull our minds into auto-pilot. This session challenges youth to break from the mechanical repetition of the ritual (of saying the Creed) and to reflect on how we can believe it, embrace it, and live it!

Catechetical (Catholicism) Outcomes:

- *Complete the final draft of your Discipleship Group's creed. These statements of faith should accurately reflect your collective beliefs about God, Jesus, the Trinity and the Church.*

Ice Breaker Activity / Questions

Hi All,

I'm thinking tonight could be busy with the Creed Project so I am not including an Ice Breaker Activity here. If you have a "standard opener" (God Moment, etc.) that is part of your routine go for it! If your group would really miss this warm up time and are looking for ideas, I do have some links posted in "Reference Materials & Links" Section (pg. 4).

Scripture Unpacked (8-10 minutes)

As Catholics, we believe that the Bible is the living Word of God. That alone should give us reason to pay attention, but there's more! Scripture is offers us lessons and wisdom that can be beneficial to OUR lives – right now!

Poor old doubting Thomas! For the last 2000 years, he's been saddled with the label "Doubting Thomas" just because he wasn't prepared to take someone else's word for the fact that Jesus had risen... It is easy to overlook the way the passage begins. The disciples are huddled in a room, "for fear of the Jews." Just a couple of weeks earlier they had been on top of the world. Jesus was enormously popular with the people, and the disciples, by association, were caught up in that affection. However, in the space of just a few short days, their world had turned upside down. Now they were cowering in a closed up room, afraid for their lives in case those who handed Jesus over for death came for them as well. Into this fear and uncertainty steps Jesus who says, "Peace be with you." It is a reminder of Jesus calming the storm out on the lake—in the midst of turmoil and anxiety he brings peace and calm. Once Thomas encounters Jesus, he abandons his claims about needing proof and proclaims, "My Lord and my God!" This is an absolutely extraordinary statement of faith. For the very first time, someone recognizes Jesus, not as Messiah, prophet or Lord, but as God.

Historical Context – My Lord and my God

This extraordinarily clear statement of belief about the divinity of Jesus appears nowhere else in any of the four gospels. Why does the Gospel of John make this statement and not any of the other gospels? It must be remembered that the Gospel of John was the last of the four gospels to be written—at least 20 years after the Gospel of Mark and some 60 to 70 years after the death of Jesus. The early Christians had been cast out of the Jewish tradition and were making sense of how their own beliefs could stand apart from Jewish tradition. With the break from Judaism, Christians felt able to express their belief that Jesus was God.

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Digging Deeper - Scripture Questions

Choose and discuss one or more of the following questions:

- Why were the disciples in hiding at the start of this passage?
- Why might Thomas have been so reluctant to believe without seeing Jesus for himself?
- How is Thomas like many people today?
- Do you think Thomas was doubting the resurrection or his friends? (or both?)

Homily: *What was the main point of the Priest/Deacon's homily? How does that message tie back to the bible readings and/or your life?*

Scripture Application Questions

Disciples Do! The “Discipleship Challenge” asks our youth to take the practical lesson/wisdom that they have discerned from the Scripture readings (aka – the Bible) and/or the homily – and apply that in the context of their own lived experience.

“Discipleship Challenge”

- What is one “practical lesson” or bit of wisdom that YOU can take away from the Bible readings and/or homily?
- What is one commitment you can make to help you (or others) “see”/experience the resurrected Christ?

Catholicism Unpacked (18-20 minutes)

Too often, the words of the Creed are monotonously recited at Mass. The over-familiar words and predictable cadence can easily lull our minds into auto-pilot. If you are already mostly done with your creed/are able to get to it, please challenge the youth to break from the mechanical repetition of the ritual (of saying the Creed) by saying the Creed slowly... intentionally reflecting on these foundational statements of the Christian faith – and how we can believe it, embrace it, and live it!

~ Barry

9th Grade Creed Project

Putting it together...

Tonight is your chance to finalize your group’s creed.

- Although there are no restrictions on how you compose your creed (we have had “rap” creeds, illustrated creeds, etc.), you may find it useful to use the Nicene Creed as a theological model for your group’s creed.
- Each creed should contain...
 - 2-3 statements you believe about God;
 - 4-6 statements you believe about Jesus;
 - A few statements to explain about the Holy Spirit and role of the Church.
 - *Since we don’t 1,600 years to evaluate YOUR creed – we are going to use the Nicene Creed as the “gold standard”. In other words, if your creed is “in theological conflict” with the Nicene Creed – you are going to want to reconsider your statement of faith.*
 - Watch your language! The meaning of words can sometimes mean different things to different people. Make sure to review your creed and consider how the words you have chosen might be misinterpreted by others.
- Ask one or more creative types to make a “poster” with your creed clearly written out (groups/individuals will be reading and making notes on each other’s creeds).

“Mini-Ecumenical Council”

At our **April 25th** session (our final session of the year) we will have a “**Mini-Ecumenical Council**” which will be held here at SJTW.

- Each group will present their Creed at the next session. The presentation can be a total group effort or a single teen (no adults please).
- Everyone will be given an evaluation sheet to fill out while reviewing each other’s creeds.
- Groups will gather to evaluate (compare/contrast) and reflect on all of the creeds in order to gain a deeper understanding of what you *REALLY* believe about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the role of the Church community.
- Oh, and there may be treats!

OneWith Resources & Links

Ice Breaker Games and Activities:

- <https://www.jubed.com/9-Icebreakers-Thatll-Leave-Your-Group-Buzzing>
- <https://teens.lovetoknow.com/teen-activities/youth-icebreakers-without-materials>
- <https://www.thereligionteacher.com/catholic-ice-breakers/>

Articles to get you thinking about ways to explain the Nicene Creed...

- How to Teach the Nicene Creed without Hosting a Snore-fest (*Clever Blog post*). <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-teach-nicene-creed-without-hosting-snore-fest-emily-jeffries/>
- Why do Catholics pray the Creed (*LifeTeen Blog post*). <https://lifeteen.com/blog/why-do-catholics-pray-the-creed/>
- The Nicene Creed: Symbol of the Catholic Faith (*phrase-by-phrase breakdown*): <https://catholic-link.org/the-nicene-creed-explained/>

Creed Videos...

- Don't be a Robot (*V-Cat – If you have not already used it...*) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYNeTwWU1RE>
- The Trinity Explained in Under 3 Minutes (*Bob Rice*) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHF-y84rgIM>
- “Creed” (*Music Video – 3rd Day & Brandon Heath*) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3i-VWxOAc>

Sunday Readings:

Reading #1: Acts 4:32-35

Responsorial Psalm: 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Reading #2: I John 5:1-6

Gospel: John 20:19-31

A full copy of the readings for the week can be found on the U.S. Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/041121.cfm>

The Nicene Creed

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.*

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

Gospel Reflection – Session #12

Poor old doubting Thomas! For the last 2000 years, he’s been saddled with the label “Doubting Thomas” just because he wasn’t prepared to take someone else’s word for the fact that Jesus had risen... It is easy to overlook the way the passage begins. The disciples are huddled in a room, “for fear of the Jews.” Just a couple of weeks earlier they had been on top of the world. Jesus was enormously popular with the people, and the disciples, by association, were caught up in that affection. However, in the space of just a few short days, their world had turned upside down. Now they were cowering in a closed up room, afraid for their lives in case those who handed Jesus over for death came for them as well. Into this fear and uncertainty steps Jesus who says, “Peace be with you.” It is a reminder of Jesus calming the storm out on the lake—in the midst of turmoil and anxiety he brings peace and calm.

Once Thomas encounters Jesus, he abandons his claims about needing proof and proclaims, “My Lord and my God!” This is an absolutely extraordinary statement of faith. For the very first time, someone recognizes Jesus, not as Messiah, prophet or Lord, but as God.

Historical Context – *My Lord and my God*

This extraordinarily clear statement of belief about the divinity of Jesus appears nowhere else in any of the four gospels. Why does the Gospel of John make this statement and not any of the other gospels? It must be remembered that the Gospel of John was the last of the four gospels to be written—at least 20 years after the Gospel of Mark and some 60 to 70 years after the death of Jesus. The early Christians had been cast out of the Jewish tradition and were making sense of how their own beliefs could stand apart from Jewish tradition. With the break from Judaism, Christians felt able to express their belief that Jesus was God.

Those who have not seen...

Jesus says to Thomas, “You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.” *That’s us!* Jesus’ words in the gospel are meant for people like us living today. We are not in the position of Thomas and the other disciples who were able to see the risen Lord face to face and so convince themselves of his rising. The gospel recognizes that to believe in the resurrection without that physical, personal encounter with Jesus is to be celebrated even more. Happy are we—blessed are we—who have not seen and yet still believe!

Questions for Youth

- What aspects of this gospel passage stand out or have special significance?
- Why were the disciples in hiding at the start of this passage?
- Why might Thomas have been so reluctant to believe without seeing Jesus for himself?
- How is Thomas like many people today?

Questions for Parents/Sponsors

- Do you think Thomas was doubting the resurrection or his friends? (both?)
- What word or phrase from the gospel passage stands out to you?
- In what situations do you most need to hear Jesus’ words, “Peace be with you”?
- In what ways can you relate to Thomas’ experience?

Digging Deeper: How can we compare modern society with the doubts of Thomas?

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