

GROWTH AND IDEALS REFLECTION

SPEAKER PREPARATION MATERIAL

Speaker: Youth or Young Adult

Time: First reflection of Die Day

Length: 20-25 minutes

Scripture: (No scripture for this reflection)

Previous Reflection: (None)

Following Reflection: The Faith Journey

Setting:

The participants have been welcomed into a warm, caring environment. They have visited with others who have come for the same "retreat." New participants have been interviewed by the leaders and likely regard them as persons who are open and welcoming and who are concerned that they have a good experience.

New participants have come into the conference room and have been introduced to the whole group. They may have a certain amount of fear, and some may feel reluctant to be involved in a spiritual process at this time in their lives. Now they find themselves in their small groups and may be expecting a "religious" talk of some sort. Your reflection begins without a scriptural quotation deliberately. Now participants discover that the person who is going to share with them is a young person like themselves. They see you are a person from their world who may have similar experiences and who speaks to them as peer to peer.

Progression:

The Growth and Ideals reflection may move participants to feel more relaxed. They realize that another young person experiences transition and change in a similar way. They, too, may wish to sort things out and begin to examine their ideals so that they may deepen their growth toward positive ideals.

Purpose:

You, the speaker, present yourself as friendly, on par with the young participants, and going through similar experiences. You meet them where they are, without preconceived ideas about where they should be. Your reflection may assist participants as they pause to sort out what makes life worthwhile and what they hope their lives will become.

The sharing is designed to initiate a reflective dialogue that is honest and sincere. Faith is not addressed in this reflection. Remember, your level of sharing will set the tone for the depth of sharing in the small groups.

Response:

The participants may now wish to embark on this journey of growing and examining ideals.

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OUTLINE

After reviewing the speaker materials, please study the outline carefully. Time constraints may require you to be selective. As you develop your stories and examples, consider the points in bold as most essential to the purpose of your sharing and the continuity of the weekend.

Introduction: Share a story, quote, or statistic that relates to growing up, transitions, or ideals.

I. I have grown up in a family of people who have influenced me in various ways.

- A. What have I learned from my parents and grandparents?
- B. What have I learned from my siblings?
- C. What traits and accomplishments seemed important during my childhood?

II. I am transitioning to adulthood and taking responsibility for my future.

- A. Soon I will be on my own; what life changes are in my near future?
- B. What ideas of youth may not fit my adult responsibilities?
- C. This retreat is an opportunity—a good time and place to reflect and sort out priorities.

III. The ideas, aspirations, and pursuits we consider most important form our ideals.

- A. Ideals are higher standards, best principles, and lofty pursuits that attract and motivate us toward attainment.
- B. My ideals help me envision a good future and find meaning in life.
 1. What ideals are changing as I mature?
 2. What are some positive ideals?
- C. Ideals move us toward who we choose to be, providing vision and motivation.
 1. For example, becoming a healthy and physically fit person may be an ideal.
 2. We are motivated to embark on a routine of healthy eating and exercise.
 3. Please share examples of your ideals.
- D. Ideals are at the core of our being—preferences we hold dear.
 1. Ideals assist me in becoming my best self. What does this mean for you?
 2. Ideals must be authentic, worthwhile, and attainable.
 3. Ideals require an investment of my best efforts. Offer an example of a personal ideal that you are working on. Does it involve sacrifice?

IIV. All humans have four similar needs.

- A. **Being loved** by others is a need that helps shape our identity.
 - 1. What family, school, and community members are shaping me at this time?
 - 2. Who supports and cares for me?
- B. **Learning to love** is about relationships and is not just academic knowledge.
 - 1. Pope Francis says, "No other school can teach the school of love if the family cannot." Who in my early life taught me how to love?
 - 2. Being loved, I love in return. Offer examples of people with whom I share love.
- C. **Reaching full potential** requires discovering our gifts and shaping our ideals.
 - 1. We all have gifts, talents, and abilities. Offer examples of these.
 - 2. Our ideals can motivate us to make choices and sacrifices. An example?
- D. **Finding meaning in life** is every person's responsibility.
 - 1. Where we spend our time and treasure points to our ideals.
 - 2. Our life will have meaning according to our efforts to live out our ideals.
 - 3. Ideals are personal, and each of us should reflect individually.

Conclusion: Summarize briefly what you have shared. End by referring back to your introduction and tying it all together, pointing the participants and team to the questions:

- 1. What gets me out of bed in the morning? Where do I spend my time and money?
- 2. Where will I be next year at this time?
- 3. What kind of person would I like to become?
- 4. What are my innermost hopes and ideals?

1 Pope Francis, Wednesday general audience, St Peter's Square, Rome, Italy, October 21, 2015.