

FAITH JOURNEY REFLECTION

SPEAKER PREPARATION MATERIAL

Speaker: Adult Team Member

Time: Second reflection of Die Day

Length: 20-25 minutes

Scripture: 1 Cor. 13:11-12

Previous Reflection: Growth and Ideals

Following Reflection: Paschal Mystery

Setting:

The participants have just heard the Growth and Ideals reflection. They shared some of their own ideals in their small groups, after which they shared with the whole group through their posters. Scripture has been enthroned just before this reflection. The Faith Journey reflection will serve as a reference point for trust and hope in the gospel message that is about to be presented in the Paschal Mystery reflection.

The presence of faith in youth today cannot be taken for granted. Young people live in a cultural environment that makes discussion of faith and religion difficult.

Progression:

Look back over your whole life and share how God was present at various times and events. In doing so, we hope the participants become aware of God's presence in life. They realize that sometimes we only recognize God's presence with time and perspective. This reflection is called The Faith Journey because you share not only the peak experiences of the presence of God, but also the times of struggle when God may not have seemed real or appeared absent or distant. As participants see both the light and the shadows, they will get a more complete picture and examine their own experiences of God.

Purpose:

The Faith Journey reflection invites participants to more deeply consider their experiences of God. Your reflection welcomes them into the mind and heart of an adult. You share your faith journey intimately and honestly, making the life of faith credible. The reflection should be given in story form, in a very personal way. The reflection charts the successes and failures of an adult to live a life of faith. This reflection must not be "preachy." Your faith story should be told with joy, humor, sorrow, regret, and hope.

Faith Awareness:

Participants see that faith is relational but not just an emotional feeling. Faith, like all

relationships, is shared. Faith calls us to give our best self to maintain this relationship with God. To lack any sense of faith may be to miss an indispensable part of life. Faith allows us to walk with God and to live in God's presence. All of life takes on new significance for those who are moving toward a life of faith.

Faith not only tells us who God is; it also tells us who we are. Our personal identity is discovered in the process of seeking God.

Response:

Participants should be invited to share their own faith journey as openly and honestly as the speaker has modeled. Having shared their own experience and having listened to the experience of others, participants are better prepared to grow in their faith and to seek a deeper relationship with God. They may become more willing to seek and receive the gift of faith.

Scripture for further reflection:

Eph. 4:13-16

¹ See GAUDIUM ET SPES, 22

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OUTLINE

After reading and praying with the scripture for this reflection, please study the outline carefully. Time constraints may require you to be selective. As you develop your personal stories and examples, consider the points in bold as most essential to sharing and the continuity of the weekend.

Scripture: Make sure to read 1 Cor. 13:11-12 from the enthroned Bible at the point in your reflection where you feel it is most apropos.

When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully as I am fully known. (1 Cor. 13:11-12)

Introduction: You may share a personal story or brief introduction with the group if it will be effective as a lead-in to your reflection.

I. My journey toward God was shaped by my family and others.

A. We learn who we are from those who love us.

1. Name different people from your early childhood who loved you and what they mean to you.
2. How has their love shaped you and helped you in your understanding of yourself?
3. Which of these individuals were instrumental in the start of your faith journey?

B. Chronologically and concisely, outline your faith journey.

1. Discuss the progression of your experience of God.
2. Touch on the development of your image of God.
3. Include key experiences from family, elementary school, high school, and young adulthood.

C. Our faith lives come alive only in relationships with God and others.

1. We reach our potential through relationships.
2. In relationships with God and others, we live out our faith.

II. Faith in God is a growing, unfolding, dynamic relationship.

- A. Faith is a personal relationship with a personal God.
 - 1. Like any relationship, life with God has ups and downs.
 - a. God seems closest when... But unreal or distant when...
Peak experience?
 - b. I sometimes see a pattern in the feelings of God's closeness and distance.
 - 2. Our relationships with God and others are sometimes tested. I've been tested...
- B. My relationship with God determines the person I am becoming.
 - 1. Faith in God gives meaning and direction to our lives.
 - 2. A complete human person, as God has designed us, is one who lives with a faith vision.
 - 3. God has a vision for our lives. By seeing this, we understand clearly who we are to be.
 - 4. The glory of God is man fully alive.

III. Faith in God gives meaning to our lives.

- A. My life has purpose because of God's love for me and others.
- B. In discovering God, we discover our personal identities.
 - 1. Walking with God calls us to be our best selves.
 - 2. God's vision for me is living as a complete person, my best self.
- C. Relationships are an important part of life.
 - 1. Intimate relationships are integral to living fully.
 - 2. We discover our value in relationships with God and others.
 - 3. Who I am is created in the context of the multiple relationships in which I invest myself.

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

- 1. How do you relate to the faith story of the team member offering the reflection?
- 2. When do you feel closest to God?
- 3. When has God seemed far away?
- 4. Have you ever experienced God in another person? In nature? Music? Sacrament? Scripture?

² St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book IV, Chap. 20, Part 7, PG 7/1, 1037

³ Irenaeus

⁴ Root, Andrew, *Relationships Unfiltered*. Zondervan. 2009