



The Kind of People He Invites

THE INVITATION: SESSION 1

Main Points:

- When Jesus called his Disciples, he flipped the traditional system on its head. He didn't call the religious elite, he called regular people.
- Jesus' disciples weren't perfectly holy before he called them. And we don't have to be either. It is in following him that we become more like him.
- Discipleship is a process, not a program. It is the process of following Jesus and becoming more like him.
- It is also the process of becoming more yourself. St Catherine of Siena said, "Become who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."

Commit:

- This week our group is simply committing to coming back next time.

Theme Verse

MATTHEW 4:18-22

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.' At once they left their nets and followed him. He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and



The Invitation

THE INVITATION: SESSION 2

Main Points:

The Kerygma (Greek word for “gospel”) can be broken down into 4 main points:

- God loves you. Christianity is not an ideology, but it is a Person. And this person, Jesus, loves you.
- We live separated from God’s love. Something is broken and we call this brokenness - both in the world and in ourselves - sin.
- Jesus’ death and resurrection bridges that divide. It’s like when his arms were stretched out on the cross he reached across that gap between God’s love and human brokenness and made himself the bridge.
- If this is all true, how do we respond? Those first 3 founding principles of the gospel are just principles unless we respond. Jesus is inviting you to follow him. Will you say yes? Will you give Jesus a chance?

Commit:

Take time this week to personally invite Jesus more deeply into your life. Pray this prayer or use your own words:

“Jesus, I thank you for the love you have for me, and for dying for me on the Cross. I’m sorry for my sins, and any choice I’ve made that has separated me from you. I invite you into my heart and in my life and I choose you to be Lord of my life. Amen.”

Theme Verse

1 JOHN 4:9-10

In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.



The Cost

THE INVITATION: SESSION 3

Main Points:

- **Jesus didn't hide from people** that following him was going to come at a cost.
- **Jesus willingly gave up his life.** No one took it from him. He made a choice to sacrifice. And he invites us to do the same. Not be crucified in a literal sense, but to "deny ourselves."
- **Taking up your cross to follow Jesus** may mean giving up sleeping in so that you can get to Mass on time. It may be having to explain to your family and friends why being Catholic is important to us, especially when they don't understand or don't appreciate our faith. It may mean giving up some bad habits.
- **Jesus is close to us in our suffering.** Remember, the cross doesn't have the final word. We believe Jesus rose from the dead. Our pain doesn't have the last word. We have hope in Jesus that there is more than just this life.

Commit:

This week, commit to praying for the other members of your group and their needs at least once before you meet again.

Theme Verse

MATTHEW 16:24

Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.



You Are Not Alone

THE INVITATION: SESSION 4

Main Points:

- **Aristotle said there are 3 types of friends:** Friends of Utility (usefulness), Friends of Pleasure (enjoyment) and Friends of Virtue. The third type are friends that are concerned for your good.
- **Having a mentor is like a coach for following Jesus.** They can teach you but also work beside you to reach goals and find new places to grow.
- **Accountability is essential to discipleship:** To be accountable means to own up to an expectation or a standard we are trying to reach. We take account of where we are in meeting that standard. To do this with another person keeps us honest.
- **"The 5 S's of Accountability"** help us have specific goals to work on in our life with Christ:
 - Service
 - Praying with Scripture
 - Sacraments
 - Overcoming Sin
 - Sharing Jesus with Others

Commit:

Choose one of the "5 S's" that you want to work on this week. Set an achievable goal such as praying with scripture 5 minutes everyday or serving your family by helping with dishes without being asked.

Theme Verse

PROVERBS 27:17

Iron is sharpened by iron; one person sharpens another.



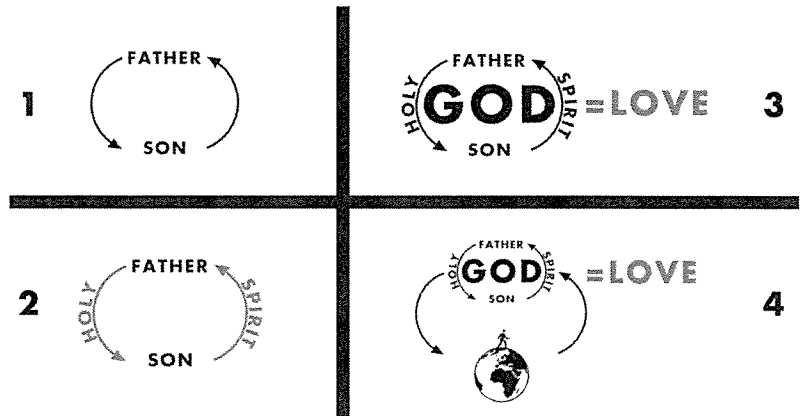
Belonging

NEVER ALONE: LIFE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT SESSION 1

Main Points:

- We feel alone when we do not have life-giving relationships.
- Pope Benedict XVI called the Holy Spirit “the most neglected person of the Trinity,” meaning we often forget that the Holy Spirit is God and we have access to Him through our baptism, confirmation, and prayer.
- The Catechism describes the Trinity as:
 - The Trinity is One (CCC #253)
 - The divine persons are really distinct from one another (#254)
 - The divine persons are relative to one another (#255)

1. *The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father.*
2. *The love between the Father and Son is so real that it is a Person, the Holy Spirit.*
3. *The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the three persons of the Trinity. The Trinity is God. And this is how we can claim “God IS love.”*
4. *“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to share in his own blessed life.” CCC 1.*



Commit:

This week commit to ask one person what they think of when they think of the Holy Spirit.

Theme Verse

JOHN 16:7

“But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”



Guided

NEVER ALONE: LIFE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT SESSION 2

Main Points:

- Another title for the Holy Spirit is “Paraclete” which translates into “Counselor,” “Advocate,” or more literally “one who comes alongside.”
- Discernment means asking for God’s guidance and help in making decisions.
- The Holy Spirit often guides us through ways outside of our direct prayer such as through friends, mentors, and most obviously through the Church.

Commit:

This week’s challenge is often called “The Heroic Minute.” As soon as you wake up in the morning, before you even get out of bed, simply pray: **“I love you, Jesus. What do you want of me today?”**

Theme Verse

JOHN 16:12-13

“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming.”



Empowered

NEVER ALONE: LIFE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT SESSION 3

Main Points:

- We have access to the same Holy Spirit given to the apostles at Pentecost through the grace of the sacraments and prayer.
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to share our faith, to be bold witnesses.
- Miracles are still possible if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Commit:

This week, ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you to reach out to someone and share your faith. But before you do, ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom to know what to say and do and courage to actually do it. (By the way, wisdom and courage are two of the seven gifts of the Spirit.)

Theme Verse

ACTS 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



Alive

NEVER ALONE: LIFE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT SESSION 4

Main Points:

- God is the only one who satisfies our deepest desires.
- At baptism, you received what the Church calls, “sanctifying grace” – when the Holy Spirit is infused into your soul and you are given the capacity to live a holy – or sanctified – life.
- If we do not cooperate with the grace given us, it can remain “tied up” and inactive in our souls.
- The Holy Spirit sheds light on the areas of our lives that need to change, on sin, and gives us the power to overcome sin. (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1433)

Commit:

1. Pray “Come, Holy Spirit” multiple times throughout your day, every day.
2. Think more about where in your life you want a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Next time we meet we will be praying specifically for these things.

Theme Verse

JOHN 7:37-39

“On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from within him.’” He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in Him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of Life."

- Nicene Creed

"Trying to fill the God-sized hole in our hearts with things other than God is like trying to fill the Grand Canyon with marbles."

- Peter Kreeft

"What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate."

- Romans 7:15

"[The Holy Spirit] brings sin to light [and] is also the Consoler who gives the human heart grace for repentance and conversion."

- CCC 1433

"Come, Holy Spirit"

- Ancient prayer of the Church

The one thing I want to remember is...

A personal challenge I want to give myself is...

Notes



Prayer for the Release of the Holy Spirit

NEVER ALONE: LIFE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
SESSION 5

Main Points:

- You receive the Holy Spirit at baptism and confirmation, but we have to “release” Him, consciously invite Him, to be active in our lives.
- It is important not to just say to people “I’ll pray for you,” but to actually pray with one another.

PRAYER FOR THE RELEASE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Merciful Father, free me from the Enemy. I reject Satan, his works, and his empty promises. Jesus Christ, I offer my life to you and truly desire to obey you as Lord. Spirit of God, I open myself to you. Release all of the graces, gifts and power to help me live as a firm, committed follower of Jesus. Amen.

Commit:

Look for the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life this week since we prayed for you. Galatians 5:22-23 outlines the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Theme Verse

2 TIMOTHY 1:6-7

“For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control.”

SCRIPTURE QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."
—Jeremiah 29:11

COMMIT

This week's commitment is to pray daily as Father Traynor recommended. First, be attentive to the desires of your heart. Second, tell God those desires. And third, ask God to build up and make strong the desires that are from Him and to take away those desires in your heart that are not from Him.

TIP FOR THE WEEK

Meditate this week on the following excerpt from the homily by Pope Benedict at the inaugural Mass for his pontificate.

"Are we not perhaps all afraid in some way? If we let Christ enter fully into our lives, if we open ourselves totally to Him, are we not afraid that He might take something away from us? Are we not perhaps afraid to give up something significant, something unique, something that makes life so beautiful? Do we not then risk ending up diminished and deprived of our freedom? . . . No! If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and He gives you everything. When we give ourselves to Him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ—and you will find true life. Amen."

SCRIPTURE QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
 —Jeremiah 1:5

COMMIT

Father Martin gave these practical suggestions of things to do that will help with discerning a vocation. Make some commitments related to these suggestions.

- » What is a reasonable goal for reading and praying with Scripture? For example, can you commit to 10 minutes a day?
- » What is a reasonable goal for going to daily Mass? Once a week? Twice a week? Daily?
- » What is a reasonable goal for going to Confession in the near future, and how frequently? Will you have a regular confessor?
- » Who is a friend (or two) you are willing to meet with for accountability to these goals, and how often can you commit to meeting? Weekly?
- » What is a reasonable goal for service in the near future, and how frequently? This week? Next week? Once a month? Once every three months?
- » What is a reasonable goal for a retreat in the near future, and how frequently? This month? Next month? Once a year? Twice a year?
- » Are you at a place in your discernment in which it would be helpful to speak with the Vocation Director of the Diocese?
- » Are you at a place in your discernment in which it would be helpful to get a Spiritual Director? If so, who do you have in mind?

**CLOSING
PRAYER**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

TIP FOR THE WEEK

Practice praying with the **ARRR** method this week.

- A**cknowledge your thoughts, feelings, and desires
- R**elate your thoughts, feelings, and desires to Jesus
- R**eceive Jesus' love and peace
- R**espond by doing what you believe Jesus is asking you to do