

FOCUS

Vision for Life

Student Leader Handbook

A Bit of Encouragement...

God has created me to do Him some definite service.
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.
I have my mission.
I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.
I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.
He has not created me for naught.
I shall do good.
I shall do His work.
I shall be an angel of peace,
A preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it,
If I do but keep His commandments.
Therefore, I will trust Him.
Whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him.
In perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him.
If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.
He does nothing in vain.
He knows what He is about.
He may take away my friends.
He may throw me among strangers.
He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me—Still, He knows
what He is about.

~Cardinal John Henry Newman



“To know Christ Jesus and to fulfill His Great Commission by first living and then communicating the fullness of life within the family of God, the Church.”

~FOCUS Mission Statement

Dear FOCUS Student Leader,

Thank you for saying “yes” to serving Christ and His Church through FOCUS! We are excited that you have made the heroic decision to live for Christ and to share His Good News with your peers on campus!

As you can see from our Mission Statement, the first and most important part of our life is “To know Christ Jesus.” As a student leader within FOCUS, our desire for you is that you will personally grow closer to Jesus Christ during your time with FOCUS and throughout the rest of your life. From your relationship with our Lord will flow all the grace you will need for your work on campus.

We want to help you become the best Catholic leader that you can be. In order to do this, we aim to provide you with resources to aid you in your personal growth and in your outreach on campus. You will find this handbook divided into five main sections: Relationship with God, Discipleship, Evangelization and Outreach, Bible Study, and FOCUS Facts and Stats. Each section begins with a short introduction which explains the vision and reasoning behind the documents that we have included.

Remember, this is a resource document *for you*. As we strive to better equip you on campus, we ask that if you have ideas for how we can better serve you, that you share ideas with the missionaries on your campus.

Thank you for having courageously accepted the call to serve Christ in this way. Throughout the rest of your college career and for the rest of your life, we pray that you will continually dedicate your life to Jesus Christ in new and wonderful ways.

May Christ be with you as you strive to build up His Kingdom!

In Christ’s peace,

Your friends at FOCUS



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FOCUS Student Leaders' Rule of Life

I. Interior Life: Begin to develop or continue to foster a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.

- ~ Daily quiet meditation; begin with at least ten minutes but gradually increase to 30 minutes to an hour
- ~ Frequent reception of the Sacraments; going above our minimum requirement of Sunday Mass-participating in daily Mass once or more throughout the week, and taking advantage of the Sacrament of Confession

II. Spiritual Multiplication: Live out intentional leadership to peers

- ~ Faithful to Bible study we attend to be formed in the Holy Scriptures
- ~ Faithful to those events hosted by FOCUS to be a welcoming presence. These would include: Speakers, Leadership Summits, and National Conferences (presence at social events is strongly recommended) .

~ In the near future, lead a Bible Study which meets weekly.

- o Use actual Bible study curriculum at least every other week
- o Two or three times a semester do something just for fun to increase and promote fellowship; this can be done during study time
- o Incorporate "Nature and Grace" as a means to take a group deeper
- o Supplement study with these four follow-ups: *Spiritual Multiplication, Moral Authority, Prayer, Apostolic Teaching*

~ In the near future, Disciple* two other students weekly, so as to prepare them to lead a Bible study and mentor two students of their own, living out 2 Timothy 2:2

- o A formal check-in should be done every other week which would cover *Interior Life, Nature/Grace, Spiritual Multiplication, F.A.C.T., and Big 3*

* We ask a student to communicate with their FOCUS discipler before formally inviting a student into discipleship

~ Method: Win, Build, Send

- o Win our peers over through genuine friendship by meeting them where they are (1 Thess 2:8, 1 Cor 9:19-23)
- o Build up our peers primarily through Bible study and Discipleship (2 Tim. 2:2)
- o Send out our peers by challenging them to do the same (Matt: 28:19-20)

III. Our Way of Life:

~ F.A.C.T.

- o Faithful- There is one God, He has one Son, Jesus Christ, and He founded One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

It is not possible for us to know everything of the Church, but we strive to live in union with Her and Her teachings, submissive to Her authority

- o Available - First to God and then to the commitments in our lives: studies, Bible study, Disciples, and events for the benefit of the community

- o Contagious - To witnessing Christ with hope and joy to others on and off campus

- o Teachable - Our lives are directed by the teachings of our Lord and our Church. If needed, we will give ~ fraternal correction, but always in charity knowing we too may receive correction

~ The Big Three (Moral Authority) - We strive to live moderately in all areas so as not to cause any of our brothers - or sisters to fall by our example (1 Cor 8: 13)

- o Chastity - To love rightly, to love as Christ Himself loves. We recognize that all are to be loved as sons and daughters of God

o Sobriety - We live moderation in all things such as our alcohol and food consumption. In accordance with the law of the land, as representatives of the [School] and the [community], as well as to be beyond reproach, we shall not promote or condone underage alcohol consumption

- o Excellence - To strive after excellence in all areas of our lives for the glory of God, especially in the areas of academics and ministry

This page has been redacted.
It contains a listing of FOCUS student leaders and their personal contact
information.

The previous page has been altered to remove specific references to location.

These pages have been redacted.

These pages contain a calendar for the semester. It has been removed to hide the specific location of the leaker.

Each month there is a dinner and a meeting both of these events are restricted to student leaders. At the end of the semester there is a retreat that is again only open to FOCUS student leaders.

Discipleship Accountability for women:

Sobriety:

- Are you drinking past your limit?
- Are you partaking in parties where your presence could be considered scandal?
- Are you upholding under-aged drinking?
- Are you spending excessive money on alcohol?

Chastity:

- Do you strive to have a pure relationship?
- Do you "live beyond reproach" when it comes to the purity of your relationship? I.E. Appropriate public display of affection, night curfews unless hanging out in groups, ect.
- Do you keep your conversations pure when talking about men? Do you objectify them?
- Do you allow yourself to get caught up in hopeless romantic movies (chick flicks), or TV shows?

Excellence:

- Are you excelling in your studies?
- Are you timely to your commitments? Do you uphold you commitments to FOCUS and other school activities?
- Do you put your best foot forward in all that you do?
- Do you motivate others (especially your disciples) to live to their best potential?

Prayer and Sacramental Life:

- Are you taking time to pray everyday? Are you working up to 20 minutes of prayer?
- Are you going to confession at least once a month?
- Have you been going to Sunday Mass? Are you trying to make additional weekday masses?
- Do you strive to grow in your prayer life? Have added extra forms of prayer to your 20 minutes of meditative prayer?
- Do you try to make it to the chapel to pray?

Evangelization:

- Do you strive to spread the good name of Jesus? Do you strive to live the Great Commission?
- Have you met new people? Do you invite new people to your bible study?
- Do you try to get into meaningful conversations about the faith with people?
- Do you share your story with people?

Spiritual Multiplication:

- Are you living out the principles of 2 Tim. 2:2 and 1Thess. 2:8?
- Did you meet with your disciples? Do you strive to work with two people?
- How have you invested in your disciples?

Bible Study:

- Did you spend the right amount of time preparing for your bible study?
- Do your try to make your study life changing? Are your women engaged?
- Have you spent time with your women outside of study? Has there been a community built up in your study?

Discipleship Accountability for men

Chastity

- Do you struggle with chastity?
- Have you struggled with pornography or masturbation?
- Have you struggled with unchaste thoughts?
- Have you been chaste in your relationship?
- Have you encouraged Chastity among your peers?

Sobriety

- Have you struggled with Sobriety?
- Have you encouraged and supported sobriety with your peers?

Excellence

- Are you striving in excellence?
- What area of your life do you struggled to be excellence?
- Did you make it to all your classes?
- Did you prepare properly for your bible study?
- Did you meet with your Disciple?
- Have you strive to be a living example of the Christian life?
- Are you living order?

Prayer

- How's prayer going?
- Have you stayed commit to you prayer commitments?
- What has God been telling you in prayer?

Evangelization

- How have you fulfilled the great commission?
- Did you meet any new people?
- Did you get into any meaning fulfill conversation?
- Did you share your testimony?

Spiritual multiplication

- Are you living out 2Tim 2:2 and 1Thes 2:8?
- Did you meet with your disciples?
- How did you invest in you disciples?

Bible Study

- Did you spend proper time preparing for you Bible study?
- What did you cover in your last Bible study?
- Do feel like everyone is engage in the study?
- Have you spend time with them outside of study?

Chapter 1:

To Know Christ Jesus: Your Relationship with God



Your Relationship With God

There are many compelling reasons to become a FOCUS student leader. Perhaps you have accepted the call to leadership because you have a strong desire to share the truth about Jesus Christ and His Church with your peers; maybe you are drawn by the genuine friendships you experience in the FOCUS community on your campus, or perhaps you hope to develop leadership skills as you take on the challenge of leading a Bible study of your own.

While all of these are wonderful things, our ultimate goal as student leaders with FOCUS is something that surpasses all of this: *we want nothing less than to know Christ Jesus*. We want to grow in our relationship with God, to experience His deep and abiding love for us as His sons and daughters, and to love Him with our whole selves in return.

Jesus gives us the two Great Commandments: “To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” and to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-39). He gives us these two commandments in this order for a particular reason. Unless we are united with our Lord in prayer and in the sacraments, we will not have what it takes to love our neighbor. Jesus Christ *thirsts* for a relationship with us, and loves us for our own sake and not for what we can do for Him. Therefore, we must be confident in His love and His desire for friendship with us before we can bring others into this friendship.

For this reason, the first section of the FOCUS Student Leadership Handbook is devoted to resources that will help you to grow in your relationship with God.

Recommended Reading:

In Conversation with Christ by Peter Rohrbach

Swear to God by Scott Hahn

Catholic for a Reason III: The Mass by Scott Hahn and Regis Flaherty



As you begin your involvement as a student leader with FOCUS, nothing is more important than developing a personal prayer life. The following article offers practical insight and suggestions on how to begin making conversation with our Lord an integral part of your day.

Giving God Twenty: How to Start a Real Prayer Life by Bud MacFarlane Jr.

If you are serious about being a Catholic, keep reading. This is for mature audiences only. It is rated R for Realistic.

We all know that a Catholic adult who does not have a daily contemplative prayer life is a contradiction in terms. If there is one constant in the advice of the saints, it is that every Catholic should have a serious prayer life. My goal here is not to berate you if you do not have a prayer life. I have fallen short myself until recently, so I am the last one who can possibly criticize you.

So my purpose is to encourage you and to help you avoid the common mistakes which prevent most folks from establishing the habit of daily prayer. Let us begin.

Simply Simple

Thousands of books have been written on the subject of prayer, and I know you may have the impression that contemplative prayer is complicated, difficult, and only for nuns and monks hidden away in monasteries. Nothing could be further from the truth. Silent prayer is for everyone. Anyone can do it. You can get started right away—today, in fact—and within a few days or weeks, rise to a steady and high level of union with God.

The King of Silence

For our purposes, let us define contemplative prayer as time spent listening to God in silence. The key is **your** silence. Stay quiet. Don't say a word. If you're from New Jersey, like me, just shut up. "Contemplative" prayer ceases to be intimidating if you regard it as **sharing silence** with God.

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is silent in the most profound manifestation of His real presence on earth, the Eucharist. You are concretely setting out to imitate His silence. He is the King of Silence. You enter his Royal Court through prayer. The door to the court swings open with the touch of a warm, silent breeze. This breeze is the breath of God. Inhale Our Lord and He will exhale you right into your day.

God will Speak to You

Jesus can speak to you by leaving messages on your soul in a similar way that we leave messages on telephone answering machines. Your soul is a supernatural email "in-box." Silent prayer is your way of downloading your messages (grace) from your King. You were **designed** by God to do this. The only words you need to tell God before you begin to pray are these: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

God Inside You

If you are in a state of grace, the Holy Trinity dwells within your soul. Your body is a flesh and



blood home for God. He is literally **inside** you. He is not far away. If you remember this truth--that God dwells inside your soul--you will know He is not "up there in heaven somewhere" when you seek silent union with Him.

In this sense, silent contemplative prayer is not only possible, it is **impossible to mess up** because God is right there with you. This is why it does not matter for the first few years if you pray badly. You don't have to be "well-spoken" with God precisely because you are not talking. You are hanging out with Him.

This is why it is so important to go to Confession frequently—once or twice a month. By absolving you of sin, Christ is keeping the "communication link" open with your soul. You are in range of His cell tower. Never let sin stop you from praying every day; do allow Confession help you pray every day.

Every Day means Every Day

You must pray every single day. I strongly recommend that you commit to silent prayer as the very first thing you do in the morning. I try to pray after I shower and get dressed—before I start my "regular" day of work and responsibilities as father and husband. There are several advantages to the First Thing in the Morning Method.

Go for the Habit

You simply must keep in mind that the evil one's fear is that we will develop a daily habit. After a lifetime of holding you in the slavery of the bad habit of not praying every day, he will fight tooth and nail to get you to miss one day so he can then discourage you from starting up again the next day. Don't fall for this sucker punch. If you missed your prayer time yesterday, get back on board today.

Fortunately, a good habit works in your favor. String together seventeen days of any behavior and it starts becoming a habit. Knit together seventeen times seventeen days, and it will become difficult for you **not** to pray. Put on prayer like a pair of pants. The evil one will then concentrate on ruining your silence, but dealing with that minor challenge is for the Advanced Course a year or two down the road.

God will not give up. Only you can give up.

The key advantage to committing to First Thing Every Morning Prayer is that your commitment to silence with your Lord will start jumping into your head as soon as you wake up—just as your need to take a shower or your desire to have breakfast leaps to the forefront of your mind when you wake up. You will know that the good habit is forming after you wake up every day for a week with "I will pray today unless I get run over by a truck" on your mind.

Crack of Dawn or Dusk

If you experience a distraction or emergency that prevents you from praying Right Off the Bat, you have all day long to get your prayer time in. If you are having a truly off day, don't go to sleep before you pray. Have a cup of coffee. You want it to play out that if you do find yourself praying just before you go to bed, it will be your sixth or seventh "attempt" because you've had it



on your mind since waking up. Use meal times as your measuring stick. If you miss prayer before breakfast, try before lunch. Or just after lunch, or just before or after dinner, etc. Associate prayer in your mind with having a spiritual meal.

So this is your simple Rule of Prayer:

"I will begin my day with prayer as the first important thing I do every day until the day I die. I will never go to bed again without spending time in silence with my God."

The Anti-Freakout

Another bonus of praying Right Off the Bat is that prayer gives you two benefits which you will soon begin to crave. First, it helps you begin your day in a settled, peaceful, and contented state. Let the house burn down! Let the kids go bonkers! Did the bank repossess your car—Cool! So what if your psycho boss screams in your ear? Inside your soul, you're as cool as a Catholic cucumber. You have spent your time with your Savior, and you know it, and you know He knows it. Silence is calming in and of itself. **Silence with God** is the best, safest, most natural anti-freak-out medicine you can take.

Right off the Bat

The second bonus is that Praying First Thing makes you like a baseball being struck by a Divine Slugger. "Pitch" yourself to God. Toss Him your soul like a softball first thing in the morning. Let your day become a big fat fastball right down the middle of the plate. God will lift his front leg, keep his shoulder in, extend his hands and belt you right into the spiritual upper deck—first pitch, first at bat, every time.

I have no way of proving this, but I believe this is why virtually every home run king in major league baseball history was or is a Catholic—including Babe Ruth, Henry Aaron, Bobby Bonds, Mark McGwire, Roger Maris, and Sammy Sosa. God loves the long ball.

If I've noticed one universal difference between so-called "good" Catholics who pray every day and those who don't, it is the uncanny way those who do pray have their entire day shaped and formed by God.

Drop and Give God Twenty

I recommend twenty minutes of daily silence with God as a minimum. I am annoyed when I hear Catholic "experts" recommend "starting small" to folks hoping to start a lifetime habit of prayer—five or ten minutes. It never works. Nothing seriously human happens in five minutes—not taking a shower, not having a meal, not having a decent phone call with a friend. Human beings are not wired that way. According to the late Archbishop Fulton Sheen, psychologists discovered long ago that the human attention span is seventeen to twenty minutes long.

There are practical reasons for giving God Twenty. It takes five minutes for most of us to just to settle into listening mode. It takes several minutes to quiet down your imagination and fend off the thoughts and worries about your daily tasks and challenges. If you pray for twenty minutes, the likelihood is you will spend five or ten minutes of that time for the first several months



getting accustomed to shutting up your jabbering mind. To have five or ten minutes of silent prayer, in other words, pray for at least twenty minutes.

I know many Catholics who have a daily prayer life. None pray for only five minutes. Twenty minutes or bust. The **best five minutes** of prayer are almost always the five minutes that come **after** the first fifteen minutes!

The Holy "Now"

Here is the progression you will likely follow. For the first several days the twenty minutes will feel like an eternity. Five minutes will seem like an hour. This is not God's fault. It is probably not really your fault, either. We live in a rushed, loud, and godless society where the devil's big lie is that there is a tomorrow. Ever notice how the world, the devil, and the flesh are always "pushing" your attention away from the current moment by pushing your thoughts toward tomorrow?

In fact, there is only the Now. By the time you make it to tomorrow, it will be today again. It will be Now. God lives in the Now—in what theologians call the Fullness of Time.

You are about to experience the Miracle of Time. The scales will fall from your eyes and you will realize, day in and day out, that time does not exist. Time is merely, as Aristotle defined it, a grade-school ruler. He defined time as "a measure of objects moving through space." Your soul is immortal—timeless. Your body "keeps" time as you "move" through your years on earth, but any union with God transcends time.

Gradually you will discover a wonderful truth: your twenty minutes of silence with your King will begin to go by quickly. Eventually, probably within a month or two, you will find yourself lingering beyond twenty minutes, even regretting that your time with God is so short. You might experience five or ten minutes of distraction on a particular day and find yourself desiring to **add** to your prayer time so you can have more peace with Him.

Throughput

When this starts to happen—when you start tapping into the reality of being with the God Who Lives Beyond Time, you will know that you are truly downloading His graces. You are now receiving His graces via T1 line.

Your desire for God is now becoming a craving—a longing as strong as any bride who pines to be with her groom on her wedding night. God is your lover, now. Today and every day is a wedding day. This is why the great mystics who wrote the book on contemplative prayer—Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Avila—described God as Lover. They describe union with God in terms of ecstasy.

You are in God's strike zone now.

You have become a Catholic with a contemplative prayer life. You will never, ever want to go back to limping through a day alone again. You are a Christian adult, and the graces of your Baptism, Confirmation, your Sacrament of Marriage (if you've taken the vows), Confession and



the Holy Eucharist now work in unison like powerful horses pulling your chariot of fire (with your family and friends on board) through time into eternity. Bang zoom!

Here are some practical measures you can rely upon.

1. **Silence Inside**
You **can** pray with noise around you. I know this sounds crazy, but it is possible to shut the world out. Moms, you can pray with the kids buzzing around you if you have no other options. Close your eyes. The King of Silence is inside you. He is all-powerful. He can make the noise go away.
2. **Find a place, but not your car**
It helps if you pray in the same spot every day. In front of the Eucharist is ideal, but barring that, pray in a room in your home. Moms might have to pray with the kids nearby. Do not attempt to pray silent prayer while you drive to work. You can't do two things at the same time. Have an informal "conversation" with God while you drive—or pray the Rosary with a tape—but don't count that as your Silent Twenty Minutes.
3. **Stop Watching Television**
This is self-explanatory. If you have time for TV, but don't have twenty minutes for God...
4. **Sit down?**
Most of my friends pray sitting down. Contemplative nuns and religious usually pray most while they are sitting down. Some prefer to kneel, especially if you have the opportunity to pray in Church, ideally just after daily Mass and receiving Communion.
5. **On the road**
My job requires a lot of travel. My "spot" is often the chair in the hotel room.
6. **Close your eyes**
Even though you will pray with your eyes closed, it is a good idea to pray before a holy picture or statue, so if you do open your eyes, you will see a reminder of Jesus or Mary. If you had a rough day and are forced to pray before bedtime, avoid praying in bed. You will probably fall asleep. Stand up to stay awake if you must.
7. **Take notes**
It is definitely an excellent idea to keep a notebook. If you "hear" God say something (which the saints call Promptings of the Holy Spirit), write it down, though it is usually best to wait until after your Twenty Minutes is completed rather than leave the silent zone.
8. **Three Sources**
It is difficult for novices like us to know for sure if these promptings are from God or not. There are only three possible sources: God, the evil one, or your own self.

If you get "instructions" that are contrary to any moral law or Catholic teaching, discard them immediately. Very few of us will ever "hear" explicit words, but most of us will get peaceful promptings. It might be a name of a person you might meet or the image of a friend or situation. Something from your past or something (or someone) in your future. It might be something more mysterious—hard to put your finger on exactly. An intuition. Often the same prompting will return to you regularly or sporadically for days, months, or years. Often it will



be that soft still voice of your own (until now, ignored) conscience telling you about a sin that you need to confess and jettison from your life.

9. Short cut: Friendship

My daily prayer life got a jump start when I asked two of my best friends to commit to Twenty Minutes a Day with me. Knowing that we're in this together has really helped. Don't be shy. Your friends want to pray every day too. Call your best Catholic friend. Commit together. Help each other. Encourage each other. Trade notes.

10. During the Day

Often, your silent time listening to God will prepare your soul with promptings that will become clear later in the day during a conversation or some daily activity. What you have done by praying Right Off the Bat is "tune in" to God's frequency. By no means should you "shut off" your communication with God. The saints speak of being in "in the presence" of God all day long. This is your destiny too if you have a daily silent prayer life.

11. No Teeth Pulling

Jesus really will communicate with you. Remember, His favorite way is to leave messages on your soul in silence. When you hear Him asking you to do something, follow the Blessed Mother's advice: "Do whatever He tells you." The saints say that obedience is the greatest virtue. The next "step" to your sanctity beyond having a daily prayer life in conjunction with the Sacraments is learning to discern the real voice of God--and learning to ignore all other voices. This is more advanced stuff, but the other voices usually tells lies tricked up to look like truth. This is why your only trustworthy source for Truth is the Catholic Church, founded by He Who is Truth.

And please, if God asks something of you, don't make Him pull teeth. Make your response, "Done."

12. Other Prayers

Most good Catholics I know start the first minute of the day when they open their eyes with morning prayers. Saint Escriva called this minute the most important minute of the day. I pray the following morning prayers but I do not "count" them as part of my silent prayer time:

Morning Offering
Guardian Angel Prayer
Consecration Prayer to Mary
Act of Contrition
Saint Michael Prayer
Memorare

At Noon, I often pray the Angelus, joining tens of millions of Catholics around the world. These common prayers are online here:

<http://www.catholicity.com/prayersdevotions/commonprayers.html>



Also, many are included on the free Mary Foundation Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet CD at <http://www.catholicity.com/cds/>

13. Spill Over

You will find that your daily Rosary will be more fruitful and contemplative—less the repetition of words—if you have a silent prayer life. You are training yourself in the habit of union with God; this will definitely spill over into your other daily devotions, including the Divine Mercy Chaplet and even your Grace Before Meals.

14. Before Bed

Start with Jesus, end with Mary. Many Catholics find great comfort in having a private conversation with Our Lady before they fall off to sleep. I recommend it. She is a good listener.



In Giving God Twenty, we learned practical tips on beginning a personal prayer life. The following article, Praying Like a Saint will take us to the next level, offering the details of a specific method of mental prayer that was used by many great Saints and is still a tool for men and women pursuing holiness all around the world.

Praying Like a Saint: A Method For Mental Prayer

“Mental prayer is nothing else than an intimate friendship, a frequent heart-to-heart conversation with Him by whom we know ourselves to be loved.” ~St. Teresa of Avila

“To know Christ Jesus...” The first four words of the FOCUS mission statement call us back to the fundamental importance of developing a relationship with our Lord in prayer. While this principle may seem simple, many have experienced the difficulty it takes to live out. As a student on a college or university campus, there are many demands placed upon your time, attention, and energy. In the midst of classes, group projects, homework, and other activities, making the commitment to create intentional time for prayer each day is difficult. And once we have managed to set aside this time, what exactly do we *do* with it? When one first begins a life of prayer, often the idea of spending even fifteen minutes in silence seems daunting.

As St. Teresa says in the quote above, prayer is nothing more than a conversation with our Lord. While this is certainly true, it is also acknowledged that this time of “conversation” can easily slip into daydreaming and mindless mental wanderings without more structure. Drawing from the wisdom of such saints as St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis de Sales, as well as St. Theresa of Avila, the method of prayer described below can help! This method is not meant to restrict us as we pray, but rather to free us by providing a format for our conversation with our Lord that may open us more fully to his Holy Spirit, and help us to fall more deeply in love with our Lord.

Getting Started

In many eastern religions, meditation or mental prayer (used interchangeably) is all about emptying one’s mind. Within the context of Christianity, just the opposite is true; rather than being empty, we strive to fill ourselves with the mind of Christ. In order to do so, it is often helpful to use Scripture or some sort of other spiritual book to help us focus our conversation. Whether you chose a scene from the Gospel’s or St. Josemaria Escriva’s *The Way*, look for a text that has short, dense chapters designed for prayer. Choose topics that motivate and inspire you, and try to avoid books that are more academic in nature. If possible, it can be helpful to read the passage you have selected for prayer the night before so that the passage is fresh in your mind for prayer the next day (for a list of books recommended for Mental Prayer, see the end of this article).

In creating a habit of prayer, the saints encourage us to pray at the *same time* each day, and to make this time before noon if at all possible. It is helpful to write this time into our schedules, honoring the time as we would a class or any other timed appointment. Further, it can be helpful to pray in the *same place* each day, and while not always an option, it is ideal to find a way to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Finally, right before you begin your conversation with our Lord, it can be helpful to take a few minutes and re-read the



passage you have chosen for meditation, once again bringing the topic to the forefront of your mind.

Praying like a Saint

Now that we have chosen a topic, time, and location for our prayer, we now turn to the structure of prayer itself. There are four main sections in this method of mental prayer: *preparation, consideration, conversation, and conclusion*. We will un-pack each section in the paragraphs below.

Preparation – The saints argue that preparation is the most important part of our conversation with our Lord. The two-fold aim of the first five minutes of our prayer is first to humble ourselves before the presence of God, and second, to call to mind that our prayer is in response to the great love God has for us as His sons and daughters.

First, we place ourselves in the presence of our Lord, begging the Holy Spirit to lead our prayer, for truly we cannot pray without His help. We are reminded of this by the Liturgy of the Hours, the universal prayer of the consecrated men and women of the Church, which always begins “God, come to my assistance. Lord, make haste to help me pray.” The CCC states “humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that ‘we do not know how to pray as we ought’ are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. Man is a beggar before God.” With this in mind during our preparation, we ask God to forgive our sins, speaking to Him “out of the depths of a humble and contrite heart” (CCC 2559).

You may have heard it said that “If religion is man’s search for God, Christianity is God’s search for man.” With this in mind, the second action of our preparation is to remember that we always pray in response to the great love that God has for us. Alluding to the story of Jesus and the woman at the well, the CCC 2560 states,

“If you only knew the gift of God!” The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is He who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; His asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.”

The following prayer, or something similar, can be used to help us cultivate both a spirit of humility, and a greater understanding of the reality of God’s great desire for our hearts.

My Lord and My God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence; I ask you for pardon of my sins and grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Mother Immaculate, St. Joseph, my Father and Lord, my Guardian Angel, Intercede for me.

Consideration – It has been said that one cannot love what one does not *know*. Consequently, during the first part of the body of our prayer, we seek to fill our mind with knowledge and thoughts of God and the virtues that will lead us to *know* Him more so that we might *love* Him more. In order to do this, we talk to God *in general* about our chosen topic. We consider the topic in our mind, using our understanding to attempt to fathom the subject, calling on our



memory to recall what relates to it, and if our topic is a story from the Gospels, using our imagination to try to picture what it would have been like to be a participant in the story ourselves.

For example, if one was meditating on the story of the Annunciation, one might talk to Jesus about Mary's humility and her perfect abandonment to the will of her Heavenly Father. One could meditate on what Mary would have been wearing, what her voice would have sounded like, and how she would have felt when Gabriel first spoke to her. In sum, the aim of the consideration section is to use our *minds* to think about our topic, to fill our intellect with these ideas, and to speak to our Lord about all that arises during our reflection.

Conversation – In the second part of the body of our prayer, we seek to love our Lord more through meditation on how our chosen topic relates to us *personally*, pouring out our hearts to our Lord and telling Him everything that rises from our desires and our will as a result of our consideration. It is during this time especially that we strive to fall more deeply in love with our Lord, making acts of adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and intercession as we meditate on the intersection of the circumstances of our lives and the topic of our prayer.

For example, using the story of the Annunciation once again we might praise God for the beautiful example we have in our Lady. We might make a self-examination of how we are living out the virtue of humility in our lives, calling to mind specific instances where we lack this virtue and asking for forgiveness and grace to overcome our weakness. We might give God thanks for the example of individuals in our lives who have given a sincere “Yes!” to our Lord as Mary has done, and we might pray for a close friend who is struggling to trust God with the challenges of his life.

The word “conversation” implies that there are two persons speaking to one another. Leave room for silence during both the consideration and the conversation so that God might have the opportunity to speak to your heart. Through a proper preparation and constant awareness of God's presence, “the heart allows itself to be driven by the Holy Spirit and God is able to do more with it by His grace than the heart could do by its own efforts.”¹

Conclusion – As our time of prayer draws to a close, we thank God for the time we were able to spend with him, and we ask him to show us how we might take what we have learned through our daily meditation and allow it to affect how we live our lives. Traditionally, the saints encourage us to take this step by making *resolutions* and a *motto*.

According to St. Vincent de Paul, “The principle fruit of mental prayer consists in making a good resolution.” Looking back on our conversation with Christ, we are encouraged to choose a specific virtue or habit that we want to cultivate and create a *general* and *specific* resolution in relation to this goal. Turning a final time toward the example of the Annunciation, we might make a general resolution to grow in trust in God's faithfulness in our lives in imitation of Mary's trust in God when she was asked to be the mother of our Savior. Our specific resolution

¹ *Searching for and Maintaining Peace* by Father Jacques Philippe



might be that each time we find ourselves worrying about finding a job after graduation, we place this anxiety in the hands of Our Lady by praying a Memorare.

Finally, we sum up our conversation with God into a *motto*, a single statement or phrase that we strive to repeat to ourselves frequently throughout the day to make the fruit of our prayer present in the daily activities of our lives. In the case above, our motto might be “Lord, let it be done to me” in imitation of Mary’s response to the angel Gabriel. Our motto should be short, concise, and easy to recall so that it can easily reconnect us to our time of prayer. Many have found it helpful to record their resolutions and motto each day in a notebook or prayer journal, and to return to the resolutions as part of their examination of conscience each night.

This is eternal life...

John 17:3 states, “This is eternal life that they know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” The method of prayer outlined above is meant to help us pursue our goal of knowing and loving Christ, and it has been developed and endorsed by many who have reached the heights of sanctity. However, by no means is this method the *only* way to pray, and if at any time you find that it *hinders* rather than *helps* you communicate with our Lord, speak to a spiritual director about alternative methods of prayer. As a student leader with FOCUS, nothing is more important than building a thriving relationship with Jesus Christ in prayer. Being caught up in a loving relationship with God in heaven is what we hope to be doing for the rest of eternity, and the more we grow in love for our Lord, the more we experience eternity in the *here and now*, and the more we are able to be a channel of God’s eternal love to those he places in our path.



While personal prayer is invaluable to developing a personal relationship with Christ, encountering Christ through the Sacraments is just as vital. The following article explains to us the meaning and purpose of the Sacraments in our lives as college students.

Sign Language: The Transforming Power of the Sacraments

Sign Language

Have you ever seen a picture of an iceberg? These monstrous pieces of ice that jut out of the water can cause a tremendous danger for a ship. The real power and weight of an iceberg is not so much what you *see* but what you *don't see*. The "tip of the iceberg" that peeks out of the water is really only a third of the actual iceberg. The bulk of the ice hides below—this can cause real damage to the boat. The top is a *sign* of what lies beneath the surface.

Sacraments are similar to icebergs. The real power of a sacrament lies beneath the surface like the bottom of the iceberg. It's what you can't see that has the real "weight." The "tip of the iceberg" points to what is hidden below the surface. You may have memorized a definition for a sacrament when you were younger that sounded like: "a sacrament is an outward sign of inward grace instituted by Jesus Christ." This is true but what does this really mean? The sacraments, according to the Catechism, are "perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our human nature. By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit they make present efficaciously the grace that they signify" (CCC 1084). In plain language, sacraments are earthly pictures of a heavenly reality. They point on earth to something greater that exists in heaven. They are something tangible that points to the intangible.

Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver will often teach this truth when he performs Confirmations. He will often call a girl up who is wearing a ring. He'll ask her who gave her the ring--it is usually a boyfriend or a parent. When he asks why that significant person gave the girl the ring the answer is: "because they love me" (Chaput, *Living the Catholic Faith*, 33). The ring on the girl's finger is a tangible sign of the real but intangible love the gift-giver has for the wearer.

So, signs are something we encounter in everyday life. Natural signs, like smoke, point to fire. Man-made signs, like stoplights, tell us when to stop. In sign language, those who are deaf use certain hand motions and "signs" to represent words and actions or entire phrases. Creation itself is a sign of the Creator. In Psalms 19:1, King David says, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork." Creation "tells" us of an unseen Creator.

From the Beginning

Scripture also tells us how God speaks to us in signs. The story of Adam and Eve reveals God's desire for an intimate relationship with His children. Created "in His own image and likeness" (Gen 1:26) they were able to have a deep relationship with God. As His children, God charged them to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen 1:28). For their nourishment God gave them "every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit" (Gen 1:29). God charged them with



one more command: they "may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2:16-17).

To show how much He loved them, God bestowed upon Adam and Eve the three-fold gifts of sonship, stewardship, and sustenance. They were His children, His son and daughter, because they were made in His image and likeness. God gave them stewardship over all of creation: God's image was to be on all they did from work to bearing children. He also promised them nourishment from all the fruits and trees of the Garden of Eden, forbidding eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

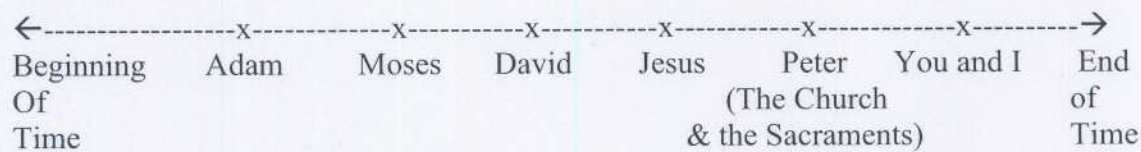
Well, we know how the story went. One Saturday night, Adam and Eve went for a bite and there the trouble started. Their sin of disobedience and lack of trust in God ruptured and broke their relationship with Him. They freely chose to disobey God and the resulting punishment was the loss of the gifts He had given to them. Salvation history overflows with stories and signs of how God wants to repair and restore that damaged relationship that was lost by our first parents.

God tries to restore back to the people of Israel what He called Adam and Eve to live out. As slaves in Egypt, He sends Moses to tell Pharaoh that, "thus says the Lord, Israel is my first-born son" (Ex 4:22). Just as Adam and Eve were children of God, Israel is called to be the children of God. They will claim to be His children by crossing over the Red Sea and following His commandments. After this miraculous escape God tells the people that if they "will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine" (Ex 19:5). God called the Israelites to be a people set apart and holy in order to be a "light to the nations." As stewards of God's message, they would lead the other nations to the one true God. While in the desert, God nourished and sustained them with manna from heaven and with water from a rock. Just like with Adam and Eve, He extended His invitation to the people to come into right relationship with Him. And just like Adam and Eve, the people sinned and rejected God's offer.

Salvation history not only tells the true story of our ancestors in the past but also tells the story of the human race and condition. God continues to come to His people and they continue to reject Him. These stories are not to remain in the past but they belong to us as well. We read the stories of Sacred Scripture to see where we fit into the story. This is our story. The similarities of Adam and Eve and the Israelite people should not be lost on us. God is coming to us to restore His gifts and we can reject Him or receive Him. So, how do we fit into the story now?

Back in the Family

The following diagram was used in a third grade Sunday school class. It is a simple illustration of how you and I fit into the story that God has been writing since the beginning of time.



God wants to bring us back into the story. He does this through His Son, Jesus, and the sacraments He instituted. The sacraments are covenants that restore the family bonds previously lost. In the Old Testament, God made several covenants with the people of Israel in order to show His great love for them. Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the whole nation of Israel fell short in keeping all the covenant promises they made but God was and is always faithful. We should not view these past encounters with God as merely contracts because contracts signify only an exchange of good and/or services – "You give me this for that" and vice versa. A covenant, on the other hand, involves an exchange of persons. One person forges their life with another and they become related in an intimate way. God wants to forge His life with us in this way and bring us back into the family.

The way He establishes this now is through the sacraments. In Latin the word for *covenant* is *sacramentum* from which we get the English word *sacrament*. The sacraments are not just signs that signify something but they are actual encounters with Christ. We really meet Jesus in the sacraments. God gives us his very life in the New Covenant with His Son. God forges a covenant with us through the sacraments. He gives Himself to us and we give ourselves back to Him in an exchange of persons. In a sense, we "fall up" in Christ where we "fell down" with Adam. We are restored and elevated to a more intimate relationship with God through the sacraments.

So, the three-fold gift promised to Adam and Israel is given in a new and dynamic way in the sacraments. In *Baptism* we are brought into the family of God, the Church: we are made sons and daughters of the Father by the washing of the waters of Baptism. *Confirmation* equips us with the strength and grace to be good stewards of the message and mission of Jesus: just as Israel was called to be a light to the nations, so now confirmed Christians are called to go and share the light of Christ to everyone they meet. The whole world needs to hear the message and good news of Jesus' saving works. Through the *Eucharist*, we receive the strength and nourishment to participate in the mission: Jesus feeds us with His own Body and Blood.

Salvation history is full of stories of our loving God coming to meet us. He comes to meet us in order to restore us back to Himself. He freely created the world out of love in order for us to have a relationship with Him. Again and again, God reveals the intimate relationship He wants to have with us. But He leaves it up to us to respond—like Adam and Eve or Israel or like Mary.

Think of the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel comes to Mary and asks her if she would be the Mother of Jesus (Lk 1:26-38). God comes to Mary, respecting her freedom, and asks if she will have an intimate role in the salvation of the world. She could have said 'no' and gone on with her life. God waited for the response of Mary, and, as Mother Teresa said, "she gave God permission." Humans have to cooperate out of their own free choice. God doesn't force anyone to do anything. The Catechism says, "God's free initiative demands *man's free response*" (CCC 2002).



Human Response

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that the sacraments are efficacious because it is Christ Himself who works in them. Efficacious means that they work and are effective; they actually bring about the reality they signify. Why? Because:

It is [Jesus] who baptizes, He who acts in His sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each sacrament signifies. The Father always hears the prayer of His Son's Church which, in the epiclesis of each sacrament, expresses her faith in the power of the Spirit. As fire transforms into itself everything it touches, so the Holy Spirit transforms into the divine life whatever is subjected to His power (CCC 1127).

It is Jesus who is acting in each and every one of the sacraments He instituted (CCC 1114). We come into contact with Him and deepen our relationship with Him. "The fruit of all the sacraments belongs to all the faithful. All the sacraments are sacred links uniting the faithful with one another and binding them to Jesus Christ" (CCC 950).

There is a story of a monk who left the monastery to live as a monk in the big city. When he arrived at his new apartment he took the mirror in the living room down and replaced it with an icon of Christ. He did the same with the mirror in the bathroom. All the pictures that were on the wall he took down and also replaced with icons of Christ. Everyday he would get up and shave, brush his teeth, comb his hair in front of the image of Christ in the icon. And before he left the apartment he would make one last check of his appearance in the icon in the living room. For years he would follow this ritual everyday. The townspeople remarked, "Have you seen that monk? The more and more disheveled he looks...the more and more holy he becomes."

This story illustrates how the sacraments and a sacramental worldview work. The more and more we try to model ourselves on the Son of God, the more and more we "look like Him." This is the work of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive Him by conforming them to the Son of God. The fruit of the sacramental life is that the Spirit of adoption makes the faithful partakers in the divine nature by uniting them in a living union with the only Son, the Savior" (CCC 1129). The Holy Spirit conforms us to look like Jesus. Just like the analogy of fire above and the illustration of the monk and the icons, we become more like God the more disposed we are.

That's how we can "tap" into the power of the sacraments. The sacraments work *ex opere operato* (which literally means by the action of them being worked). This means that when they are celebrated they bring about grace no matter how holy the minister might be. However, the fruits of the sacraments and what is gained by the person receiving the sacrament "depend on the disposition of the one who receives them" (CCC 1128). We have to be open and ready to receive the graces offered through the sacraments.

Think of someone attempting to draw water from the garden hose. If they went to the hose with a thimble or a baby cup it would take a long time to water the garden. If they went to fill up a large bucket or tub it would take less time. It is the same when we receive the sacraments. The



more disposed you are (the more you are a bucket and tub), the more active the sacramental grace will be.

If we know what the sacraments offer us, we will also realize why we want to be ready to receive the graces from the sacraments. The sacraments make us grow in holiness. We become more and more like the One we worship. Every time we go to participate in a sacrament we go to meet the living God. We go to meet Jesus Christ. Every sacrament is a chance to encounter our loving God who constantly comes to meet His people and to restore the broken relationship. As we grow up more and more in the family of God we become more and more like our Father.

Discussion Questions

Read Ps 19:1. Think of some of the incredible beauty and wonders of nature like Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon. Look at creation around you. What does this tell us about God? What kind of God created these?

How do the sacraments work? Have you ever thought of them as a magical incantation? Do you think this is the correct understanding? If not, why?

Think of some commonplace signs and symbols we encounter everyday like a storm cloud or stop sign. What do they point to? Now think of some of the sacraments. What do these symbolize or point to?

Read Rom 1:19-20. St. Paul tells us that the Gentiles are guilty for not believing in God because of His “stamp” on creation. In what ways, other than the ones in the text, can you see the “stamp” of God in creation?

Is there a time in your life where you felt moved and touched by God after you received a sacrament? Describe the experience.

Read CCC 950. You have heard the saying, “a chain is only as strong as the weakest link.” How can you better strengthen and unite yourself with your fellow Christians? With your family? Your friends or classmates? With people you don’t even know yet?

What are some practical ways you can be open to the graces that God offers to you in the sacraments?



Living the Sacraments: Preparing for Mass and Confession

"Peoples of the entire world need to hear these words. Their conscience needs to grow in the certainty that Someone exists who holds in His Hands the destiny of this passing world...And this Someone is Love—Love that became Man, Love crucified and risen, Love unceasingly present among men. It is Eucharistic Love."

~Pope John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope

In the previous article, we learned that the sacraments of the Catholic Church are not merely signs or symbols, but actual encounters with Christ who is a blazing reality. When this reality comes alive in our lives, we come to a greater understanding of God's love for us and that this love demands a response. Perhaps in the past we have gone to Mass or Confession merely out of a sense of obligation, fear, or grudgingly to pacify our parents. But in light of the truth of God's love poured out on humanity throughout History through the Church and her seven sacraments, our hearts are transformed as we realize the great gift that the sacraments make available to us every day: the very life of God.

When we realize the gravity of the gift we have available to us in the sacraments, we may see in ourselves an increase in our desire to encounter Christ, especially in the Mass and in Confession. As we seek to meet our Lord, it makes sense that we would strive to prepare our hearts and our minds to receive this great gift. The following articles are tools developed to help us prepare for the extraordinary encounters we can have with Christ in our ordinary lives, offering practical tips on how to prepare for Mass and for Confession. Keep in mind that these guidelines set the bar very high, and they present an ideal to strive toward and not necessarily something that will be mastered in a moment. Working with your discipler, take one or two suggestions from the articles and work to incorporate them into your preparation for Mass and Confession over a long period of time. When you have developed a strong habit, choose another. Over time, making these simple acts of preparation in our lives will have a lasting impact on time and eternity as we make ourselves even more available to our Lord's transforming grace.

Preparation for Holy Mass

Father Dylan James is a priest in England. He served as a summer chaplain for FOCUS from 2003-2006 and in that time developed the following guidelines for FOCUS missionaries and students as for preparation for Holy Mass.

If at all possible, strive to arrive early for Mass, even if only a few minutes to quiet your heart and your mind to encounter the mystery of the Christ in the Eucharist. As you pray, use the following acronym to guide your preparation.

F – **Focus** yourself on God's presence, recollect your thoughts, calm your body and your mind so that you may be receptive to the Holy Spirit.

O – **Observe** mentally what is about to happen in the Mass. Call to mind that you will hear the very Word of God; that you will join in the praise of the saints and angels who will be truly present around the altar; that you will be mystically present at the foot of the Cross and be united



to the perfect sacrifice of Calvary; and that Jesus Christ will give Himself totally and completely to you in Holy Communion and that you in turn will give yourself totally and completely back to him in return.

C-Holy Communion Prepare yourself to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion by asking him to come to you, to give you the graces you need, and to make you worthy to receive the great gift of his Body and Blood.

U-Unite your prayer intentions to the Holy Mass that is about to be offered, Call to mind all the people you have said you will pray for, those you remember and those you do not. Most of all, unite your sufferings to Jesus' suffering on the cross.

S-Silence yourself in preparation.

If time allows before mass, praying over the Scripture readings for Mass that day using either *Magnificat* or a Misalette is also encouraged. Mass readings can also be found online.

During Mass

Strive to make yourself familiar with the richness of the Catholic liturgy. This knowledge will help to prevent you from merely “going through the motions,” and will allow you to enter into the Mass more prayerfully. Listen attentively to the readings and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart as the Word of God is read. Bring a notebook or journal and take notes during the homily. During the Eucharistic prayer, hear the words of consecration and be aware of the reality that Christ is truly present.

Thanksgiving after Holy Mass

After Mass, remain a while in prayer, thanking God for the gift of Himself in Holy Communion, for the gift of the graces given, for the opportunity to attend Mass, and for all the other gifts in your life. This is a wonderful opportunity to make conversation with our Lord during this special time of intimacy. Ask that the graces available from receiving Holy Communion will bear a fruitful harvest in your life and in the lives of those Christ has placed in your path. This time, when Our Lord is particularly close to us, is also a special time to ask *and obtain* favors. Bring your petitions to Christ, trusting in His goodness.

As you prepare to leave, form some mental resolutions that you intend to carry from this Mass, resolutions flowing from the homily or from your prayer. Write it down so that you can hold yourself accountable to carrying it out. As you leave, try to maintain a spirit of interior recollection and awareness of God's presence and carry this with you during the day.

Preparing for Confession

While every Catholic is asked to receive the sacrament of confession once a year, anyone who is seriously chasing after holiness is strongly encouraged to receive the sacrament more frequently, on either a monthly or even a weekly basis. John Paul II received this sacrament every day. It is helpful to make going to confession part of a routine, choosing a particular day each month (ex. the first and third Fridays of each month) to receive this sacrament.



Every day before bed, we might make a brief examination of conscience such as the one suggested in the Follow-up on Confession. We may want to keep a written record of these examinations so that when we prepare for confession we will have a more accurate picture of the particular areas that are in need of healing in our lives.

When it comes time to receive confession, it is helpful to make a more complete examination of conscience. There are several excellent tools available to aid us in our preparation for confession. One such tool is the following examination of conscience by Father James Dylan. This examination is rigorous, *but do not let this discourage you!* God's mercy is infinitely greater than our capacity to sin, and having a greater self-awareness of the areas we may need healing in our lives can be a great help in our growth in holiness.

(Examination of Conscience should be inserted after this page)



For Time and For Eternity: Using Your Time for the Glory of God

"You cannot kill time without injuring eternity."

~ William Shakespeare

As Christians, we recognize that we have been given an incomparable gift by God. Our filial adoption by God as His daughters and sons is beyond comprehension. We know also that God gives us many other gifts, both spiritual and temporal. One gift that is often not recognized is the gift of time. Saint Josemaria Escriva says, "Time is a treasure." How often is time squandered, or not used for the glory of God? Time, even more than money, is a limited resource, and if we are to be good stewards of this gift, it would do us well to "budget" our time for the maximum impact. Time is a gift of God freely given. The question we need to ask, is how should we use this time for the glory of God?

The purpose of this article is to set forth a vision for the use of time as a student leader with FOCUS, and discuss how our lives as a whole can be ordered to the glory to God.

With that in mind, it must be stated that every action of ours should ultimately be ordered to our final end: Heaven. In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next.... It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective.... Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in'; aim at earth and you will get neither." To truly live an ordered life, we must keep our eyes on the goal, directing all our actions toward Heaven. Doing so will give us a sense of motivating purpose in all that we do, and help us maintain our zeal when life is difficult.

When we strive to order every action of our life towards the goal of Heaven, we stand a greater chance of living a *unified life*. We live in an age where most individuals live fragmented lives, with different goals, sets of standards, and ways of behaving and thinking for the different "compartments" of their life – professional life, social life, spiritual life, intellectual life, physical life, etc. "Many people feel they need to leave the values and principles of their faith outside of certain activities in the same way they leave a coat in a waiting room. The modern world tries to separate faith from reason, the professional from the personal, the means from the ends. This separatist approach destroys the 'unity of life' and creates the modern madness of feeling torn in two."² This divisive tendency is a result of man's fallen nature. Without opening oneself to Christ's redeeming grace, it can also be an instant recipe for unhappiness. When our use of time becomes disconnected from our essential purpose (i.e. pursuing holiness in order to attain eternal union with Our Lord), we tend to pursue various ends depending on the sphere in which we're currently living. On the other hand, "man, made in the image of the Creator, redeemed by the blood of Christ and made holy by the presence of the Holy Spirit, has as the ultimate purpose of his life to live 'for the praise of God's glory' (cf. Eph. 1:12), striving to make each of his actions reflect the splendor of that glory."³ This is precisely what it means to pursue excellence – to live in such a way that each sphere of our life is ordered to the glory of God. As a student

² Kelly, Matthew, *Rediscovering Catholicism*. Cincinnati: Beacon Publishing, 2002. p.39

³ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor (The Splendor of Truth)*, Art.10



leader, this will include our relationship with Christ, our families, students, teammates, friends, donors, ourselves, etc. Thus, there will be no area of our lives that is not submitted to the penetrating light of Christ. We are not meant to be one person in our classes, another at home, another at work, another with Our Lord. Rather all our actions and our very being are meant to be ordered to the imitation of Christ.

A common tendency for modern men and women is to *separate* our time instead of *ordering* it. Once we begin to see *all* time as “God’s time,” our lives become more cohesive. John Paul II offered this challenge to our faltering culture: “Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ! *Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that He may cast light upon it and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity.*”⁴

For many movements, their mission determines their life. As students involved with FOCUS, our life *is* our mission. When we dedicate our time and our lives to Our Lord, we become fully His. Ideally, this mindset and worldview we embrace now will not vanish when we graduate. The principles we strive for as student leaders should inform our entire lives. Our Lord has called us to imitation of Himself and to spread the Good News no matter where He may call us in this life. The time in which we are involved with FOCUS is designed to help us to begin or to further cultivate *a way of life*, inspired by the universal call to holiness and evangelization that Christ extended to everyone. The virtuous habits we establish now could potentially impact the rest of our life. Secondly, the way we live certainly impacts the lives of others. As Pope Benedict XVI explained, “*To evangelize means: to show this path [to happiness] - to teach the art of living.... [If] the art of living remains an unknown, nothing else works.*”⁵

But how exactly does a student leader go about practicing “the art of living?” Between school work, relationships with God, family, and friends, extra-curricular commitments, work-study jobs, not to mention your commitments as a FOCUS student leader, there are many demands placed upon our time. How do we begin to make the goal of heaven the unifying principle of our lives?

While it is ultimately the task of each individual to answer this question themselves, FOCUS offers a tool which seeks to provide a framework to help us translate our ideal of ordered living into our every day actions. Combining secular wisdom with Biblical wisdom, FOCUS draws upon categories developed by Franklin-Covey’s time management system and places these terms in context of our common vocation of union with God. Below is the framework described in greater detail.

⁴ John Paul II, *Dies Domini (The Lord’s Day)*, Art. 7

⁵ Josef Cardinal Ratzinger, Address on ‘The New Evangelization’ given on December 10, 2000 in Rome, Italy.



Concentric Circles of Order

FOCUS presents the *Concentric Circles of Order* as a model that student leaders might follow as they seek to live lives ordered towards heaven. Imagine six circles, with the smallest circle in the center and each consecutive circle drawn a bit larger surrounding the previous. The center circle represents our highest priority, with the relative importance of other priorities diminishing with each circle as it moves away from the center. (See Concentric Circles Image)

Concentric Circle One - Just as we give God a ten percent tithe of our salary, we also strive to give **God** a ten percent tithe of our time each day by meeting Him in personal prayer, in spiritual reading, in the Rosary, and in the Sacraments. This means that as student leaders we strive to spend approximately one hour a day with our Lord. This time is not meant to be spent all at once, but rather spread throughout our day so that we are able to connect with God frequently. Between the recommended twenty minutes of mental prayer and daily mass, it becomes natural to make time with God part of our daily routine. If you are just beginning your spiritual life, do not let this intimidate you. Begin by making small goals, and work with your discipler to gradually add more and more prayer into your schedule.

Concentric Circle Two - Our next priority as Catholic Christians is our primary **Vocation** as a husband or wife, priest or religious. God has called each of us to particular responsibilities within His family and to serve him in a particular way, either in marriage to a particular person or through marriage to Christ and his Church. As Catholics, we believe that this service is our individual path to sanctity and ultimately to heaven.

Those who have entered their permanent vocation in marriage or consecrated life must necessarily place service of their vocation as their first priority after their personal relationship with God, and might invest two to three hours of their day towards their vocation. However, as single people, we are encouraged to use this time in discernment of our primary vocation and to use any “left over” time investing in our relationships with our disciples, Bible studies, and into our vocation as students.

Concentric Circle Three - Based upon the statement “You cannot give what you do not have,” a student leader’s next priority lies in a commitment to **Rest, Relaxation, and Leisure**. We cannot care for others unless we are taking appropriate care of ourselves, and with this in mind, we are encouraged to re-create our body, mind, and soul through daily exercise, taking time to prepare healthy meals, reading for fun, playing a musical instrument, investing in life-giving friendships, and undertaking further personal development. Two to three hours a day may be devoted to these pursuits.

The Four Quadrants by Franklin-Covey - The time remaining in our day will be spent largely investing in our vocation as a student. This remaining seven to ten hours represent the last three concentric circles of our model. Why three circles?

Let us turn our attention to a Franklin-Covey tool titled “The Four Quadrants of Time



Management” to answer this question. Covey proposes that in any given day there are four types of tasks that demand our attention. The daily activities and obligations of our lives as students are no different. These four categories are outlined through the following table.

As seen above, Covey divides all tasks into one of four categories depending on its level of importance and its level of urgency. It is helpful to think of our daily obligations in this way as we strive to order our responsibilities within the apostolate. Each quadrant is examined individually below.

	Important	Not Important
Urgent	<p>Quadrant One (Q1)</p>	<p>Quadrant Two (Q2)</p>
Not Urgent	<p>Quadrant Two (Q2)</p>	<p>Quadrant Four (Q4)</p>

Quadrant One - Quadrant One (Q1) represents those tasks which are both “Urgent and Important”. In other words, Q1 tasks are those that are of vital importance to the success of our work and must be completed at a certain day at a certain time. For a student leader, an example of a Q1 task might be attending class, working a shift at your work-study job, attending Bible study, or meeting for discipleship.

Quadrant Two – Quadrant Two (Q2) represents those tasks which are “Important, but not Urgent.” Stated another way, Q2 tasks are those which are vital to the success as a student and FOCUS leader, but whose final execution is not imminent. Activities such as doing research for a paper which is due at the end of the semester, investigating graduate school curriculum, or helping to plan a FOCUS large group event would all be categorized in Q2.

Quadrant Three – Quadrant Three (Q3) represents those tasks which are “Urgent, but not Important”. Tasks in Q3 typically include various “housekeeping” duties that must be completed at a scheduled time (for example, an oil change or a hair cut.)

Quadrant Four – Quadrant Four (Q4) represents those tasks which are “neither Urgent nor Important”. Tasks found in Q4 might include those housekeeping duties that do not necessarily need to be completed at a specified time stopping by the financial aid office to check on a student loan payment, or purchasing books for the upcoming semester.

Concentric Circle Four – Bearing this in mind, it is helpful to make **Q2 Tasks** (Important, but not Urgent) our first priority when it comes to ordering our the tasks that are part of our lives as students. Toward that end, we might spend anywhere from one to three hours completing Q2 Tasks each day. It is commonly understood that “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail,” and our activities as a student are no different. We strive to take on those tasks which allow us to be



proactive as opposed to reactive in our approach, such as taking an hour on Monday morning to create a to-do list for the week, or studying for the GRE for a few months before we take the exam. If Q2 tasks are not completed ahead of time, they will become Q1 tasks if left incomplete for too long. “Living in Q2” frees us from the “tyranny of the urgent,” the overwhelming feeling that can take control and keep us from being fully alive when we fail to make Q2 tasks the backbone of our time in the apostolate. Students who run haphazardly from one activity to the next often feel dissipated and disappointed with their ability to live thrive as students, often rendering themselves ineffective and discouraged.

Concentric Circle Five – Our next priority is to spend time completing those tasks that are both Urgent and Important including your classes, scheduled meetings, and Bible studies. Two and half to six and half hours may be devoted to **Q1 Tasks** each day.

Concentric Circle Six – Finally, one hour per day may be devoted to **Q3 and Q4 Tasks**. Like Q2 tasks, if Q3 and Q4 tasks are not completed they will become Q1 tasks. For example, if a student does not take time to launder his clothes, he will be forced to make it a priority when he no longer has anything clean to wear.

The Concentric Circles model is meant to serve as a guideline. While it can point us in the right direction, each of us must take ownership over creating a schedule and plan of life that is appropriate to our unique legitimate needs, responsibilities, interests and talents.

“To Make a Sincere Gift of Yourself”

In the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, we are told that “Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self” (*Gadium et Spes*, No. 24). No matter your race or creed, investing one’s time and energy toward a purpose that is higher than oneself energizes the human spirit.

As Catholic Christians, we understand this universal longing as part of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of the Trinitarian God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, existing as a community of self-giving love for all eternity. Further, this longing exists in response to our desire to follow Jesus Christ as he gave a sincere gift of Himself to His Heavenly Father and to all of humanity through the gift of his death on the cross. As Christians, we know that in order to *give* this gift of ourselves, we must first *possess* ourselves. In order to achieve self-possession, we must strive daily to assert the dominance of our will over our passions and selfish desires by practicing the virtue of *self-discipline*. Only through control of these desires are we truly free to love.

Our lives change when our habits change

While we can grow in self-discipline, it is no secret to those who study human nature that we are creatures of habit. Living an ordered life requires constant striving, and the key to improving in our mission of ordered living is to bring about a change in our habits. Harnessing the power of



the habits and rituals in our lives is a powerful tool, especially when it comes to keeping the first three Concentric Circles in their proper order. While use of sheer will and the exercise of self-discipline require pushing yourself toward a particular behavior, habits pull *at* us.⁶ When we create a habit of rising each morning and heading to the gym, or climbing into bed at the same time each night we find that these actions begin to have a strong pull on us, and the “burden” of placing first things first becomes light.

Matthew Kelly often states “Our lives change when our habits change.” We see from the following adage that this is true not only for our temporal life, but our eternal life as well.

Sow a Thought, Reap an Action
Sow and Action, Reap a Habit
Sow a Habit, Reap a Character
Sow a Character, Reap a Destiny

Nature builds on grace, and when we claim dominion over the natural order of our world (time, talent, and material belongings), by establishing positive habits we make way for God’s grace to take greater effect in our lives. Further, we grow in self-possession so that we might be free to serve all those whom Christ places in our path.

⁶ Consider this quote from Loehr and Schwartz’s *The Power of Full Engagement*: “Change is difficult. We are creatures of habit. Most of what we do is automatic and non-conscious. What we did yesterday is what we are likely to do today. The problem with most efforts at change is that conscious effort can’t be sustained over the long haul. Will and discipline are far more limited resources than most of us realize. If you have to think about something each time you do it, the likelihood is that you won’t keep doing it for very long. The status quo has a magnetic pull on us. **A positive ritual is a behavior that becomes automatic over time – fueled by some deeply held value.** We use the word “ritual” purposely to emphasize the notion of a carefully defined, highly structured behavior... The power of rituals is that they insure that we use as little conscious energy as possible where it is not absolutely necessary, leaving us free to strategically focus the energy available to us in creative, enriching ways.”

Loehr, Jim and Schwartz, Tony, *The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal*. Prince Frederick: Simon and Schuster, 2003. p. 20-21



Chapter 2:

And To Fulfill His Great Commission: Discipleship



Discipleship

Christ's final commandment to us is clear: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Within FOCUS, we fulfill Christ's Great Commission quite literally as we live out Discipleship and Spiritual Multiplication. Just as Christ spent three years investing in His apostles, so we too understand the importance of sharing our lives with those around us, particularly with those who are willing and ready to teach teachers to teach" (2 Tim. 2:2). By living out Spiritual Multiplication, we will be able to reach more souls for Christ more effectively and, in time, faster, than any other means of evangelization.

In order to *make disciples* for Christ, we must first *be disciples* of Christ. As Christians, we are called to know, love, and serve Christ. Within our discipleship relationships, we strive first and foremost to be conformed to the image of Christ. To this end, discipleship is a great place to grow in our relationships with Christ through prayer, conversation and study, realizing that we cannot give what we do not have.

In discipleship, we strive to "share not only the Gospel of God, but also our very selves" (1 Thess. 2:8). A discipleship relationship consists of a few people helping each other grow closer to Christ. It can be likened to a big brother or big sister type of relationship, which provides encouragement and accountability in the Christian walk.

While we may be unable to reach the entire world (or campus) on our own, we can invest our lives into two or three others. Spiritual Multiplication *works* and it is the most effective way to build up authentic Catholic leaders who are willing to teach others to teach, too! By taking part in discipleship, we know that what we do with a few is for the good of the masses, so that at last, the masses might come to know Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior!

For this reason, this section of the FOCUS Student Leadership Handbook includes resources on how to live out Spiritual Multiplication.

Recommended Reading:

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert E. Coleman
The Lost Art of Disciple Making by Leroy Eims¹

¹While these books are not Catholic, they do provide valuable insight into how to live out the Spiritual Multiplication within the Christian life.



As Christians, we seek to follow Christ and to fulfill His Great Commission. In order to make disciples of all nations, we look for faithful people who love Christ and desire to make Him known to others. The following article explains more of the method of Spiritual Multiplication.

Teaching Teachers to Teach: Spiritual Multiplication Explained

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

~ Matthew 28:19-20

The Great Commission

The Great Commission is Christ’s final command to us. Before He ascended into Heaven, Christ gives us His final instructions. He commands us not just to get converts, but to *make disciples*. Through FOCUS, we fulfill Christ’s last commandment through Spiritual Multiplication and Discipleship. We spiritually multiply because this is how Christ Himself taught us to reach the world. In His own life, Christ spent *three years* investing his very life into twelve men, and, in particular, into three: Peter, James, and John. These men were His work. By building up these apostles as leaders, He ensured that the Church would be carried on throughout the ages. It’s because of the witness of those men and God’s grace that we still have the Church today.

This method has been passed down throughout the ages. Just take a look at the hierarchy of the Church. It is neither practical nor possible for the Pope, the Shepherd of the Church, to spend quality time with each individual member. But the Pope can spend time with the Bishops, who in turn spend time with the priests in their diocese. Priests then are given the specific task of looking out for their congregation, for those in their flock. In this way, the Pope is able to influence the whole flock through the Bishops and priest²

Within FOCUS, Spiritual Multiplication is the heart of all that we are called to do. Our ultimate goal is to reach the world for Jesus Christ, and the way that we do that is through discipleship. We must strive to leave a Christ-like impact on a few people rather than trying to impact as many people as possible. Time has proven that this is indeed the most effective way to evangelize. If we are able to reach people, to build them up, to help them become self-feeders, and to teach them to teach others, there is no limit to what we can do!

Commitment to Christ

Being a disciple begins with having a personal commitment to pursuing holiness and being conformed to Jesus Christ. St. Paul understood this well when he challenged the Corinthians, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). Within discipleship relationships, we should be able to say the same thing: imitate me because I am *running* after Christ! If we desire to share Jesus Christ with those around us, our lives must be rooted in our personal relationship with Him. This idea is summed up well in the old adage “you cannot give what you do not have.”

² For more information, see FOCUS Follow-Up 9 on Spiritual Multiplication



In our work of making disciples, we must never forget this basic truth: that our apostolate and evangelization will only be successful in the measure that we ourselves live the supernatural inner life of which Jesus Christ is the Source”³. Without this interior life, this relationship with Christ, we will simply be ineffective in our work. In order to live discipleship well, we must have Jesus Christ at the center of our relationships. This means that we need to live out our commitment to daily prayer and constantly strive to be more conformed to His image and likeness.

Practicals

In order to find disciples, we need to be willing to step outside of our personal “comfort zones” in order to share the Good News. After all, the Great Commission tells us to “Go therefore and make disciples... and *teach* them to observe *all* that I have commanded.” (Matthew 28:19-20). Fear may hold us back from sharing our faith sometimes, but we need to reach beyond that fear to share Christ with others.

We share the good news of Christ with others through the idea of *Win, Build, Send*. This means that first of all, we need to *Win* people to Christ and His Church. We do this in a variety of ways, including Bible studies, one-on-one meetings, playing sports, etc. By doing fun activities together and sharing our lives with others, we can win the right to be heard. And that right to be heard will help us to share Christ with others. After people are won over to Christ, we must *Build* them up in their faith by helping them to learn more about the Church and by helping them become self-feeders. By helping teach others to ask questions and seek out the answers on their own, we can provide others with valuable skills that will help them in their Christian walk for the rest of their lives. The final component is to *Send* others out to teach those whom Christ places in their path. It is our aim to build up strong leaders who will be willing and ready to go out and do for someone else what you have done for them.

Living out Spiritual Multiplication takes time, energy, and prayer. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* says this: “It takes time to make disciples. It takes individual, personal attention. It takes hours of prayer for them. It takes patience and understanding to teach them how to get into the Word of God for themselves, how to feed and nourish their souls, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, how to apply the Word to their lives. And it takes being an example to them of all of the above.” Personal example is powerful. It is through our own example that we can truly teach others to teach.

Our Ultimate Goal

As we strive to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission, we must always keep the end goal in mind: to reach as many souls as possible who will not only know and live their faith, but who will desire to share it with others also. And remember: the beautiful thing about Spiritual Multiplication and Discipleship is that when you take the time to share your life and faith with someone else, God will work in your life as well!

³ Soul of the Apostolate by Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard, p. 3



Deciding whom to disciple is one of the biggest decisions that you will make as a FOCUS leader. In order to make disciples of all nations, we first look for faithful people who love Christ and desire to make Him known to others. Here are a few ideas on how to ask someone into a discipleship relationship.

Imitate Me as I Imitate Christ: How to Ask Someone into Discipleship

Are they FACT?

As you are looking for someone in whom you can invest your very life, just remember to look for someone who is FACT. The acronym FACT stands for *Faithful, Available, Contagious, and Teachable*.

Faithful

A faithful individual is someone who is faithful to the Church and her teachings. This does not mean that he or she needs to know all the Church's teachings; he or she does, however, need to believe that the Catholic Church is the one true Church established by Christ and to trust in Her teachings. A faithful person is also someone who is faithful to their commitments, for example, attending Bible study weekly.

Available

Being a FOCUS disciple is a significant time commitment. Look for someone who has—or is willing to make—the time to be a leader within FOCUS. Also make sure those you are thinking of discipling are reliable and willing to invest in Spiritual Multiplication.

Contagious

In order to draw others to Christ, we need to be able to show the joy of living the Christian life. Look for someone who has a joyful spirit and can draw others into this same joy. Keep in mind that your disciple does not need to be an extrovert, but he or she should have the social graces to effectively reach out to new people. We need all types of people to share and spread the Gospel!

Teachable

As we mentioned before, someone does not need to know all of the Church's teachings in order to be asked into discipleship. At the same time, we need to make sure that the individuals in whom we are investing are teachable and willing and ready to learn more about their faith. Further, individuals need to be willing to be held accountable and open to the correction of their discipler.

The Big Three

As FOCUS student leaders, we ask you to live as examples of Moral Authority in the Big Three: *Chastity, Sobriety, and Excellence*. As we all know, these are some of the toughest virtues to acquire on a college campus, but by living as examples in these areas, we will be able to show others what a difference Christ has done in our lives.

Chastity

God has made us to love and to be loved, and we know that true love always seeks the good of the other. Unfortunately, because of our fallen nature, this love isn't always expressed in the best way. Chastity is nothing more than the power to love in the right way" (Moral Authority



Follow-up, 15). By loving others as Christ loved us, we can be powerful examples to those around us.

Sobriety

One of the biggest temptations during college life is the misuse of alcohol. As Catholics, we do not believe that alcohol is evil in itself. At the same time, we know that alcohol is often abused and used by those not of legal age. In 1 Peter 5:8, St. Peter tells us: “Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.” It can be tough enough to make the right decisions when we are sober; we must therefore not allow ourselves to be weakened by misuse of alcohol.

Excellence

So many people in our world today just do enough to get by. St. Paul challenges us to take this one step further: “Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:23-24). By striving for Excellence in all we do, we glorify God and sanctify our daily living. Our example of excellence can also call others to higher standards. As Pope Benedict XVI said, we are not made for comfort—we are made for greatness.

The Importance of Prayer

When looking at whom to disciple, we must pray for guidance and wait for those our Lord will give us on His time. At the same time, we must strive to put ourselves into situations that give our Lord the opportunity to guide us to those He chooses. If we remain faithful to God in prayer, He will bring those to us whom He has chosen for us to share the Faith. We shouldn't choose disciples simply because we like or enjoy hanging out with them. Rather, choose disciples that are willing and able to disciple others. Keep an open mind and ask our Lord who it is that He wants you to invest your life into.

Steps to take when asking someone into discipleship

1. Pray! Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to whom you should disciple
2. Look for someone who is FACT (*Faithful, Available, Contagious, Teachable*)
3. Talk to your discipler about whom you are thinking about asking into discipleship
4. Meet with the person you've been praying for and explain discipleship to him/her (perhaps go through the “Spiritual Multiplication” Follow-Up)
5. Talk about Discipleship Commitments
6. Ask them to pray about it
7. Trust God and thank Him for His faithfulness!



Once you have asked someone into discipleship, it's time to live out 1 Thess. 2:8 by sharing "not only the Gospel of God, but also our own selves." Here are some key points to remember when you're looking at how to best spend time with your disciples. At the same time, keep in mind that each discipleship relationship will look differently—there isn't one mold for every discipleship relationship.

Sharing Our Very Selves: What to Do During Discipleship

Discipleship is a friendship that is centered upon Christ. As such, a discipleship relationship should serve three functions. First of all, discipleship provides *Encouragement* in the Christian walk. Discipleship also is a great place to work on *Accountability* to keep you challenged and striving to grow as a man or woman of God. Finally, discipleship is *a safe and confidential place* to talk and grow together in Christ.

What to do during discipleship time:

- 1. Begin with Prayer.**
- 2. Talk about Prayer.**
 - A great place to start is by asking your disciple, "How is your prayer life?" Talk about consistency and the importance of having a set prayer time each day.
 - Ask about and encourage daily prayer, daily Scripture reading and other spiritual reading, and daily Mass
- 3. Talk about your lives.**
Share your testimonies. Talk about what is going on in your lives.
- 4. Work on the Big Three.**
 - Regularly discuss Sobriety, Chastity, and Excellence. These can be difficult virtues on a college campus, but they are vital in our Christian walk.
- 5. Discuss follow-ups or spiritual reading, which encourage good conversation**
- 6. Set Nature and Grace goals**
 - Nature: Natural virtues
 - Grace: Life of prayer, Sacraments
 - Hold your disciple accountable to the goals which they set each week
- 7. Plan discipleship time for the following week.**
- 8. End with prayer.**

Tips for Discipleship:

1. Be natural. It's friendship.
2. Spend time outside of discipleship time together. Time spent with your disciple outside of discipleship will make your discipleship time that much more effective.
3. Try a "one week on, one week off" approach: spend one week going through a follow-up and the next week doing something that makes you both come alive!
4. Strive for excellence and challenge your disciple to do the same.
5. Challenge incrementally: work slowly to challenge them beyond where they are without overwhelming them.
6. Trust the Holy Spirit to help you.
7. Pray with and for your disciples.



As we strive to grow in our Christian life, we look for ways to draw closer to Christ in both natural and spiritual ways. Setting Nature and Grace goals within the context of a discipleship relationship is one concrete way to grow in these areas. By setting Nature and Grace goals, we can make ideal virtues become realities in our lives.

Ideals to Action: Nature and Grace Goals

Accountability is one of the most important aspects of a discipleship relationship. Each week, we will set “Nature” and “Grace” goals—one goal working on a certain area of our nature (flesh) and one goal working on grace (our relationship with God). The two areas fit together closely, as we learn from St. Thomas Aquinas: “Grace builds on nature.” For example, one week you may choose to work on the Heroic Minute (getting out of bed as soon as your alarm goes off). By working on the goal of the Heroic Minute each day, you are able to discipline your flesh in small ways. As you learn to discipline your flesh and nature, that same discipline will naturally carry over to your spiritual life as well. That way, the next time you may be tempted in your life of grace (such as to not pray for a full 20 minutes), you will be disciplined and strong enough so that you may resist the temptation.

The aim of Nature and Grace goals is to make concrete positive changes in our lives. In order to create these changes, we will strive to build good habits. As Matthew Kelly states, “Our lives change when our habits change.” Since we are going after creating *habits*, it is expected that these goals may take some time to take root in our lives. Therefore, it is entirely possible to work on a Nature or Grace goal for more than one week.

As we set these goals, we must remember the importance of turning to God and asking for the grace and help that we need in order to pursue our goals with excellence. We must work as if everything depends upon us, yet pray as if it all depends upon God, knowing that we can do nothing apart from Christ. Below are some examples for Nature and Grace goals.

NATURE Goals:

Punctuality
Time Management
Orderliness (clean desk or work space)
Good posture
Proper grooming
Overeating
Procrastination
Reliability
Tendency to be argumentative
Tendency to interrupt
Excessive talkativeness/ Not Really Listening
Cliquishness
Negative humor
Table manners
Harsh tone of voice
Heroic Moment (getting up on time)
Chivalry
Modest and appropriate attire
Manners and social grace

GRACE Goals:

Mental Prayer
(ex. 15 min.—1/2 hour—1 hour)
Spiritual Reading (ex. 10 minutes/day)
Daily Mass
Reading the Gospels/ Scripture
(1-2 Chapters per day)
Confession (Monthly—weekly)
Rosary
Divine Mercy Chaplet
Morning/Evening/Night Prayer
Morning Offering
Daily Examination of Conscience
Fostering a Spirit of Recollection throughout
the day
Reading Catechism of the Catholic Church
Memorizing Scripture



Recommended Resource List

Internet Resources:

<http://www.catholic.com/>
<http://www.newadvent.org/>
<http://www.ewtn.com>
<http://www.vatican.va/>
<http://www.faithfulchristians.org/>
<http://www.cuf.org/>

The following is a list of books that have been recommended by FOCUS staff. If you are looking for a book to read either in relation to training or for your own personal growth, this is a great place to look.

Some of the books indicated below have non-Catholic authors. While these texts offer invaluable wisdom, it is important to note that the authors are writing outside of the context of the Catholic worldview and therefore may present their material in a way that is incomplete or in some way “out of sync” with the fullness of truth revealed through the Catholic Church. It is important to be aware of this when approaching these texts.

Prayer

- *The Liturgy of the Hours with Office of Readings*
- *Ascent of Mount Carmel* / St. John of the Cross
- *Augustine on Prayer* / Thomas Hand, OSA
- *Christian Perfection and Contemplation: According to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*/ Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange
- *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* / Jordan Aumann
- *Compendium of Spirituality* / Emeterio De Cea, OP (ed.)
- *Conversation with Christ* / Peter Thomas Rohrbach
- *Difficulties in Mental Prayer* / Eugene Boylan
- *Discernment of Spirits: The Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living*/ Timothy Gallagher
- *Fire Within* / Fr. Thomas Dubay
- *Interior Castle* / St. Teresa of Avila
- *Introduction to Spirituality* / Louis Bouyer
- *Prayer for Beginners* / Peter Kreeft
- *Prayer: Living with God* / Simon Tugwell, OP
- *Prayer Primer: Igniting a Fire Within* / Fr. Thomas Dubay
- *Spiritual Exercises* / St. Ignatius Loyola
- *Spiritual Passages* / Fr. Benedict Groeschel

Spiritual Reading

- *A Simple Path* / Mother Teresa
- *Abandonment to Divine Providence* / Jean Pierre de Caussade



- *The Autobiography of St. Theresa of Avila* / St. Theresa of Avila
- *The Cloud of Unknowing* / William Johnston (ed.)
- *Conferences* / John Cassian
- *Confessions* / St. Augustine
- *The Conversion of St. Augustine* / Romano Guardini
- *The Dialogue* / St. Catherine of Siena
- *The Divine Favors Granted to St. Joseph* / Pere Binet
- *Divine Mercy in My Soul: The Diary of St. Faustina Kowalska* / St. Faustina
- *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* / Blessed Anne Catherine Emerich
- *The Four Loves* / C.S. Lewis (non-Catholic)
- *The Friendship of Christ* / Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson
- *The Genesee Diary* / Henry Nouwen
- *Happy Are You Poor* / Fr. Thomas Dubay
- *He and I* / Gabrielle Bossis
- *He Leadeth Me* / Walter Cixzek
- *The Hidden Power of Kindness* / Fr. Lawrence G. Lovasik
- *I Believe in Love* / Jean du Coeur de Jésus D'Elbée
- *Imitation of Christ* / Thomas A. Kempis
- *An Introduction to the Devout Life* / St. Francis de Sales
- *Journal of a Soul* / Pope John XXIII
- *Journey Towards Easter* / Joseph Ratzinger
- *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* / St. John Climacus
- *The Life of Christ* / Fulton Sheen
- *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis* / Anonymous
- *My Daily Bread* / Anthony Paone, S.J.
- *On the Holy Spirit* / St. Basil
- *On the Beatitudes/Commentary on the Our Father* / St. Gregory of Nyssa
- *Opening to God* / Thomas Green
- *The Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ* / Archbishop Alban Goodier
- *Prayers of Meditations of St. Anselm* / St. Anselm
- *The Prison Meditations of Alfred Delp* / Alfred Delp
- *The Reed of God* / Carryl Houselander
- *Rosary Meditations from Mother Teresa of Calcutta: Loving Jesus with the Heart of Mary* / Published by Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament
- *The Rosary of Our Lady* / Romano Guardini
- *Rule of St. Benedict (Introduction to Humility)* / St. Benedict
- *The Sacrament of the Present Moment* / Jean Pierre de Caussade
- *The Sanctifier* / Luis Martinez
- *Screwtape Letters* / C.S. Lewis (non-Catholic)
- *Searching for and Maintaining Peace* / Fr. Jacques Philippe
- *The Secret of the Rosary* / St. Louis de Montfort
- *Seek That Which is Above* / Joseph Ratzinger
- *Silent Pilgrimage to God* / Charles de Foucauld
- *Something Beautiful for God* / Malcom Muggeridge



- *The Soul of the Apostolate* / Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard
- *The Soul's Journey to God* / St. Bonaventure
- *The Stairway of Perfection* / Walter Hilton
- *Story of a Soul* / St. Therese of Lisieux
- *This Tremendous Lover* / Dom Eugene Boylan
- *Transformation in Christ* / Dietrich von Hildebrand
- *True Devotion to Mary* / St. Louis de Montfort
- *The Way of Perfection* / St. Theresa of Avila
- *Weeds Among the Wheat* / Thomas Green, S.J.
- *When the Well Runs Dry* / Thomas Green, S.J.
- *A Woman Clothed With the Sun* / John Delaney
- *The World's First Love* / Fulton Sheen

Liturgy/Eucharist

- *Adoration* / David Guernsey
- *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* / Fr. James O'Connor
- *In the Presence of Our Lord: The History, Psychology, and Spirituality of Eucharistic Devotion* / Fr. Benedict Groeschel and James Monti
- *The Lamb's Supper* / Scott Hahn
- *Mass Confusion* / James Akin
- *A New Song for the Lord* / Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
- *Preparing Yourself for Mass (previously titled: Meditations before Mass)* / Romano Guardini
- *Sacrosanctum Concilium* / Vatican II
- *The Spirit of the Liturgy* / Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
- *St. Cyril of Jerusalem on the Sacraments* / (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press)

Church Teaching/Doctrine

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- *50 Questions on the Natural Law: What it is and Why We Need It (revised)* / Charles Rice
- *The Aquinas Catechism* / St. Thomas Aquinas
- *Documents of Vatican II (begin with four major Constitutions)*
- *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Heaven but Never Dreamed of Asking* / Peter Kreeft
- *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* / Ludwig Ott
- *The Truth of Catholicism: Inside the Essential Teachings and Controversies of the Church Today* / George Weigel

History

- *A Compact History of the Catholic Church* / Alan Schreck
- *Characters of the Reformation* / Hilaire Belloc



- *Christ the King-Lord of History: A Catholic World History from Ancient to Modern Times* / Anne Carroll
- *The Everlasting Man* / G. K. Chesterton
- *Great Heresies* / Hilaire Belloc
- *History of Christendom Series (Volumes I–V)* / Warren Carroll
- *How the Reformation Happened* / Hilaire Belloc
- *The Popular History of the Catholic Church* / Philip Hughes
- *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* / Fr. Louis Bouyer
- *Triumph: The Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church: A 2,000-Year History* / H. W. Crocker III
- *The Courage to be Catholic* / George Weigel

People/Saints

- *John Henry Newman* / C. S. Dessain
- *King's Good Servant, but God's First: the Life and Writings of St. Thomas More* / James Monti
- *The Life of Bishop Neumann* / Thomas Langan
- *The Life of Saint Anthony* / St. Athanasius
- *A Man for Others, St. Maximilian Kolbe* /
- *The Martyrdom of Edmund Campion* / Evelyn Waugh
- *Padre Pio, the Stigmatist* / Rev. Charles Carty
- *Saint Francis of Assisi* / G. K. Chesterton
- *Saint Francis of Assisi* / Johannes Jorgensen
- *Saint John Vianney, Cure D'Ars* / Abbe Francis Toch
- *Saint Thomas Aquinas, The Dumb Ox* / G.K. Chesterton
- *Treasure in Clay: Autobiography of Fulton Sheen*

Philosophy

- *The Evidential Power of Beauty* / Fr. Thomas Dubay
- *Friendship: The Art of Happiness* / John Cuddeback
- *Fundamentals of the Faith* / Peter Kreeft
- *The Sources of Christian Ethics* / Servais Pinckaers

Theology

- *Spiritual Theology* / Jordan Aumann
- *Theology and Sanity* / Frank Sheed
- *Theology for Beginners* / Frank Sheed

Marriage/Family

- *Catholic Sexual Ethics* / Ronald Lawler, Joseph M. Boyle, and William E. May



- *Casti Conubii* / Pope Pius XI
- *Familiaris Consortio* / Pope John Paul II
- *First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and the Trinity* / Scott Hahn
- *Good News About Sex and Marriage* / Christopher West
- *Humanae Vitae* / Pope Paul VI
- *Love is a Decision* / Gary Smalley (*non-Catholic*) and John Trent (*non-Catholic*)
- *Three to get Married* / Archbishop Fulton Sheen
- *What Wives Wish their Husbands Knew about Women* / James Dobson (*non-Catholic*)

Priesthood

- *Letters to My Brother Priests* / Pope John Paul II
- *On the Priesthood* / St. John Chrysostom
- *The Priest in Union with Christ* / Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance
- *The Priest is not His Own* / Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Evangelization and Discipleship

- *Becoming a Contagious Christian* / Bill Hybels (*non-Catholic*)
- *Boys to Men* / Curtis Martin and Tim Gray
- *Catechesi Tradendae* / Pope John Paul II
- *The Cost of Discipleship* / Dietrich Bonhoefer (*non-Catholic*)
- *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* / Pope John Paul II
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi* / Pope Paul VI
- *General Directory of Catechesis* / Vatican
- *Heart of Virtue* / Donald DeMarco
- *Journey of Desire* / John Eldredge (*non-Catholic*)
- *The Master Plan of Evangelism* / Robert Coleman (*non-Catholic*)
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte* / Pope John Paul II
- *Redemptoris Missio* / Pope John Paul II
- *The Sacred Romance* / Brent Curtis (*non-Catholic*) and John Eldredge (*non-Catholic*)
- *Wild at Heart* / John Eldredge (*non-Catholic*)

Apologetics / Conversion

- *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* / John Henry Newman
- *Beginning Apologetics (Series)* / San Juan Catholic Seminars
- *Born Fundamentalist, Born Again Catholic* / David B. Currie
- *By What Authority: An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition* / Mark Shea
- *The Case for Christ* / Lee Strobel (*non-Catholic*)
- *The Catholic Church and the Bible* / Fr. Peter Stravinskias
- *Catholic for a Reason (Volumes I – III)* / Edited by Leon Suprenant
- *Catholicism and Fundamentalism* / Karl Keating



- *Christianity for Modern Pagans* / Pascal Pensees – edited and with an introduction by Peter Kreeft
- *Confessions of a Convert* / Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson
- *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* / John Cardinal Newman
- *Faith Facts (entire collection)* / Catholics United for the Faith
- *Faith of the Early Fathers (Volumes I – III)* / William A. Jurgens
- *The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense* / Suzette Haden Elgin
- *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* / Peter Kreeft
- *How to Win an Argument* / Michael Gilbert
- *Mere Christianity* / C.S. Lewis (non-Catholic)
- *New Evidence that Demands A Verdict* / Josh McDowell (non-Catholic)
- *Nostra Aetate* / Pope Paul VI
- *Orthodoxy* / G.K. Chesterton
- *The Problem of Pain* / C.S. Lewis (non-Catholic)
- *Radio Replies (Volumes I – III)* / Fr. Rumble and Fr. Carty
- *A Rocking Horse Catholic* / Caryll Houselander
- *Rome Sweet Home* / Scott and Kimberly Hahn
- *Search and Rescue* / Patrick Madrid
- *Snakebite Letters* / Peter Kreeft
- *The Spirit of Catholicism* / Karl Adam
- *Surprised by Truth: 11 Converts Give the Biblical and Historical Reasons for Becoming Catholic* / Patrick Madrid
- *Unitatis Redintegratio* / Pope Paul VI
- *What Went Wrong with the World* / G.K. Chesterton
- *Where We Got the Bible: Our Debt to the Catholic Church* / Henry Graham

Leadership

*These works don't focus on Christian doctrine, and therefore we have not indicated non-Catholic authors.

- *Beyond Success: The 15 Secrets to Effective Leadership and Life Based on Legendary Coach John Wooden's Pyramid of Success* / Brian D. Biro and John R. Wooden
- *Courageous Leadership* / Bill Hybels
- *E Myth* / Michael E. Gerber
- *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* / Patrick Lencioni
- *The Greatest Salesman in the World* / Og Mandino
- *Gung Ho! Turn On the People in Any Organization* / Ken Blanchard
- *Leading With the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life* / Mike Krzyzewski
- *One Minute Manager* / Kenneth H. Blanchard
- *Please Understand Me II* / David Keirse
- *Principle Centered Leadership* / Stephen Covey
- *Servant Leadership* / Robert Greenleaf



- *Seven Habits for Highly Effective People* / Stephen Covey

Scripture

- *The Holy Bible* / God
- *The Dictionary of Biblical Theology* / Xavier Leon Dufour
- *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* / Scott Hahn
- *First Corinthians* / Richard Hays (non-Catholic)
- *A Guide to the Bible* / Antonio Fuentes
- *Ignatius Bible Commentary* / Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch
- *Inside the Bible: An Introduction to Each Book of the Bible* / Fr. Kenneth Baker, SJ
- *Jesus and the Victory of God* / N.T. Wright (non-Catholic)
- *Mission of the Messiah* / Timothy Gray
- *Mystery of the Kingdom* / Edward Sri
- *Our Father's Plan Study Guide and Timeline Band* / Jeff Cavins
- *The Sacraments in Scripture* / Timothy Gray

Finances

*These works don't focus on Christian doctrine, and therefore we have not indicated non-Catholic authors.

- *Avoiding Common Financial Mistakes* / Ron Blue
- *Complete Financial Guide for Young Couples* / Larry Burkett
- *Every Single Cent* / Larry Burkett (for singles)
- *Funding Your Ministry: Whether You're Gifted or Not* / Scott Morton
- *How to Manage Your Money* / Larry Burkett
- *Rich Dad, Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money--That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!* / Robert T. Kiyosaki, Sharon L. Lechter
- *Total Money Makeover* / Bill Ramsey

Fiction

*These works don't focus on Christian doctrine, and therefore we have not indicated non-Catholic authors.

- *Anna Karenina* / Leo Tolstoy
- *The Ball and the Cross* / G.K. Chesterton
- *Ben Hur: A Story of the Christ* / Lew Wallace
- *Brideshead Revisited* / Evelyn Waugh
- *The Brothers Karamazov* / Fyodor Dostoyevsky
- *Chronicles of Narnia* / C. S. Lewis
- *Conceived without Sin* / Bud MacFarlane Jr.
- *Count of Monte Cristo* / Alexander Dumas
- *Crime and Punishment* / Fyodor Dostoyevsky
- *Darkness at Noon* / Arthur Koestler
- *Death Comes for the Archbishop* / Willa Cather



- *The Death of Ivan Illych* / Leo Tolstoy (short story)
- *Divine Comedy* / Dante
- *Don Quixote* / Cervantes
- *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse* / Michael O'Brien
- *The Four Quartets* / T.S. Eliot
- *Flatlands: A Romance of Many Dimensions* / Edwin A. Abbott
- *Fr. Brown Mysteries* / G.K. Chesterton
- *Good Country People* / Flannery O'Connor (short story)
- *A Good Man is Hard to Find* / Flannery O'Connor (short story)
- *Ivanhoe* / Sir Walter Scott
- *Joan of Arc* / Mark Twain
- *The Kings Achievement* / Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson
- *Kristen Lavransdatter* / Sigrid Unset
- *Leaf by Niggle* / J.R.R. Tolkien
- *The Lord of the Rings* / J.R.R. Tolkien
- *Master and Man* / Leo Tolstoy (short story)
- *Master of Hestviken* / Sigrid Unset
- *My Antonia* / Willa Cather
- *O Pioneers* / Willa Cather
- *Pierced by a Sword* / Bud MacFarlane Jr.
- *The Power and the Glory* / Graham Greene
- *Pride and Prejudice* / Jane Austen
- *The Queen's Tragedy* / Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson
- *Quo Vadis* / Henryk Sienkiewics
- *Revelation* / Flannery O'Connor (short story)
- *The Song of Bernadette* / Franz Werfel (*non-Catholic*)
- *Space Trilogy* / C. S. Lewis
- *Three Musketeers* / Alexander Dumas
- *War and Peace* / Leo Tolstoy
- *The Wasteland* / T.S. Elliot
- *With Fire and Sword* / *The Deluge* / *Fire in the Steppe* / Henryk Sienkiewics



An integral part of discipleship is not only to pass on the life-giving teachings of the Catholic Church, but also to teach disciples how to teach others the truth of God's family themselves. In order to accomplish this task within FOCUS, each student leader is asked to work through a series of ten "Follow-ups" with his or her discipler.

Following in Faith: An Introduction to FOCUS Follow-Ups

What are Follow-ups?

Drawing upon the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), teachings of the Church Fathers, useful stories and analogies, and of course Sacred Scripture, Follow-ups provide us with the intellectual tools to pass on the faith to those whom Christ places in our paths. Modeled after the CCC in their content and structure, Follow-ups present the Gospel in an accessible manner, making it possible to share the faith with our generation by giving us the means to articulate our faith in terms that modern men and women can understand.

1. Repent and Believe

The first step in the Christian life is a call to repentance. This follow-up shows the great need for each of us to turn to God and to give our entire lives to Jesus Christ as Lord first and foremost. In Scripture, Jesus challenges us, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46). Even though we sin and fall short, our Heavenly Father desires to heal us, restore us, and elevate us to our new life in Christ as adopted sons and daughters of God.

2. Baptism

By Baptism, we are spiritually and radically changed. Through this Sacrament, we are freed from sin and reborn as daughters and sons of God. Through the saving waters of Baptism, we also become Heirs of Heaven, temples of the Holy Spirit, and members of the Family of God, the Church. Baptism saves us by first destroying our old selves—our sinful nature—and then saving us through water and the Spirit.

3. Confession

God loves us and desires for us to be in communion with Him. Because of our fallen nature, we turn our backs on God and fall away from Him time and time again. Through the Sacrament of Confession, we receive God's healing and forgiveness. In his physical body, Jesus healed physical ailments and forgave sins. Christ now continues this work of healing and forgiveness through His body on earth, the Church.

4. New Identity in Christ

Through our Baptism, we are given a New Identity in Christ. This new identity should—and does—affect every aspect of our lives. This follow-up examines the extraordinary consequences of our Baptism and of committing our lives to Christ. With this New Identity, we now have a new purpose in life, that is, to cooperate with God's work of Salvation for all mankind.

5. The Teaching of the Apostles

Through the teaching of the Apostles, God reveals Truth to us. These truths that God gives to us bring us into a deeper relationship with him. When He was still with His disciples, Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them "into all the truth" (John 16:13). The apostles' teaching was guided by the Spirit, and the same Spirit still guides us today through



the hierarchy of the Church. This follow-up discusses the importance of knowing and living these truths in our lives.

6. Fellowship

The decisions we make about our friendships are some of the most important decisions that we make in our lives. This follow-up shows us the importance of having good friends and building virtuous friendships. Having fellowship with other Christians is crucial because good friends build us up and encourage us to become better Christians. As we seek to grow in our relationships with others, we realize that it is only through our relationship with God that we can learn how to be a good friend.

7. The Breaking of the Bread

The Mass is a family meal in which we partake in the New Covenant which Christ established at the Last Supper. In the Eucharist, we receive Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. This follow-up shows us how the Real Presence of Jesus in Holy Communion can deepen our union with Christ, strengthen our love for Him and others, and help us to overcome our weaknesses and sins.

8. Prayer in the Life of a Christian

God thirsts that we may thirst for Him. God alone can satisfy our deepest desires, and prayer is where we experience this truth. God desires a personal relationship with each of us, and He constantly calls each one of us to come to know and love Him more. The more that we pray, the more that we make prayer a part of our daily life, the more peace we will find. As Christians, we must constantly strive to be in communion with God, and prayer, especially daily prayer, will help us to reach this ultimate goal.

9. Spiritual Multiplication

In His Great Commission, Christ commands us to make disciples of all nations. Spiritual Multiplication and discipleship are the God-given methods for reaching the world for Christ. No other method has been given, and indeed, no other method is more effective. This follow-up presents the method of Spiritual Multiplication and shows us how we can practically live out Christ's final request and commandment.

10. Moral Authority

Jesus Christ has called us to be His witnesses. This implies two elements: that our lives reflect His transforming presence and that we can render an account of the hope within us to anyone who asks. This follow-up helps establish the need in our world for personal excellence. By our own witness and example, we can earn the right to be heard by those who do not yet know Jesus Christ and by those who have not yet come to see the Church that Christ founded as the Family of God. In particular, this follow-up presents the need to live Moral Authority in the areas of chastity, sobriety, and personal excellence.



Chapter 3:

Outreach and Evangelization



Outreach and Evangelization

As we grow in our relationship with Christ, it is only natural that the love we have found in Him will spill over into the relationships we have with those around us. At the 2005 World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI summed up our mission well when he said, “Anyone who has discovered Christ must lead others to Him. A great joy cannot be kept to oneself. It has to be passed on!”

It is both our *responsibility* and our *privilege* to share the Good News of Christ with those around us. C.S. Lewis once wrote, “Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.” Each day, we meet many souls—*immortal souls*—who do not know of Christ’s love for them. There are people in each of our lives that we have the opportunity to reach.

St. Francis of Assisi once said, “Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.” As Christians, we must live Christ’s message in our own lives and speak of Him with those around us. It is by our daily example that others will see the joy we have from following Christ. John Paul II said, “Your great contribution to the evangelization of your own society is made through your lives. Christ’s message must live in you and in the way you live and in the way you refuse to live... Your lives must spread the fragrance of Christ’s Gospel throughout the world.” Let us live in such a way that all those whom we meet may see God’s love shining through us!

As leaders for Christ through FOCUS, we are called to go out and to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission to “make disciples of all nations.” This section of the Student Leadership Handbook is filled with resources to help you accomplish just that.

Books to Read:

Search and Rescue: How to Bring your Friends and Family into, or back into, the Catholic Church by Patrick Madrid and Scott Hahn



In your first semester as a student leader with FOCUS, you have worked to develop a personal prayer and sacramental life, grown in friendship with your discipler, and through the FOCUS Follow-up curriculum, have begun to become equipped to teach the truth of Jesus Christ and his Church to your peers in a way that will make sense to them. Now you are ready to join in the task of Spiritual Multiplication on your campus. But where to begin?

One More Soul: Prayer at the Heart of Evangelization

“Apart from me, you can do nothing.” ~ John 15:5

Through Scripture, the Sacraments, and the individuals God has placed in your life, you have had a personal encounter with the transforming love of Jesus Christ. You are convicted of the great need that all souls have for the grace provided by our Lord and His Church, and you desire to invite others into this life changing relationship.

At least in theory...But in practice, it can be terrifying to share your story with a non-Christian friend, call a new freshman whom you've never met and invite them to Bible Study, or invite a friend who has fallen away back to Mass. It is natural to feel a little nervous in these situations, but we must remember that courage doesn't mean never being afraid, but rather acting according to the Truth in difficult situations in spite of our fears.

And the Truth is that whether we recognize it or not, there is a war raging in the heart of every student whom you pass as you walk to your classes each day. “God and Satan are at war, and the battlefield is the human heart” Dostoyevsky famously stated.¹ Dr. J. Reyes, President of the Augustine Institute, reminds us that this is “a real war. It is an implacable war – a total war. *People die and they die forever.* But people are also born again, *and they live forever.*” If we see things rightly, we realize that there is more at stake than we can fathom, and that our decision to follow Christ is not just something that involves “me and Jesus,” but potentially thousands of other souls whom God could reach through us if we allow him to do so. “So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5:20). These words are as true today as when Paul first wrote them to the Corinthians.

Truly, it is humbling to contemplate the weight of the task before us. And it should be! However, Jesus urges us to “Be not afraid!” because our Heavenly Father loves to use the small, the weak, and the humble so that the world may know that it is by His power and not ours that the battle has been won. The story of one such unlikely victory is that of the Israelites in the battle of Jericho. Let us turn to the book of Joshua to recall the story.

At this point in the story of Salvation History, the Israelites have been wandering around in the desert for forty years. Moses has died, everyone is sick of eating manna, fearsome warriors inhabit the land that Yahweh promised to them, and the city of Jericho is surrounded by a seemingly impenetrable fortress. But God has raised up a new leader, a man from the tribe of Benjamin named Joshua. As God leads the Israelites to the Promised Land once more, Joshua announces that he has received a battle strategy from the Lord to gain victory over Jericho. What

¹ Brother's Karamozov



Joshua *doesn't* say is "Listen everyone! I've got the perfect strategic plan for defeating Jericho. I've found a weakness in their walls and I'm confident that if we attack at these points we will be able to capture their commanding officers..." Rather, Joshua commands the men of Israel to "take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams horns before the ark of the Lord. Go forward, march around the city, and let the armed men pass on before the ark of the Lord." (Joshua 6:6-7). What kind of a battle strategy is this?

In short, God asked the Israelites to have a six day liturgy around the walls of Jericho. God's true presence dwelling in the ark of the covenant was with them, and there was music and prayer. From the world's perspective, this is quite an unconventional battle plan, but as we know, the walls of Jericho came crashing down on the seventh day and the Israelites went on to claim the Promised Land.

And in doing so, God made a powerful point that reaches through History to you and I today. He revealed to us that the battles we face are insurmountable if we try to approach them with our mere human means, but when our efforts are united to God, anything is possible. Moreover, he made a decisive connection between warfare and prayer, convicting us of the truth that no matter the circumstances, the "Battle is the Lord's."

If this was true for the Israelites, it is true for us as we fight the battle for human hearts. As we seek to live Spiritual Multiplication as a student leader with FOCUS, the first and best way we can begin to be a channel of grace for God to reach souls is to pray for them. Especially during the summer and during times of outreach in the fall, the following practical ideas may be incorporated into your life as we live the reality that all evangelistic work begins and ends in prayer.

- Meditate often on the truth that the Holy Spirit is the only true Evangelist. We can begin praying even now that God would be at work in the hearts and minds of the students he intends to place in our path, and we might do so specifically each day.
- Pray for the other student leaders on your campus, that they might continue to grow in holiness and be blessed with opportunities to share their faith in Jesus with many.
- Pray for friends within your circle of influence who are in need of the life-changing message of the Gospel in their lives. Pray for their specific needs, and pray for opportunities to share Jesus with them in a way they will understand.
- Pray often to St. Francis Xavier and St. Therese of Lisieux, the patron and patroness of missionaries.
- Pray to God for a "zeal for love of souls." Meditate on some of the accounts of Peter, Paul, Stephen, and Philip the Deacon in the book of Acts. When we realize the extent to which God has loved and blessed us, a desire naturally arises in us for all souls to be convinced of their true identity as sons and daughters of God, and our insecurities and fears are overshadowed by our desire to share the joy within us. Our goal on earth is to get to heaven and to bring as many people with us as we can. When you have zeal, you forget your fears, shyness, and doubts, and you go forward with a holy boldness. There is something attractive in holy boldness, in a soul on fire with love for Christ who is a blazing reality.



- Make the book, The Soul of the Apostolate, your bedside book. Pope St. Pius X did. It contains some of the most valuable pieces of wisdom from the saints about the absolute, vital necessity of making prayer the beginning and end of apostolic work. Also, check out I Believe in Love by Jean C. J. D'Elbee.

When we read the signs of the times, we may be tempted to despair at the greatness of the task that has been laid before us. The odds seem to have been stacked against us, as if we were entering a basketball game with only three minutes left on the clock and with our team down 98-12. From a strictly human perspective there is no reason for hope. But with God, there is always room for hope! The battle is the Lord's – *it is already won*. Jesus said, "Take courage – I have overcome the world." (John 15:5). Let us take our Lord at His word.

G.K. Chesterton once said, "The one perfectly divine thing, the one glimpse of God's paradise on earth, is to fight a losing battle – and not lose it."² We must only have the courage to step into the fray, and the way to do this is first and foremost through prayer.

² G.K.'s Weekly, March 9, 1929



St. Augustine famously stated, "We must pray as if everything depends on God, and work as if everything depends on us." In this article, we will discuss the ways FOCUS student leaders across the nation make themselves "ambassadors for Christ" on their campuses by reaching out to those whom the Holy Spirit places in their path.

Go and Set the World on Fire: A Vision for Fall Outreach

In 1535, St. Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus. A man of tremendous vision and unflagging zeal, Ignatius called for a clear awakening in the Catholic world to respond anew to the call of Christ. In the midst of the Counter-Reformation, he expressed his vision with such uncompromising clarity that many joined him in his missionary efforts, eventually making the mission of the Jesuits one of the largest and most far-reaching missionary efforts in all of Church history. Whenever Ignatius would end a meeting with young members of his Society or would sign a letter to missionary priests in another land, he would nearly always close with the charge to "Go, and set the world on fire." And so they did.

Nearly 400 years before the conversion of St. Ignatius, St. Dominic, another missionary hero, received his call from God to become an evangelist. During this moment of grace, he had a vision of a dog running through a dry wheat field. The dog was carrying a burning torch in its mouth and as it ran, the torch ignited a fire in the field. God told St. Dominic that he was to be like that dog, igniting fires in the hearts of the people he served.

And finally, over one thousand years before the birth of St. Dominic, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the hero of all missionary heroes exclaimed, "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already ablaze!" (Luke 12:49)

Curtis Martin, the founder and president of FOCUS, believes that there is no other place at this moment in history more primed to be "set on fire" with the love of Christ than the college campus. The college or university that you call home is entirely populated with men and women just like you who will be the future leaders of our culture, and thousands of them are literally *dying* to hear the Gospel.

FOCUS missionaries can make an impact on a campus, but their reach is limited. Since they are not students themselves, missionaries do not have the advantage of the natural connections you enjoy with those you meet in your classes, your dorms, your cafeteria, and your extracurricular activities. While these circumstances may seem like merely a natural part of life as a college student, they can offer the opportunity for powerful encounters and lead to the growth of life-changing relationships if you make yourself available to light the fire of Christ's love in the hearts of those He places in your path.

It is for these reasons that every fall, missionaries invite student leaders to join them in their mission to "set the world on fire," a mission entrusted to every baptized Christian by Jesus himself.³ Through the faithfulness and commitment of student leaders, God can use a FOCUS movement on a college campus as a powerful instrument to share the life-changing message of

³ Matthew 28:19



the Gospel in ways we cannot begin to imagine. But on a practical level, what does this look like?

Like all great endeavors, we must “begin with the end in mind.” As student leaders involved with FOCUS, what is our goal? We desire to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through small group Bible Studies, and to “spiritually multiply” ourselves by finding two disciples of our own by investing specifically in members of our study who are fit for leadership themselves. In sum, our goal is to build a weekly Bible study so that we might attract and then invest deeply in two disciples.

Just as a military general might lay out a “battle plan,” FOCUS missionaries work to develop a strategy for helping FOCUS student leaders accomplish this goal. While every campus is unique, understanding the lay of the land informs our decisions as we go about making this goal a reality. There are a few characteristics of the “terrain” on campus that most, if not all, campus cultures have in common. What are these characteristics?

First off, a recent study suggests that one of every two Catholic college freshmen has stopped practicing their faith by the end of their freshman year, and a full seven out of ten have left the Church by the time they graduate. An entire generation of Catholic young people is walking out the doors of the Church, and the majority is doing so without full knowledge of the beauty, the depth, and the richness of what it is they are leaving. Second, social scientists suggest that college students make upwards of ninety percent of their friends and time commitments within the first three weeks of their freshman year. Consequently, the window of opportunity to invite new students into the FOCUS community on your campus is extremely narrow. Take time to reflect on these two statements, and it is likely they will resonate in your experience.

Due to these characteristics of the college “terrain,” one of your largest commitments as a student leader within FOCUS is to participate in a “fall outreach” season during the first three to four weeks of the semester. The goal of fall outreach is to “cast the net wide,” offering as many invitations and opportunities as possible to students, particularly freshman, to find a home within the FOCUS community, and consequently within God’s family, the Church. Within the context of “Win, Build, Send Evangelization”⁴, the first three weeks on a campus are entirely devoted to the “Win,” meeting new students where they are at, genuinely caring for them, and earning the right to eventually invite them to be part of the FOCUS movement on your campus.

While every campus is different, the first week of the fall outreach season on a typical campus might involve the following elements:

- Student Leader’s Retreat – You may be asked to return to campus a few days early in order to participate in a retreat for student leaders. The retreat provides an opportunity to rekindle friendships, to build community within FOCUS student leadership, to cast vision and speak about the specifics of fall outreach on your campus, and to meet our Lord in prayer and the sacraments.

⁴ See Article on Spiritual Multiplication in Section Two



- Bible Study Sign-ups at Mass – It is common for a missionary or a student leader to give a brief testimony about FOCUS, and to extend an invitation to sign-up for a FOCUS Bible Study during the first weekend masses on a campus. You may be asked to help engage students after Mass in conversation and to invite them to sign-up to become involved with FOCUS.
- Involvement Fair – Most campuses host an “involvement fair” during orientation week, providing new students with an opportunity to become familiar with the student organizations present on campus. Again, you may be asked to be present at this event to speak with new students about FOCUS and once again to encourage them to provide us with their contact information so we can invite them to be involved.
- Large Group Event – Many FOCUS campuses have a large group event during the first week of school to invite new students into the Catholic community. Generally, FOCUS student leaders are asked to attend in order to practice hospitality and to continue to invite new faces to be part of the FOCUS movement on campus.
- Name Sort - After orientation weekend is through, FOCUS missionaries and students record and sort through the contact information for individuals who have expressed an interest in being involved with FOCUS, and these names are sorted by gender, as well as year in school, and even sometimes by residence hall.

And after all of this, the real work of fall outreach begins! You will receive contact information for new students who have expressed an interest in becoming involved with FOCUS. At this point, you have the awesome responsibility of reaching out to those students who have been entrusted to your care. Ultimately, the goal will be to invite these students to be part of your new Bible study...but *we've got to win them first!*

In FOCUS, we seek to share the Gospel with people first and foremost in context of a relationship. We seek to build genuine friendships with new students by practicing *incarnational evangelization*, a term that simply means investing our time, energy, and our very selves into new students in a radical way. Through friendship, we, in a sense “win the right” to invite students into our Bible Study. In the same way that Jesus “got into the lives” of Peter, Matthew, and John, we seek to get in the lives of new students during the next phase of outreach: systematic follow-up.

Practically, FOCUS student leaders accomplish this by doing the same things that they might normally do anyway during the first few weeks of the fall semester, only they intentionally make their new students part of it. For example, you need to make a trip to the campus bookstore before classes begin, so you invite a couple of your new students to come with you. Or you may have a passion for live music, so you ask one of your new students to join you and your friends to hear a live performance at a coffee shop on campus. Or you and your buddies are getting together for a game of basketball, so you knock on the door of three or four students on your contact list and ask them to come with you. The possibilities are endless, but the point is that you go out of your way to have meaningful contacts with your new students during the first two to three weeks after orientation weekend.

Only after spending significant time and energy investing in your new students will you ask them into Bible Study. While the specific time frame will differ from campus to campus, the



overarching vision is that when we are asking new students to be part of our Bible studies, we are doing so within the context of an established friendship.

As you begin to build your Bible Study, do not neglect an entirely different group of people who could potentially be involved with your study: those men or women who are within your already established *circle of influence*. Who are the individuals with whom you study? With whom you live? Whom you know through student organizations? Social scientists estimate that the average person has a social circle of approximately one hundred people. *Do not hesitate to invite these people to be part of your study as well!*

Overwhelming? Absolutely. Exhausting? Certainly. Worthwhile? Without a doubt. The effort that FOCUS missionaries and student leaders put forth on campuses across the country is heroic. And it is fitting that it should be, for every single soul on every campus across the country is infinitely valuable and whether they know it or not, in need of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. God can use us as student leaders within FOCUS to be instruments in His hands to do good works that will have consequences that echo for all eternity.

And if it ever becomes too much, let us call to mind once again the fact that the Holy Spirit, who appeared as tongues of flame over the apostles, is the only true missionary, and the one who will ultimately make it possible to “Go, and set the world on fire.” The dream God has for us and for our campus is infinitely larger than anything we can imagine. If we are faithful, we will see the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of those we meet in ways we cannot yet begin to envision, if only we trust Him to bless our efforts. We close with words from St. Josemaria Escriva:

In your apostolic undertakings you are right – it is your duty – to consider what means the world can offer you (2 + 2 = 4) but don’t forget – ever! That, fortunately, your calculations must include another term: God +2+2...⁵

Do you see? With Him you could do it. Why are you surprised? Be convinced: there is nothing to be surprised about. If you trust God – really trust Him – things work out easily. And, what is more, you always go further than you imagined you could.⁶

⁵ *The Way* 471.

⁶ *Furrow* 123.



Whether you are sharing it at a FOCUS large group event or sitting at a table in the cafeteria, it is important to be able to share your personal testimony with those Christ places in your path. The following article tells us why, and gives us the tools to communicate our story effectively.

Tell Me A Story! **How to Prepare and Communicate your Personal Testimony**

“What is the most powerful force in human in history? Story. Want to start a war? Tell a story. Want to end a war? Tell a story. Want to cause people to fall in love? Tell a story. Want to cause people to fall out of love? Tell a story. Want to inspire people? Tell a story. Want to degrade people? Tell a story. Want to motivate people? Tell a story. Want to discourage people? Tell a story. The most powerful force in History is story...”

*~Matthew Kelly, author of *Rediscovering Catholicism**

As we strive to articulate the Gospel in a way that will resonate with modern men and women, it is imperative that we take Matthew Kelly’s words to heart. Truly, story is the most powerful force in human history, and as an “ambassador for Christ,” (2 Cor 5:20) we can harness the power of this truth as we proclaim Christ to our generation.

As a student leader with FOCUS, there are three stories in particular that we wish to place in your “evangelization toolbox.” The first is the story of God’s family, the Church, a story commonly referred to a “Salvation History.” The second is the story of FOCUS and our mission to embrace our identity as sons and daughters of God in the modern world and to allow the Holy Spirit to use us to change the culture for Jesus Christ, one soul at a time. The third story, however, is different from the first two. It is likely not written in a book, and it is entirely unique. It is *your* story.

The following article is designed to help you to tell your story, the story of how the God of eternity stepped into time and transformed *your* life through His Church and through your experience as a student leader with FOCUS in a way that will resonate with our generation.

We live in a world that tells us that there is no story that unites all of humanity. As Catholics, we can stand against this lie, proclaiming to the world how we have come to believe that our lives are part of the story of *everything*; from Creation to the Resurrection to the Mass that is celebrated at this very moment, infusing the mystery of God’s love into our lives today. *Truly, this is a story worth telling, and no one else can tell it for you!*



Personal Testimony Outline

Objective: To help one prepare or revise a 3- to 5-minute personal testimony, and share it with another person within two weeks.

I. Definition of a personal testimony

A personal testimony is a Christ-centered witness to God's actions in a person's life.

II. Why give a testimony

- A. The call to evangelize is universal (Matthew 28:18-20)
- B. Jesus specifically tells us to do it (Luke 8:38-39)
- C. People will come to faith through our witness (John 4:28-30, 39-40)
- D. We should always be prepared to give a reason for the hope within us (I Peter 3:15)
- E. When well-prepared, it is concrete and non-threatening to non-Christians. It is harder for others to deny our experience as a Christian than if we were to present abstract ideas.
- F. One of the most natural ways to share the evangelize (easily conversational, can be put into writing)

III. Basic progression of a personal testimony (based on Acts 26)

1. My life before I knew Jesus Christ (26:1-11)
 - What kind of a person was I socially, spiritually and emotionally?
 - Unifying theme to testimony should be introduced (familiarity with Christ but never knew Him personally, loneliness in college, spiritual hunger, the Fatherhood of God, etc.). Paul's unifying theme: his devotion to Judaism
2. How I came to know Jesus Christ (26:12-18)
 - What happened? Even if conversion was gradual, the testimony should still give one concrete moment or turning point for audience to "hang onto".
 - If other people were involved in bringing about conversion, care should still be taken to make sure this section is Christ-centered and not agent-centered.
 - Avoid over-dramatization.
3. My life in Jesus Christ (26:19-23)
 - What changes have occurred in my life? How am I living my relationship with Jesus?
 - Care must be particularly exercised here with regards to language. Avoid using loaded words and phrases ("follow the Spirit," "indwelling of the Trinity," "vocation," "sacraments," "quiet time," "dark night of the soul," etc.).
 - Avoid extremes: try not to come across as a perfected saint, but, at the same time, don't dwell on struggles and failures.
4. Challenge/Invitation to audience (26:27-29)
 - Ask audience (implicitly or explicitly), "How will you respond to Jesus Christ?"

IV. Elements of a good testimony (CAST)

- A. **Concreteness:** The audience is given "handles" to the testimony. Experiences, places and persons are described accurately and unambiguously, yet without obsession to detail. The turning point (how one came to know Jesus Christ) is identifiable and specific (even



if it is just one of many turning points). The person giving the testimony comes across as real and ordinary.

- B. **Accessibility:** The experiences are described in such a way that the audience can relate to or understand them. Language chosen is free from lingo and dense terminology (“sin”, “tabernacle”, “Eucharistic adoration”, etc.).
- C. **Simplicity:** The “plot” or “thread” of the testimony is clear and follow-able, without confusing tangents and opulent details. Jesus Christ is at the center of this testimony and is its hinge.
- D. **Thematic:** There is *one* overarching theme or analogy used. Every point of the testimony should in some way be related to this singular theme.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Every Christian should have a memorized and a written testimony.
- B. The testimony is a powerful yet simple tool.
- C. Action point: Prepare a testimony and practice it with discipler and other Christians.



Just as it is important to be able to share our story with others, it is just as important that when reaching out to other students, we find out their story as well. This article offers practical tips for discovering the stories of those God places in your path.

Tell Me *Your* Story! The Art of Asking Intentional Questions

John Paul II once said that if we want to be evangelists, we must know two things. First, we must know Jesus Christ, and second, we must know the hearts and minds of modern men and women. We must know how they think and what they fear. We must know what motivates and inspires them, what discourages and degrades them. We must learn to see the world through their eyes, and only then we will be able to articulate the Gospel in a way that will resonate with their experience.

While we seek to know the hearts and minds of modern men and women *in general*, we don't share the Gospel with an entire demographic, we share the Gospel with *individuals* who have unique experiences and fears and desires. If we want to share the Gospel in a way that will resonate with the particular experience of an individual human person, we must learn to see the world as they see it. We must learn *their* story so that we might articulate the Gospel in a way that speaks to the circumstances of their life.

How do we begin to learn these things about the people God places in our lives? We ask them! By asking intentional questions, we can begin to learn the truth about a person, about how they have been formed by their families, by their friends, and by their experiences to become the individual that now stands before us. By being interested in these things, not only do we show the person that we care for them, but we gain valuable information that will help us to find the point of intersection between *his or her* story and the story of Christ and his Church. The following intentional questions will help you to accomplish just that.

1. People invest time and energy into developing their careers, their bodies and relationships, but often neglect the spiritual dimension of their lives. How do you actively pursue spiritual growth?
2. Do you think much about spiritual things? (This usually leads to conversation about what "spiritual" means—i.e. religion vs. relationship).
3. How has this experience affected the way you look at God?
4. We've never had a chance to talk about your religious background. Where would you say you are in your spiritual pilgrimage?
5. I'd like to tell you how I established a personal relationship with God (Tell your personal testimony of how you became a Christian. Keep it to three minutes, using the following outline: *Before*—what characterized my life before I trusted Christ. *During*—how I came to trust Christ. *After*—how I am different now).
6. What is your concept of God? Do you view Him positively or negatively?



7. Have you ever come to a point in your life where you trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, or do you think that is something you're still moving toward? May I share with you how I came to that point?

8. Do you find that faith and spiritual values play a role in your (work) (day) (marriage) (perspective on life)?

9. If you could be sure there is a God, would you want to know Him? Or if you could know God personally, would you want to?

10. Bring a friend to your church or a Christian event, then ask:

What did you think of it? Did it make sense to you? Have you made the wonderful discovery of knowing God personally? You'd like to, wouldn't you?

11. Do you go to church? Why or why not?

12. I'd hate for you to come to my church and not understand what it's all about. Would you want to get together and discuss our basic beliefs?

13. We've been friends for quite some time now, and I've never really talked to you about the most important thing in my life. May I take a few moments and do so?

14. Is church something that has had an influence in your life? Are you at a point now that you want church to be a bigger part of your life? What prompted this? Would you want to hear our basic beliefs so you'll know if that fits in with what you're looking for?

15. How do you think someone becomes a Christian?

16. Can I share the thing I've found most important to me as a (dad), (mom), (boss)?

17. What do you think about when you go to sleep at night? (If anxiety or guilt rob them of sleep, introduce the peace found in a relationship with Christ).

18. Most people in America say they believe in God. What does believing in God mean to you?

19. Before I came to know Jesus personally, God was a vague concept that I could not relate to or grasp. How would you describe your view of God? Jesus? Is He a reality to you or more of a vague concept?

20. If you were to die tonight do you think you would go to heaven?

Adapted from Campus Crusade for Christ
<http://www.evangelismtoolbox.com/go.php?type=page&resource=572>



As we end our discussion of the particular means by which we live out the Great Commission as student leaders with FOCUS, the following article reminds us that our evangelistic efforts on campus are part of something much larger.

The New Evangelization: Building a Civilization of Love
By Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

Human life cannot be realized by itself. Our life is an open question, an incomplete project, still to be brought to fruition and realized. Each man's fundamental question is: How will this be realized—becoming man? How does one learn the art of living? Which is the path toward happiness?

To evangelize means: to show this path—to teach the art of living. At the beginning of his public life Jesus says: I have come to evangelize the poor (Luke 4:18); this means: I have the response to your fundamental question; I will show you the path of life, the path toward happiness—rather: I am that path.

The deepest poverty is the inability of joy, the tediousness of a life considered absurd and contradictory. This poverty is widespread today, in very different forms in the materially rich as well as the poor countries. The inability of joy presupposes and produces the inability to love, produces jealousy, avarice—all defects that devastate the life of individuals and of the world.

This is why we are in need of a new evangelization—if the art of living remains an unknown, nothing else works. But this art is not the object of a science—this art can only be communicated by [one] who has life—he who is the Gospel personified.

Structure and Method in New Evangelization

1. The structure

Before speaking about the fundamental contents of new evangelization, I would like to say a few words about its structure and on the correct method.

The Church always evangelizes and has never interrupted the path of evangelization. She celebrates the eucharistic mystery every day, administers the sacraments, proclaims the word of life—the Word of God, and commits herself to the causes of justice and charity. And this evangelization bears fruit: It gives light and joy, it gives the path of life to many people; many others live, often unknowingly, of the light and the warmth that radiate from this permanent evangelization.

However, we can see a progressive process of de-Christianization and a loss of the essential human values, which is worrisome. A large part of today's humanity does not find the Gospel in the permanent evangelization of the Church: That is to say, the convincing response to the question: How to live?

This is why we are searching for, along with permanent and uninterrupted and never to be interrupted evangelization, a new evangelization, capable of being heard by that world that does

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not find access to "classic" evangelization. Everyone needs the Gospel; the Gospel is destined to all and not only to a specific circle and this is why we are obliged to look for new ways of bringing the Gospel to all. Yet another temptation lies hidden beneath this—the temptation of impatience, the temptation of immediately finding the great success, in finding large numbers. But this is not God's way. For the Kingdom of God as well as for evangelization, the instrument and vehicle of the Kingdom of God, the parable of the grain of mustard seed is always valid (see Mark 4:31-32).

The Kingdom of God always starts anew under this sign. New evangelization cannot mean: immediately attracting the large masses that have distanced themselves from the Church by using new and more refined methods. No—this is not what new evangelization promises. New evangelization means: never being satisfied with the fact that from the grain of mustard seed, the great tree of the Universal Church grew; never thinking that the fact that different birds may find place among its branches can suffice—rather, it means to dare, once again and with the humility of the small grain, to leave up to God the when and how it will grow (Mark 4:26-29).

Large things always begin from the small seed, and the mass movements are always ephemeral. In his vision of the evolutionary process, Teilhard de Chardin mentions the "white of the origins" (*le blanc des origines*): The beginning of a new species is invisible and cannot be found by scientific research. The sources are hidden—they are too small. In other words: The large realities begin in humility.

Let us put to one side whether Teilhard is right in his evolutionary theories; the law on invisible origins does say a truth—a truth present in the very actions of God in history: "The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you." God says [this] to the People of Israel in the Old Testament and thus expresses the fundamental paradox of the history of salvation: certainly, God does not count in large numbers; exterior power is not the sign of his presence.

Most of Jesus' parables indicate this structure of divine intervention and thus answer the disciples' worries, who were expecting other kinds of success and signs from the Messiah—successes of the kind offered by Satan to the Lord: All these—the kingdoms of the world—I will give to you ... (Matthew 4:9).

Of course, at the end of his life Paul believed that he had proclaimed the Gospel to the very ends of the earth, but the Christians were small communities dispersed throughout the world, insignificant according to the secular criteria. In reality, they were the leaven that penetrates the meal from within and they carried within themselves the future of the world (see Matthew 13:33).

An old proverb says: "Success is not one of the names of God." New evangelization must surrender to the mystery of the grain of mustard seed and not be so pretentious as to believe to immediately produce a large tree. We either live too much in the security of the already existing large tree or in the impatience of having a greater, more vital tree—instead we must accept the mystery that the Church is at the same time a large tree and a very small grain. In the history of



salvation it is always Good Friday and Easter Sunday at the same time...

2. *The method*

The correct method derives from this structure of new evangelization. Of course we must use the modern methods of making ourselves be heard in a reasonable way—or better yet: of making the voice of the Lord accessible and comprehensible. ... We are not looking for listening for ourselves—we do not want to increase the power and the spreading of our institutions, but we wish to serve for the good of the people and humanity giving room to he who is Life.

This expropriation of one's person, offering it to Christ for the salvation of men, is the fundamental condition of the true commitment for the Gospel. "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive," says the Lord (John 5:43). The mark of the Antichrist is the fact that he speaks in his own name.

The sign of the Son is his communion with the Father. The Son introduces us into the Trinitarian communion, into the circle of eternal love, whose persons are "pure relations," the pure act of giving oneself and of welcome. The Trinitarian plan—visible in the Son, who does not speak in his name—shows the form of life of the true evangelizer—rather, evangelizing is not merely a way of speaking, but a form of living: living in the listening and giving voice to the Father. "He will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak," says the Lord about the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

This Christological and pneumatological form of evangelization is also, at the same time, an ecclesiological form: The Lord and the Spirit build the Church, communicate through the Church. The proclamation of Christ, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God presupposes listening to his voice in the voice of the Church. "Not speak on his own authority" means: to speak in the mission of the Church

Many practical consequences come from this law of expropriation. All reasonable and morally acceptable methods should be studied—to use these possibilities of communication is a duty. But words and the whole art of communication cannot reach the human person to such depths as the Gospel must reach.

A few years ago, I was reading the biography of a very good priest of our century, Don Didimo, the parish priest of Bassano del Grappa. In his notes, golden words can be found, the fruit of a life of prayer and of meditation. About us, Don Didimo says, for example: "Jesus preached by day, by night he prayed."

With these few words, he wished to say: Jesus had to acquire the disciples from God. The same is always true. We ourselves cannot gather men. We must acquire them by God for God. All methods are empty without the foundation of prayer. The word of the announcement must always be drenched in an intense life of prayer.

We must add another step. Jesus preached by day, by night he prayed—this is not all. His entire life was—as demonstrated in a beautiful way by the Gospel according to St. Luke—a path toward the cross, ascension toward Jerusalem. Jesus did not redeem the world with beautiful words but with his suffering and his death. His Passion is the inexhaustible source of life for the



world; the Passion gives power to his words.

The Lord himself—extending and amplifying the parable of the grain of mustard seed—formulated this law of fruitfulness in the word of the grain of seed that dies, fallen to earth (John 12:24). This law too is valid until the end of the world and is—along with the mystery of the grain of seed—fundamental for new evangelization. All of history demonstrates this.

It is very easy to demonstrate this in the history of Christianity. Here, I would like to recall only the beginning of evangelization in the life of St. Paul. The success of his mission was not the fruit of great rhetorical art or pastoral prudence; the fruitfulness was tied to the suffering, to the communion in the passion with Christ (see 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; ... 2 Corinthians 11:30; Galatians 4:12-14).

"But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah," said the Lord. The sign of Jonah is the crucified Christ—they are the witnesses that complete "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24). Throughout all the periods of history, the words of Tertullian have always been verified: The blood of martyrs is a seed.

St. Augustine says the same thing in a much more beautiful way, interpreting John 21, where the prophesy of Peter's martyrdom and the mandate to tend, that is to say, the institution of his primacy, are intimately connected.

St. Augustine comments [on] the text John 21:16 in the following way: "Tend my sheep," this means suffer for my sheep.... A mother cannot give life to a child without suffering. Each birth requires suffering, is suffering, and becoming a Christian is a birth. Let us say this once again in the words of the Lord: The Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence (Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16), but the violence of God is suffering, it is the cross. We cannot give life to others without giving up our own lives.

The process of expropriation indicated above is the concrete form (expressed in many different ways) of giving one's life. And let us think about the words of the Savior: "Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).

The Contents Essential for New Evangelization

1. Conversion

As for the contents of new evangelization, first of all we must keep in mind the inseparability of the Old and the New Testaments. The fundamental content of the Old Testament is summarized in the message by John the Baptist: *metanoëite*—Convert! There is no access to Jesus without the Baptist; there is no possibility of reaching Jesus without answering the call of the precursor, rather: Jesus took up the message of John in the synthesis of his own preaching: *metanoëite kai pisteúete èn tù eùaggelíu* (Mark 1:15).

The Greek word for converting means: to rethink—to question one's own and common way of living; to allow God to enter into the criteria of one's life; to not merely judge according to the current opinions. Thereby, to convert means: not to live as all the others live, not do what all do,



not feel justified in dubious, ambiguous, evil actions just because others do the same; begin to see one's life through the eyes of God; thereby looking for the good, even if uncomfortable; not aiming at the judgment of the majority, of men, but on the justice of God—in other words: to look for a new style of life, a new life.

All of this does not imply moralism; reducing Christianity to morality loses sight of the essence of Christ's message: the gift of a new friendship, the gift of communion with Jesus and thereby with God. Whoever converts to Christ does not mean to create his own moral autarchy for himself, does not intend to build his own goodness through his own strengths.

"Conversion" (metanoia) means exactly the opposite: to come out of self-sufficiency to discover and accept our indigence—the indigence of others and of the Other, his forgiveness, his friendship. Unconverted life is self-justification (I am not worse than the others); conversion is humility in entrusting oneself to the love of the Other, a love that becomes the measure and the criteria of my own life.

Here we must also bear in mind the social aspect of conversion. Certainly, conversion is above all a very personal act, it is personalization. I separate myself from the formula "to live as all others" (I do not feel justified anymore by the fact that everyone does what I do) and I find my own person in front of God, my own personal responsibility.

But true personalization is always also a new and more profound socialization. The "I" opens itself once again to the "you," in all its depths, and thus a new "We" is born. If the lifestyle spread throughout the world implies the danger of de-personalization, of not living one's own life but the life of all the others, in conversion a new "We," of the common path of God, must be achieved.

In proclaiming conversion we must also offer a community of life, a common space for the new style of life. We cannot evangelize with words alone; the Gospel creates life, creates communities of progress; a merely individual conversion has no consistency....

2. The Kingdom of God

In the appeal to conversion the proclamation of the Living God is implicit—as its fundamental condition. Theocentrism is fundamental in the message of Jesus and must also be at the heart of new evangelization.

The keyword of the proclamation of Jesus is: the Kingdom of God. But the Kingdom of God is not a thing, a social or political structure, a utopia. The Kingdom of God is God. Kingdom of God means: God exists. God is alive. God is present and acts in the world, in our—in my life.

God is not a faraway "ultimate cause," God is not the "great architect" of deism, who created the machine of the world and is no longer part of it—on the contrary: God is the most present and decisive reality in each and every act of my life, in each and every moment of history.

In his conference when leaving the University of Münster, the theologian J.B. Metz said some



unexpected things for him. In the past, Metz taught us anthropocentrism—the true occurrence of Christianity was the anthropological turning point, the secularization, the discovery of the secularity of the world. Then he taught us political theology—the political characteristic of faith; then the "dangerous memory"; and finally narrative theology.

After this long and difficult path, today he tells us: The true problem of our times is the "Crisis of God," the absence of God, disguised by an empty religiosity. Theology must go back to being truly theo-logy, speaking about and with God.

Metz is right: the unum necessarium to man is God. Everything changes, whether God exists or not. Unfortunately—we Christians also often live as if God did not exist (*si Deus non daretur*). We live according to the slogan: God does not exist, and if he exists, he does not belong.

Therefore, evangelization must, first of all, speak about God, proclaim the only true God: the Creator—the Sanctifier—the Judge (see Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Here too we must keep the practical aspect in mind. God cannot be made known with words alone. One does not really know a person if one knows about this person secondhandedly. To proclaim God is to introduce to the relation with God: to teach how to pray. Prayer is faith in action. And only by experiencing life with God does the evidence of his existence appear.

This is why schools of prayer, communities of prayer, are so important. There is a complementarity between personal prayer ("in one's room," alone in front of God's eyes), "paralitur-gical" prayer in common ("popular religiosity") and liturgical prayer.

Yes, the liturgy is, first of all, prayer; its specificity consists in the fact that its primary project is not ourselves (as in private prayer and in popular religiosity), but God himself—the liturgy is *actio divina*, God acts and we respond to this divine action.

Speaking about God and speaking with God must always go together. The proclamation of God is the guide to communion with God in fraternal communion, founded and vivified by Christ. This is why the liturgy (the sacraments) are not a secondary theme next to the preaching of the living God, but the realization of our relationship with God.

While on this subject, may I be allowed to make a general observation on the liturgical question. Our way of celebrating the liturgy is very often too rationalistic. The liturgy becomes teaching, whose criteria is: making ourselves understood—often the consequence of this is making the mystery a banality, the prevalence of our words, the repetition of phrases that might seem more accessible and more pleasant for the people.

But this is not only a theological error but also a psychological and pastoral one. The wave of esoterism, the spreading of Asian techniques of relaxation and self-emptying demonstrate that something is lacking in our liturgies. It is in our world of today that we are in need of silence, of the super-individual mystery, of beauty.

The liturgy is not an invention of the celebrating priest or of a group of specialists; the liturgy (the "rite") came about via an organic process throughout the centuries, it bears with it the fruit of the experience of faith of all the generations.

Even if the participants do not perhaps understand each single word, they perceive the profound



meaning, the presence of the mystery, which transcends all words. The celebrant is not the center of liturgical action; the celebrant is not in front of the people in his own name—he does not speak by himself or for himself, but in persona Christi. The personal abilities of the celebrant do not count, only his faith counts, by which Christ becomes transparent. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

3. *Jesus Christ*

With this reflection, the theme of God has already expanded and been achieved in the theme of Jesus Christ: Only in Christ and through Christ does the theme God become truly concrete: Christ is Emmanuel, the God-with-us—the concretization of the "I am," the response to Deism.

Today, the temptation is great to diminish Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into a merely historical Jesus, into a pure man. One does not necessarily deny the divinity of Jesus, but by using certain methods one distills from the Bible a Jesus to our size, a Jesus possible and comprehensible within the parameters of our historiography.

But this "historical Jesus" is an artifact, the image of his authors rather than the image of the living God (see 2 Corinthians 4:4ff; Colossians 1:15). The Christ of faith is not a myth; the so-called historical Jesus is a mythological figure, self-invented by various interpreters. The 200 years of history of the "historical Jesus" faithfully reflect the history of philosophies and ideologies of this period.

Within the limits of this conference, I cannot go into the contents of the proclamation of the Savior. I would only like to briefly mention two important aspects.

The first one is the Sequela of Christ—Christ offers himself as the path of my life. Sequela of Christ does not mean: imitating the man Jesus. This type of attempt would necessarily fail—it would be an anachronism. The Sequela of Christ has a much higher goal: to be assimilated into Christ, that is to attain union with God. Such a word might sound strange to the ears of modern man. But, in truth, we all thirst for the infinite: for an infinite freedom, for happiness without limits.

The entire history of revolutions during the last two centuries can only be explained this way. Drugs can only be explained this way. Man is not satisfied with solutions beneath the level of divinization. But all the roads offered by the "serpent" (Genesis 3:5), that is to say, by mundane knowledge, fail. The only path is communion with Christ, achieved in sacramental life. The Sequela of Christ is not a question of morality, but a "mysteric" theme—an ensemble of divine action and our response.

Thus, in the theme on the sequela we find the presence of the other center of Christology, which I wished to mention: the Paschal Mystery—the cross

and the Resurrection. In the reconstruction of the "historical Jesus," usually the theme of the cross is without meaning. In a bourgeois interpretation it becomes an incident per se evitable, without theological value; in a revolutionary interpretation it becomes the heroic death of a rebel.



The truth is quite different. The cross belongs to the divine mystery—it is the expression of his love to the end (John 13:1). The Sequela of Christ is participation in the cross, uniting oneself to his love, to the transformation of our life, which becomes the birth of the new man, created according to God (see Ephesians 4:24). Whoever omits the cross, omits the essence of Christianity (see 1 Corinthians 2:2).

4. *Eternal life*

A last central element of every true evangelization is eternal life. Today we must proclaim our faith with new vigor in daily life. Here, I would only like to mention one aspect of the preaching Jesus, which is often omitted today: The proclamation of the Kingdom of God is the proclamation of the God present, the God that knows us, listen to us; the God that enters into history to do justice. Therefore, this preaching is also the proclamation of justice, the proclamation of our responsibility.

Man cannot do or avoid doing what he wants to. He will be judged. He must account for things. This certitude is of value both for the powerful as well as the simple ones. Where this is honored, the limitations of every power in this world are traced. God renders justice, and only he may ultimately do this.

We will be able to do this better the more we are able to live under the eyes of God and to communicate the truth of justice to the world. Thus the article of faith in justice, its force in the formation of consciences, is a central theme of the Gospel and is truly good news. It is for all those suffering the injustices of the world and who are looking for justice.

This is also how we can understand the connection between the Kingdom of God and the "poor," the suffering and all those spoken about in the Beatitudes in the Speech on the Mountain. They are protected by the certainty of judgment, by the certitude, that there is a justice.

This is the true content of the article on justice, about God as judge: Justice exists. The injustices of the world are not the final word of history. Justice exists. Only whoever does not want there to be justice can oppose this truth.

If we seriously consider the judgment and the seriousness of the responsibility for us that emerges from this, we will be able to understand full well the other aspect of this proclamation, that is redemption, the fact that Jesus, in the cross, takes on our sins; God himself, in the passion of the Son, becomes the advocate for us sinners, and thus making penance possible, the hope for the repentant sinner, hope expressed in a marvelous way by the words of St. John: Before God, we will reassure our heart, whatever he reproves us for.

"For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything" (1 John 3:19ff). God's goodness is infinite, but we should not diminish this to goodness to mawkish affectation without truth. Only by believing in the just judgment of God, only by hungering and thirsting for justice (see Matthew 5:6) will we open up our hearts, our life to divine mercy.

This can be seen: It isn't true that faith in eternal life makes earthly life insignificant. To the contrary: only if the measure of our life is eternity, then also this life of ours on earth is great and



its value immense. God is not the competitor in our life, but the guarantor of our greatness. This way we return to the starting point: God.

If we take the Christian message into well-thought-out consideration, we are not speaking about a whole lot of things. In reality, the Christian message is very simple: We speak about God and man, and this way we say everything.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger
Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers
Jubilee of Catechists, 12 December 2000



Chapter 4:

Bible Study



Bible Study

In order to grow in our love for Christ, we must draw close to Him through prayer and through studying Sacred Scripture. In this regard, Bible studies are a great way to delve into Scripture and to learn more about Christ. As St. Jerome once said, “Ignorance of Scripture is Ignorance of Christ.” Through our study of God’s Word, we will grow more and more in our relationship with Him.

The Bible is God’s love letter to us. It is the greatest story ever told because it is the story of all humanity. In our world today, many people have lost sight of how they fit into the story. We need to know history—*His Story*—in order to see how our lives fit into the big picture. The Bible tells us the story of God’s continuous love for man, even though man falls time and time again. By calling out to mankind in love, God shows that He will never forsake us and that he is always ready and willing to call his lost sheep back into the fold.

“The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4: 12). The Bible is truly God’s living Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was written almost two thousand years ago—and it is still relevant to us today. To this end, we will come to know and love Christ through studying His word and by passing on this knowledge to those around us.

This section of the Student Leadership Handbook is devoted to resources that will help you as you prepare to lead your own Bible study.

Recommended Reading:

A Father Who Keeps His Promises by Scott Hahn
Ignatius Catholic Bible Studies by Scott Hahn et. Al
Beginning Apologetics Series by Fr. Frank Chacon and Jim Burnham



Within FOCUS, it is our aim to help others grow in their knowledge of the Faith and to build strong Christian communities. Bible studies do just that. Here are some helpful tips to remember as you prepare to lead your own Bible study.

Acts 2:42: How to Lead a Bible Study

“And they devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

~Acts 2:42

After Christ ascended into Heaven, His disciples were charged with the task of sharing the Good News of Christ with the world. In Acts 2:42, we see the four main areas that the disciples emphasized: *Apostles’ Teaching, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread, and Prayers*. These four areas are essential for a Christian community. Here is a further explanation of how you can incorporate these four essential areas into your Bible study community.

1st Pillar: Teaching

Obviously one major component of Bible study is studying the Church and her teachings and sharing that information with others. As Bible study leaders, we must strive to teach and proclaim the Gospel in a dynamic way—it is a crime to bore others with the faith! One great way to keep others interested and to teach others is to incorporate outside material that you’re learning or studying into your own Bible study.

2nd Pillar: Fellowship

Fellowship is one of the most important aspects of a Bible study. As a leader, you need to find ways to build relationships inside and outside of your study by investing your very self (1 Thess. 2:8). Invite those in your study to other activities—find out what makes them come alive and look for opportunities to share your life with them. For example, you can look for fun activities to share, including birthdays, holidays, men’s/women’s nights, meals, *good* movies etc. For a more complete list of ideas, check out the next article on ways to build community.

3rd Pillar: Breaking of Bread

The third pillar is the Breaking of the Bread. Look for ways that you personally can grow by attending Mass and frequenting the Sacraments. Invite those in your study to those places where grace is bestowed and go with them! You can also invite others to share in your devotions and prayers.

4th Pillar: Prayer

Pray with those in your study. Prayer is what enables us to carry out the moral life, and it gives us credibility as leaders who are walking the talk! After all, we can’t give what we don’t have. By spending time praying with and for those in our studies, we will build up our friendships with those around us and our friendship with our Lord.



Tips for Starting Up

- Keep location consistent.
- Prepare by prayer, studying the material, and creating good questions.
- Facilitate instead of lecturing. Listen instead of talking the whole time.
- Be sure to start and end on time.
- Have a spiritual backup in case no one shows (Rosary, Adoration, Chaplet)

*Do's and Don'ts of Small-Group Leading**Do's*

- Do be flexible.
- Do set questions to get more than a “yes” or “no” response.
- Do try to make Scripture applicable to their lives.
- Do start and end with prayer. Grow in prayer together. Write down prayer requests. Help them become comfortable with vocal group prayer (such as Popcorn prayer)
- Do have the group set their own standards and keep each other accountable (For example, coming to Bible study every week and calling if unable to make it, etc.)
- Do have the group do prep work (Bible study homework) and conclude with an action point.
- Do encourage the group to hang out outside of Bible study together.
- Do pass out a phone and e-mail list.
- Do bring food.
- Do be enthusiastic regardless of turnout.
- Do be approachable and friendly—like a big brother or sister.
- Do share your life, including jokes, personality, juicy info, personal stories, etc.

Dont's

- Don't answer your own questions (wait *at least* 30 seconds and pray a Hail Mary).
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Don't dominate discussion.
- Don't get too far off your outline.
- Don't ask them to interpret, only to apply.
- Don't use lots of FOCUS “lingo” or Catholic vocabulary without making sure they understand.
- Don't put people on the spot, especially asking them to pray out loud.
- Don't be afraid of not always having the answers. Just remember that the answers *are* out there!



One of the most important aspects of a Bible study is building and fostering a community with those in your study. Here are some fun and easy ways to build that community!

Iron Sharpening Iron: Building Community in Your Bible Study

In Scripture, we learn the importance of good friendships. “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17). Sharpening is always done for a purpose—it makes us stronger and more effective. In our Christian walk, we *need* others to walk beside and to help sharpen us, rubbing down our weaknesses and building us up to make us stronger. Building a community within your Bible study is a great place to help “sharpen” others.

As you seek to build a community within your study, there are countless activities that you can do. In order to spend time with those in your study, you don’t even have to go out of your way too much. Rather, do things that you love to do and invite others to share them with you. You can also find activities that make those in your study come alive and spend time doing activities that you both enjoy.

In the midst of classes, work, and everything else, it’s important for us to take time for good leisure and recreation so that we can be “recreated.” Here are some ideas for ways to incorporate good leisure into your life as you seek to cultivate relationships with those in your study.

During study:

Share your testimonies
 Use Ice-Breakers
 (M&M game: for each M&M you take, share a “fun fact”)
 Do fun bonding activities
 (carve a pumpkin, make flower pens, write Bible passages on a card)
 Incorporate Mixed Media
 (bring short videos, songs, etc.)
 Talk about Highs and Lows of the week
 Celebrate Birthdays
 Celebrate Saints’ Feast Days
 Do a study on “Commonly asked Catholic Questions”
 Have a study on Advent, Christmas, Lent, etc.
 Popcorn prayer
 Give up something for Lent together
 Talk about the Saint of the Day
 Have a short Q and A time

Outside of Study:

Design a Bible Study T-shirt
 Meet for daily Mass one day a week
 Meet for a meal on campus
 Hour of adoration together
 Attend athletic events
 Camping
 Bonfires
 Shopping trips
 Spa night
 Pride and Prejudice and tea party
 Have a ping-pong/ air hockey tournament
 Make dinner for another Bible study
 Bowling
 Ice skating
 Community service (Soup Kitchens, etc.)
 Movie nights
 Hiking
 Lift weights/work out together
 Rock climbing
 Pumpkin carving
 Play Frisbee, basketball, other sports
 Play on an intramural team together
 Make Christmas cookies together
 Hit the books together at the library
 Pray with and for those in your study!



As you are leading your Bible study, you may realize that you have a few extra weeks at the end of a semester and not enough time to start a whole new study. Here are some ideas for shorter or different topics that you could talk about and study with those in your study. For more ideas, talk with the missionaries on your campus and refer to the "Recommended Resources" in Section Two..

Additional Bible Study Topics

Catholic Femininity/Masculinity

We live in a world that is deeply confused about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. Discussing authentic femininity and masculinity with your Bible study can be extremely fruitful. Both men and women might benefit from a discussion of two articles by Terrance O. Moore titled *Wimps and Barbarians* and *Heather's Compromise*. Both articles are available online at www.claremont.org. Men's studies might spend time discussing John Eldridge's book *Wild at Heart* for further study and women might turn to the works of Edith Stein, John Paul II's Encyclical *On the Dignity and Vocation of Women*, or Alice von Hildebrand's *The Privilege of Being a Woman*.

The Fourth Cup Video/Article by Scott Hahn

At the Last Supper, a Traditional Jewish Passover, Christ only consumes three of the four traditional cups. Wonder why? Check out these works by Scott Hahn to learn more about the connection of the Fourth Cup to the Eucharistic Feast. You may be able to check out the video from a library/ Resource Center. For the article, ask your missionaries (available on the Staff Website).

Temperament Test

In order to know and love God and those around us, we must first be able to know ourselves. One way to learn more about yourself and others is through the Temperament test. Ancient philosophers identified four basic temperaments, and these have been used for centuries to help understand human nature. While we want to be careful not to put ourselves or others into boxes, the Temperament test can be a useful tool in learning more about ourselves and help us to become better friends and better Christians. To find the temperament test and to find out more about the four temperaments, check out:

http://www.angelicum.net/html/four_temperaments.html.

Theology of the Body

Over a course of 129 Wednesday audiences between 1979 and 1984, John Paul II gave reflections that contain a vision of the human person including body, soul, and spirit. These audiences later became known as the Theology of the Body. According to John Paul II, we "fulfill the very meaning of [our] being and existence" when we live according to the true meaning of our sexuality. He explains that the physical human body has a specific meaning and is capable of revealing answers to us about fundamental questions we all have by applying his message to the vocations of marriage and celibacy. For more information, go to theologyofthebody.net. One man who has spent many years researching and teaching the Theology of the Body is Christopher West. He also has many great books and audio CDs on the topic.



Lives of the Saints

Spend time getting to know our older brothers in sisters in Christ. By learning about the lives of the saints, we will learn more how we can strive for holiness in our daily lives. Spend some time getting to know the Patrons of Missions, St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Francis Xavier. You can also get to know Mary, Christ's mother and ours more. Check out catholic.org/saints to search a large database for particular saints or pick up any biographies or autobiographies of the saints. You can also look for books on the lives of saints, such as Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, which provide great insight within a brief sketch of many saints.

Encyclicals

If you're looking to learn more about matters of the Church, in particular in matters of doctrine, look to encyclicals, formal statements issued by the Pope to Bishops. In particular, check out "Mission of the Redeemer" or "The Gospel of Life" from John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI also wrote, "Deus Caritas Est:" God is Love. For more info and encyclicals, check out: www.papalencyclicals.net



Chapter 5:

FOCUS Facts and Stats



FOCUS FACTS & STATS

Another story we need to know in learning art of evangelization is the story of FOCUS, the *Fellowship of Catholic University Students*. You have heroically accepted the call to become a leader to your peers through FOCUS. It is therefore important to know the history and mission of the organization you have become involved with. Within this section you will find both FOCUS' information and reasons why FOCUS is incredibly crucial on college campuses.

A college campus can be a very difficult place to be a Catholic and the statistics speak clearly this truth. Often the college campus has been referred to as a war zone, with many victims injured in various ways. We have included statistics on abortion, suicide, depression, drugs, and sex. Please use these statistics to grow in your own knowledge of the reality of the typical college environment. It is our mission to reach out to all these people, giving them the light of Jesus Christ himself.

Let us go and truly become the "*Light of the World*" that we are called to be!



As we learned earlier, knowing and sharing stories is essential to our culture and for evangelization. Here is the story of FOCUS, along with some information so you can share more about FOCUS with your family and friends.

FOCUS: Vision for Life

“To know Christ Jesus and to fulfill His Great Commission, by first living and then communicating the fullness of life within the family of God, the Church.”

~FOCUS Mission Statement

What is FOCUS?

FOCUS stands for *The Fellowship of Catholic University Students*. We were founded in 1998 by Curtis Martin as a national outreach to college campuses, both to secular and Catholic schools. Through small group Bible studies, large group leadership training, and one-on-one discipleship, FOCUS brings the fullness of life and truth in the Catholic Church to college students, and gives students the tools to help them share this good news with their friends. FOCUS is working to play a vital role in the “new evangelization” called for by Pope John Paul II.

FOCUS takes recent college graduates, trains them in the teachings of the Church, Scripture and practical aspects of ministry, and sends them out typically in teams of four to serve on college campuses. FOCUS staff members initially dedicate two years of their life to this full-time work on campus. FOCUS works with the blessing of the local bishop and the support of the local pastor and existing campus ministry(ies).

FOCUS started on the campus of Benedictine College in Atchison, KS in the spring of 1997. Six months later, Archbishop Charles Chaput invited FOCUS to start at the University of Northern Colorado. The next year, FOCUS started at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In 2007, we reached students at 29 campuses in 15 states.

The Need

Culture doesn't just happen; it's shaped. College students are tomorrow's leaders, and they are developing their belief systems on today's college and university campuses. However, pause and consider:

- Of the approximately 1.3 million abortions every year in the U.S., about 50-55% of the women having abortions are under 25 years old *National Abortion Federation, www.physiciansforlife.org*
- Every year, 1,100 U.S. college students commit suicide, and another 24,000 try to kill themselves. *Center for Disease Control September, 2005*
- 44% of U.S. college students engage in binge drinking. College presidents agree binge drinking is one of the most serious problems on college campuses. *-Advocacy for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems*
- A national study surveyed college students who were asked, "Are you sexually active?" Fifty-six-and-a-half percent of the students replied yes. *-Zogby International*



- According to a 2005 Gallup poll, Catholics age 18-25 reported their Mass attendance: 15% at least once a week; 15% two or three times a month; 23% about once a month; 37% a few times a year; 11% seldom or never. *"American Catholics from John Paul II to Benedict XVI," National Catholic Reporter, September 30, 2005, p.8.*
- Only point 1% (0.1%) of Catholic university students say that they would even consider a vocation as a priest. (Guido, Joseph J. "College Students and Conversion," *America*, 02/05/2001, Vol. 184 Issue 3, p. 6.)
- Of the 46,709 priests in the United States, only 298 are under the age of thirty. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, www.usccb.org/plm/summary.htm.)

The Success

In just nine years, FOCUS has grown from one campus with two missionaries and 25 students involved to 29 campuses with over 130 missionaries and thousands of students involved.

Within FOCUS, we aim to transform the culture for Jesus Christ, to bring college students to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and to build Christ-centered leaders for the future. Our goal is to invest in a few students, teaching them how to teach the Gospel. These student leaders will then go out and reach their peers for Christ.

FOCUS is effective in fostering vocations. In just nine years, FOCUS has been influential in the decision of 84 men to enter the seminary and 28 women to enter into religious life. These 112 young people are making the decision to follow Christ in a culture that is experiencing a vocation crisis. "Nothing could have been a better preparation for my studies for the priesthood than my time spent with FOCUS," said Brian Larkin, a former FOCUS Missionary, now at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in the Archdiocese of Denver.

Students involved in our program are now in medical school, law school, in the business world, teaching, and ministry. Many are married or in the religious life. They are approaching their vocations and professions with Christ at the center of their lives.

The FOCUS Student Leadership Conference is an event which draws students from each FOCUS campus, as well as other schools across the nation. These conferences include prayer, talks, breakout sessions, fellowship and sacraments. The first conference began outside of Kansas City in January of 1999 with 25 students. In January of 2004, over 1,300 participants gathered in Denver, CO for the conference, featuring actor Jim Caviezel, Dr. Scott Hahn, and a private, pre-release screening of the movie, The Passion of the Christ.

In 2008, we plan to have 3000-4000 students for our 10th anniversary celebration at the FOCUS National Student Leadership Conference with the theme: "Go, and set the world on Fire." Details are available at www.focusonline.org.



What People Are Saying

"FOCUS embraced me my freshman year and taught me for the first time what it means to be a Catholic through Scripture."

-Neethu Muppadhyll, University of Colorado at Boulder, Class of 2004, former FOCUS missionary, now enrolled in medical school

"FOCUS made Christ first in my life. Instead of becoming a physician-scientist who happens to be Catholic, I will be a devout Catholic who happens to be a physician-scientist."

-John Dickinson, MD/PhD student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. 1998 Benedictine College Graduate

"I will leave the Academy not only as a soldier for our country, but also as a Soldier for Christ."

-Joseph Vaeth, United States Air Force Academy Class of 2004

"It wasn't until FOCUS sent four missionaries to campus my junior year that I began to fall in love with Jesus Christ. The more I loved Him, the more He drew me toward the Catholic Church. If it wasn't for the work of God through the FOCUS missionaries, I don't know if I ever would have discovered the beauty of Catholicism."

-Kristen Fausey, Carroll College class of 2003, FOCUS staff member

"No one does a more dynamic job of reaching college students for Christ than FOCUS."

-Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Denver.

"The FOCUS missionaries are inspiring and training the next generation of Catholic Leaders. Their contagious dedication to excellence and dynamic orthodoxy is providing the atmosphere where future leaders in business, science, the arts, law and medicine (not to mention the Church) can explore how they can sanctify their work through a Christ-centered worldview."

-Monsignor Stuart Swetland, Mount St. Mary's Seminary



We all know how critical the situation is on college campuses in the United States. We have witnessed the battle ourselves. The following statistics will keep us, and others, mindful of the necessity of our mission: to bring others Jesus Christ. Please feel free to utilize these statistics when sharing the vision with others. Each reference is listed just above the corresponding statistic.

Crisis on the College Campus: What You Need to Know

Abortion

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 2003 Division of Reproductive Health

- The highest percentages of reported abortions were for women aged <25 years (52%)

Center for Disease Control 2003

- Women known to be aged 20--24 years obtained 33% of all abortions for which age was adequately reported.

Justice for All, Ohio State chapter, no date given, <http://jfa.org.ohio-state.edu/index.htm>

- 40 % of all abortions are performed on college aged women.

National Abortion Federation, www.physiciansforlife.org

- 19%-20% of U.S. women obtaining legal abortions in 2000 were teenagers, aged 10-19; about 33% were aged 20-24 years [CDC, 2000].
- Of the approximately 1.3 million abortions every year in the U.S., about 50-55% of the women having abortions are under 25 years old
- Women who report no religious affiliation are about 4 times more likely to have an abortion than women who report some religious affiliation

Family Research Council, 2003, www.frc.org

Insight Magazine, 10/01-8/01; HLA Action News, Fall 2001

- When they enter college, 37% of women support abortion. Four years later, 73% support abortion. [Insight Magazine, 10/01-8/01; HLA Action News, Fall 2001]

Washington Times, 7Mar01

- Approximately 84,000 college women become pregnant every year.
- On average, women give at least 3 reasons for choosing abortion: ¾ say a baby would interfere with work, school, etc.; about 2/3 say they cannot afford a child; and ½ say they do not want to be a single parent.

Alcohol

Aug. 2006 American Psychiatric Association News Release, "College Students and Alcohol Abuse: A Sobering Look"; Lydia Sermons-Ward and Hillarie Turner

- 4 in 5 college students drink and about half of college student drinkers engage in heavy episodic consumption

Hingson et al., 2005

- 1,700 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes



Core Institute, 2005

- 300,000 of today's college students will eventually die of alcohol-related causes such as drunk driving accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, various cancers and heart disease
- 159,000 of today's first-year college students will drop out of school next year for alcohol- or other drug-related reasons
- The average student spends about \$900 on alcohol each year
- 30.1% of college students surveyed in 2005 had admitted to using marijuana in the last year (16.7% in the last 30 days). 4.9% had used cocaine in the last year and 2.1% in the last 30 days; 6.4% amphetamines in last year and 3.3% in last 30 days

Harvard School of Public Health

- A national survey reveals that 42% of college students reported binge drinking

The NSDUH Report (published periodically by the Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA))

- Based on 2002 to 2005 combined data, 57.8 percent of full-time college students aged 18 to 20 used alcohol in the past month, 40.1 percent engaged in binge alcohol use, and 16.6 percent engaged in heavy alcohol use.

American Psychiatric Association, 2004

- Students who live in a fraternity or sorority house are the heaviest drinkers—86% of fraternity residents and 80% of sorority residents report binge drinking

“10 Things Your College Student Won’t Tell You” by Kristin Kovner Published: August 14, 2006

- Each year 2.8 million college students drive drunk, and 1,700 die from alcohol-related injuries

Hingson et al., 2002

- More than 100,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex

Cheating

April 29, 2006 ABC News “A Cheating Crisis in America's Schools”

- 70% of students are now admitting to some form of cheating
- Incidents involving unsourced material from the Internet in written work have quadrupled in the past six years, yet 77% of students don't consider it cheating or "very serious."
- A survey of more than 4,000 U.S. and Canadian schools revealed half of all faculty members admitted ignoring cheating at least once.
- "It's typically 30 percent of all the papers submitted have significant levels of plagiarism," said John Barrie, founder of Turnitin.com

The Demographics of Cheating in College Students by Melanie Butler, Tiffani Ridley, and Mary Allen* - California State University, Bakersfield (Fall 2006)

- Most students (78%) reported cheating of at least one type.



Debts

10 Things Your College Student Won't Tell You by Kristin Kovner Published: August 14, 2006

- The average college senior now has six credit cards and a \$3,200 total balance
- 17% of young adults significantly alter their career path because they're so far in the red so early

Currently, in 13 million households — up 70% from 2000 — parents are financially supporting children 18 and over, whether they live at home or not (SOURCE UNKNOWN)

Graduation <http://www.local10.com/money/2644351/detail.html>

- According to the student loan servicer Nellie Mae, 78 percent of college students have plastic by the time they get their diploma, and 32 percent of them have four or more credit cards.
- Some colleges across the country have banned credit card marketing, but it's big business for others. Oklahoma has an exclusive \$10 million deal with Visa to market on campus. The University of Tennessee has a \$16.5 million credit card deal.

Depression

8/4/03 article University of Michigan Health Minute “Heading back to campus? Watch for depression triggered by college stresses, U-M expert advises”

- 10 percent of college students, that the American College Health Association estimates, arrive on campus with a prior diagnosis of depression or other mental illness. But even students with no history can start feeling depression's impact.

2004 survey by the American College Health Association

- Nearly half of all college students report feeling so depressed that they had trouble functioning
- 15% meet the criteria for clinical depression

American Psychiatric Association, 2004

- One out of four young adults will experience a depressive episode by age 24
- Over 60% of the students reported feeling things were hopeless one or more times
- 10% of the students reported seriously considering attempting suicide at least one time

4/24/07 article New York Times “Senators Discuss Preventing College Attacks” Michael Luo

- 94 percent of students reported feeling overwhelmed by all they have to do

Matthew Kelly Foundation

- After birth control, anti-depressants are the number one medication prescribed to young women.

Drugs

- 29% say they have used prescription drugs recreationally. These include pain relievers like Vicodin, which can lead to respiratory and liver failure, and amphetamines such as Ritalin



and Adderall, which can result in cardiac arrhythmia and coma — and can lead to harder drugs. Students using these stimulants are 20 times more likely to try cocaine. (SOURCE UNKNOWN)

<http://www.yic.gov/drugfree/alcabuse.html>

- Surveys at colleges and universities across the country indicate the percentage of students who used various other drugs within the past year: marijuana (32.3 percent); amphetamines (6.5 percent); hallucinogens (7.5 percent); cocaine (3.7 percent); and designer drugs such as Ecstasy (3.6 percent)

Eating Disorders

1998 (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/eat.html>)

- Among college females, 78% reported bingeing experiences and 8.2% used self-induced vomiting to control weight
- Among the college student population, a reported 1% to 7% of male students suffer from eating disorders

See Johnson & Connors, *The Etiology and Treatment of Bulimia Nervosa*, 1987

- Reportedly, 5% to 20% of college females have eating disorders

Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders, "Eating Disorders 101 Guide: A Summary of Issues, Statistics and Resources," published September 2002, revised October 2003,

<http://www.renfrew.org>

- The mortality rate associated with anorexia nervosa is 12 times higher than the death rate of ALL causes of death for females 15-24 years old.
- 25% of college-aged women engage in bingeing and purging as a weight-management technique
- An estimated 10 per cent of female college students suffer from a clinical or sub-clinical (borderline) eating disorder, of which over half suffer from bulimia nervosa.

Fail out of college

<http://www.prnewsnw.com/PR%20News%20Releases/Art%20And%20Entertainment/Books/1%20out%20of%204%20College%20Students%20Dropout%20or%20Flunk%20Out>

- 1 out of 4 College Students Dropout or Flunk Out
- May 19, 2005 -- As the graduation season approaches, parents, family, and friends will be reaching for books that offer their students guidance. Considering the high dropout rate—nearly 1 in 4 college students dropout or flunk out—there is a need for inspiration

Gambling

The Journal of Gambling Studies

- College students remain the most heavily targeted group affected by the presence of 2,500 online gambling websites
- College students are at greater risk for becoming addicted to gambling; five percent report pathological gambling and more than nine percent report other gambling-related problems



A Deadly Obsession for College Students Heather Schultz 08/17/2006

- According to the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, in Sept. 2005 approximately 580,000 young people ages 14 to 22 gamble on the Internet on a weekly basis

Mass Attendance

National Catholic Reporter: "American Catholics from John Paul II to Benedict XVI," National Catholic Reporter, September 30, 2005, p.8. nationwide Gallup poll

- A nationwide survey of self-identified Catholics, done in 2005. In that survey, Catholics age 18-25 (many college students and many people not in college) reported their Mass attendance: 15% at least once a week; 15% two or three times a month; 23% about once a month; 37% a few times a year; 11% seldom or never.

Pornography

Thirty million people are now logging on to some 300,000 porn Web sites daily (SOURCE UNKNOWN)

Exposing Faith Through the XXX Church By Paul Strand Washington Sr. Correspondent, CBN.com

- The average age when they first see pornography use is now 11

Pornography Addiction: How to Win the War against Satan's Attack on the Family Kenneth Henderson

- Studies show that 1 out of every 4 men are addicted to or have a problem with pornography

Rape

Johnson and Sigler, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2000

- 13% of college women indicated they had been forced to have sex in a dating situation

Warshaw, Robin 1994 "I Never Called It Rape"

- In a study of 6,000 students at 32 colleges in the US, 42% of rape victims told no-one and only 5% reported it to the police
- 1 in 12 male students surveyed had committed acts that met the legal definition of rape or attempted rape
- In a survey of college males who committed rape, 84% said what they did was definitely not rape

Boeringer 1996, Violence Against Women:5

- A study of 477 male students, mostly 1st and 2nd year students, found 56% reported instances of non-assaultive coercion to obtain sex. Examples included: threatening to end a relationship; falsely professing love; telling lies to render her more sexually receptive

Sex

Zogby International, national report, commissioned by the Foundation for Academic Standards & Tradition (FAST), June 2000



- Fifty-six-and-a-half percent of the students replied "yes" when asked "Are you sexually active?"

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1995

- 79.5 percent of college students 18 to 24-years-old had had sexual intercourse and that 55.4 percent had had sexual intercourse during the 30 days preceding the survey.

"Statistics: The States of our Unions," *Psychology Today*, Nov/Dec 2000, page 10__ sources: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

- 28% of college students who have had a "hook-up" without having sex, and never saw their hook-up partner again
- 49% of college students who have had a "hook-up" with sex and never saw their hook-up partner again

Suicide

Center for Disease Control and Prevention's WISQARS system in September, 2005.

- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among Americans between the ages of 15-24 and the second leading cause of death among those between the ages of 25-34.
- Every year, 1,100 U.S. college students commit suicide, and another 24,000 try to kill themselves. For Americans aged 15 to 24, suicide ranks third behind unintentional injury and homicide as a cause of death

Counseling Insights is a series developed by the staff members at Counseling services: A Multicultural Center. University of Colorado, Boulder, 1996.

- Suicide remains the second leading cause of death among college students. 20 percent of male suicides are in the 15-24 age range. 14 percent of female suicides are in the 15-24 year age range. 30 percent of all suicide attempts are gay and lesbian teens.
- Adolescents and young adults often experience stress, confusion, and depression from situations occurring in their families, schools, and communities. Such feelings can overwhelm young people and lead them to consider suicide as a "solution." Few schools and communities have suicide prevention plans that include screening, referral, and crisis intervention programs for youth.

10 Things Your College Student Won't Tell You By Kristin Kovner Published: August 14, 2006

- But the most serious concern for parents and educators is suicide, which accounts for an estimated 1,100 student deaths each year.

Vocations

ROME, JULY 20, 2006 (Zenit.org)

- A survey, conducted by the Italian institute Eurisko, of one thousand young people between 16 to 29 years of age, showed that 10 youths out of 100 feel at some point a call to the priesthood or religious life (male and female), but the majority abandon the idea after a few months.



- Among the reasons for so many failed vocations is that 71% of young people said they had no friends who had the desire to consecrate themselves to the Lord.
- Twenty-nine percent felt called after a personal experience, such as a visit to a monastery, a pilgrimage or a spiritual retreat
- The survey revealed that 70% of the young people interviewed could not mention a man or a woman who represented a point of intellectual reference.

Interesting Points

During the first part of their freshman year, students are more open to meeting new people than they have ever been or ever will be again.

In a recent American history survey, only 23 percent of college seniors correctly identified James Madison as the "Father of the Constitution"; 98 percent knew that Snoop Doggy Dog is a rapper. The survey, conducted by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut, at the request of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), was designed to measure students' knowledge of American history and government.

Please contact Libby McCartney, FOCUS Director of Marketing, at emccartney@focusonline.org if you have any questions or comments about the above statistics.



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Appendix

SYSTEMATIC DISCIPLESHIP

FOCUS DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

FOCUS MISSION STATEMENT:

To know Christ Jesus, and to fulfill His Great Commission, by first living and then communicating the fullness of life within the Family of God, the Church.

The following is a brief yet detailed description of one of the main means of living out the FOCUS mission, DISCIPLESHIP. What, How, and When to best disciple FOCUS missionary staff and students involved in the FOCUS program will be covered.

It is our hope that knowing and imitating Christ Jesus will bear fruit in each person's life. This knowledge will blossom into love as a natural result of daily conversation with Our Lord in prayer and frequent reception of Him in the Holy Eucharist. It is only logical that our service and labor for Him could only follow (not precede) a personal relationship with Him. It is within this framework that FOCUS asks each mentor to pray for each of his/her disciples. This should be done periodically in daily prayer, and also before each discipleship meeting. It is very helpful to go to the Holy Spirit, ask for His gifts. Discipleship is a time when each person can utilize the gifts of Fortitude, Piety, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel, Wisdom and Fear of the Lord, when listening to and relating to each disciple. We need to go to Christ and ask for His mind and heart in helping to form our disciples, as He would wish. And we need to go to the Father and ask for His grace and help as well. By doing this, we will better ensure our mission to help form saints in FOCUS.

Discipleship is an extraordinary time for encouragement in the Christian walk, and a great opportunity for iron to "sharpen iron". As a disciple we should have thick skin so as to receive well both the encouragement and the suggestions we receive from our discipler. As disciplers, we need to have soft hearts, so that we always deliver our encouragement and suggestions with charity. It does well for all to remember that the Christian walk is more a marathon than it is a sprint. Incrementalism is key to our work. We challenge each other to take steps forward – but we don't ask each other to take all the steps at once. This is especially true in student discipleship. The following guidelines are specifically for staff discipleship and *mature* student discipleship relationships, while the framework applies to all discipleship relationships. The goal should be to meet every week for discipleship, and to go through "systematic discipleship" every other time you meet. Work slowly into these areas with student discipleship – if the student's heart is won over to Jesus Christ, they will yearn for opportunities to grow closer to him.

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- I. **OPENING PRAYER:** Say the **OUR FATHER** together.
This is reminder to always begin discipleship time in prayer. We say the Our Father to begin discipleship.
- II. **DISCUSS SPIRITUAL ISSUES, Grace building on Nature:**

This is a section of discussion that is critical in discipleship. It is in striving to attain habits that are Christ like that each will grow in holiness. It is FOCUS' main mission to form and encourage sanctity within the missionary staff as well as on college campus's. This is why it is imperative that the staff remains cheerfully hopeful and on fire for Christ. We need to avoid becoming lukewarm in our struggle for holiness. It is within the area of discussing Spiritual Issues of discipleship that FOCUS missionaries will challenge one another to greater sanctity.

- A. **PRAYER:** A great place to start is by asking one's disciple, "How is your prayer life? Do you have a set time that you pray every day? If so when? Are you able to stay committed to that time, making it a priority everyday? If not why? Or what do your think you can change in order to make it happen ever day? Do you think you should change the time? Etc. Once a disciple has nailed daily prayer for at least 10 minutes a day, then challenge him/her to do more, like 5 more minutes gently working each missionary up to 30 minutes to an hour of prayer daily.
- B. **READING OF the Holy Scriptures and The Catechism of the Catholic Church in a Systematic manner:** It is a FOCUS recommendation for each missionary to follow the set reading agenda beginning in Matthew through Acts, then the narrative books and through the entire Bible. This will be a goal that each staff member will set when beginning his/her work with FOCUS. By reading the New Testament, each person will better identify with Christ, getting to know Him better and being more able to imitate Him in ones' thought, words and deeds of daily life. The mentor will ask the disciple about his/her personal progress in reading through the Scriptures on a weekly basis, further challenging the disciple to read at least five minutes a day and work up to 10 minutes at a set time each day.
- C. **SACRAMENTAL LIFE / ADORATION:** FOCUS encourages each staff member to live a sacramental life. This entails going to Mass more often than on Sundays. The context of the discipleship relationship is a great opportunity to discuss the spiritual life and how to challenge oneself to attend Mass on a daily basis. That can be done gently by adding one more time each week as a resolution or challenge under the issue of GRACE. It is also a great time to challenge disciples on making the FOCUS Examination of Conscience each night before going to bed and then regular confession attendance. The idea is that we will grow in knowledge of our faults and become more aware of what each can do to become more holy. This is best done when one attends confession on a regular basis.
- D. **READING A SPIRITUAL BOOK:** Spiritual reading will aid all staff in acquiring a supernatural sense for our daily tasks and routines. Each FOCUS staff member is encouraged to read some spiritual book. This could range from a biography of a saint, a classic spiritual book, or a recommended book. FOCUS has the beginning of a list of options for staff to reference in order to give recommendations to disciples. It is FOCUS' recommendation for each staff member to spend 10-15 minutes a day doing this type of spiritually enriching reading. It is up to the disciple to suggest a book and then hold the disciple accountable to finding the time to read. Again candid questions about the suggested time and length of time, how successful the attempt to read is, etc. are appropriate questions for the mentor to pose to the disciple.



III. DISCUSS FOLLOW-UP

- A. **INTRODUCE:** Each disciple will be given each Follow-up by his/her mentor. It will be introduced with some thought provoking questions and brief discussion. Then each disciple will be asked to take the Follow-up home to read and study before the next weeks meeting.
- B. **QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION:** During the following meetings, the mentor and disciple will discuss the Follow-up, and the disciple will be given ample opportunity to ask questions and voice misunderstanding or concern for clarity. It is up to the mentor to question the disciple on the information contained in the Follow-up, and up to both to come prepared for meaningful discussion. An overall understanding of the concepts presented in the monthly Follow-up is needed before the disciple is ready to give the Follow-up to the next generation disciple.

IV. DISCUSS FOCUS OUTREACH

- A. **BIBLE STUDIES:** It is important to ask each disciple about the FOCUS Bible Study or studies he/she is leading. Ask how many students have signed-up? How many actually attend? If the response is low, ask why? Then help the disciple come up with possible remedies for low attendance. Maybe the time is too stiff and boring and needs to be more social and fun or maybe it is too chatty and loose and needs more structure and accountability. Ask questions and find solutions together. Ask if the students are responding to your disciple's efforts? Is the missionary able to see leaders within the group? Is the missionary able to keep students on track? Is he/she making it through the FOCUS study in a timely manner? A Chapter a week is suggested. If the missionary has second generation studies or disciples, cover those topics as well.
- B. **DISCIPLES:** It may take an entire semester or even up to a year of relationship building before a missionary finds three students that are FACT, Faithful, Available, Contagious (Cheerful) and Teachable. As a mentor it is up to you to keep encouraging your disciple to leading by example and waiting for God to show the leaders. Once disciples are in place, then it is appropriate to inquire about the next generation of disciples, ups, downs, joys, concerns, leadership potential etc. If the disciple has questions about how to handle certain situations or issues with specific disciples then this is the place to discuss that and develop solutions or answers together.
- C. **PRIME TIME:** It is important to talk with our disciples about the campus plan, campus wide activities and Prime times. Depending on the maturity of FOCUS on each campus, the level of campus wide activities may range from just a few to many. It is a good idea to keep track of what is going on, what needs to happen next and possible changes in plan with each disciple. It is a good idea to be a sounding board and give ideas or helpful tips when asked.
- D. **CAMPUS ACTIVITIES:** As with the Prime time discussion, the campus activities discussion may range in detail as to the newness of the FOCUS program on each campus. Senior staff will be able to share wisdom and experiences. Some schools may have more frequent activities and those will need to be covered briefly. Keep in mind that the mentor should be encouraging and helpful when ever possible. Ask about attendance, topics covered, and activities in general and keep track of your disciple's involvement.



V. CHALLENGE WITH A RESOLUTION

The closing resolution will give an opportunity to formally state or restate if previously discussed in discipleship time, under II Spiritual Issues, one item in each of the areas to work on during the following week.

- A. **ONE RESOLUTION FOCUSING ON NATURE:** It is during discipleship time that a mentor can help form his/her disciple in areas dealing with the natural world. FOCUS will provide a systematic list of natural virtues to work on and progress through discipleship. Giving guidance in modest dress, personal hygiene, counsel in public manners, etc. These will be brought up in discipleship so that each disciple will be challenged to greater natural virtue. Each mentor may help the disciple develop virtue and better habits by suggesting ways of rooting out the bad ones and replacing them with goods ones. If someone always talks with food in their mouth, they need to be made aware of the impropriety and encouraged to form a good habit of not talking with food in their mouth. If a staff has a bad habit of not showering regularly then they need to be encouraged to set higher goals of personal hygiene. If a staff member has a difficult time listening and is always talking, then he/she needs to be made aware of the situation and encouraged to set goals to be a better listener and less talkative. Many of these personal items will be easily addressed and changed if we take the time to mentor and teach our disciples with true charity. This is a great time to work on true femininity and masculinity in thoughts, actions, and words. Each week a challenge or resolution should be made in order to improve our natural state as children of God. More often than not our resolutions each week will remain the same or similar. One does not form virtue in a week.
- B. **ONE RESOLUTION FOCUSING ON GRACE:** This resolution should focus on an area that the disciple will be able to challenge himself/herself in growing more holy. FOCUS will provide a systematic list of areas to grow in practical holiness. This might be getting to mass one extra time during the week, or saying the rosary on a daily basis, setting one's prayer time by adding 5 or 10 minutes more, adding a holy hour each week in front of the Blessed Sacrament, memorizing a Scripture verse etc. It will be up to the mentor to remember items previously discussed in the spiritual life in order to suggest possible weekly goals or resolutions for each disciple. After you agree on the resolutions, write them down and check up on them in the following week's discipleship time. This type of accountability is the IRON SHARPENING IRON!

VI. CLOSING PRAYER: Glory Be and Hail Mary

This is a reminder to always end discipleship time in prayer. We say a Hail Mary and Glory Be at the end of each discipleship meeting. This also reminds us that what was discussed during discipleship should ordinarily be kept confidential.

POSSIBLE TIME FRAME FOR DISCIPLESHIP

- I. OUR FATHER: 1 minute
- II. DISCUSS FOLLOW-UP: 15 – 20 minutes
- III. DISCUSS SPIRITUAL ISSUES: 10 – 15 minutes
- IV. DISCUSS OUTREACH: 10 – 15 minutes
- V. GIVE PERSONAL CHALLENGE/RESOLUTION FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK: 5 minutes
- VI. CLOSE WITH HAIL MARY and GLORY BE: 1 minute

TOTAL DISCIPLESHIP TIME: 42 – 57 MINUTES

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Discipleship

Initial Questions:

Read Matthew 28:19-20. Where does the concept of 'discipleship' come from?

Read 2 Timothy 2:2. What is the main purpose of discipleship?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8. What is the difference between just sharing the Gospel, and sharing your 'very self'? Why is that important?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, and Sirach 37:12. What are some of the benefits of Christian discipleship?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1. Why might this verse be an important foundation for discipleship?

Follow-up Objective:

To expound on what discipleship is and how we practice discipleship within the FOCUS model, and to explain the necessary role Christian discipleship plays within our universal call to evangelize.

"I have called you friends..." (John 15:15)

One of the greatest gifts Jesus Christ extends to us is that of friendship. He does not call us to be His servants, but to be His *friends* (see John 15:15). He invites us into a deep, intimate friendship unlike any other, and the more we come to know Him, the more we experience the joyful freedom that resides in a life conformed to Jesus Christ.

While He walked this earth, Jesus spent the majority of His time with only a handful of men.

"He actually spent more time with His disciples than with everybody else in the world put together. He ate with them, slept with them, and talked with them for the most part of His entire active ministry. They walked together along the lonely roads; they visited together in the crowded cities; they sailed and fished together on the Sea of Galilee; they prayed together in the deserts and in the mountains; and they worshiped together in the synagogues and in the Temple."¹

Through the time He invested in the men known as His disciples, Jesus was able to leave a lasting impact on the world. His friendship with these men was not arbitrary, but purposeful and life-changing. He came to show them the love of the Father, to teach them the Truth, and to lead them on the road to everlasting Life.

¹ Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1994. Pg.45



Furthermore, He also taught His disciples to teach others. Before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus gave these men, His disciples and His closest friends, this command: *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”* (Matthew 28:19-20). Discipleship – really a Christ-centered friendship – is the method Jesus Christ chose to share the Gospel message with the world. His Great Commission extended not only to His Apostles, but to each Christian who would follow Him. He has called *all* of us to “go and make disciples.”

Pope Benedict XVI once stated: “To evangelize means...to teach the art of living.” Jesus did not simply *tell* His disciples about the Gospel. Through each detail of His everyday life, small and great, He *showed* them how to live it out.

As one author wrote, “A barren Christian is a contradiction.”² To fulfill our Christian vocation, we must bear fruit – we must teach others the ‘art of living’ a life conformed to Jesus Christ. The most natural and effective way to evangelize is through the method Christ revealed: Christian discipleship.

“Go and make disciples”

So, where does one begin? Once again, Pope Benedict XVI offers some valuable insight regarding the first step in evangelization and discipleship.

*“Jesus had to acquire the disciples from God. The same is always true. We ourselves cannot gather men. We must acquire them by God and for God. All methods are empty without the foundation of prayer. The word of the announcement must always be drenched in an intense life of prayer.”*³

Before we invite someone else into a discipleship relationship, we must first be disciples of Our Lord! “All discipleship activity should begin with, be inspired by, and remain grounded in our personal relationship with Jesus Christ and our desire for others to have an ever-deeper relationship with Him as well.”⁴

We cannot expect our disciples to conform their lives to Christ if we are living a life opposed to His Gospel, nor can we hope to share the message of the Gospel unless we are rooted in prayer. We must *first* live and *then* communicate the fullness of life offered within the Church.⁵ This does not mean that we must be perfect models of Christian discipleship, but that we actively strive to love and follow Our Lord. Thus prayer and cultivating our own relationship with Jesus is essential to our efforts. We cannot share Him unless we know Him.

“Whenever young men and women allow the grace of Christ to work in them and produce new life, the extraordinary power of divine love is released into their lives and

² *Ibid* Pg.100

³ Josef Cardinal Ratzinger. Address on ‘The New Evangelization’ given on December 10, 2000 in Rome, Italy.

⁴ From the *Systematic Discipleship* article in the FOCUS Staff Formation Guide.

⁵ Cf. FOCUS Mission Statement



into the life of the community. It transforms attitudes and behavior and inevitably attracts others to follow the same adventurous path.”⁶

While we will never live the Gospel as perfectly as Our Lord, our lives can become powerful testimonies and catalysts for conversion as we are transformed through our union with Jesus Christ. Prayer for and with our disciples is a key element to our relationship with them.

F.A.C.T.

Every relationship will be unique, but as you pray about whom you might invite into discipleship, there are a few practical guidelines to help you. First, ask yourself (and your own discipler) if the person you are considering is F.A.C.T. – *Faithful, Available, Contagious, and Teachable*.

Faithful - Is this person faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church? Even if they do not fully understand or know how to explain every doctrine, are they willing to submit to the authority of the Church and teach what she teaches, while seeking greater understanding? Secondly, are they faithful to their current FOCUS commitments – i.e. weekly Bible study? Will they remain committed to discipleship, Bible study, FOCUS events, and other leadership requirements as time goes on?

Available - Does this person have the time to invest into a leadership role? What other commitments do they have? Are they reliable? Do they make themselves available to serve Christ through FOCUS?

Contagious – Does this person have a joyful spirit? Do they have a desire to share Christ’s love with others? Are they willing to extend beyond their comfort zone to go out and invite others who may not be like them? Do they tend to draw others in? Will someone else ‘want what they have’?

Teachable – Does this person have an eager willingness to learn? Are they open to the authority, teaching, and experience of others (i.e. the Catholic Church, FOCUS staff, priests, their discipler, etc.)? Are they humble? How do they respond to accountability?

The Big Three

As Christian leaders in a secular culture, there are certain standards that we must strive after. Particularly on a college campus, there is a great need for role models in the areas of “the Big Three” – Chastity, Sobriety, and Excellence. More specifics on these virtues can be found in the ‘Moral Authority’ Follow-up, but in regards to discipleship, it should be stated that anyone who is entering a discipleship relationship is expected to actively strive to be faithful in these three areas. Before one can be an effective *leader*, one must know how to be a *follower* of Jesus Christ. Living the virtues of chastity, sobriety, and excellence will give us the moral authority we need to be effective witnesses of Our Lord.

⁶ John Paul II, World Youth Day, Denver 1993



The “Disciples” of Karol Wojtyla

When Pope John Paul II was still Father Karol Wojtyla, he was both known and loved for the time he invested in the young people within his Polish diocese. Because of the restrictions Communism placed on his pastoral activity, he had to be creative. By wedding his love of the outdoors to his passion for sharing the Gospel, Father Wojtyla invited groups of young adults to go hiking, kayaking and camping, hold songfests, play sports and join discussion groups. His intention was simply to ‘accompany’ others on their journey with Christ. The impression he left on these individuals simply by spending personal time with them – and offering a powerful Christian example while doing so – is staggering. In imitation of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, Karol Wojtyla truly understood the art of discipleship. Some of his closest young friends related comments such as these:

“He had mastered the art of listening...[No matter what subject was introduced – religion, daily life, work] he was always interested....”

“[While] I talked to him for hours and hours [I] never heard him say, ‘I’d advise you to’...He’d throw light on [a problem]. But then he would always say, ‘You have to decide.’”

“Today, many priests try to be like the kids. We were trying to be like him.”

“[Wojtyla] tried to accompany someone else in their problems; he was open to revealing the humanity of another.”⁷

While John Paul II certainly had a unique role to fulfill as a priest and pastor that extended beyond our bounds of discipleship, his example can still offer valuable insight into the nature of discipleship. What was so attractive about Father Wojtyla was his ability to listen, his heroic pursuit of holiness, and the time he was willing to invest in the individuals God had placed in his life.

Get Real

The discipleship relationship is not that of a doctor to a patient, nor of a spiritual director or a therapist. It is not a relationship based upon expertise. Rather, it is founded upon a personal relationship with a brother or sister in Christ. As opposed to a superior, think of yourself as a brother or sister who is there to pray, listen, teach and lead by example.

Do not attempt to be something you are not. Be sincere and genuine. It is important for your disciples to see you as you are: a sinner running to Christ and striving for holiness. Our humility and honesty can often help others realize that holiness is tangible. What is most necessary to show our disciples is “a zeal inspired by Christ’s own charity, which takes the form of concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability, and interest in people’s problems.”⁸

⁷ Weigel, George. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II*. New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. 2001. Pgs. 105-106.

⁸ John Paul II. Encyclical Letter of John Paul II: *Mission of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Missio)*, article 89.



*"It makes us vulnerable, of course. We are not perfect like our Lord, and those persons to whom we open our lives will come to see our many shortcomings. But let them also see a readiness to confess our sins when we understand the error of our way. Let them hear us apologize to those we have wronged. Our weaknesses need not impair discipleship when shining through them is a transparent sincerity to follow Christ."*⁹

Furthermore, it must be stressed that the goal of discipleship is to make disciples *for Christ*. While we can be incredible instruments in the hands of Jesus, we are certainly not out to mold miniature versions of ourselves!¹⁰ We are not spiritual directors or professional counselors, and we cannot make decisions for people. We may offer prudent counsel, accountability, encouragement, and *occasional* fraternal correction, but our main objective is to simply help point our disciples in the right direction – to Jesus and the guiding wisdom of His Church.

Time Well Spent

On a practical level, what does discipleship look like? As previously stated, each relationship will be unique, but again there are some guidelines.

First, it is important to practice 'incremental discipleship' - to meet your disciple 'where they are at.' Don't ask or expect them to conquer every virtue immediately! Be compassionate and encouraging, even while you challenge them to strive for greatness. The Christian journey is more of a marathon than a sprint, and patience is fundamental.

Weekly meetings and on-going communication within a discipleship relationship are also important, especially at the beginning. Try a 'week-on, week-off' method of discipleship: spend one week having good conversation on discipleship issues, and the next week doing something fun together. Sometimes our most fruitful conversations occur while doing something that seems completely unrelated (like sky diving or painting your toenails). The value of simply spending time together cannot be overemphasized!

Discipleship with a new disciple is typically more systematic and catechetical (for example, you may go over a Follow-up, give tips on leading a Bible study, share thoughts on living out spiritual multiplication, discuss apologetic issues, talk about how to cultivate certain virtues and a prayer life, etc.). Discipleship with an older, more spiritually mature disciple is generally more relational.¹¹

Because within a new discipleship relationship you are focusing more on teaching what discipleship entails, the method of discipleship, and discussing topics perhaps unfamiliar to a new disciple, this relationship can tend to feel more static and "forced" than a more mature Christian friendship. You should not expect to be good friends immediately. Within a new

⁹ Coleman, p. 77.

¹⁰ "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)

¹¹ See the 'Grace & Nature' Chart and article on 'Systematic Discipleship' for more details and ideas on a typical discipleship meeting.



relationship, focus on setting the tone for what discipleship should look like and the type of things that should be discussed, and allow the Lord to bless the friendship however He wills.

If you have been discipling someone for a long time, you may be blessed to share a natural friendship and have a more “relational” discipleship relationship. Yet, in each case, it is important to maintain a catechetical approach with methods and concepts that are transferable, so that knowledge can be passed on within a discipleship chain. Remember, we are not just teaching, we are teaching teachers how to teach.¹² Keeping the overall goal of spiritual multiplication in mind should help you as you decide how to spend time with your disciple. Is your disciple learning to effectively ‘teach others how to teach’? *“Are those who have followed us to Christ now leading others to Him and teaching them to make disciples...? The test of any work of evangelism thus is not what is seen at the moment...but in the effectiveness with which the work continues in the next generation.”*¹³

Sharing ‘Our Very Selves’

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul speaks of sharing “not only the gospel of God, but our own selves.”¹⁴ This is our model for Christian discipleship. Pope Paul VI once wisely stated: *“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”*¹⁵ As we strive to faithfully live out the Great Commission given us by our Savior, we must often recall the awesome responsibility and privilege we have been granted in being His witnesses. It is a great blessing to be a Christian leader, but let us always remember that we are first and foremost disciples ourselves: disciples of Jesus Christ. There will be setbacks and disappointments. Not every person we invite into discipleship will follow through or live up to our expectations. But if we are faithful, Jesus will undoubtedly work through us and bear great fruit – even if we don’t always witness it.

Pope Benedict XVI said, *“God cannot be made known with words alone.... We cannot give life to others without giving up our own lives.”*¹⁶ Jesus does not need those who can simply tell about Him, but those who live with Him and like Him and can teach others to imitate Him. He is out to conquer the entire world with His saving love, one soul at a time. And He wants us – His disciples – to be His instruments.

*“When will we realize that evangelism is not done by something, but by someone? It is an expression of God’s love, and God is a person.... This is the ‘new evangelism’ we need. It is not better methods, but better men and women who know their Redeemer from personal experience – men and women who see His vision and feel His passion for the world – men and women who are willing to be nothing so that He might be everything – men and women who want only for Christ to produce His life in and through them according to His own good pleasure.”*¹⁷

¹² 2 Timothy 2:2

¹³ Coleman, pgs. 102-103

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 2:8

¹⁵ Pope Paul VI. Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI: *On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)*, article 41.

¹⁶ Josef Cardinal Ratzinger. Address on ‘The New Evangelization’ given on December 10, 2000 in Rome, Italy.

¹⁷ Coleman, pgs. 105-106



Discussion Questions:

What are some things you have found to be effective in fostering a friendship with a new disciple? How did your discipler foster a friendship with you?

How have you found a good balance between maintaining a friendship and practicing more 'systematic' discipleship?

What are some creative ways to invest in your disciples, especially the busier ones?

What is the best way to offer accountability within a discipleship relationship?

What are some of the challenges of discipleship? What are some of the blessings?

How has discipleship impacted you personally?

What might discipleship look like in the 'real world,' outside of a college campus?



Intellectual Formation

Purpose: To transform the *mind* in Christ and fill it with noble ideas.

(c.f. Phil 4:8, Rom 12:1-2)

Goal: Commit to daily reading of Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, or other spiritual works.

Ideas for reading material:

- Book of the Bible
- Section of the Catechism
- Writings of the Popes
- Writings of the Saints
- Works of early Church Fathers

Example Questions: (specific and reflective)

- Where are you in the reading plan?
- What are you learning in your reading?

Human Formation and the Virtues

Purpose: To strengthen the *will* through active growth in the virtuous life while rooting out vice.

(c.f. 2 Pet 1:4-8)

Goal: Commit to working daily on the development of a single virtue and rooting out its corresponding vice.

Ideas of virtue/vices:

- Punctuality/Procrastination
- Reliability/Undependability
- Listening/Excessive talking
- Chivalry/Bad manners
- Time Management/Disorganization

Example Questions: (specific and reflective)

- How many days did you get up on time?
- What was your experience?

Prayer and the Sacraments

Purpose: Love of God: To grow in the life of grace and love of God. (c.f. Heb 12:14, 1 Thes 5:17)

Goal: Commit to daily time of prayer and frequent active participation in the sacraments.

Ideas:

- Prayer – Commit to daily prayer. If not praying at all, start with five or 10 minutes a day. If a habit is already ingrained, commit to giving more time daily to the Lord.
- Sacraments – Commit to attending Sunday Mass and going to regular confession. Develop a love for the Eucharist and attend daily Mass when possible.

Example Questions: (specific and reflective)

- How many days last week did you pray at your specific time?
- How is your meditation going? Explain

Apostolate

Purpose: Love of Neighbor: To grow in grace and the love of neighbor for love of God. (c.f. Matt 22:37-39, Matt 28:18-20)

Goal: Commit to living Spiritual Multiplication and Heroic Generosity in daily life.

Ideas:

- Bible study – Commit to leading a Bible study with other students.
- Discipleship – Commit to discipling at least two other students.
- Evangelization – Model the love of God to everyone you meet, and always be prepared to give a witness to the hope that is within you. (c.f. 1 Pet 3:9)

Example Questions: (specific and reflective)

- Which disciples did you meet with last week?
- Are they up to speed on the reading plan?



Leading A Bible Study

Biblical Basis of Small Groups

During His public ministry, the Lord Jesus ministered at several levels:

- (1) Peter, James and John, who spent the most time with Him;
- (2) the rest of the Twelve
- (3) the 70 disciples (Luke 10)
- (4) “the multitudes” of the “the crowd”

Comparatively, our ministry may be laid out like this:

- (1) disciples
- (2) Bible studies
- (3) Other students or groups you intend to reach (non-Christians, athletes, Greeks, etc.)

This basic hierarchy should hold true as we manage out time: we should be spending most of your time with people who are higher priorities for us.

“Growing” a Bible Study

Our task in Bible study is to provide the necessary conditions so that the students can live and communicate the fullness of within the Church

We sow and water, but it is God alone who gives growth (analogy from 1 Cor. 3:5-9). It is our responsibility to provide these conditions, but it is the Holy Spirit alone who is the master of the soul.

Give the Bible study your best shot, but remember that the Holy Spirit can still work through our mistakes and failures.

What do you need to “grow” a study?

The Early Church is our model (Acts 2:42):

1. **The Apostles’ Teaching:** dynamic orthodoxy and practical instruction – be faithful to the FOCUS curriculum
2. **Fellowship:** the study is an environment to form Christian friendships both during your meeting time and especially outside you meeting time
3. **Breaking of the Bread:** challenge your students to get into the sacrament life – go to weekday Mass, Confession – explain how they can do these things
4. **Prayer:** it is extremely important that the group prays together and for each other; teach them to pray for their non-Christian friends; help them to see and intercede for one another’s needs; etc.

As you incorporate these four elements into your Bible study, remember your two main goals:

1. to help them live the fullness of life in Christ, within the Family of God the Church
2. to enable them to communicate the fullness of life (which means that they should be able to share what they’ve learned in an effective way)

Be a Great Bible Study Leader: Two Helpful Points

1. “Appoint the Holy Spirit as your Bible study leader and make yourself His assistant. Remember that He will never fail.
2. Pray and make sacrifices for your students – these, say St. Therese, are the two greatest tools God has given us to win souls



Practical Guidelines for a Successful Bible Study

Why Small Groups?

- Small groups give students the sense of belonging that they are looking for.
- Small groups allow students to be known and to have the opportunity to share.
- Small groups allow students to personalize their faith and discuss the implementation of Christ's teaching in their lives.
- Small groups encourage accountable relationships which allow students to serve one another (Gal 5:13), accept one another (Rom 15:7), forgive one another (Col. 3:13), greet one another (Rom 16:16), bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), be devoted to one another (Rom 12:10), honor one another (Rom 12:10), teach one another (Rom 15:14), submit to one another (Eph 5:21), encourage one another (1 Thes 5:11).
- In a small group it's easier to share, pray, encourage, and be personal.

Small Group Values

- Be Committed – to the meetings and individuals in the group
- Be Honest – to goal is to achieve a deep level of honesty in the group
- Be Confidential – what is shared in the group stays in the group
- Be Supportive – encourage your brothers/sisters in their walk with Christ

Leading a Small Group Effectively

- Include everyone whenever possible.
- At the beginning, get everyone in the group to talk.
- Four in a group is best; six is okay; eight should be the maximum.
- Be aware of new people and include them in the conversation.
- Remember that small groups often raise the tension level (because people can't hide).
- Move from light to heavy discussion.
- The longer the group is together, the better they will feel about the group.
- Prepare your discussion questions and vary how you ask them.



- Avoid any put-downs.
- Discussion questions should be answerable.
- Allow people the right to pass and not share.
- Create a casual and relaxed atmosphere.
- Don't always expound on the answer yourself.
- Call people by name.
- Eye contact and body language are important for the leader.
- Get your group in a comfortable atmosphere where everyone can see each other's eyes.
- Request confidentiality in the group.

An effective small-group leader:

- Guides the discussion with control and flexibility
- Encourages as much participation as possible
- Asks a variety of questions that involve the group
- Listens well
- Arranges seating to involve participants
- Models the skills he/she wants to develop in group members
- Notices the people in the room, the conversations occurring, and the non-verbal signals
- Creates an inviting, positive atmosphere
- Affirms the ideas expressed by group members
- Doesn't panic with silence
- Doesn't let one person monopolize the discussion



Developing an Outline and Asking Good Questions:

1. **Have confidence in your material.** Be careful in attempting to cover too much material; the materials have been designed to build on one another. Still, feel free to develop a few main questions of your own that deepen the discussion.
2. **Find a lens to build your study upon.** As a lens bends light to focus it on a specific point in the eye, find one or two main points to focus on in the study. Then read the verses and ask questions that will cause others to think through and develop those main points.
3. Develop your main point through **meditation and prayer.** Spend approximately one hour in preparation for each study.
4. **Trust in your main point.** Have faith in that what is important to you will be important to others.

John Paul II once said, "To be an evangelist you need to know two things. You must know Jesus and you must know modern man."

Work to know yourself through prayer, and you will know others.
See 1 Cor. 10:13 "No trial has come to you but that which is human..."

5. Prepare questions at **three levels: Observation, Interpretation, and Application**
 - a. **Observation:** What is going on in the passage?
Examples: To whom is Jesus talking to? Where is He going? What does He say or do?
 - b. **Interpretation:** What does the passage mean?
Examples: Why would Jesus say this? What do we know about the person Jesus is talking to? How would Jesus' words affect this person? Compare and contrast, find cause and effect.
 - c. **Application:** How does this apply to our lives today?
Examples: How do Jesus' words affect us? What actions are we being called to change? What actions are we being called to perform? What in our daily life stands between us and really living or imitating this act or teaching of Jesus?



Bible Study Resources

I. FOCUS Bible Studies

Seeker Studies

1. *Can being a Christian make me happy?* (for women)
2. *Christians in the World* (Mary and Martha)
3. *Rock and Sand*
4. *The Good Shepard*
5. *The Prodigal Son*
6. *The Woman at the Well*
7. *Who do you say that I am?*
8. *Your body matters* (for women)
9. *Sower and Seeds*
10. *Zacchaeus*

Introductory Bible Studies

1. *Foundations for Life*
2. *Men of Courage* (for men)
3. *Real Life*

Intermediate Studies

1. *Christ like Leadership for Women*
2. *First Corinthians*
3. *Holy Week Bible Study*
4. *Hospitality*
5. *Lent and Fasting*
6. *Lent and Almsgiving*
7. *Men's Big 3*
8. *Salvation History*
9. *The Catholic Church and Homosexuality*

II. Other recommended studies

Stacy Mitch (for women)

1. *Courageous Love: A Bible Study on Holiness for Women*
2. *Courageous Virtue: A Bible Study on Moral Excellence for Women*
3. *Courageous Women: A Study on the Heroines of Biblical History*

Dr. Tim Gray

1. *Boys to Men* (with Curtis Martin) (for men)
2. *Mission of the Messiah*, on the Gospel of Luke
3. *Sacraments in Scripture*



Dr. Ted Sri

1. *Mystery of the Kingdom, on the Gospel of Matthew*

Dr. Cuddeback

1. *Friendship: The Art of Happiness*



Crisis Resource List for FOCUS Missionaries

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Introduction

As FOCUS staff members, we strive to practice Incarnational Evangelization, seeking to win the right to share Jesus Christ with the students we have been called to serve by striving to cultivate genuine friendships, walking with our students in every aspect of their lives. Unfortunately, the culture of death in which we live has had a profound effect on the lives of the students we serve and as we walk with these young men and women, it is likely that we will encounter first hand the wounds our students bear as a result of their choices and the malevolent milieu in which we exist.

As missionaries, we are quite often not equipped or qualified to deal with the struggles our students bear. We may not have the particular knowledge or expertise to offer guidance in a particular situation, but we can serve to help connect our students with individuals who can. The following list of resources is meant to enable missionaries to do just that.

While most of the resources listed below are faith-based, be aware that not all the resources listed below are Catholic organizations and therefore may present information that may not be in line with Catholic teaching. Some of the resources, like those for example dealing with Eating Disorders, come purely from a health-science perspective and do not incorporate any aspect of faith in the information presented. Nevertheless, though these organizations may not be specifically Catholic, or even Christian, they still provide us with invaluable insight into the nature of certain disorders and are therefore useful in our apostolate. All resources which are *not* Catholic organizations will be marked with an asterisk (*).

In addition to the resources listed below, each team is strongly encouraged to work with their campus chaplain and/or local diocesan office to secure contact information for local crisis resources. A worksheet can be found on the FOCUS portal and can be completed and shared among the staff on each campus.

Boundaries for FOCUS Staff

Though not many think of the work of a life guard as a particularly perilous profession, helping a drowning victim presents a dangerous situation for all involved. Often an individual who is drowning is in a state of panic. Survival instincts overtake ones consciousness to the point where one will do anything to keep one's head above water, even to the point of pushing a well meaning rescuer under the surface. Due to the inherent danger of approaching someone in the water who is in such a state, a lifeguard is trained to stay on solid ground and attempt to reach an individual with a flotation device before getting into the water himself. Only after this method has failed does a lifeguard approach a drowning victim in the water. But once again, he offers a flotation device to stabilize the victim before making physical contact.



At times, serving as a FOCUS missionary can be a little like being a lifeguard. When reaching out to a student in crisis, it is imperative that we are conscious of keeping appropriate boundaries in place for our own protection as well as for the wellbeing of the student. A missionary maintains these boundaries by realizing when a student's situation is beyond his or her qualifications, and helps refer the student to a professional who is in a position to provide appropriate assistance.

At times, it may be difficult to discern where the line between our qualifications as a missionary ends and where the need for a third party begins. As missionaries, our particular area of expertise lies in *character formation*. The key to discerning if and when to involve a trained professional in a situation is to learn to discern the difference between *issues of character* and issues that are *pathological* in nature. If missionaries find themselves in a situation where they must answer this question, they are encouraged to seek to educate themselves about the nature of the particular pathology from which the student suffers and to seek advice from trusted individuals (Campus Chaplain, Health Care Professional, etc.) as they discern how best to proceed.



Crisis Pregnancy Resources

*Option Line**

Option Line is an online crisis pregnancy resource with a search engine that will locate crisis pregnancy clinics in your area. The site is not affiliated with any particular religious denomination, and though it does not come across as blatantly “Pro-Life,” the site states “we do not offer, recommend or refer for abortions or abortifacients, but we are committed to offering accurate information about abortion procedures and risks.” The site offers free confidential counseling, pregnancy tests, as well as information on after abortion services.

Phone representatives are available 24 hours a day seven days a week at 1-800-395-HELP and there is a link to e-mail Option Line on their website (<http://www.pregnancycenters.org/advantage.asp>).

Also, there are representatives available at certain times of the day on AOL messenger. Their screen name is “AnswersatOL1”.

*The Nurturing Network**

The Nurturing Network (TNN) is an international charitable organization that responds to the immediate and comprehensive needs of a woman facing the crisis of an unplanned pregnancy. With a group of 47,000 “Resource Members,” individuals and families who are willing to open their homes and share their resources to a pregnant woman in need of their assistance, TNN has coordinated a grassroots outreach to over 18,000 women and children nation wide in the last twenty years.

Reach The Nurturing Network at 1-800-TNN – 4MOM or via their website: <http://www.nurturingnetwork.org>.

Sisters of Life

Located in New York, the apostolate of the Sisters of Life is to defend the sanctity of human life, leading them to engage in several crisis pregnancy related activities. Listed below are a couple of their most active outreach activities.

- Visitation Ministry – A mission designed to provide for the emotional and practical needs of women in a crisis pregnancy situation. Call 212-737-0221.
- “Holy Respite” - A “live-in” experience with the sisters for women experiencing crisis pregnancy at the Sacred Heart of Jesus convent in Manhattan (<http://sistersoflife.org/hr.htm>)



Post Abortion Resources

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats

Offered across the nation, Rachel's Vineyard Retreats are offered for both men and women who have suffered from the negative affects of abortion. Those leading the retreat are trained in post-abortion counseling and seek to enable individuals to enter into the grieving process after the loss of their baby.

Information on the retreats can be found at the Rachel's Vineyard website (<http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/weekend/retreats/index.htm>) or by phone at 1-800-HOPE 4 ME.

Sisters of Life

In addition to the crisis pregnancy facets of their apostolate, the Sisters of Life sponsor a program called "Entering Canaan" for men and women who have a desire to experience healing after an abortion. The program consists of monthly days of prayer and healing, monthly gatherings and weekend retreats. They also sponsor days of prayer and healing specifically for men.

Call (718) 325-9002 for more information.



Catholic Mental Health Resources

CatholicTherapists.com

Founded by Alison Ricciardi, a Catholic Therapist who appeared on EWTN, CatholicTherapist.com keeps a database of the contact information for Catholic Therapists around the country. Therapists apply to be listed on the site and must meet certain standards to be included. In addition, Therapists are asked to post a response on certain questions of faith and morals, either agreeing or disagreeing with statements from the Catechism on artificial contraception, homosexuality, and the marriage covenant. The website also offers recommended reading on topics such as emotional health and healing, marriage, child-rearing, and psychology and spirituality.

<http://www.catholictherapists.com>

St. Michael's Institute

Saint Michael's Institute is a national alliance of mental health professionals who integrate the genuine discoveries of Psychology and Psychiatry with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Based in New York City, the institute offers counseling guided by the mind of the Church in the areas of marriage and family, homosexuality, post-abortion syndromes, depression, and other trauma.

Contact this resource via their website: <http://www.saintmichael.net> or through the following contact information.

Dr. Phillip Mango, President
Saint Michael's Institute
118 East 28th St., Suite 916
New York, NY 10016
phone: (646) 424-0395
fax: (504) 910-8576
email: st_michael@verizon.net



Self-Injury Resource

What is Self-Injury?

Self-Injury or “cutting” is a growing trend among modern teenagers and young adults. By cutting, burning, or hitting, individuals who suffer from this disorder attempt to exercise control over their lives and to deal with emotional pain by inflicting physical pain upon themselves. An estimated two to three million Americans engage in some form of self-injury.

While this behavior may look like attempted suicide, experts agree that the actions fall into two separate categories. While someone who attempts suicide does so with the intention of taking his or her own life, those who self-injure use the activity as a coping behavior in order to deal with suffering in their lives. The goal may be to release feelings, become calm, punish oneself, or visually express one’s pain, but it is never to cause death.

*S.A.F.E (Self Abuse Finally Ends) Alternatives**

S.A.F.E. Alternatives® (Self-Abuse Finally Ends) is a nationally recognized treatment approach, and professional network and educational resource base, which is committed to helping individuals achieve an end to self-injurious behavior.

Reach this organization at 1-800-DONTCUT or online at <http://www.selfinjury.com/>

Eating Disorders Resource

*Eating Disorder Referral and Information Center**

The Eating Disorder Referral and Information Center is an online resource with exhaustive information on Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge Eating, Obesity, Body Image, Men and ED’s, signs of ED’s, how to help a friend or family member who may have an ED, as well as several other pertinent topics. In addition, the site contains a search engine powered to locate ED clinics in any area of the United States.

Reach this organization via their website: <http://www.edreferral.com/>



Suicide Resource

*S.A.V.E. (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education)**

The self-stated mission of this online resource is to “is to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, eliminate stigma and serve as a resource to those touched by suicide.” The site offers a 24 hour emergency telephone number (1-800-273-TALK) as well as statistics on suicide, information on suicide prevention, signs that an individual may be suicidal, information on depression, and much more.

Reach this organization via their website: <http://www.save.org/>

Drug and Alcohol Addiction

*The Drug and Alcohol Resource Center**

The Drug and Alcohol Resource Center is a nationwide database that seeks to both offer information regarding the detoxification process for various drugs including alcohol as well as serve as a network to connect individuals with rehabilitation clinics in their area. The site also offers information on how to plan and execute an intervention for individuals who struggle with addiction.

Reach this organization via their website: <http://www.addict-help.com> or toll free at 1- 800-567-5986.

*Alcoholics Anonymous**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a “fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.” A.A. requires no dues or fees, only a desire for sobriety. A.A. is not affiliated with any sect, denomination, organization or institution, but its Twelve Step Program toward sobriety asks members to turn to a higher power in order to overcome their addiction to alcohol.

Look in your local phone book for information on the A.A. chapter near you or visit their website at <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org>.



Pornography Addiction

PornDestroysWomen.org

Founded by devout Catholic Matt Smith, national spokesman for Lifeteen and MTV personality from *The Gauntlet* and *The Real World-New Orleans*, the organization PornDestroysWomen.org boldly declares “You cannot simultaneously objectify and dignify women.” This site is great resource for information on the Porn industry and much more.

Access this resource via <http://www.porndestroyswomen.org/>

St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers

St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers is “an informal international network of Christian men, under the patronage of St. Joseph, dedicated to strengthening the family.” In addition to providing resources in many other areas of family life, St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers provides information on pornography addiction, offers referrals to trusted addiction counselors, suggests several book and audio titles on this topic, as well as providing information on local men's small groups who meet to hold one another accountable in matters of purity.

Access this resource via www.dads.org

*X3 Watch Accountability Program**

X3 Watch is a software program that can be downloaded free of charge designed to allow individuals to develop a system by which they can be held accountable for the internet sites he/she visits. The software tracks the internet history on a computer and sends a report to an “accountability partner” that the user designates. Though the software does not offer any sort of “web-filter,” it supplies the accountability that many individuals need to overcome an addiction to internet pornography.

Access this resource at <http://www.xxxchurch.com/index2.htm>.



Homosexuality

*National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH)**

The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality is a secular group of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts that seek to a) challenge “mainstream” psychological theory that claims to have definite “scientific answers” to issues of homosexuality b) encourage schools to discuss homosexual issues in a fair and balanced manner and c) to encourage balanced scientific research on the causes of homosexuality. The organization believes it is possible to hold “the principled, scientifically supportable view that homosexuality works against our human nature.” The site offers exhaustive information regarding the psychological, medical, social, ethical, and political issues surrounding homosexuality.

Access this resource via their website: www.narth.com

*Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality (PATH)**

According to their website, PATH is a non-profit coalition of organizations that help people with unwanted same-sex attractions (SSA) realize their personal goals for change -- whether by developing their innate heterosexual potential or by embracing a lifestyle as a single, non-sexually active man or woman. PATH initiated a branch organization called *People Can Change* which offers personal coaching and an online support group to individuals who want to heal the personal issues at the root of their same-sex attraction.

Access this resource via their website: www.peoplecanchange.com

COURAGE¹

Founded by Terence Cardinal Cooke of New York, *Courage* is a formal outreach of the Catholic Church to those with same-sex attraction. The organization is “a spiritual support system which would assist men and women with same-sex attractions in living chaste lives in fellowship, truth and love.” The organization seeks to help individuals with same sex attraction to develop the freedom in interior chastity.

Access this resource via their website: www.CourageRC.net

¹ Be aware that there is another “Catholic” group for those with same sex attraction called *Dignity*. This group does *not* promote authentic Catholic teaching. Their website states that “as a GLBT Catholics, you can express your sexuality in a loving life-affirming manner that is in keeping with Christ’s teaching.” Be aware this group exists so that you can speak about it knowledgeably with students in case they bring it up.



Saint Thomas of Aquinas' frequent Prayer before Study

Ineffable Creator,

Who, from the treasures of Your wisdom,
have established three hierarchies of angels,
have arrayed them in marvelous order
above the fiery heavens,
and have marshaled the regions
of the universe with such artful skill,

You are proclaimed

the true font of light and wisdom,
and the primal origin
raised high beyond all things.

Pour forth a ray of Your brightness

into the darkened places of my mind;
disperse from my soul
the twofold darkness
into which I was born:
sin and ignorance.

You make eloquent the tongues of infants.

Refine my speech

and pour forth upon my lips
the goodness of Your blessing.

Grant to me

keenness of mind,
capacity to remember,
skill in learning,
subtlety to interpret,
and eloquence in speech.

May You

guide the beginning of my work,
direct its progress,
and bring it to completion.

You Who are true God and true Man,

Who live and reign, world without end.

Amen



Preparation for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas

Almighty and ever-living God, I approach the sacrament of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I come sick to the Doctor of Life, unclean to the Fountain of Mercy, blind to the Radiance of Eternal Light, and poor and needy to the Lord of Heaven and Earth. Lord, in your great generosity, heal my sickness, wash away my defilement, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty, and clothe my nakedness. May I receive the bread of angels, the King of kings and the Lord of lords with humble reverence and with the purity and faith, the repentance and love, and the determined purpose that will help to bring me salvation. May I receive the Lord's body and blood, and its reality and power. Kind God, may I receive the Body of your only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, born from the womb of the Virgin Mary, and so be received into His Mystical Body and numbered among his members. Loving Father, as on my earthly pilgrimage I now receive your beloved Son under the veil of a sacrament, may I one day see Him face to face in glory, who lives and reigns with you forever.

Amen.

Thanksgiving Prayer after Mass

Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas

I thank you, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, who deigned to feast me, sinful and unworthy servant, with the precious body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, not for any merit of mine, but only because of your merciful goodness. And I pray that this Holy Communion, far from condemning me to punishment, may bring about my pardon and salvation, encompassing me with the armor of faith and the shield of a good will. By it let my vices be done away, all lustful desires extinguished. May it advance me in charity, patience, humility, obedience, and every other virtue. Let it be strong defense against the wiles of all my enemies, visible and invisible, allaying for me every disturbance of flesh and spirit, binding me firmly to you, the one true God, and bringing my last hour to a happy close. I pray, too, that it may be your pleasure to call my sinful self one day to that banquet, wonderful past all telling, where you, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, feast your saints with the vision of yourself, who are true light, the fulfillment of all desires, the joy that knows no ending, gladness unalloyed, and perfect bliss: through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Prayer to St. Therese for Evangelization

Dear Little Flower of Lisieux,

How wonderful was the short life you led. Though cloistered, you went far and wide through fervent prayers and great sufferings. You obtained from God untold helps and graces for his evangelists. Help all missionaries in their work and teach all of us to spread Christianity in our own neighborhoods and family circles.

Amen.



Litany of Humility

*Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val (1865-1930),
Secretary of State for Pope Saint Pius X*

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, **Hear me.**
From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved...
From the desire of being extolled ...
From the desire of being honored ...
From the desire of being praised ...
From the desire of being preferred to others...
From the desire of being consulted ...
From the desire of being approved ...
From the fear of being humiliated ...
From the fear of being despised...
From the fear of suffering rebukes ...
From the fear of being calumniated ...
From the fear of being forgotten ...
From the fear of being ridiculed ...
From the fear of being wronged ...
From the fear of being suspected ...

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I ...
That, in the opinion of the world,
others may increase and I may decrease ...
That others may be chosen and I set aside ...
That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...
That others may be preferred to me in everything...
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

