



iFollow Session 3: Jesus and the Good News



Song – Go Tell Everyone by Alan Dale

God's Spirit is in my heart,
He has called me and set me apart,
This is what I have to do, what I have to do.

*He sent me to give the Good News to the poor,
Tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more,
Tell blind people that they can see, and set the downtrodden free,
And go tell everyone the news that the kingdom of God has come
And go tell everyone, the news that God's kingdom has come.*

Just as the Father sent me,
so I'm sending you out to be
My witnesses throughout the world
The whole of the world.

Don't worry what you have to say
Don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart,
Will speak in your heart.

Scripture – Luke 4:14-21

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.”

Prayer

Blessed are the poor...
Not the penniless, but those whose heart is free.
Blessed are those who mourn...
Not those who whimper, but those who raise their voices.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice...
Not those who whine, but those who struggle.
Blessed are the merciful...
Not those who forget, but those who forgive.
Blessed are the pure in heart...
Not those who act like angels, but those whose lives are transparent.
Blessed are the peacemakers...
Not those who shun conflict, but those who face it squarely.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice...
Not because they suffer, but because they love.

Taken from the Women's World Day of Prayer 2011 Resource

Quote

‘If we are to experience the joy of love, we must also be generous. We cannot be content to give the minimum. We need to be fully committed in life and to pay particular attention to those in need. The world needs men and women who are competent and generous, willing to be at the service of the common good. Make every effort to study conscientiously, to develop your talents and to put them at the service of others even now. Find ways to help make society more just and humane wherever you happen to be. May your entire life be guided by a spirit of service and not by the pursuit of power, material success and money.’

#4 Message for World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI, 2012

Activity

It's important that we know what our discipleship is about. Since Jesus is our model, we can start by exploring what Jesus' mission was.

On butcher paper, or the back of a roll of wallpaper, write up the words from Isaiah that Jesus quotes in Luke 4 in large writing. If you're particularly artistic, you can make it look like an ancient scroll - or use your best handwriting at least!

Tell a narrative version of the Luke scripture, unravelling the scroll in the appropriate place, reading the words from it like Jesus did. Explain that you're going to explore in a bit more detail what this looks like in practise.

Give small groups a particular phrase from the scripture and get them to explore it, seeing if they can identify who the subjects are in modern society, what the issues they face are, and what Jesus' message to them is, e.g. who are the prisoners in our society? Not just criminals in jail, but those who are trapped in poverty; or are people who society have condemned for their choices or behaviour; or are stuck in bad relationships; or are economic immigrants separated from their families. What would it mean for them to be free? Since this activity is quite figurative instead of literal, your group may need to hear an example, or need your assistance in getting going. Once they have a grasp of the modern relevance, see if they can come up with a rewording of their line for the 21st century.

Once everyone's come up with some ideas, get them to add their new lines to the scroll, so that you end up with an alternative version of the scripture next to/around the original.

Read out the new text. Next, give each group a different line to their original one, and set them the task of coming up with at least three ways that they can affect change so that the scripture becomes reality.

Again, they may need some examples to help get the ball rolling. Share back their suggestions and add the actions to the scroll, maybe in a different colour pen.

With the overview of the whole piece of scripture, with your new translation and suggested actions, ask the group if they can achieve it. Why/why not? What help may they need? What would hold them back? Do they accept this as their mission on earth?

Tool | Praying with Icons

When an iconographer creates an icon, they are said to "write the icon", not paint it. This is because it is a prayerful exercise in humility before God. They are highly symbolic using shapes, colours and forms to symbolize different spiritual realities. They are not signed by the artist on the front, if at all. The best iconographers are not famous artists, but holy saints.

Praying with icons is an ancient prayer practice that involves keeping our eyes wide open, taking into our heart what the image visually communicates. We focus not on what is seen in the icon, but rather on what is seen through it -- the love of God expressed through God's creatures.

Choose a suitable icon to pray with. You may have one in your parish, or you may be able to borrow one. Alternatively, you can search for icon images online and create a PowerPoint. There are many different icons of Jesus, each focusing on a different aspect of Him. Display your icon so that everyone can see it, or use a number of smaller ones and set up each one separately.

To begin your prayer, light a candle nearby, or dim the lights and create a candlelit atmosphere. Make sure the icons can be seen properly. You may also want to play some gentle background music, or sing some quiet songs or chants. Music from Taize will work well.

As you pray, cultivate an inner attitude of listening. God is not an idea and praying is not an exercise to improve our idea of God. Prayer is the cultivation of the awareness of God's actual presence. We may speak words to God or just look attentively at the icon and let God speak to us.

Depending on your group, they may be able to engage in this style of prayer for a long period, or may struggle to focus. Do not be afraid of silence. Judge what is the right length of time for your group, then bring everyone together to share a prayer like the Our Father, or Glory Be.

Adapted from <http://www.yearofgrace.catholic.org.au/index.php/encounter-jesus>

