



## iFollow Session 4: Be You



### Song – Oh God, You Search Me by Bernardette Farrell

O God, you search me and you know me.  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down you are before me:  
Ever the maker and keeper of my days.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,  
You have known its meaning through and through.  
You are with me beyond my understanding:  
God of my present, my past and future, too.

Although your Spirit is upon me,  
Still I search for shelter from your light.  
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you:  
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me,  
Gave me life within my mother's womb.  
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:  
Safe in your hands, all creation is made new

### Scripture – Genesis 1:27, 31a

'God created humankind in his own image, in the image of  
God he created them; male and female he created them.  
God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.'

### Quote

'Whereas we sometimes find it hard to accept others, God  
offers us an unconditional acceptance which enables us to  
say: "I am loved; I have a place in the world and in history; I  
am personally loved by God. If God accepts me and loves  
me and I am sure of this, then I know clearly and with  
certainty that it is a good thing that I am alive".'#2

*Message for World Youth Day 2012, Pope Benedict XVI*

## Prayer

Persons are gifts which the Father sends me wrapped.  
Some are wrapped very beautifully.  
They are very attractive when I first see them.  
Some come in very ordinary wrapping paper.  
Others have been mishandled in the mail.  
Once in a while, there is a "special delivery."  
Some people are gifts which come very loosely wrapped, others very tightly.

But the wrapping is not the gift.  
It is so easy to make this mistake – it is amusing when babies do it.  
Sometimes the gift is very easy to open up, sometimes I need others to help.  
Is it because they are afraid? Does it hurt?  
Maybe they have been opened up before and thrown away.  
Could it be that the gift is not for me?

I am a person, therefore, I am a gift, too.  
A gift to myself, first of all. The Father gave myself to me.  
Have I ever really looked inside the wrappings? Am I afraid to?

Perhaps I've never accepted the gift that I am. Could it be that there is something else inside the wrappings? Maybe I've never seen the wonderful gift that I am.  
Could the Father's gifts be anything but beautiful?  
I love the gifts which those who love me give to me: why not this gift from the Father?

And I am a gift to other persons.  
Am I willing to be given by the Father to others ... a person for others?  
Do others have to be content with the wrappings ... never permitted to enjoy the gift?  
Every meeting is an exchange of gifts. But a gift without a giver is not a gift.  
It is a thing devoid of relationship to a giver or a givee.  
Friendship is a relationship between persons who see themselves as they really  
are ... gifts of the Father to each other ... for others.

A friend is a gift not just to me but to others through me. When I keep my friends ... possess them ... I destroy their "giftness." If I save their lives for me, I lose them. If I lose mine for others, I save them.  
Persons are gifts ... gifts received and gifts given ... like the Son.  
Friendship is the response of person gifts to the giver.

Thank you, Father, for your beautiful gifts ... persons ... friends ... and for the most beautiful gift and friend of all ... your Son, Jesus Christ!

## Activity

We are often encouraged to be, or at least to act, like Jesus. Dr Conrad Gempf, in [a recent speech at the Youthwork Summit](#) in the UK turned that idea on its head by telling the audience: *“Don’t try to be Jesus. You are not Jesus. Who are you? Try being that, for Jesus, in Jesus.”*

Read out his quote, and see how people respond to it. You may want to ask what they think it means, and whether they agree with it or not.

Using whatever art materials available (modeling clay, paint/pastels/crayons, collage etc) invite your group to create their own representation of themselves, which shows who they are and what they bring to the task of discipleship. Not who they want to be, or who they think they should be, but who they ARE. What qualities or skills do they have? What is it about them that they can do better than anyone else? What are their weaknesses? What kind of messenger of the Good News are they?

You may want to create one large artwork, with each person contributing an individual element.

## Tool | Mastering your self-talk

Self-talk is the term psychologists give to the inner voice that each of us carries around with us, helping us think about and interpret the situations we find ourselves in. It includes our conscious thoughts as well as our unconscious assumptions or beliefs.

Much of our self-talk is reasonable, e.g. 'I'd better do some preparation for that exam', or 'I'm really looking forward to that match'. However, some of our self-talk is negative, unrealistic or self-defeating, e.g. 'I'm going to fail for sure', or 'I didn't play well - I'm hopeless'. Negative self-talk often causes us to feel bad, and to experience upsetting emotions such as hurt, anger, frustration, depression or anxiety. It can also make us behave in a self-defeating way. For instance, thoughts such as 'I'm going to fail for sure' may discourage you from working hard when you are preparing for your exams.

The way you interpret events has a huge impact on the way you feel and behave. Changing the way you think will change the way you feel.

We can begin to do this by disputing our self-talk. This means to challenge the negative or unhelpful aspects of your internal voice. Doing this enables you to feel better and to respond to situations in a more helpful way. Once you start looking at it, you'll probably be surprised by how much of your thinking is inaccurate, exaggerated, or focused on the negatives of the situation.

A good way to test the accuracy of your perceptions might be to ask yourself some challenging questions. These questions will help you to check out your self-talk to see whether your current view is reasonable. This will also help you discover other ways of thinking about your situation.

### 1. Reality testing

- What is my evidence for and against my thinking?
- Are my thoughts factual, or are they just my interpretations?
- Am I jumping to negative conclusions?
- How can I find out if my thoughts are actually true?

### 2. Look for alternative explanations

- Are there any other ways that I could look at this situation?
- What else could this mean?
- If I were being positive, how would I perceive this situation?

### 3. Putting it in perspective

- Is this situation as bad as I am making out to be?
- What is the worst thing that could happen? How likely is it?
- What is the best thing that could happen?
- What is most likely to happen?
- Is there anything good about this situation?
- Will this matter in five years' time?

### 4. Using goal-directed thinking

- Is thinking this way helping me to feel good or to achieve my goals?
- What can I do that will help me solve the problem?
- Is there something I can learn from this situation, to help me do it better next time?

Adapted from <http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/introducing-self-talk>