



iBelieve Session 7. The people of God

Creed Reference – I believe in the holy Catholic Church, The communion of saints



Song – ‘We are one body’ by Dana Scallon, Denver World Youth Day 2003 theme song

*We are one body, one body in Christ;
and we do not stand alone.*

*We are one body, one body in Christ;
and he came that we might have life.*

1. When you eat my body and you drink my blood,
I will live in you and you will live in my love.
When you eat my body and you drink my blood,
I will live in you and you will live in my love.

2. Can you hear them crying, can you feel their pain?
Will you feed my hungry, will you help my lame?
See the unborn baby, the forgotten one,
they are not forsaken, they are not unloved.

3. I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, I am the Final Sacrifice,
I am the Way, the Truth, the Life;
he who believes in me will have eternal life.
I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, I am the Final Sacrifice,
I am the Way, the Truth, the Life;
he who believes in me will have eternal life.
(to Verse 4)

4. On the rock of Peter, see my Church I build.
Come receive my spirit, with my gifts be filled.
For you are my body, you're my hands and feet.
Speak my word of life to ev'ryone you meet.

Prayer

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 a 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 nothing.

I shall do good - I shall do his work

I shall be an angel of peace,

a preacher of truth in my own place.

He does nothing in vain.

He knows what he is about.

Amen

John Cardinal Newman

Scripture – Romans 12:4-6

We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions. In the same way, though we are many, we are one body in union with Christ, and we are all joined to each other as different parts of one body. So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us.

Activity

When asked by a journalist 'What has to change in the Church?' Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) replied: 'You and I.' In this answer, she reminds us that our Church is not about an institution, but is about the people. Ask the group how they feel about what Mother Teresa said – are they challenged, annoyed, do they agree or disagree?

Run a quick brainstorm with the group about what 'church' means to them: Possible answers include: the body of Christ, Christ as the vine and we are the branches, Christ as the shepherd and we are the sheep, our parish, priests/bishops/the Pope, our families, our ancestors, saints, martyrs, missionaries, people in this diocese, people in Aotearoa New Zealand, people in other countries of the world. Highlight the breadth of the Church both in terms of distance (there are 1.2 billion Catholics in the world, most of whom we will never meet but whom we think of as our brothers and sisters), and in terms of time (the apostolic lineage of the Catholic church goes back to Jesus himself, and all the people of faith who have gone before us are still part of our church).

Using whatever art and craft materials you can get hold of – pens, paints, glue, scissors, coloured/textured paper, molding clay etc, invite everyone to create something that represents or symbolises 'church' for them personally.

You can invite people to explain or share their creation with each other or the whole group, and you could also include these creations in your closing prayer.

Part 2: At World Youth Day in Rome in 2000, Pope John Paul II spoke to the young people gathered, saying, *"Do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium!"* This challenge was not necessarily to become the next St Mary of the Cross Mackillop, or St Francis of Assisi, but is a call for us to be holy. The Catechism defines saints as people who are holy, who are united with God in love and who allow God to live His life in them. As Mother Teresa said, "Holiness is not the luxury of a few people, but a simple duty for you and me."

In small groups, discuss what it means for normal people like us to be holy.

Can you think of any people in your life who you would describe as a saint, using the definitions above?

Why do you think Pope John Paul II thought people would be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium?

What is there to be scared about?

Create a short drama which explores some of these questions, then present them to the other groups.

Tool | Prayer Stations

This is simple to explain, but takes some time to prepare and set up. Your group is invited to enter into a time of prayer, guided by instructions at different points in the room, or *stations*. At each station there is a different prayer or reflection activity for the young people to engage with. Ask the group to respect everyone's right to be able to connect with God through this experience, and therefore to maintain quiet and not distract anyone.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED

What you will need depends on exactly what stations you want to have. You'll need to plan well and figure this all out in advance. This session can be very intensive on setup and resources. Basic materials include lots of candles (pillar candles and tea lights), coloured cloths and material, instruction sheets for each station, and quiet music (either played electronically, or live, depending on if you have any sufficiently competent musicians who can minister through their music).

TIMINGS

This depends on the number of stations provided, the size of the group, and their ability to enter into the activities – somewhere between 30 and 60 minutes is good.

SUGGESTED STATIONS

Here are some basic stations, but you can create your own depending on what is current and what themes you are covering with the group.

Praying to saints - Make some sheets of paper with images of different saints and a little bit of information about each. Invite the young people to spend a bit of time looking at them and then pick a saint whose intercession they can then ask for.

Prayer for the world - Get a large map of the world and a load of tea lights (or other small candles). Invite the young people to light a candle and place it on a part of the world they want to pray for.

Prayer Wall - Put a few sheets of large black card up on a wall and provide some chalk, to make a graffiti wall. Give the young people a few minutes to reflect and think and then invite them to put their prayers up on the wall. As well as a single activity, this can be a more permanent feature which can be added to at a later date.

Rosary - Pray a decade of the Rosary, maybe for a specific intention or maybe one of the specific mysteries. See session four on Mary for pointers on using the Rosary.

Prayer ministry - Have the young people pray for one another in turn. This might include laying on hands if the group would be comfortable with that.

Pinning our worries to the cross - Get a cross and then get a load of post-it notes and pens. Everyone is invited to write a worry they have or a prayer intention on one of the post-it notes and pin it to the cross.

Praying with images - Provide a load of newspapers and/ or magazines, some glue, scissors some large sheets of cards and some thick pens. Invite the young people to go through the magazines etc and find some things to pray for. Then cut them out, and stick them up together with a word or two of explanation if they want to. This activity requires the young people to not get distracted by the magazines, so you may want to pre-select images yourself, and laminate them.

Bibles - Provide a stack of bibles and invite the young people to sit with one of them for a few moments. They can flick through randomly or they can revisit a passage or a story they know well.

Note to a friend - provide some sheets of paper and friends and invite the young people to write a note to somebody telling them something they feel they need to hear, such as an apology, an affirmation or a word of thanks or encouragement.