

November 16, 2022

Dear CRE student,

We missed you at CRE on November 14th! So that you keep up with the other people in your group, we ask that you complete the following:

1. Opening Prayer

A Reading from Genesis 3:8-10

When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid."

Prayer Leader:

Lord God, when Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from you because they were afraid. Bring understanding to us about ourselves that we may know the cause of our fears and what motivates us whenever we hide from you. We ask through Christ your son. Amen.

A Reading from Matthew 18:10-14

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father. What is your opinion? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost."

Prayer Leader:

Good Shepherd, we have asked to know ourselves. Now we ask to know you better. May we understand how you view us when we are afraid of a relationship with you and what motivates you to seek us out whenever we hide from you. We ask through Christ your son. Amen.

2. Concupiscence

After the Opening prayer, we had a discussion about concupiscence:

Here is the fanciest theological word that you may ever hear in your life. I am going to ask you to repeat after me:

Con (kahn)

Cu (queue)

Pi (pih)

Scense (sense) Concupiscence

Congratulations, you're already theologians. Now to define the word. In a couple of the sessions in Equipped for Life, we have seen that we are made for God. During our last session,

we added to that. Not only are we made for God, we are also in need of God. We are incomplete in mind, emotions, body, or relationships. We have hurt others in mind, emotions, body, or relationships and we have been hurt in mind, emotions, body, or relationships. We need God's help. Yet, there is a great irony.

It seems that if we are made for God and are in need of God, then we humans would enthusiastically welcome God to be a part of our lives. The irony is found in the way that humans are resistant to God. This resistance to God is one way to understand the word, "concupiscence".

Humans are fundamentally good; however, we are wounded, disoriented, and prone to endangering ourselves and other. To be complete and to be whole, we need God. Yet, we resist.

3. Somewhere near you

Read the following scenarios and answer the questions:

Scenario 1:

All the adults in a household were scheduled to work on a particular weekend. That left a teenager at home. He was told to go to Mass on his own and he promised he would. Mass was at 10:30am and all he needed to do was get breakfast, get showered and dressed and walk to Mass. He woke up and started playing video games. He was aware of the time, but he continued to play until it was too late to get to Mass.

Can you relate to that happening? Why or why not?

Why do you think he was reluctant to go to Mass?

Scenario 2:

A teenage girl heard a talk at church about taking time to pray before going to bed. The adult giving the talk gave out a guide for how to pray to God. At the end of the talk, she decided that praying was important and wanted to try it. The next night, she had it in her mind that she was going to spend the last five minutes of her day before she goes to bed. But before she started, she checked her phone. She saw something that made her laugh and she kept scrolling. Then she saw something that a friend posted and decided to get in touch about it. They texted back and forth for the next half hour. It got late and she went to bed without trying to pray.

Can you relate to that happening? In what way?

Why do you think it is so easy to procrastinate?

4. The Four Fears

In the story about Adam and Eve, it is not just a story about them. We don't read the Genesis story as recorded history. Instead, it is a story that reveals something that is deeply true about the experience of being human. The truth of the human experience that is being shown is that we hid from God and that we hide out of fear. But the fear may not be the kind of fear that we

often think about. Some people have seen that there are four primary fears that keep us away from God:

- 1) Weirddness - There is a real fear that if we say “yes” to God more fully that he will make us weird. He will make us do something stupid or purposefully embarrass us in front of our friends because it would somehow be good for us.
- 2) FOMO - A second commonly cited fear is the fear of missing out. There is a perception that if we say yes to God, then we will not have fun. Many people will hold in their mind that they will get serious about their faith after their high school and college years. Being serious about your faith is something that adults do. Because of that, we will have fun now and get serious later in life.
- 3) For the few - There is also a fear that saying “yes” to God more fully is something that is for professional Church people or for certain adults that are out of touch with real life. Priests, religious sisters and brothers, youth ministers, directors of religious education: these are the professional Church people, but there can be the perception that they are disconnected from the real life of high school people. Also, there are certain adults whose life may be centered on God, but there is a perception that they too are out of touch with the real-life issues facing teens.
- 4) It’s just too late - The fourth and final fear is probably the most tragic. Some people have the feeling that they have already done something that God disapproves of so much that he wouldn’t really love them.

We have named each of these as “fears”, but we could also call them “lies”. None of these fears are the case. The feelings are certainly real. The fear of being weird, the fear of missing out, the fear that faith is for the few, or the fear that it is just too late are things that can cause us to hide from God, but these fears reveal that there is still much that we can learn about who God really is and about how God sees us.

Answer the questions below as they relate to the four fears:

- 1) When you look at the story from Genesis, which of the four fears do you think was at play for Adam and Eve? Why?
- 2) Would you add any other fears to the list or do you think these four cover what causes people to hide from God?
- 3) Is there a fear that you identify with most? How do you see this in your life?
- 4) Are there other things in your life that keep you from following God’s desire for your life more closely?

5. Closing prayer

As we turn to God and pray, right now, let’s ask for any help we need to look deeply inside of ourselves and examine what motivates us in our relationship with God.

Dear God, St. Augustine said that you have made us to be in a relationship with you. Yet, we resist your offer of friendship. It was through your own gift to Mary that she able to say “yes” to your will for her life. We ask for that same help, through Christ you Son.

All: Amen.

A Reading from Matthew 14:24-31

Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. “It is a ghost,” they said, and they cried out in fear. At once [Jesus] spoke to them, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” Peter said to him in reply, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how [strong] the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Prayer Leader:

In the reading from Matthew’s gospel that we just heard, Jesus seems to be saying that fear lies underneath doubt.

Reader:

A Reading from 1 John 4:16-19

We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

We just heard that perfect love drives out all fear. Tonight we talked about four fears that are common to all humans. In the song we are about to hear, there is an invitation to make a step toward God as he calls us to join him. What is on your mind? Do one of the four fears relate to your life? Are there other things in your life? Teens can often think they are the only ones who struggle with making a deeper commitment to God. This is a very common experience.

Use the time that we are about to have to talk honestly with God. Again, this is a safe place and God is a safe place. Say to God whatever is on your mind after talking through this session’s topic.

Listen to the song here: https://youtu.be/dy9nwe9_xzw (*Oceans (Where Feey May Fail)* by Hillsong)

After the song, complete the sentence:

“One thing I can do to make a step closer to God is ...”



Joining all of our prayers into one, let's pray the perfect prayer taught by Jesus. Our Father ...

Prayer Leader:

God, you ask us to follow you more closely. We ask for your help to do that. We pray this through the Christ the Lord. Amen.

Please complete and submit by our next class. You may email it to rotramel@stjohn23rd.org or turn it in to your catechist/small group leader.

Peace and Blessings,

Maureen Rotramel
Director of Faith Formation