



Gathered Session 3: Putting into Practice (90 minutes)

Overview

This session should take place after the young people have completed module 5. It focuses on the theme of living out our call to mercy by “doing what we believe.” The young people will explore ways they can “do what they believe” in their everyday lives and will share the ways their chosen saints and sponsors serve as models for their lives. This session will help the young people to think more deeply about the call to be witnesses of mercy in the world. It will also help them to recognize God’s love as the source of real happiness (joy) and to understand that giving of ourselves out of love deepens our joy. A small-group activity will encourage them to reflect on the content from the first five modules.

Suggested Structure

Time Frame	Activity
5 minutes	Gathering
10 minutes	Welcome and Opening Prayer
10 Minutes	Icebreaker Game
10 Minutes	Partner Activity
15 minutes	Witness Talk
20 minutes	Small-Group Activity
15 minutes	Closing Prayer
5 minutes	Dismissal

Practical Considerations

Paperwork and People

- Meet with the Confirmation team ahead of time to go over directions for the small-group activity. See the handout “Doing What I Believe: Small-Group Leader Directions” (Document #: TX005806), and answer any questions the team might have.
- Recruit a member of the parish (ideally a young adult) to give a witness talk on the topic of “doing what you believe.” The presenter should talk about how he or she has put God’s love into action. (More details on the presentation are given in the “Witness Talk” section of this session.)

Preparation

- **Space:** This gathering requires space for the group to meet together as a whole, as well as space for the small groups to meet. Be sure there is enough open space (if your layout includes tables) for the young people to participate in a large-group game that uses a continuum line that runs the length of the room.
- **Prayer:** For the opening and closing prayers, set up a prayer table with a tablecloth, a Bible, and candle, and matches. For the closing prayer, this space will need to allow for the young people to stand in a semicircle around the table, facing a blank wall.

Materials Needed

- **Gathering and Opening Prayer**
 - the song or music video “Searching,” by Paul J. Kim, from the *Scandal of Mercy* album, and an audio or video system
 - copies of the handout “Opening and Closing Prayers” (Document #: TX005807), one for each young person and adult leader
- **Partner Activity**
 - projection equipment (*optional*)
- **Small-Group Activity**
 - projection equipment
 - sheets of newsprint, one for each small group
 - markers, one for each small group
 - copies of the handout “Doing What I Believe: Small-Group Leader Directions” (Document #: TX005806), one for each small group
 - sheets of Bishop Frank quotes from the handout “Doing What I Believe: Small-Group Leader Directions” (Document #: TX005806), one for each young person
 - a roll of tape
 - a meme creation app (*optional*)
- **Closing Prayer**
 - copies of the handout “Opening and Closing Prayers” (Document #: TX005807), one for each young person and adult leader (saved from the opening prayer)
 - posters created in small groups

The Session

Gathering (5 minutes)

As the young people begin to arrive, play Paul J. Kim's song or music video "Searching."

When greeting the young people, recruit prayer leaders for the opening and closing prayers. You will need three for the opening prayer and three for the closing prayer. Give each prayer leader a copy of the handout "Opening and Closing Prayers" (Document #: TX005807), and ask them to review their parts ahead of time.

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Welcome the young people and introduce the session with these or similar words:

- Welcome, everyone. The team is excited to be gathered with you again. Today (*tonight*) we will explore further what it means to "do what we believe" as followers of Christ. We invite you to enter into this time with open hearts and open minds, letting the peace, love, and joy of the Holy Spirit grow in each of you. How would you explain what it means for people to "do what they believe"? What does that phrase mean to you? As you think about what you see and experience in your own life, where do you see a great example of people "doing what they believe"? Let's begin with prayer.

Opening Prayer (see the handout "Opening and Closing Prayers" [Document #: TX005807])

Distribute the handout. Direct the prayer leaders to read from their places in the larger group. As leader 1 begins, have another young person come forward to light the candle.

Ask the young people to hang on to the handout for the closing prayer.

Icebreaker Game (10 minutes)

Ask the young people to imagine a line that runs the length of the room. Explain that you will announce a category, and then they are to arrange themselves along the line based on where they fall within the category. Crank up the chaos and fun by setting a time limit, playing elimination (last person to get in line is out, or not allowing the young people to talk).

Category	This end of the line is . . .	That end of the line is . . .
Height	short	tall
Hair color	light	dark
Age	younger	older
Birthday day of the month	the first	the last
Shoe size (number)	small	big
Alphabetically by your saint name	A	Z

Partner Activity (10 minutes)

Use the following lightning-round questions for a partner activity. Have everyone find a partner (you may have one group of three). The adult leader should then read or display with projection equipment the following questions. Then the young people will quickly answer each question to their partners.

1. Favorite color?
2. Ice cream or gelato?
3. Three words to describe yourself?
4. Three words your maternal grandmother would use to describe you?
5. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
6. Pepperoni or sausage?
7. Best thing that happened to you this week?
8. Peanut butter: crunchy or creamy?
9. What do you want to be when you grow up?
10. What do you do for fun?
11. Apple or Android?
12. Favorite quote or saying?
13. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?
14. Favorite food?
15. ESPN or Discovery Channel?
16. Netflix or YouTube?

Ask the partners to share their responses to two additional questions (below). Read or project each question separately, and give each young person 30 seconds to answer each.

1. Whom did you choose as your Confirmation sponsor and why?
2. Whom did you choose as your saint and why?

Witness Talk (15 minutes)

This is a brief talk given by one of the team members or a youth, a young adult, or a parishioner who can share a powerful story of an experience of “doing what you believe.” This person should be someone who is living her or his faith by giving to another or others out of love, compassion, charity, goodness, and kindness, and by reaching out, as Bishop Franks says, to “those in the shadows.” The strength of this talk corresponds to the power of the story that is told. You will want to find someone whose story is engaging and inspiring and who is an effective storyteller.

Offer the following introduction to the young people:

- We are fortunate today (*tonight*) to have with us (*name of speaker and brief background*) to share with us his/her story of “doing what you believe.” Pope Francis says this:
The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for eternity; [but] to pour out the balm of God’s mercy on all those who ask for it with a sincere heart. The way of the Church is precisely to leave her four walls behind and to go out in search of those who are distant, those essentially on the ‘outskirts’ of life. It is to adopt fully God’s own approach, which is that of mercy. (Homily at Mass with new cardinals, February 15, 2015)

The speaker should cover the following points:

- What drew you to giving of yourself in the way you did/do?
- Who is the person or people “living in the shadows” that you felt moved to care for or respond to?
- What breaks your heart about this person (or these people)?
- How do your beliefs serve as the motivation and basis for how you live what you believe?
- How have your beliefs inspired you to give of yourself out of love to another?
- What have you discovered through the experience that has surprised you?

The main goal of the witness talk is to connect the following points that Bishop Frank makes:

- We are called to “do what we believe.”
- We are called to mercy and compassion, especially to those places where people are “living in the shadows.”
- In giving of ourselves out of love, we receive lasting happiness (joy).

Small-Group Activity (20 minutes)

You may choose to show the Bishop Frank Caggiano videos “If God Is Love” and “It’s a Beautiful Thing,” from module 2, to establish the context for this activity.

Display on the screen the poll results from “Your Favorite Bishop Frank Quote,” from module 2. Arrange the young people into small groups of three or four. Distribute a sheet of newsprint and a marker to each group. Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

- God calls us to love. Bishop Frank talked about how we give and receive the love of God in many different ways—through other people, through beauty, in experiences, in prayer, and in other ways too. God asks us to share the love we’ve received with others. In your small group, you will revisit the quotes from Bishop Frank and think of some examples from your own life of the things he suggests.

Direct the small-group leaders to lead their groups through the activity as outlined on the handout “Doing What I Believe: Small-Group Leader Directions” (Document #: TX005806). When everyone in the small group has had a chance to share his or her favorite quote and an event or experience that relates to it, each group will use the sheet of newsprint and marker to make a poster titled “I am doing what I believe when I” Each group member will finish the sentence, writing her or his response on the poster.

Allow the small groups 10 minutes to work. Toward the end of the time, remind the groups to choose each one statement for their group leader to share as part of the closing prayer.

When the groups are finished, ask for the young people’s attention and point out the blank wall near the prayer table. Ask each small group to stand, share (without identifying who said what), and hang its poster on the blank wall. After all the groups have shared, conclude the activity with the following words:

- Thank you for your sharing. The power to change the world through love, through mercy, rests in this room. Each of you has the power within you, by God’s grace, to bring to the world what it is most in need of today: mercy! What will you choose to do with this power, this gift? This is the question we each must answer for ourselves.

Digital Option Have the small groups compile their responses to create a meme using a meme creation app. The groups will have to e-mail the adult leader their memes or store them on the cloud so the leader can access them to share with the large group on the projection screen. Practice this in advance, and provide clear instructions to the small-group leaders on what apps to use and how to display the finished memes.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Ask the young people to take out the handout “Opening and Closing Prayers” (Document #: TX005807), which they saved from the opening prayer. Arrange the young people in a large semicircle around the prayer space, facing the wall of posters. The prayer leaders should stand facing the semicircle. After the first reading, each small-group leader will read her or his group’s chosen statement from the “I am doing what I believe when I . . .” poster. Continue with the rest of the closing prayer.

Dismissal (5 minutes)

Thank everyone for coming and make any announcements that may be needed. Remind the young people of critical dates for completing the modules and the date of the service day.

(The quotation by Pope Francis in this session is from his homily at Mass with new cardinals, February 15, 2015, at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150215_omelia-nuovi-cardinali.html. Copyright [LEV].)