

Chapter 10:

The Living Jesus Today: Constant Friend and Companion

Student Preparation

- Students were assigned to read Chapter 10, pages 284-303.
- Students were asked to complete Chapter 9 Review Questions 1-5 and 11-16 on pages 303-304.
- Students were asked to commit to ten minutes of prayer and quiet time three to four times per week for the last two weeks of the course.
- Students were asked to bring in an item which symbolizes themselves for the closing prayer.

Warm-up (about 20 minutes)

- Set the tone for this session as a wrapup of the course on Jesus. Affirm the students' contributions and presence in the class. Ask the students to reflect for a few moments, and then jot down a few memories or insights which have been important to them. Have students share their thoughts with the group.
- Share and discuss the students' responses to the Chapter 9 Review Questions which they completed prior to this session. Answers may be found on pages 197-198 of the Teacher's Manual.
- If desired, do some final discussion on the book of Revelation that could not be completed the previous week. Ask students if they have found any helpful resources on the topic.
- Have students place the symbols they brought in the prayer space. Have a special place prepared to receive their symbols. If a student forgot to bring a symbol, offer them the opportunity during the break to search out something on the premises, or to write a brief statement on a piece of paper. Have some stationary and pens available for this purpose.

Part 1:

Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: Are You Jesus?, Jesus is Present in the Church; Jesus is Present in Others, Especially the Poor and Suffering; Jesus Meets Us in the Sacraments (pages 285-295)

- Have a student read the story on page 285 about the salesman and the little girl aloud. Another true story tells of a homeless man who was applying for support services. The volunteer asked the man's name, and then for his family. The man answered, "Jesus." Thinking she had misunderstood, the volunteer asked the question again, and received the same reply. Kindly, she tried to explain, "We need to have the name of someone who knows you, of someone we can call if there's a problem." Exasperated, the man replied, "I don't have anyone else. Put down Jesus!" Have students discuss the meaning behind these two stories.
- Some people describe exceptionally loving persons as "Jesus with skin on." Ask students to journal about one person they know who might fit this description. Have them share their results with the group. Invite them to let the people they described know of the impact they have had on the students' lives.
- Have students discuss St. Teresa of Avila's observation that if we are looking for the Lord in today's world, we should look in the mirror (page 286). Ask them to brainstorm ways in which today's teens can realistically be Jesus' hands, feet, eyes, and voice.
- On page 289, the students are told that the work of the Church is to proclaim the message of love and forgiveness, build community, serve others, and worship God in truth and love. Have students discuss places where they see these qualities of Church, whether in their parishes, schools, families, or other places. Have them brainstorm ways in which they can contribute to the life of the Church.
- Read to the students the parable of the Good Shepherd (Lk 10:29-37). Have them draw parallels between the characters in the parable (the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan, etc.) and people they encounter today. Lead the students in a discussion about sharing their financial resources with others. Young people often see themselves as not being in a position to share, when in fact many teenagers today have a considerable amount of disposable income. Ask them to brainstorm luxury items they might be able to cut back on in order to make such sharing possible.
- Review the sacraments and their symbols. Have students in small groups make flash cards and practice reviewing them with one another.

Break/Writing Exercise (about 15 minutes)

- Join students for a break with refreshments.
- Give students who did not bring symbols a chance to find or create a symbol for the closing prayer service.
- Page 286 speaks of following Jesus by taking up our crosses. These crosses can be illness, injury or other loss, the sacrifices required to live up to our beliefs, difficulties in relationship, and the challenge to be generous. Have students journal about what it means for them personally to take up their own cross to follow Jesus. Have them reflect on the areas of their lives where they find the most challenge currently.

Part 2:

Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: Jesus Meets us in Scripture, Meeting Jesus in Prayer, Jesus and Contemporary Cinema (pages 295-302)

- Ask each student to read one of the Scripture passages they used for prayer the previous session aloud. Write the references on the board, and encourage students to jot them down for use in prayer in the future. Review the advice on praying with Scripture found on pages 296-297.
- In John 14:13-14, Jesus says, "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it." Facilitate a discussion with students on the power of prayer, and on the kind of expectant, hopeful heart that should accompany prayer.
- Have student check in on their prayer experience over the last two weeks. Ask them to discuss any challenges they encountered, such as mental distractions, interruptions from others, fatigue, or discouragement.
- Review the four types of prayer (vocal, meditation, affective, and contemplative) described on page 297. Ask students to share their experience with each type. Ask them to describe the benefits and challenges they encounter with each. Encourage students in the future to vary their prayer, and to try some forms with which they may not be familiar.
- Show a clip of one of the videos on Jesus described on pages 300-302. Have students critique what they see, giving particular consideration to the portrayal of Jesus as both divine and human, communication of the charisma which Jesus clearly had in real life, and whether the portrayal seems realistic.

Prayer Experience (about 20 minutes)

- Set up prayer space, giving particular attention to the symbols brought by the students. Place a large bowl in the center of the space. If possible, lower lighting level and light one or more candles to signal the beginning of prayer.
- Play an appropriate music selection to set the tone for ending the course.
- When students have settled, invite them to take turns explaining the significance of the symbols they brought with them.
- Ask students to take a few minutes of quiet to consider a commitment they are willing to make to improve their ability to be a loving, faithful person. The commitment could be in regard to prayer, dealing with conflict, speaking up for the faith, improvement in personal moral decisions, and so on. Distribute pieces of paper and pens, and ask the students to write their commitment on the papers. Invite students to place their commitments in the bowl.
- Give students the opportunity to pray for any people or concerns they have.
- Close with a spontaneous prayer, or the following:

Jesus, thank you for the opportunity we have had to learn more about you and what it means to be your disciples. Help us to support one another as we do our best to follow you. We ask your blessing on the commitments we have made. Please help us to grow ever closer to you. Amen.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

- If desired, give each student a small token as a symbol of affirmation of their journey forward with Jesus.
- Invite students to make any final comments they may wish to contribute.
- Thank the students for their willingness to grow and be challenged in their faith.