



Week Leading up to 12.6.20: We are called to be Witnesses

***{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: Mark 1: 1-8

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Lord God, You have called each of us through baptism to be your messengers and witnesses. Give us courageous and loving voices to boldly make a path for You in our own hearts and in the hearts of others. Like John the Baptist, may the way we live look different from the ways of the popular world around us. We make ourselves fully and totally Yours. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

YouTube Video: The Most Motivating Talk I've Ever Heard - Father Mike Schmitz (6:27)

<https://youtu.be/J6gPK1OoVjs>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

1. Did Fr. Mike say anything in this talk that really inspired you?
2. Did Fr. Mike say anything in this talk that really challenged you?
3. Why do you think our culture was able to "break" such a devout man's faith and love for the Eucharist?
4. Have you had any memorable times when you have witnessed to Christ and your faith? How did it go?
5. Being fully honest, is there anything that holds you back or makes you fearful to powerfully witness your faith in Christ to others?
6. Is there anything you can concretely do in the next week to become a better witness?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or all}

- Reflect on and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the people who have provided a great faith witness to you.
- Ask God to help you see any areas of your faith life where you have become lazy or complacent.
- Pray that God provides you an opportunity in the next week to witness the hope that is within you, then keep an eye out for that opportunity.
- Invite someone you know to attend an Emmaus Small Group meeting with you or encourage them to register in January. ESG Registration information can be found at www.olsorrows.com/esg/

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Jesus, give us the grace and help to fight the temptation to be lazy and comfortable and complacent. We want to be a people of purpose and courage. We want to be the saints you call us to be in 2020. Show us how we can get to work for you. Amen.

{Optional additional Readings}

Sunday Reading 1: [IS 40:1-5, 9-11](#); Sunday Reading 2: [2 PT 3:8-14](#)



Week Leading up to 12.13.20: Messengers Helping the Lost be Found

Please use this session at least once between 12.7.20 and 1.10.21.

If using this this session for a week other than 12.7-12.13 let your group know that the reading read is for Sunday 12.13.

***(Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.)**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: JN 1:6-8, 19-28

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Dear Lord, John the Baptist was such a humble servant, who always pointed the way to You. We thank You for sharing Your story with us so we can understand You better. We especially thank You for the gift of our spiritual baptism and the nudging's of the Holy Spirit. May we be docile to Your call and willing, eager messengers; just as John the Baptist was. In Your Name, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. Why do you think God used messengers like John the Baptist?

YouTube Video: Advent Lost and Found, Mike Chamberland (10:51) <https://youtu.be/TM7ZDQjI0K0>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. Have you ever been lost...like really lost in a scary way? What was that like?
3. Have there been people in your life that have helped you find your way (in faith or personally)? What did they do? How did they help you?
4. How do you think/feel God has worked through you as an agent helping others to be found?
5. Is there anything in regards to helping build God's kingdom that you have been considering doing?
6. Have you ever thought of becoming an ESG leader or Assistant leader? What do you think is needed to be an ESG Leader or Assistant leader?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or all}

- Think about a person that you feel would make a great ESG leader and let them know what qualities you see in them.
- Write down three things that you are currently doing to draw closer to Christ and be a messenger. After doing this, spend time with God and ask Him what more He wishes of you.
- Fast from something this week for someone in your life that does not know Christ.

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Holy Spirit, we call on You to fill this space. You can truly do amazing things through us if only we allow You to do so! Just as John the Baptist was a messenger, give us the courage and words we need to invite others into a deeper understanding of who You are and what You have done for us. We ask that You shower us with the virtue of patience needed to plant Your seeds. Through the power of Jesus Christ. Amen.

{Optional additional Readings}

Sunday Reading 1: IS 61:1-2A, 10-11; Sunday Reading 2: 1 THES 5:16-24



Week Leading up to 12.20.20: Confidence in Uncertainty

***{Start with reviewing the previous Meetings Challenge or discuss prior to sharing this week's challenge.}**

Let's Begin: Think about how the challenge went for the last session. What went well? What was difficult?

Opening Prayer:

Begin with a brief moment of silence shaking off any and all distractions or difficulties of the day and remembering that God is always with us.

Read: LK 1:26-38

After the Reading Conclude with this prayer:

Dear loving Father, we thank You for always being so willing to calm our fears. Dear loving Mother Mary, we thank you for your submissive heart and showing us your beautiful example of trust and hope. Dear Jesus, we thank You for coming to save us and walking with us in our uncertainty. Dear Lord, it is our greatest desire to lovingly trust in You as Mary did at the Annunciation. In Your Name. Amen.

Reflection or Discussion Question:

1. What do you think/feel it means to be a handmaid of the Lord in this Gospel reading?

YouTube Video: What does God want me to do? – Fr. Mike Schmitz (6:01)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPhjpue3SfQ&feature=youtu.be>

Reflection or Discussion Questions:

2. Have you ever felt confused or worried about something that you felt God didn't give clear direction about?
3. Have you ever felt God ask for you to wait or stay in place? Why do you think this was?
4. Fr. Mike indicated in the video that God won't ask you to make decisions based upon what you don't know and that when He calls you to move forward, God will always speak in clarity. Fr. Mike also shared that God has already revealed to you what you are supposed to do right now. Does this change what you think/feel about discerning God's will in your life?
5. Have you ever received confirmation from God after making a decision?
6. Do you agree that we can have certainty that God will walk with us? Have you always felt this way?
7. How can we better learn to be content and confident yet live in uncertainty?

Session Challenges: {Choose one or all}

- To grow closer to God, we can work on being more submissive to His will as Mary was. Make an effort to submit your heart to Gods and unburden yourself through the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Try to serve another by performing a simple selfless act of kindness daily. Consider doing something for which you will receive no recognition.
- Make an effort to read the daily readings and ponder on what God is telling you about trust and fear.
- Before opening your Christmas gifts, say a prayer in great thanksgiving for the birth of Jesus with those you are with.

Closing Prayer: (Leaders: We recommended offering time during the closing prayer for participants to offer personal intentions.)

Dear Lord, as sinners we acknowledge that we live in a world with fear and great uncertainty. We also know that you have given us clear direction on how to be Your loving children. May we always know in our hearts that You are walking with us through the darkness and uncertainty that surrounds us. As Mary did, we humbly submit to Your will and ponder Your power to come into this world as a baby. Shower us with the grace needed to strive toward being the saints you call us to be and rejoice in the celebration of the birth of Your son, Our Redeemer. For Jesus You are truly with us, our Emmanuel! Alleluia. Amen.

{Optional additional Readings}

Sunday Reading 1: 2 SM 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16; Sunday Reading 2: ROM 16:25-27