

Ninth Grade: Encountering God through Praying with Scripture

Praying with Scripture throughout the entire year will allow the young people to come to encounter Jesus in a deeply personal way and develop a close friendship with Him. The following resources are meant to foster this process. Please consider praying with a Scripture passage every day and at every session. This can take as little as 5 minutes or 20 minutes, as planned or as time is available. (See page 4 for variations of Praying with Scripture that differ the amount of time needed.)

There are 4 different Prayer Cards posted at: <http://diolc.org/catechesis/prayer/>

1. Jesus' public ministry
2. Advent and Christmas
3. Lent
4. Easter Season



Jesus' love for you

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, or lack compassion for the son of her womb? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands...” (Isaiah 49:15-16) Jesus loves you so much that He gave His life for you. As you spend time with Him in conversation (in prayer) you will become more aware of how much Christ cares for you, and for every detail of your life. Take time each day to be with Our Lord by praying with a Scripture passage so that you come to know this to be true.

Why would I pray with Scripture passage on a daily basis?

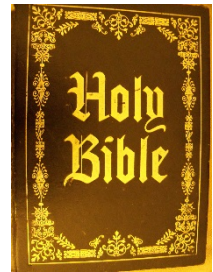
- 1) To encounter the Person of Christ each day
- 2) To enter into / go deeper in a relationship with the Person of Jesus
- 3) To come to know how much Jesus loves us, that He is faithful and that we can trust Him
- 4) To be committed to prayerfully read God's Word each day

Learning the Principles

- Our relationship with the Lord Himself is what really matters. One of the best ways we can encounter Jesus and dispose our hearts to hear from the Lord personally is through Praying with Scripture (*Lectio Divina*).
- Pray with a Scripture passage every day and at every session.
- Praying with Scripture is a way of prayerfully pondering a Bible passage in which you encounter the Person of Christ. There is a progression that takes place that is not a method or technique but a way that incorporates the natural development of a relationship between two persons. In pondering the passage, there is a deepening process that starts in the head and goes to the heart as the Holy Spirit makes a connection between the persons and events in the Scripture and your own personal life

by reminding you of something from your life. Further, you are ultimately led to simply rest in God, to be in His Presence and listen to what Jesus might whisper to your heart through a thought or a word. The goal is communion with Christ. The Praying with Scripture prayer worksheet includes these four steps: Read, Reflect, Spontaneous Prayer and Resting in God.

- By prayerfully pondering Scripture passages, learners will grow in their friendship with Jesus by encountering Him in His Word.
- Encourage young people to pray with a Scripture passage during their personal prayer time each day, (or at least once a week). Specific passages are listed below. The best place to begin is the Gospel of Luke.
- “Praying with Scripture” is commonly called *Lectio Divina*, which is Latin for Divine Reading.
- “A time-honored way to study and savor the Word of God is ‘Lectio Divina’ which constitutes a real and veritable ‘spiritual journey’ marked out in stages.” (Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus)
- “I urge you to become familiar with the Bible, and to have it at hand so that it can be your compass pointing out the road to follow. By reading it, you will learn to know Christ. (Message of Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day, 2006)
- To seek the Lord and find Him in our lives also means accepting His Word, which is joy for our hearts. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote: “When I found your words, I devoured them; they became my joy and the happiness of my heart” (*Jeremiah* 15:16). Learn to read and meditate on the Sacred Scriptures. There you will find an answer to your deepest questions about truth. God’s word reveals the wonders that He has accomplished throughout human history, it fills us with joy, and it leads us to praise and adoration: “Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us kneel before the Lord who made us” (*Psalms* 95:1,6). (Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Twenty-Seventh World Youth Day, 2012)
- Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus said, “the ancient tradition of *Lectio Divina*: the diligent reading of sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to Him with trusting openness of heart...This practice will bring to the Church – I am convinced of it – a new spiritual springtime.” (Pope Benedict’s address to the International Congress commemorating the 40th Anniversary of Dei Verbum, September 16, 2005.)



Activities

- Pray with one of the Scripture passages from the pages below. It is best to pray with passages that include persons, rather than just text.
- Have young people write out their answers using the “Praying with Scripture” prayer worksheet that is included.
- Explain simply how to pray with a Scripture passage:
 - 1) The parent or teacher should prepare by reading the chosen passage beforehand to avoid stumbling over pronunciation and punctuation. Ask the youth to write the Scripture chapter and verses at the top of the prayer worksheet, such as

Matthew 8:23-27 (for example). Provide them with the simple directions: I will read aloud the passage and you may listen. The young people are to close their Bible and just listen. The first time is for them to hear the passage. Further, they may have different translations. (If a person is praying the passage by themselves, they are to read the passage the first time aloud.)

- 2) Next, re-read the passage silently. This allow participants to see the words of the passage. On the worksheet, summarize what is happening in the passage in just a few sentences – to grasp the big picture. This is not about interpreting what it means; but simply to re-state the key points in 3-4 brief phrases. This allows us to work with the passage. In this 3-4 phrase summary, we are re-telling the passage as if explaining the passage to a small child.

We want re-tell the Story in our own words and this does not need to be full, perfect sentences but only covering the most important facts.

Note: Summarizing the story is important because we need the structure of the Story line before we can go deeper

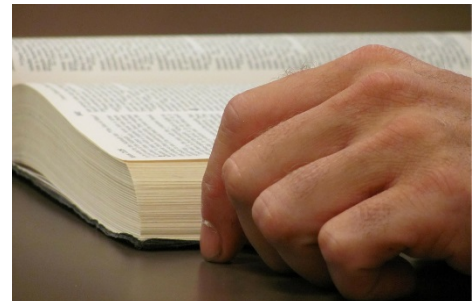
- 3) Now pick a person from the passage. Note: The parents or teacher are to name the different persons in the Bible passage from which the young people can choose; they will want to choose someone that they can relate to even though they might not fully understand why at this point. Participants could choose to be “a silent observer” – someone standing nearby and just watching.
- 4) Answer the three questions:
- How do you think this person or you yourself would feel in this situation
 - Does it remind you of something or someone in your life?
 - Anything you would say or do differently. Note: This is not asking participants to change the Scripture passage.
- 5) Take some quiet time to speak with Jesus, sharing your honest feelings. Don’t just think about the situation/ the life experience that came to mind, but have a heart to Heart talk with Jesus.
- 6) Pick a word or phrase that stood out for you / that has special meaning for you.
- 7) Read the passage again. Listen to what Jesus might whisper in your heart.
- 8) As a group, close the time of prayer with the Our Father
- Note: The Teacher’s Instruction Sheet included with the prayer worksheet also has some helpful information with questions usually asked by young people.
- Some other ways to change it up for the students:



1. Ask the young people, after hearing or reading a Scripture passage, to simply choose a word or phrase that stood out for them (without giving them the prayer worksheet).
 2. Other times, have the youth journal about a specific Scripture passage.
 3. Another choice would be to withhold the worksheet and simply ask the questions aloud from the worksheet, allowing the students to simply answer the questions interiorly.
 4. It also works to read the passage once aloud and then provide silence as the youth journal about what stood out for them and why.
 5. For a fuller prayer experience, allow time for the young people to complete the prayer worksheet found here: <http://diolc.org/catechesis/prayer/> Ninth Grade
 6. Have the teens read the chosen passage silently and underline what stood out for them and then journal in their notebooks the reason why.
- Teach the young people how to pray with their heart; not just rattling words. “Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of Him ‘to whom we speak.’”
 - Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745) In other words, when we pray with our heart, we come to know Jesus Christ personally and deeply. As this friendship with Him grows, we recognize more and more how much He loves us and how much we love Him. From this love, received and given, we respond from a natural desire to be one with Him in all things, and live our lives in a way that is reflective of His own. This brings much peace and joy to ourselves and those around us.
 - Memorize the Scripture verse: Psalm 119:105
 - Play Amy Grant’s song, “Thy Word is a Lamp unto My Feet and a Light unto My Path.”

Spiritual Comprehension – Do they understand?

- Ensure that young people receive answers to clear up any misunderstandings and/or barriers in praying with a Scripture passage, such as those listed below. The answers to these statements can be found on the Praying with Scripture worksheet’s directions.
 - I will mis-interpret a Scripture passage.
 - I haven’t really studied Scripture before.
 - I don’t know anything about the Bible
 - I don’t want to make a mistake.
- **Youth should become familiar and very comfortable with this way of praying with a Scripture passage by using it throughout this year before they advance to the next grade level. Therefore it should be prayed every day and at every session.** Please continue to teach other prayers as planned and provided in the Diocesan Religion Curriculum.



Encountering God in Prayer

- In the pondering of a Bible passage, we have a privileged meeting place with Jesus.
- When teens are moved by the prayer time and encounter Jesus in prayer, take time to thank Him for the gift of His Word.

- Slowly build up the amount of silence that young people have in prayer. As a further progression, provide silence so that youth may have a “heart-to-heart” conversation with Jesus.
- To help young people deepen their relationship with Jesus, allow frequent times of silence in the chapel where Our Lord is reserved in the tabernacle. Guide the youth to acknowledge that they truly believe that the Person of Christ is in the tabernacle by a reverent genuflection and attentiveness to Him. The parents and teacher’s language referring to Jesus present in the tabernacle helps to build the awareness of this fact.



The Magisterial Sources for “Praying with Scripture” (*Lectio Divina*)

- *Dei Verbum*, n. 25
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraphs 2708, 1177
- *National Directory for Catechesis*, n. 67
- *Guide for Catechists*, part II, n. 7
- *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II, n. 39
- *Final Message from the Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*, n. 9
- *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini – The Word of God* by Pope Benedict XVI, n. 86-87

Sacred Art that depicts this way of praying with Scripture – putting yourself in the “scene”

- *St. Francis in Sacred Art: St. Francis is pictured with the Creche to symbolize his placing himself in the passage to ponder the events and the people.*

Scripture foundation

- “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105
- “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16
- “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4
- “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17
- “So shall my word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

Praying with Scripture prayer worksheet

- A Praying with Scripture prayer worksheet is available at www.diolc.org/catechesis/prayer 9th Grade.