

ENCOUNTER: DISCOVERING JESUS

A HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE
FOR DISCOVERING JESUS

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

“So I ask you: Are you looking for empty thrills in life, or do you want to feel a power that can give you a lasting sense of life and fulfillment? Empty thrills or the power of grace? To find fulfillment, to gain new strength, there is a way. It is not a thing or an object, but a person, and he is alive. **His name is Jesus Christ.**”

- POPE FRANCIS



Diocese of
Green Bay

Core Gospel Framework

The core message of the Gospel is called the *kerygma*.

The *kerygma* informs the central mission and identity of the Church and the identity of every baptized Christian. The most basic form of the *kerygma* contains five elements. It is the declaration that:

- ▶ 1. God is love and has created me for relationship with Him.
- ▶ 2. I have broken my relationship with God by my sin.
- ▶ 3. Jesus restores my relationship with God through His life, death, and resurrection.
- ▶ 4. Jesus invites me to trust him, to turn from sin, and to give my life to Him.
- ▶ 5. Jesus has poured the Holy Spirit into my heart to bring me to new life in His Church and sends His Church on mission so that others can experience that new life.



Liz Lemon Swindle, *Without Purse or Scrip*.

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1. God is love and has created me for relationship with Him.

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. A voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

- Mt 3:14, 16-17

"God is love, God loves me unconditionally, I am His beloved child."

Reflect upon the following questions and make a note of any thoughts that come to you at this time.

When you think about love, what do you hunger most for?



Liz Lemon Swindle, *Friends*.

Who in your life has given you an experience of unconditional love?

Prayer - Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

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2. I have broken my relationship with God by my sin.

After arresting Jesus they led him away. Peter was following at a distance. They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter sat down with them. When a maid saw him seated in the light, she looked intently at him and said, "This man too was with Jesus." But Peter denied it saying, "Woman, I do not know him." A short while later someone else saw him and said, "You too are one of them"; but Peter answered, "My friend, I am not." About an hour later, still another insisted, "Assuredly, this man too was with him, for he also is a Galilean." But Peter said, "My friend, I do not know what you are talking about." Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, and Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Peter went out and began to weep bitterly.

- Lk 22:54-62



Rembrandt, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*.

What is the one thing you want to let go of in order to be truly happy?

What name can you give to the restlessness in your heart?

What ache and hurt do you want to be free of?

Prayer - The Confiteor

I confess to Almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen.

3. Jesus restores my relationship with God through His life, death, and resurrection.

What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

- Lk 15:4-7



Simon Dewey, *Painting*.

Two others, both criminals, were led away with Jesus to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

- Lk 23:32-34

Reflection: Jesus died so that you may live. He wants your whole heart. Not just a small piece but all of you. He loves you and wants to be in an intimate and close relationship with you. Pope Francis says that "Jesus Christ loves you, he gave his life to save you, and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, and free you" (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #164).

What difference has Jesus made to my life?

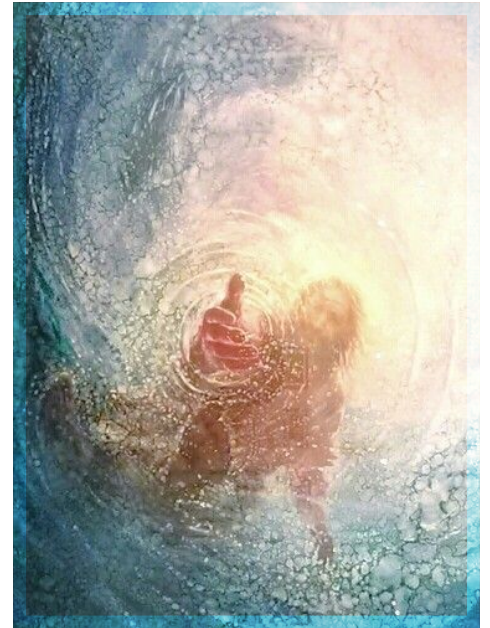
Prayer - The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

4. Jesus invites me to trust Him, to turn from sin, and to give my life to Him.

Jesus had the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side. 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.

- Mt 14:22-31



Yongsung Kim, *Save Me - the Hand of God*.

Write down any obstacles that you have in handing your life over to Jesus:

Today, make your own commitment to Jesus.

Prayer - Suscipe - St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess, you have given me: I surrender it all to You to be disposed of according to Your will. Give me only Your love and Your grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more. Amen.

5. Jesus has poured the Holy Spirit into my heart to bring me to new life in His Church and sends His Church on mission so that others can experience that new life.

Jesus said "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find peace. A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

- Jn 10:8,10



St. Raphael Parish - Oshkosh, *I am Here.*

How am I open to the Holy Spirit today?

How has the life of the Church (celebration of the sacraments, saints, devotions, specific people from your parish community) been present in your story?

In what ways do you have a sense that the Holy Spirit is calling you to share your story and share in the Church's mission?

Prayer - Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love,
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us Pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord,
Amen.

Processing the Kerygma Experience



“The subject of proclamation is Christ who was crucified, died, and is risen: through him is accomplished our full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death; through him God bestows ‘new life’ that is divine and eternal. This is the ‘Good News’ which changes man and his history, and which all peoples have a right to hear.”
- St. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* #44

It has been said that we need to hear the *kerygma* (or core message of the Gospel) proclaimed as the *kerygma* many times in order for it to take root in our hearts. This may be your first time hearing this message or it may be a message that you know well and have heard many times.

During this experience, you may feel a great sense of joy, peace or sadness or points of resistance or obstacles. Acknowledge how you feel. Don’t be afraid to confront these obstacles: God already knows them and will help you through them. Take time to give thanks for the opportunity to hear the Gospel in this way.

- As you reflect upon the overall experience, how do you feel?
- What was the hardest for you? Why?
- Who can you share your experience with?
- How did this experience help you to see Jesus more clearly?

Close your reflection time with prayer:

Christ Has No Body but Mine

Christ has no body now but my body,
No hands, no feet on earth but my hands, my feet,
It is my eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but my body.

(Adapted from St. Theresa of Avila, 1515–1582)