

October 2007 G.R.A.C.E. Monthly Session

Catechetical Area: the Creed

Catechetical Focus: The Communion of Saints: What Makes a Saint, a Saint?

Event Connecting to: Celebration of the Feast of All Saints

Five Modules/Stations, each taking a different part of that theme:

Station #1: The Communion of Saints: Who is in the communion of saints?

Reflection questions:

- Who are the role models we look up to in life
- How is their life rooted in faith; tell about their trust in God
- Have you learned anything about God because of their actions?
- What makes a saint?
- Is everyone a saint?

Format: An older couple acting in their grandparent role

We are grandparents and we belong to the 'communion of saints'. Because it can include the faithful on earth with those in heaven and those who have died, I guess what we need to understand is what it means when we say the 'faithful on earth'. . Throughout our life we have experiences many good role models who have helped us to experience what it means to be a member of the 'communion of saints'.

- Stories about role models in life that you looked up to and why.
- How were there lives rooted in faith...tell about relationship to God.
- Have you learned anything about God from them.
- What then makes a saint...is it about what I do or say...is it about what I believe...is it about my good qualities...is it about how I relate to God and express this relationship to those around me.
- Is everyone a saint...no, leading a good life and adhering to the teaching of God leads us to sainthood. Sainthood depends on decisions we make in life.
- Can everyone be a saint? Yes, if our decisions in life include God as basis.
- At end, ask what they learned about saints and maybe what qualities they need to work on or already practice in order to see themselves and a member of the 'communion of saints'.

Station #2: The Process of Official Canonization of Saints

Reflection questions:

- What is the process for official canonization?
- Why does the Church name certain men and women as saints?
- What about miracles as part of the step toward sainthood?

Format: A man acting as Venerable Solanus Casey whose cause for canonization is now in process in Rome

Welcome group and introduce yourself as Fr. Solanus Casey. Tell brief story about yourself (about 3 – 4 min) mentioning key elements about your life with the poor. Explain why you are called venerable instead of a Saint, mentioning step and process it takes to get to sainthood and some of the reasons looked for in the process (mention good versus bad qualities...not being perfect, etc.). Also mention the step of those playing the devil's advocate (defender of the faith) in researching the life of the saint. Mention some of the people quoted in a recent Michigan Catholic who have had an experience of being helped by Fr. Solanus and relay some of their stories. Tell why people pray to you to intercede for them. Dialog with group:

Stations #3: Martyrdom and Sainthood

Reflection Questions:

- Why are martyrs considered special saints?
- What does the word mean and how can we relate to the idea, even if we don't die for the faith?
- What are the especially challenging things about my life right now that God is asking me to handle with faith?

Format: Focus on Icon of SS. John and Paul in the Church

Welcome group and ask for 2 male volunteers to come forward. While you are dressing them, begin to telling story of SS John and Paul from parish handout and stop at part that explains why they died. Once they are dressed...ask them

- Why didn't you want to stay in the Roman army...did you know what was going to happen to you if you didn't agree to stay...what did happen...why did you make that decision.
- What motivated you to choose death over participating in the Roman rule of the day?
- Was it an easy decision to make...can you relate it to today and the decisions we are faced with daily.
- Thank the 2 and move onto dialog with group.
- We all face decisions in our lives about doing the right thing or doing what Jesus would want us to.
Let's take a few minutes with those around you and share some of the things that challenge us daily.
- What challenges do I face as an adult in responding to God's love.
- What will it cost me if I truly want to be Jesus' disciple.
- How will I respond to the challenges I will face in witness to gospel of Jesus.
- End with sharing of their discussions and with a few general statements about the cost of discipleship.

Station #4: Preparing for the Feast of All Saints

Reflection Questions:

- What does this feast celebrate?
- How can I connect my life to the celebration?

Format: Families/Individuals Make a "Faith Shield"

Lives of 10 selected saints are put on cards making sure specific information of their lives is included. Attached to story of saint will be the gospel reading for All Saints Day (Beautitudes). Families will complete a coat of arms for that saint with the following questions inserted into the shield.

- Who is your saint and when and where did they live?
- What special actions or charisms did they display?
- Read the gospel for All Saints Day and relate it to your saint...which beatitude is best exhibited by your saint?
- What do I need to work on in my life to be more like my saint?
- Prayer: Thank you God for the life of St _____, I him or her I will try to be more_____.
- After families are done, they will cut out shield and hang it on boards in hallway.
- Facilitator will ask

Who had saint _____, what was so special about her/him? Try to get as many saint as possible named so group hears about other saints instead of just their own.

Station #5: The Litany of Saints: Why do we ask saints to pray for us?

Reflection Questions:

- Why do Catholics pray for saints to intercede for us?
- Where does that practice come from?
- What is the litany of saints?

Format: Preparing and then Singing the Litany of the Saints

Short introduction to why catholics pray with saints. (role models, holy people with strong faith and trust in God, known for having a special charism that set them apart, healing actions are attributed to them, etc.)

- After intro, explanation of what the Litany of Saints is and why and when we use it. Short practice on refrain and then sing it together.
- Quiet time with reflective music.
- Closing tie in to importance of knowing lives of some of the saints and what made them unique.
- Ask if their names are connected to any particular saint...and if their name comes from a saints name. Have dictionary of saints names on hand to look up any questionable names. Include these names in Litany of Saints.