

Finding Jesus

Christians pray “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” We believe in one true God who is a community of persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our goal in life is to attain union with the Father in heaven through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Stated another way, the Holy Spirit enables us to recognize Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the Son of God who takes us to the Father and our heavenly home.

The Spirit works in many marvelous ways, enabling us to recognize Jesus in others and God actively working in so many situations in our world. Where has the Spirit helped you feel especially close to the Lord? Check off any of the following that have helped you see God active and alive in the world and your life.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ___ a conversation with a close friend | ___ looking at a sunset |
| ___ praying and worshipping with others | ___ observing the joy on the face of a person whom you helped |
| ___ reading the Bible | ___ praying in a candlelit room |
| ___ after receiving holy communion | ___ holding a newborn infant |
| ___ watching children play | ___ giving a witness talk at a youth retreat |
| ___ listening to some beautiful music | ___ receiving or giving forgiveness |
| ___ walking in the woods | ___ observing an elderly person praying peacefully |
| ___ sitting alone in a quiet church | |

Add a couple of your own unique encounters here:

a. _____ b. _____

✧ discuss ✧

If you wish, share with your classmates one occasion that convinced you that the Lord is very real.

How might each of the passages below be considered a way of meeting the Lord?

“For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them” (Mt 18:20).

“In truth I tell you, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40)

Meeting Jesus

Part 1: The New Testament gives us stories about people who approached Jesus reluctantly or had difficulty approaching him. Read the Bible references for each of these people and jot down why they only cautiously approached Jesus. Briefly describe what happened to them after they met him.

<i>Person(s)</i>	<i>Why cautious?</i>	<i>What happened?</i>
1. Woman with severe bleeding (Lk 8:42–48)	_____	_____
2. Woman at well (Jn 4:5–42)	_____	_____
3. Nicodemus (Jn 3:1–21)	_____	_____
4. Paralytic at Capernaum (Mk 2:1–12)	_____	_____
5. Peter (Lk 22:54–62)	_____	_____
6. The disciples (Lk 24:9–12)	_____	_____
7. Sick man at Bethesda (Jn 5:1–9)	_____	_____

Part 2: At times you may have approached Jesus reluctantly or felt you were unable to approach him. Check off any reason that may have kept you from meeting Jesus in prayer or through the sacraments:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> afraid of what others might think | <input type="checkbox"/> did not see the need |
| <input type="checkbox"/> laziness | <input type="checkbox"/> lack of faith in Jesus' presence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a feeling of being unworthy | <input type="checkbox"/> hard to see him sometimes, especially at Mass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> could not find the time | |

other reasons _____

✿ journal ✿

1. Which of the above were excuses? Valid reasons?
2. Were you like any of the persons in the first part of the exercise? Explain.

Light of the World

A key way for a Christian to be a sign of Christ is to follow the Lord's teachings to be salt of the earth and light of the world. Jesus wants our good deeds to shine forth, to testify to God's presence, and to lead others to the heavenly Father (see Mt 5:13-16). Rank in order of importance from 1 (most important) to 9 (least important) which of the following good acts would serve effectively as light in today's world.

- ___ A. Mass attendance every Sunday
- ___ B. Loyalty to friends and family
- ___ C. Volunteering at a senior citizen's center
- ___ D. Avoiding bad language and swearing
- ___ E. Honesty in speech and deeds (no cheating)
- ___ F. Active work for a pro-life political candidate
- ___ G. Tutoring younger students
- ___ H. Living an outwardly simple life
- ___ I. Suffering insults without seeking revenge

✧ discuss ✧

1. Why did you choose as you did?
2. Which of the above do you find most revealing about a person's character? Why?
3. Could any of these lead a non-believer to Christ? Explain.

The Cost of Discipleship

To follow Jesus means to drop out of the line, even to risk being considered foolish. Here are four situations. What would you do (or have you done in similar situations) if you would meet this within the next few weeks?

1. Some poor people in the neighborhood of your school have been left homeless because of a fire.
2. A friend shoplifts a CD from a music store.
3. You finally notice a classmate who eats lunch alone each day.
4. Someone makes come crude remarks about the Catholic church in your presence.

Eucharistic Planning Sheet

Theme of the Liturgy: _____

Penitential Rite (compose an introduction and a series of petitions)

Liturgy of the Word

- a. First reading _____ read by: _____
- b. Response _____ read (or sung) by: _____
- c. Second reading _____ read by: _____
- d. Gospel: _____ read by the celebrant

General Intercessions (compose 5 or 6) Decide who will read them.

Preparation of the Alter and Gifts: Who will present the gifts? Any special symbols (for example, a book to represent their studies, a ball to represent their physical endeavors, etc.)?

Which *Eucharistic Prayer*? _____

Communion Prayer: Perhaps someone could write a poetic thanksgiving prayer to be read with quiet music in the background.

Musical Selections:

- a. Gathering: _____
- b. Response After Reading: _____
- c. Presentation of the Gifts: _____
- d. Acclamation: _____
- e. Holy, Holy, Holy and Lamb of God: _____
- f. Communion: _____
- g. Closing: _____

Other Details:

Mass servers?

Eucharistic ministers?

Banners / posters / decorations?

Catholic Mass Terms

Trivia buffs and informed Catholics would be able to match the following items connected with the Mass. Try your hand at these.

Liturgical Colors

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| ___ 1. rose | a. symbol of hope; used during Ordinary Time |
| ___ 2. white | b. symbol of love; used on Pentecost Sunday |
| ___ 3. red | c. symbol of purity; used during Christmas and Easter |
| ___ 4. purple | d. symbol of anticipated joy; used on the third Sunday of advent and Fourth Sunday of Lent |
| ___ 5. green | e. symbol of penance; used in Advent and Lent |

Mass Vestments

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| ___ 1. cincture | a. long, band-like vestment worn around the neck and falling to the knees |
| ___ 2. alb | b. rectangular piece of white fabric worn about the neck, tucked into the collar |
| ___ 3. stole | c. a cord used as a belt |
| ___ 4. amice | d. a body-length tunic of white fabric |
| ___ 5. chasuble | e. the outer garment of the celebrant of the mass |

Sacred Vessels and Altar Linens

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| ___ 1. ciborium | a. a white cloth napkin used for cleaning the sacred vessels |
| ___ 2. monstrance | b. a receptacle made so the sacred host can be carried and seen |
| ___ 3. corporal | c. a cloth-covered square piece of stiff material used to cover the chalice |
| ___ 4. purificator | d. used to hold the hosts of distribution at communion time and for reservation of the hosts in the tabernacle |
| ___ 5. pall | e. a square piece of cloth spread on the altar cloth on which the sacred vessels stand |

Moral or Not?

Here are some statements about morality, the rightness or wrongness of human behavior. Answer “true” or “false” to the following statements. Discuss which would be a Christian response to each item.

- ___ 1. If the majority decides something is OK, then it must be all right.
- ___ 2. I have the *duty* to give to the poor even at the cost of personal sacrifice.
- ___ 3. People should have the right to say who can live in their neighborhood.
- ___ 4. We must be just to people, that is, give them their due. But we don’t have to be charitable, that is, give them more than their due.
- ___ 5. I have to love others but I don’t have to like them.
- ___ 6. Sexual activity for “in-love” non-married people is OK as long as precautions are taken.
- ___ 7. Cheating on quizzes is nothing to worry about.
- ___ 8. Since God is all-forgiving, sin is not that big a deal.

Morality is responsibility, a responding to God who calls us to live long lives for others.

1. How do you define morality? Write your definition here:

2. According to your definition, what is the most moral thing a person can do?

3. What is the most immoral thing a person can do?

The Gifts of the Spirit

Here are the gifts St. Paul mentions in another famous passage on the body of Christ (Rom 12:3–8). Please read this passage. Then, briefly describe how you can put each gift into action.

Gift

Ways I Can Live This Gift

1. Prophecy

2. Ministry

3. Teacher

4. Power of
Exhortation

5. Almsgiving

6. Leadership

7. Works of mercy

Love and Marriage

Here are some statements on love and marriage. Rank-order them according to which statement you think is most true (1) to which statement you think is least descriptive of love or marriage (5).

1. Love is primarily . . .

___ a commitment

___ a feeling

___ a sharing

___ instinctual

___ spiritual

___ other: _____

2. When I hear the word *love* I think of . . .

___ my parents

___ sex

___ a good friend

___ marriage

___ being accepted

___ other: _____

1. Marriage is . . .

___ give and take (a 50–50 deal)

___ unrealistic today

___ only for those who want kids

___ a special way to grow together

___ a sure way to lose your freedom

___ other: _____

1. Marriage as a sacrament means . . .

___ the partner is the key means to holiness

___ two become one in Christ

___ children are an important sign of God's love

___ God blesses a couple's sexuality in a profound way

___ a couple must remain faithful to each other forever

___ other: _____

✧ discuss ✧

1. In small groups, share your top rankings and give reasons for your choices.
2. Share "other" choices you and your classmates came up with.
3. As a class decide which were the most popular choices. Discuss reasons why this might be so.

Marriage Assignments

Choose one of the following assignments:

- a. *Divorce*. Using a recent article or two from Catholic journals, catechisms, Catholic encyclopedias, and the like, report on one of the following:
 - (1) why marriages fail
 - (2) church teaching on separation and divorce
 - (3) church teaching on divorce and remarriage
 - (4) the annulment process
 - (5) church ministry to the divorced and separated
- b. *Birth control*. Research the following:
 - (1) church teaching on artificial means of birth control
 - (2) Natural Family Planning
- c. *Marriage preparation*.
 - (1) Interview your pastor or director of religious education to find out what a person must do to get married in your parish.
 - (2) Report on a program your parish might have for engaged or married couples to prepare for or enrich their marriage (examples: Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter).
- d. *Anatomy of a Marriage*. Interview a successful, happily married couple, perhaps your grandparents. Write a short biography about their marriage together and discuss why it has been both successful and happy. (Students may wish to present a copy of their work to the couple they interviewed.)
- e. Using a book such as Joseph Champlin's *Together for Life*, plan your own wedding ceremony. Put together a wedding booklet that includes symbols that express your ideas of marital love. Include music selections, readings, special rituals you may want family members or friends to participate in, etc. Write your own marriage vows.
- f. Suppose there were such a thing as a Christian computer-dating service. Compose a list of twenty questions for an application that you think would help reveal who this person truly is. (Example: What is your favorite kind of music?) Answer these questions yourself. Then give it to a friend of the opposite sex and compare answers. Write a short essay entitled "My Ideal Future Marriage Partner."

Marriage Laws

To test your knowledge of the marriage laws of the church, here are some true and false statements. See how much you already know by trying your hand at these.

- ___ 1. A Catholic is forbidden to marry a non-Catholic.
- ___ 2. A Catholic must marry before the parish priest and two witnesses.
- ___ 3. The church encourages a couple to live together before getting married.
- ___ 4. The Catholic church can bless “homosexual” marriages.
- ___ 5. Catholic church teaching holds that marriage is always permanent.
- ___ 6. The church will bless a marriage in which the couple has decided beforehand not to have any children.
- ___ 7. The church hopes each married couple will have as many children as they physically can.
- ___ 8. A Catholic must obey church laws on marriage.
- ___ 9. There are no restrictions—besides state laws—for two Catholics who wish to marry.

Giving Advice

Assume you belong to a group of mature Catholic adults whose advice has been sought concerning the following situations. What advice would you give?

1. I am an eighteen-year-old Catholic who has fallen in love with an eighteen-year-old Jewish girl from a very strong Orthodox Jewish family. My parents desperately want to break off our relationship now. What should I do?
2. We have been married for four years. I really want to have a child, but my husband says we should wait at least four more years until we have purchased our dream home. What would you suggest I say to him?
3. I really like this guy . But I am always the one who has to call him. and once I call him we always have to do what he wants to do. Any ideas on how I can bring some balance to this relationship?
4. My folks recently underwent a painful divorce. I am fifteen years old, and the situation is really bothering me. I know it wasn't my fault they broke up, but I still feel guilty about it. I'm not sure whose side I should be on. Can you help me?
5. Despite what parents and teachers think and say, some kids are going to have sex. I know about sexually transmitted diseases and all the other risks, but what if I really fall in love with someone? Why can't we show our love to each other if we promise it will only be to this person?

The Sacraments

	This sacrament brings about the following:	This sacrament symbolizes:
Baptism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● initiation into the Christian community ● adoption into God's family (add to this list) 	
Confirmation		
Eucharist		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● unity with the Lord and Christians (add)
Reconciliation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● forgiveness (add)
Anointing of the Sick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● physical healing (add) 	
Holy Orders		
Marriage		