

*FOLLOW ME
SESSION 1*



**WHY
ARE
YOU
HERE?**

FOLLOW ME

Why are you here?

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SESSION OVERVIEW






Welcome to YDisciple. This first session that you will do with your small group gives an introduction to the YDisciple program. You will focus on helping teens get to know one another and develop an environment for small-group faith sharing. And you'll begin to ask the tough questions. Do not be afraid of the tough questions—asking questions about our purpose and mission in life will give context to the purpose of the group.

This session includes several activities designed to get each of the teens engaged in the group discussion. By setting the environment for faith sharing, the teens will know what to expect with regard to their participation in the group.

After the session send home the Teen Sheet and Parent Sheet. Remind the parents that they have access to the videos. In addition, encourage the teens and parents to listen to "What's So Great About Being Catholic?" by Jason Evert. You will find the download next to the Parent Sheet on the site.

SESSION SNAPSHOT

Review the entire lesson plan in advance so you are prepared to lead and discuss comfortably. Gather necessary supplies and review video clips prior to your gathering. Below is the outline for the session. Use the time allotments as a guideline, as the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

TIME	SECTION	SECTION OVERVIEW
30 minutes	 CONNECT	Use these opening activities to get your small group introduced and comfortable with discussion.
45 minutes	 DISCUSS	<p>There are 2 video segments in this section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Scene 1: Why am I here?  Scene 2: Who is Jesus? <p>In this section, you will begin to discuss some of the deeper realities of who Jesus is and why it is important to be serious about pursuing Him.</p>
15 minutes	 COMMIT	Close your meeting with a review of your discussion and a simple prayer challenge for the week.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- » Media device to show video segments
- » Bibles
- » Index cards (two per person)
- » Pens
- » Teen Sheets

PREPARE IN ADVANCE

- » Have snacks ready.
- » Create a welcoming environment.
- » Write the following headings on a chalkboard, white board, or sheet of paper so everyone can see it:
 - » Name
 - » Address
 - » Phone number
 - » Email address
 - » Y or N — Do you have a Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter account?
 - » Birthday
 - » Parents' & Siblings' names
 - » Pets
 - » Favorite thing to do
 - » Something that you are proud of
 - » A short-term goal
 - » A long-term goal
 - » A little-known fact about yourself



LEADER TIPS

- » Environment makes a big difference. The location and setting of your first meeting will set the tone for the discussion for this and all subsequent gatherings. The ideal environment would be a living room, fireside room, or coffee shop. Try to avoid meeting in a classroom or an all-purpose room at the parish. Teens are less comfortable in these environments, and it is difficult to develop faith sharing without a comfortable audience.
- » If you have to meet in an environment that is less than ideal, try to rearrange the furniture in the room to make it more conducive to faith sharing. Doing something simple such as having everyone sit in a circle with chairs can make a big difference.
- » There is a reason Jesus frequently shared meals with his disciples. Sharing meals or food together creates a more intimate setting for faith sharing. Have some food or snacks available for the teens.
- » The discussion questions and activities are created with the purpose of getting every teen in the group engaged in the discussion. Some of the questions may seem a little silly, but if you engage in a surface-level discussion with teens in the beginning, you will find that it will help bridge the discussion into deeper topics.



CONNECT

The first activities in this session are intended to get your small group introduced to one another and participating in discussion.



ACTIVITY

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

SAY: Welcome to our first discipleship group. To start out, I want to get to know a little bit about each of you and your personalities. I want to ask you a few questions and allow each of you to give an answer. These questions aren't intended to be very serious, but they will help us get to know each other a little better. Think of this as a "Buzzfeed" quiz.

- » Would you rather live in a hobbit hole or a tree house?
- » Would you rather live in an ordinary home in an extraordinary place or an extraordinary home in an ordinary place?
- » Would you rather go on a European sightseeing vacation or a Caribbean beach vacation?
- » If you could be a character in any movie, who would you be?



ACTIVITY

MORE GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

SAY: Thank you all for sharing. I would like to gather some information from each of you. We'll make a game out of it. Please write the following information on an index card (*point out the list you created in advance*). When everyone has completed this task, I will read the last five items on each card out loud and we will try and guess whose card I'm reading.

Distribute two index cards and pens.

After everyone has finished, pool all the cards together. Pick a card and read the last five items on the list. Have group members write down who they think the person is on the second index card. Then move to the next card and repeat. After you've finished reading them all, read through each one and see who guessed the most right. Collect the cards and save the information for future reference.



ACTIVITY

WHAT DO THESE 3 THINGS HAVE IN COMMON?

SAY: Let's do one more activity. Who will be first to answer what the following have in common? Give yourself a point if you're first.

- » Iceberg, Tongue, Waitress
(They all have tips.)
- » Moses, Superman, Annie
(They were all adopted.)
- » Axel, Salchow, Double Lutz
(They are all figure skating jumps.)
- » Split, Bread, Cream Pie
(They are all words that go with "banana.")
- » House, War, Finger
(They are all types of paint.)
- » Crunch, America, Jack Sparrow
(They were all famous captains.)
- » Rip, Hack, Buzz
(They are all types of saws.)
- » Pound, Star, Operator
(They are all buttons on the telephone.)
- » Toilets, Eyes, Trash Cans
(They all have lids.)
- » Water, Flower, Bunk
(They are all types of beds.)
- » Nose, Legs, Faucet
(They are all things that run.)
- » Pope, Mary, Eucharist
(These are things Catholics believe in.)

SAY: What are some other things that are uniquely Catholic? In other words, what distinguishes the Catholic Church from other religions and even other Christians?

What distinguishes Catholics from other religions:

- *In other religions man is searching for God. In Christianity, God finds man.*
- *God is a communion of three persons.*
- *Jesus is God.*
- *God is personal and wants a relationship with us.*
- *Jesus saves. We cannot save ourselves*
- *Jesus established a Church.*

What distinguishes Catholics from other Christians:

- Sacraments
- Authority – Bishops
- Mass
- The Eucharist
- Vestments
- Saints
- Sacramentals
- Prayers – litanies, novenas, rosary, liturgy of the hours
- Priesthood
- Religious sisters and brothers
- Vows of poverty, chastity and obedience
- Indissolubility of marriage

Allow for a few minutes of discussion.

INTRODUCTION

SAY: What Catholics believe is at the heart of why we are meeting as a group. As you are becoming adults, you are not going to blindly believe in something. You really need the opportunity to thoroughly examine what to believe before you commit your life to those beliefs. I am here to introduce topics of the faith and facilitate discussion. I am not here to judge you or make you believe anything! I am here because my Catholic faith is important to me and you are important to me. That's it!

And you should know that what you share in this group will remain confidential. I will not talk to your parents about what you share in our group without first asking your permission. And I want to ask each of you to be confidential with what is shared in our group. Can you commit to that? There is one exception and that is if you share something that leads me to believe your health is at risk or someone else's health is at risk—I will then talk to you privately about the appropriate people we should inform.

Having said that, I want you to know that I will be consistently encouraging you to talk to your parents about the topics we discuss. That is why I will send home a "Parent Sheet" that will introduce them to the topics we discussed. A great way to "honor your father and mother" is to work hard at good communication with them.

OPENING PRAYER

SAY: I want to open our discussion together with a verse from Scripture and a short prayer. Please open your Bibles to John 1:35-39.

Have a teen read the following:



"The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, 'What do you seek?' And they said to him, 'Rabbi' (which means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour."

—John 1:35-39

PRAY: Heavenly Father, I am grateful for the opportunity to gather with this group. Lord Jesus, thank You for the invitation to "come and see" and discover the special plan You have for us. Holy Spirit, be with us now and speak to our hearts during this session. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



DISCUSS

SAY: Let's watch the Scene 1.



Watch the Scene 1 video segment. The segment is about three minutes long.

SAY: Chris Stefanick said that there is a fundamental question that we all wonder about: Why am I here on this earth?

First we need to understand that the odds of us being here, in this room together, are astronomical.

Two scientists from Great Britain have shown mathematically that the odds of life being here on earth simply by chance is 1 out of 10 to the 40,000th power. (They did so by looking at how amino acids would have had to randomly sequence themselves to form a protein molecule.) Compare that to the number of drops of water in all the oceans of the world, estimated at 10 to the 26th power, and you see how large that number is. To put that number into perspective, we could safely say that it would be more probable for a tornado to sweep through a junkyard and assemble an iPad than for us to be sitting here by chance.



QUESTIONS

Ask the following questions, and give the teens a few minutes for each to share their answers.

SAY: I want to give each of you a chance to respond to the following questions, going from less serious to more serious:

- » Would you rather have a miniature pig or a monkey as a pet?
- » Would you rather go back in time and meet your ancestors or go into the future and meet your great grandchildren?
- » Why do some people believe that evolution proves there is no God?
- » What are some arguments for the existence of God?
(*Matter and energy cannot come from nothing; complexity and diversity of life; Jesus; miracles.*)



LEADER TIP: To go deeper into this topic, search "The Four Big Bangs" by Frank Pastore on the Internet for a fascinating five-minute video on the improbability of life happening by chance. Consider sending the link in an e-mail to parents.

SAY: Let's move on to Scene 2.



Watch Scene 2. Discuss the following questions after watching the five-minute segment.

- » If Jesus claims to have the answers to the questions of our hearts, what do you think prevents people from taking Christianity seriously?
- » Jesus asked His disciples the question: “Who do you say that I am?” If you were to survey students at your school with that question, what do you think would be some responses?
- » C.S. Lewis claimed that there are only three options for Jesus’ identity: liar, lunatic, or Lord. What do you think he meant by this?
(Jesus claimed to be God and went to His death to maintain that claim. If He really was not God, then He had to be lying or a lunatic. If he was lying then why carry it to His death? He could have easily renounced His claims and been spared. Also, if He was lying then we can no longer call Him a good moral teacher. He deceived millions of people if He was lying, and many were persecuted and killed in His name. If he was crazy, then why was He such a threat to the religious leaders? How did He engage in such intelligent debates with His opponents? Why is there nothing in historical writings that indicate He was crazy?)



COMMIT



ACTIVITY

TAKE AWAY

SAY: I am going to go around the circle, starting with the person on my right, and I’d like each of us to share something we remember that this person said tonight.

Take a minute and go around the group asking everyone to share briefly. Then continue.

I want to go around the circle again, this time starting with the person on my left, and I’d like each of us to share one take-away from tonight. In other words, share something that you heard tonight that has made an impression on you.

Take a minute and go around the room again.

I want to remind you to keep what was shared in our group tonight confidential. This will really help us to develop trust.

This week, we would like you to commit to praying one Hail Mary every day to Mary, the perfect disciple. Ask her to help you make a commitment to the process of discipleship and open your heart to her Son.



CLOSING PRAYER

Mother Mary. She followed Jesus from His birth to the foot of the cross. Let's close our time together asking for her intercession for us, that we might have the desire to respond to Jesus' invitation to "come and see."

Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death Amen.

After you close in prayer, thank the teens for coming and invite them to return.

SAY: Hey, I am really looking forward to seeing you next week! Thanks for being here.