

Involve Youth and Their Gifts

World Youth Day affords parishes and schools the perfect opportunity to highlight the gifts and ministerial abilities of young people, especially at Mass. Be sure that all youth are properly prepared and trained to perform the selected role. Ideally, these roles should not be performed by youth as a one-time event.

The young people who are recruited and trained to perform these roles also should be invited (if they are not already doing so) to serve on a regular basis at the parish by being placed on the regular Mass schedule throughout the year. Mentoring new youth into liturgical ministries by pairing them up with an experienced minister is another helpful way to involve the whole parish in its ministry to and with young people. In addition to the regular liturgical ministry roles, consider including a faith witness before Mass or at another appropriate time; liturgical drama to accompany a reading; and special attention to art and environment.

Highlight Youth Leadership

World Youth Day also is an excellent opportunity to highlight the young people who have given their time and talent throughout the year to contribute to the mission and life of the parish community. This acknowledgement of youth leadership helps offer the larger community a chance to grasp the active and involved nature of young people, as well as their calling to be partners with adults in sharing in the mission of the church. Consider some of the following ways to highlight these leaders:

- At the beginning of Mass or after the homily, invite the various heads of each committee or ministry group to call forward the young people who have participated in that ministry in the previous year.
- Invite youth to decorate a bulletin board with pictures or make a photo collage of young people doing various forms of ministry and service.
- Create a list of youth involved in leadership and include it in the parish bulletin.
- Have a dinner reunion and prayer service for past and present youth leaders that have served throughout the years.
- Use the “Blessing of Youth Ministry Leaders” to call forward and bless youth involved in parish ministry.

Create a Worship Aid

Develop a worship aid with the young people, outlining all of the components and songs for the World Youth Day Mass. Consider adding any of the following ideas to add some “thematic zest” to the material:

- Have the young people develop brief reflections and thoughts about youth and the church. Pull out some catchy sentences and phrases and place them throughout the worship aid.
- Print the prayers that young people may have written for the Mass, especially the general intercessions.
- Have the young people reflect on the Scripture readings and summarize select messages underneath

each reading in the worship aid or have youth share brief thoughts as to what the readings say to them, and record these in the worship aid.

- Print all of the names of those involved in the various roles during the parts of the liturgy, as well as all those responsible for planning.

Involve Youth in Service

World Youth Day usually falls on or near “Make a Difference Day”—a nationwide movement, sponsored by *USA Today*, to have people involved in service to their community. Take advantage of these two national events and plan a parish outreach event. Find out more at: www.usaweekend.com/diffday/index. Contact your local media and let them know of your plans, in case they would like to highlight your group as part of the day’s activities.

Resource 15—Lectionary Readings and Reflections

October 26, 2008—

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

First Reading: Exodus 22:20-26

Thus says the LORD:

“You shall not molest or oppress an alien,
for you were once aliens yourselves in the land
of Egypt.

You shall not wrong any widow or orphan.

If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me,
I will surely hear their cry.

My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword;
then your own wives will be widows, and your
children orphans.

“If you lend money to one of your poor neighbors among
my people,
you shall not act like an extortioner toward him
by demanding interest from him.

If you take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge,
you shall return it to him before sunset;
for this cloak of his is the only covering he has
for his body.

What else has he to sleep in?

If he cries out to me, I will hear him; for I am
compassionate.”

Commentary

Have you ever been down on your luck? Lost? Set apart from a group? Left out, ignored, or oppressed? Chances are that each of us has found ourselves on the margins at some point in our lives (unfortunately, some still do and some always will). This reading from Exodus, part of a section known as the “Book of the Covenant,” is a reminder that we should never forget what it was like, or is like, to be oppressed, and that we should always use compassion in responding to those who find themselves on the margins.

The widow and the orphan, just like refugees and aliens, were considered some of the most vulnerable groups during ancient times and deserved extra protection by society. The reference to returning one’s cloak had to do with the fact that cloaks were also used as one’s blanket and must be returned by nightfall so that the person had a covering for their body. All of the laws stated in this reading served as a reminder to the Israelites that they were to treat others with the same compassion and justice that God had shown them.

Compassion is one of the telling characteristics of discipleship. When we witness someone acting in a just and compassionate manner toward another, we see

God in the flesh; it is a moment of both incarnation and Christian witness.

Questions for Reflection

- When have you found yourself oppressed or placed on the margins by others? Who treated you with compassion at that time? Why?
- What incident of oppression or injustice have you witnessed? Were you active or passive while it occurred? What keeps people from taking a stand against injustice?
- How might you be called to be more compassionate in your life?

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

Response: I love you, Lord, my strength.

I love you, O LORD, my strength,

O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.

R: I love you, Lord, my strength.

My God, my rock of refuge,

my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!

Praised be the LORD, I exclaim,

and I am safe from my enemies.

R; I love you, Lord, my strength.

The LORD lives and blessed be my rock!

Extolled be God my savior.

You who gave great victories to your king

and showed kindness to your anointed.

R: I love you, Lord, my strength.

Commentary

This is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to God, acknowledging God’s active presence in the psalmist’s life. It serves to remind us that God protects us from harm’s way and serves as a rock of refuge, of strength, a fortress that no one can overcome. God’s protection also enables us to serve others with love, knowing that there is nothing that can ultimately harm us if we remain faithful to God.

Questions for Reflection

- What word or image of God used in this psalm speaks most powerfully to you? Why?
- If you were to describe God in a song to those who did not know of God, how might your refrain read?
- What type of strength do you receive from God? How does your faith in God enable you to do things that otherwise might seem hopeless or undesirable?

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Brothers and sisters:

You know what sort of people we were among you for your sake.

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit, so that you became a model for all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

For they themselves openly declare about us what sort of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to await his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.

Commentary

Dropping a pebble in a pond affects the entire pond. Lighting one candle in a darkened room illuminates the entire room to some degree. In this reading, Paul reminds the people of Thessalonica that their faith already has rippled out; their light of faith has begun to illuminate the neighboring towns and villages. He implores them to keep their faith alive and growing so that these ripples and lights become an even stronger and clearer message to everyone. True discipleship replicates itself. The mere presence of someone trying to follow Christ will inspire others to turn toward God, the Great I Am. The more we turn from false gods in our culture and in society, the more powerful our witness to the one, true God will be!

Questions for Reflection

- Name two people who have helped you to see God more clearly in your life.
- Share a time when someone's behavior or action influenced you to change your own behavior or action. Why did it have that impact upon you?
- Which speaks louder to you: actions or words? How are you "speaking" your faith to others?

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the greatest and the first commandment.

The second is like it:

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

Commentary

Discipleship in a sound bite: that is what Jesus gave the Pharisees, and gives us, in response to the question asked of him in this reading. The two great commandments that Jesus spoke of were very familiar to the Jews, because they came from the Torah—the first one from Deuteronomy (6:5) and the second from Leviticus (19:18). What Jesus adds to these two laws is his insistence that you cannot have one without the other. Jesus tells all of us that one simply cannot love God without serving others, nor can one serve others without loving God.

Both laws point to an "other-centeredness" that is at the root of discipleship. If it is only about our own wants and needs, then it is not true discipleship. Jesus underscores this fact by challenging the traditional notion of neighbor, using the story of the good Samaritan from Luke to lead his audience beyond the comfort zone of just being neighbor to those who are like you and whom you like. Instead, Jesus stretches us by inviting us to act with Christian love even toward those we dislike or of whom we might be fearful. Sound challenging? That is exactly the point Jesus had in mind as he reminds all of us in a couple of sentences what it takes to follow him.

Questions for Reflection

- If you were standing in the crowd listening to Jesus respond to the Pharisee, what might be going through your mind as you heard him answer the question in this way?
- What are some of the greatest challenges today to serving God through these two commandments?
- What are some ways that you can love God more with your heart, soul, and mind?

Overall Discussion

- Of the readings you heard, which spoke to you the most? Why?
- What part of the readings might speak most powerfully to the young people in our community? Why?
- How do these readings bring God to life?
- What good news comes from all that we have just discussed? How can we connect this good news to our young people, to youth ministry, and to our role as a community of faith in today's world and culture?

Commentary notes and readings referenced in part from *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers (1999—Year A)* by Lawrence E. Mick. Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, IL: 1998.

Resource 16—2008 World Youth Day Liturgical Planning Guide October 26, 2008— 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

What Is World Youth Day?

In 1985, Pope John Paul II invited young people from around the world to join him in Rome on Palm Sunday to observe the United Nations' International Year of Youth. At this gathering, the Holy Father initiated World Youth Day. In addition to the annual celebration of World Youth Day, the pope invites young people from around the world to gather with him approximately every other year for the International Gathering of World Youth Day.

World Youth Day is a day to celebrate youth (younger and older teens), in all of their diversity and goodness, and to encourage these young people to lead the church both now and into the future. The Catholic bishops of the United States, wanting to place full attention on the youth of our nation, voted to move the celebration in the U.S. from Palm Sunday to the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, this year occurring on October 26. During this weekend, parishes are invited to bless young people, involve them in all aspects of the Mass, affirm their leadership, and invite them to use their gifts in service to the church and the world.

A Message from the Pope...

Each year, the pope prepares a message to the young people of the world. The 2008 statement may be found online at www.vatican.va or www.nfcym.org.

Suggested Bulletin Announcements

The Weekend Prior to World Youth Day

Next weekend we will be honoring young people at all Masses as we celebrate World Youth Day, an annual celebration of youth begun by Pope John Paul II in 1985. Please join us in prayer and affirmation as we recognize the gifts of youth and encourage their full and active participation in the life of our faith community. (Add specific details of what will happen at and/or after all Masses.)

The Weekend of World Youth Day

This weekend we give thanks for young people and the many gifts and blessings they bring to our faith community as we celebrate World Youth Sunday, an annual celebration begun by Pope John Paul II in 1985. We ask for your ongoing prayers of support for each of them, their families, and those who minister to and with them along their journey of faith. (Include any parish plans or announcements regarding activities.)

Liturgical Recommendations for Parishes Celebrating World Youth Day

One of the primary goals of youth ministry is to involve the entire faith community in ministering to and with the young people. Therefore, it is recommended that young people be affirmed and celebrated at each of the Masses during World Youth Day, rather than highlighting them at just one weekend liturgy.

- Invite young people, and the adults who work with them, to serve in the various liturgical ministries connected with each Mass.
- Invite an older youth or two to offer a witness of their journey of faith before Mass begins or at another appropriate time.
- If World Youth Sunday cannot be celebrated on the 30th Sunday, then select another weekend at which the young people and their faith journeys may be celebrated.

Suggested General Intercessions for World Youth Sunday

There are four prayers of intercession required by the church (see the General Instruction of the Roman Missal 70), which are: "for the needs of the Church; for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world; for those burdened by any kind of difficulty; [and] for the local community." It is preferable that members of the planning team write additional prayers, but if not, consider these intentions (they also may write opening and closing prayers, for the presider):

- For young people, that they may respond to the call to ministry and leadership within their parish and school communities, let us pray to the Lord...

- In thanksgiving for all those who help to form, empower, and support young people in their ongoing journeys of faith, let us pray to the Lord...
- For all gathered here, that each of us commits to loving God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and to treating our neighbor with respect and dignity, let us pray to the Lord...

Recommended Music for Mass

The following songs and hymns are suggested, as they relate to the readings designated for the 30th Sunday of Ordinary Time.

With You By My Side
David Haas
GIA Publications

Come and Follow Me
Tom Franzak
GIA Publications

Love One Another
Bob Dufford, S.J.
Oregon Catholic Press

Only This I Want
Dan Schutte
Oregon Catholic Press

Lift Up Your Hearts to the Lord
Roc O'Connor, SJ
Oregon Catholic Press

What You Have Done for Me
Tony Alonso
GIA Publications

Thuma Mina/Send Me, Jesus
South African Hymn
GIA Publications

A Blessing of Youth Ministry Leaders

The presider invites all young people involved in ministry and service forward to pray the following blessing of their senses. If the group is small, the presider may wish to actually make the sign of the cross over the senses of each person. If the group is larger, a general motion of the sign of the cross may be used.

Presider: May the Lord bless your eyes so that you see the goodness and uniqueness of God in every person you meet.
May the Lord bless your ears so that you may listen and remain open to the diversity of needs that exist within this community.
May the Lord bless your lips so that you may speak the truth honestly, openly, and powerfully in all you do.
And may the Lord bless your hands that they may serve as extensions of Christ's as you reach out in compassionate service for the good of the kingdom.

Invite the entire assembly to extend their hands in solidarity

Presider: God of all life,
we ask you to bless these young people
whom you have called forth to serve.
Guide and sustain them in ministry
so that our community will be blessed
by the richness and diversity their leadership offers us.
Empower them to be prophetic voices of today
as they prepare to lead us into the possibilities of tomorrow.
We ask this blessing upon each of them,
in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing of Youth

This blessing may be prayed over all the young people in the assembly following the prayer after Communion. The presider should invite all young people to stand.

Presider: God of spirit and truth,
we ask your blessing upon these young people.
May they come to know and share the wonder and awe that is within them
as they grow in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
Bless their openness and enthusiasm,
strengthen and support the many good works they do.
Challenge and provoke them along their journeys of faith as
you guide them to understand their true calling in this world.
In all these things, we ask your blessing upon them this day,
in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For more information on prayers, blessings, and music to be used for World Youth Day as well as throughout the year, go to the NFCYM website: <http://www.nfcym.org/resources/ymrm/index.htm>. You also may order the 2008 Youth Ministry Resource Manual, *Our God, the Great I Am*, from the NFCYM.

Our God, the Great I Am 2008 Youth Ministry Resource Manual

[This prayer may be placed in pews or on prayer cards. The cards may be used for assembly prayer or given to parishioners, with the request that they pray for youth throughout the year.]

Our God, the Great I Am
revealed in creation;
we praise and thank you
for all that you have fashioned for us,
the land and water,
animals and birds;
we thank you.

Our God, the Great I Am
revealed in burning bush and whispering wind;
we praise and thank you
for all who have heard your call
and for those who have been part of
salvation history;
we thank you.

Our God, the Great I Am
revealed in Jesus Christ;
we praise and thank you
for loving us,
for Jesus' life, death, and resurrection,
and for leading us to follow him;
we thank you.

Our God, the Great I Am
revealed in others;
we praise and thank you
for our families, communities, friends,
and all those who show us who you are,
may we show you to others.

We thank you.

