

FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

SESSION 1: MADE FOR MORE

Thank you for being a facilitator on this retreat! We are very grateful that you can be present while we cannot. There are specific instructions that we will provide for you to assist in the facilitation of this retreat experience.

This whole day is about their identity in Christ and how they relate to the world. The following questions will appear during the video session, and the participants will have time to write down the answers in this fashion:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FROM THE VIDEO SESSION

OPENING

1. How are you coming to this retreat today? How are you feeling about this experience?
2. What hopes or expectations do you have for this retreat?

CLOSING

1. What do you think it means to be called to be more?
2. What is one way in which you desire to grow or change?
3. Have you ever experienced a call from God or known someone who experienced a call from God? What happened?

ACTIVITY: WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT...

This activity is designed to get students to look at the world around them and their place in it with wonder and find God's presence and influence in it through the eyes of awe. They are provided the following instructions:

The purpose of this activity is to give you a sense of wonder. When instructed, go and find an object which could fit on your desk. It can be something you brought or anything you find around you. Return to your seat when you find your object and await further instructions.

At this point, encourage them to spend a 2-5 minutes searching for an item of their choice. There is no limitation to what they can get, but it must come from the room or surroundings around them and it must fit on their desk or in their space.

When they return, encourage them to spend 5-10 minutes writing down as detailed a description of their item as possible. If it helps, give them guiding hints like asking them to write where the materials came from, or how it was made, or where they

imagine it has been shipped, who do you think has touched the object, etc. They will have the following instructions:

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Take a few minutes to describe your item comprehensively. Think of its scientific properties, its origins, its components, its story, its uses, etc.

When the students are finished writing, they should go around in a circle sharing what they have written. For every student, you should ask a question that challenges the student to think further about that object. For instance, if a student describes a rock as "old," you may ask, "can you imagine the days, the weeks, months, years of that rock? Where has it been, where it comes from?"

As the students finish sharing, lead a discussion to some key points:

- We are surrounded by **limitless love and possibility**. Every object, whether as large as a mountain, or as small as a molecule, or as simple as a pencil, invites us to explore a world that is more than ourselves.
- We should challenge ourselves, each day, to take a little time and sit in the **wonder of creation**, that we get to be in this world of inexhaustible complexity, innumerable stories, and measureless potential.
- All of these things have this quality, because everything around us comes from God, who is truly infinite. It's only when we fail to see the world around us as God sees it and made it, that we can get confused and see a pen, as just a pen, or worse a person, as just background to our lives.

**** WE, TOO, WERE CREATED BY GOD,
AND THUS ARE MAGNIFICENTLY COMPLEX AND WONDERFUL CREATIONS.
NOTHING AND NO ONE CAN LIMIT OUR WORTH OR OUR PURPOSE. ****

After the activity, turn their attention to the following questions in their packets:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS AFTER THE ACTIVITY

Consider the following questions and take some time to write your thoughts down:

1. How would you define the word, "wonder?"
2. Think about all the objects that surround you. How do you feel different about them, after this activity?
3. What keeps you from seeing objects in your everyday life in the way you saw them during this activity?

4. If you took 10 minutes each day to do something like this exercise, how do you think it would change you and your perspective?

5. If we remind ourselves that these objects were in some sense made by God, what does that tell us about God?

6. How does the way you feel about that object change, knowing God had a hand in you having it right now?

7. How do you think God wants you to relate to that object? To any object around you?

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SESSION 2: SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

Welcome to the second session of this retreat experience! We will explore what God could do with your life.

The students will have a time of prayer at the end of the video. After the prayer, they will jump right into the next activity:

ACTIVITY: WHAT IF...

The purpose of this activity is to give the retreatants a period of discernment of their futures and challenge them with the teaching of Ignatian indifference, which states that we should only desire that which brings us closer to God and should therefore have no preference for wealth over poverty, health over sickness, long life over a short one, etc. Our one choice should always be that which brings us closer to God.

To begin the activity, please instruct the retreatants to close their eyes and imagine their ideal future. It could be the kind of person they want to become or what they will do with their lives. The future could be as soon as the college they want to attend in a couple of years or as distant as the kind of loving grandparent they hope to be. After they sit for some moments to visualize their future, please pose several "what if" questions, which may cause the retreatants to adjust their ideal future. Give them 15-30 seconds between each question so they may reflect on the questions.

- What if your income level was not important to you?
- What if you could live anywhere in the world?
- What if you were not required to achieve the future your parents planned for you?
- What if first world luxuries and comfort levels did not matter to you?
- What if your ability to maintain current friendships did not influence your decision?
- What if you had all the time in the world to make this dream a reality?
- What if maintaining your image was not important to you?
- What if having power and control over yourself and others were not a factor in your image?
- What if it didn't matter to you what other people thought of your ideal future?

After giving them time to reflect, give them 10 minutes or so to complete the "side 1" activity. After they have finished, give them about 5 minutes or so to complete "side 2".

SIDE 1

On this side, draw an image of their ideal future. You can also make a collage of words that describe your ideal future, or any other illustration of what your ideal future will look like.

When you are finished, turn to side 2.

SIDE 2

On this side, write down or illustrate the ideas or things that could get in the way of you achieving your ideal future. When you are finished, wait for further instructions.

Ask for volunteers to share with the group what their ideal futures look like and what things may keep them from achieving them.

After a few share about their futures, begin a discussion on the idea of Ignatian indifference. Some key points are:

“Often, we think about freedom as freedom from interference from others, but St. Ignatius understood freedom ... as being detached enough from things, people, or experiences to be able either to take them up or to leave them aside...”

What does freedom mean to you? What do you think it means to be detached from things or people or experiences?

Ignatian indifference is “the capacity to let go of what doesn’t help me to love God or love others—while staying engaged with what does. Indifference does not mean not caring. One can be indifferent and yet be deeply passionate. Nothing and no one belongs to us. Every beloved person and every good creation belongs to God, including me.”

What do you think people need to let go of to help them love God or others better? What is something you think you might need to let go of to help you love God or others better?

God gifted us with food, nature, people, and so much more. He gave us these gifts for us to enjoy. When we allow those gifts to stop us from following God’s desires for us, they tend to bring us suffering, not joy. When we enjoy those gifts without being attached to them, we are free!

Jesus wants us to trust God and to allow God’s desires for us to unfold in our lives.

Matthew 6:25-27 – “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

(For more information, visit <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-indifference/>)

After the activity, please have the retreatants answer the following questions:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS AFTER THE ACTIVITY

1. What does Freedom of Detachment and Indifference mean in your life?
2. What things/people/ideas in your life do you think are holding you back from loving God and others?
3. To realize your ideal future, what things/people/ideas might you need to detach yourself from?
4. When you look into your future, what do you see yourself doing? What values/goals will you live by?
5. Has your image of your future changed based on this concept of indifference and your experience of this retreat so far?

OPTIONAL - Play the song "Control" by Tenth Avenue North at the end of the session or as they answer the questions quietly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFfztu8-bBQ>