

Discouragement

Pages F-1 through F-4
Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT

Song: Broken

CD 1, Track 6

Words and Music by: Ryan Meyers

FCYB Music CDs

Materials Needed

Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT, FCYB Music CDs, CD player, markerboard or chalkboard for the "Scripture Reflection" Large Group Discussion, pens/pencils and paper for the "A Guided Meditation" Large Group Activity.

Insert Reflection/Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Prayerfully read the 1 on 1 With Christ article on page F-4 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT**. Then immediately have two teens recite the following:

Leader

When I fall,
When I feel small,
When I feel broken,
When I feel needy,
When I doubt,
When I am tired,
When I am afraid,
When I am weary,

Response

Catch me, Lord.
Build me up, Lord.
Mend me, Lord.
Fulfill me, Lord.
Assure me, Lord.
Give me rest, Lord.
Calm me, Lord.
Comfort me, Lord.

Dear Lord, even in the toughest of times, help me to see that You are there.
Even when I am discouraged, help me to see Your will in whatever I may be going through.
When I can't speak, show me how to listen for You, for I know You are near, Amen.

Large Group Activity - "The Trust Game" (10 minutes)

Instructions for Game: Choose one teen to be "it." The rest of the teens should stand in a tight circle with their shoulders touching. "It" is in the middle. "It" is instructed to close his/her eyes and stiffen his/ her body. Next he/she is instructed to fall back trusting the group to catch him/her. Repeat several times with different teens in the center.

Follow with a discussion of the teens' answers to these questions:

Was it hard for you to trust your peers to catch you?
What did it feel like having the responsibility of catching someone?

Large Group Discussion - "Scripture Reflection" (15 minutes)

Write each of the Scripture passages in this section on a markerboard or chalkboard to display during the discussion. Then, after reading each, ask the teens to share their answers to these questions:

Ask: "Do you believe that Christ is in control?"
After a short discussion, read Luke 12:25-26.

Ask: "Do you believe God can make good things come from bad?"

After a short discussion, read Romans 8:28.

Ask: "Do you believe that God loves you and wants what is best for you?"

After a short discussion, read Romans 5:5.

Ask: "Do you believe that God can provide saving help?"

After a short discussion, read Lamentations 3:26.

Large Group Activity – "A Guided Meditation" (15 minutes)

Ask the teens to think about any situation that is causing them to be worried, anxious or discouraged. Encourage the teens to use their imaginations. Then, have them write these things on a piece of paper. Tell the group that you are going to read a meditation and that they should picture in their imagination everything that you describe to them. Ask the teens to get in a comfortable position, quieting their minds and their bodies. Ask them to close their eyes. Wait until everyone is quiet. Then have the adult leader read the following guided meditation slowly in a calm and soothing voice.

Adult Leader: Close your eyes. Imagine that you are in your bedroom. Take a minute to picture yourself sitting on your bed. What does your room look like? How is your furniture arranged? Is it clean or cluttered? Next to you on your bed you notice a backpack. Now think about one of the things you are worried or anxious about. Picture it as a heavy and jagged rock. Put the rock into the backpack. Do this with each of the things you just wrote down. These are the things that you feel discouraged about. Now pick up the backpack. Put it on your back. It is extremely heavy. It weighs you down. Next, picture yourself at the front doors of your Church. Walk into the Church. It is empty. Candles are lit on the altar. The Eucharist is exposed for adoration. Soft music is playing. Walk down the aisle and sit down in front of the altar. Now, take off the backpack. Rub your weary shoulders. Open your bag. One by one, take out your worries, your anxieties the things that make you feel bad and place them before the altar.

Then you hear a voice say to you, "Never forget that I love you." "In the warmth of my love no hurt will last too long, no pain will ever be too severe, and no challenge will ever be too great for me to overcome." "Trust me!" God invites you to give your problems to Him. When you do, He will lift the burden and surround you with love. Take a deep breath and let those things that bother you go. Say to God, "Take all of Me!" In His warm embrace, you will be healed and made whole. Now, pick up the empty backpack, bow before the Lord, and walk out of the Church. (Pause in silence.)

Music Reflection/Closing (10 minutes)

Play the song "Broken" by Ryan Meyers. CD 1, Track 6 on the FCYB Music CDs.

(All leave in silence)

Bed Thinks:

When you go to bed tonight, think about what God said to you in the guided meditation . . .

"In the warmth of my love, no hurt will ever last too long, no pain will ever be too severe and no challenge will ever be too great for me to overcome."

(Type this message on a small piece of paper and give to each teen as they leave.)

Discouragement

Pages F-5 through F-8
Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT

Song: Broken

Words and Music by: Ryan Meyers

CD 1, Track 6

FCYB Music CDs

Materials Needed

Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT, FCYB Music CDs, CD player, a notepad for each teen to use in the Opening Prayer and for each teen (or group) to use for the What Jesus Said Large Group Discussion, a Video/DVD player and tape/DVD of a salmon swimming upstream for the Putting My Faith Into Action – In My Example Large Group Discussion.

Setting the Stage

No special arrangements are needed to set the stage for this session plan.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

What Jesus Did

Begin by proclaiming Luke 9:41 at the top of page F-5 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Then, ask the teens to reflect on this Scripture passage as you read the article on the same page. When you have finished reading the article, encourage them to individually verbally complete this sentence:

Lord, when I get discouraged, help me to have the faith to . . .

After each teen who wants to volunteer a prayer has finished, conclude with this prayer (or a similar prayer from your heart):

*Jesus, please forgive me for the times when I showed lack of faith in You.
Increase my faith so that I know, without a doubt, that Your love and
encouragement will get me through any challenge I face, Amen.*

Putting My Faith Into Action

Small Group Discussion – “The Power of Prayer” (15 minutes)

Divide the teens into groups of two or three to discuss the To Make or Break and Tips for Talking entries on page F-7 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**.

Make - Share with each other something that is discouraging you. After each sharing, hold hands and pray for God’s blessing on each other or pray an “Our Father” together.

Tips for Talking - Share with each other something that you really appreciate about any of the members of your group. Encourage each other that each of you can be there in times when any of you are discouraged or depressed.

Remind the teens how important praying together can be as a way of sharing their faith.

What Jesus Said

Large Group Discussion - “Challenges in Our Lives” (15 minutes)

Read the What Jesus Said article on page F-6 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Then ask the teens to list (either individually or as a group discussion) problems or challenges that teens face that cause them to be discouraged. Have the teens identify each item as being either “major” or “minor.” Then, make two columns as follows on a markerboard or chalkboard for all to see. (Leave space for a third column to the right of these columns for later discussion.)

<i>Problems or Challenges in Our Lives</i>	
<i>Major Challenges</i>	<i>Minor Challenges</i>

Ask the teens to share their list, write each example under the appropriate column. Then, discuss the teens’ answers to the following question:

Do you really believe that Jesus can help get you through the challenges that you face?

(Share with the teens a time when you were discouraged and Jesus helped you through it.) After this discussion, return to the list on the board by writing **Jesus’ Response(s)** as a third column to the right of the lists the teens have created. Ask the teens to suggest what Jesus’ response(s) (in answer to their prayers) about each of these problems might look like in their lives. Discuss their answers.

Putting My Faith Into Action

Large Group Discussion – (15 minutes)

If possible, show a video clip of the salmon swimming up-stream. Then, have the teens read the In My Example article on page F-8 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Then, discuss the teens’ answers to these questions:

What does the lesson of the salmon swimming up-stream teach us about discouragement?

Do you ever feel like living a Christian life is just as hard in today’s culture? Encourage them to give some specific examples.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Encourage the teens to offer any prayers of intercession for any family member or friend who might be discouraged or facing major challenges. Follow-up with by praying together:

A Disciples Prayer in Regard to Discouragement

Dearest Jesus, even You faced discouragement from time to time. When I am there, inspire me to turn to You in prayer for help and encouragement. Give me the strength to avoid the temptation for self-centered sin by helping me to focus on others and not myself as a way to recover balance in my life. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Mindful in the Morning

When you wake up in the morning, before you get out of bed, say to Jesus . . .

“There is nothing that will happen to me today that You and I can’t handle together.”

(Type this message on a small piece of paper and give to each teen as they leave.)