

The First Beatitude

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

True or False

1. _____ Poor people are basically lazy.
2. _____ There are very few people who are poor on Long Island.
3. _____ Welfare does not work and should be ended.
4. _____ All poor people should be put to work for any money they get from the government.
5. _____ We should not allow poor people from other countries to come to America.
6. _____ I would much rather be rich than be poor.
7. _____ Jesus was very rich according to the gospels.
8. _____ Jesus always associated with the rich and spoke very highly of the rich.
9. _____ Our Church teaches us that we should avoid the poor at all costs.
10. _____ Our Church does too much for the poor; we should stay out of politics.

Jesus says:

- Mark 14: 4 and 5 "There were some who were indignant. 'Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor.'"
- Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."
- John 12: 8 "You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."
- Luke 12: 22 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life and what you will eat, or about your body and what you will wear."

Objective: To help teenagers reflect on the importance of being poor in spirit.

Icebreaker: Think of a time in your life when you needed money and someone helped you out.

Introduction: We will look at the Beatitudes and try to figure out what Jesus means by them and how we can live them today.

True or False:

1. Do you know any lazy people? Have you ever been lazy yourself? Are all lazy people poor? Do you know any poor people who want to work and have a job?
2. How many poor people are there on Long Island? How would you find out? Would you want poor people to live in your neighborhood? Are there any poor people in your community?
3. Why do you think welfare does not work? What is the alternative?
4. What if a person is sick or disabled? What if a single mother or father has several children to watch and cannot make enough to afford daycare for the children?
5. How much money should people have before they are allowed to come to America? How much money did your parents, grandparents, or greatgrandparents have before they came to America?
6. What are some of the disadvantages of being rich? Will being rich really bring you happiness? Why does Jesus say that the poor are "blessed" ?
7. Which gospel? 8. Which gospel? 9. Which Church? 10. In what ways can our Church do more for the poor? What are some ways the Church should be involved in politics and some ways it should not be involved in politics?

Jesus says:

Mark 14: 4 and 5 Are there some times when we need to spend money on building churches and religious art and not give that money to the poor?

Matthew 6:24 What happens when you try to serve God and money?

John 12:8 Will the poor always be with us? Is this an excuse for inaction?

Luke 12:22 Does this mean that we don't have to work for a living? Can I just sit back and do nothing and wait for God to provide?

"Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted." Matthew 5:4

MOURNING

1. Many people have the idea that it is "unmanly" for a guy to shed tears in public. How do you feel about this?
2. What do you think about wakes? Have you ever attended a wake? At what age do you think children should be brought to wakes?
3. Some teenagers get upset when they go to a wake of a person they loved very much, like a grandfather or a grandmother, and they see people laughing and telling stories. They feel this shows no respect for the person who has died. How do you feel about this?
4. With regard to mourning, many counsellors talk about going through "stages" of mourning. The first stage is denial. Why would a person want to deny that a death has taken place?
5. Another stage in facing death is called anger. Why do you think a person would respond to death with anger? How does this help in coping with the death of someone you love?

COMFORTING

1. You have just found out that your best friend's father has passed away suddenly due to a heart attack. How would you comfort your friend?
2. A time in my life when I needed comforting was
3. Do you find that your belief in Jesus is more of a comfort or a challenge?
4. The most comforting person I know is ...
5. If you really needed comforting about a tough loss or problem, would you go to your parents or your friends?

JESUS SAYS:

- Luke 9: 52 "All were weeping and mourning for her, when he said, 'Do not weep any longer, for she is not dead, but sleeping.'"
- Mark 12: 43 "Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, 'Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury.'"
- Matthew 22:32 "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."
- John 11: 35 "And Jesus wept."

Objective: To help teenagers reflect on their experiences of death and loss and to share about the importance of comforting others in times of loss.

Icebreaker: The first time I ever went to a wake was ...

Introduction: We will look at the Second Beatitude and talk about what it means to mourn and be comforted.

MOURNING:

1. Why does the myth of men not being able to cry in public still persist?
2. What are some of the benefits of a wake? What are some of the drawbacks?
3. Why do some people laugh and share stories at wakes? Should wakes be just serious affairs?
4. How does denial help a person face death?
5. When do you usually get angry? When was the last time you were angry? How does anger help in facing the problems of life? Do you tend to avoid angry people or to confront them about their anger?

COMFORTING:

1. Is it always important to comfort someone with words? What does your presence say at a moment of loss and suffering?
2. How did you feel when you were comforted?
3. In what ways can our belief in Jesus be a challenge to us?
4. What did you learn from this person about giving comfort to others?
5. Do you feel closer to your parents or your friends at this time in your life?

JESUS SAYS:

1. How does our belief in Jesus change our attitude toward death? (Luke 9:52)
2. Why are widows sometimes so generous? (Mark 12:43)
3. In what ways is God the God of the living? (Matthew 22:32)
4. Why did Jesus weep in public at this time in his life? (John 11:35)

"Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land." Matthew 5:5

TOM Tom is trying out for the football team for the first time. He is playing fairly well and thinks he might just make the team. He sees that it is coming down to him and one of his friends, Josh. Josh is the silent type while Tom is more boisterous and outgoing. Tom feels bad that he is in such a close competition with a friend; but he really wants to make the team. After practice one of the guys complains to the coach about a jacket that was taken out of his locker. The coach calls the team together and wants the person who took it to return it to him. Tom knows that if he starts a rumor about Josh taking the jacket that it will increase his chances of making the team. He doesn't want to do this; but he really wants to make the team and so he starts the rumor. The coach hears about it and calls Josh in and Josh meekly denies it. The coach decides to take Tom on the team instead of Josh. Tom has a great season and is voted All League. Josh attends every game and roots for his friend and is very happy at how well he did.

LINDA The Junior Prom is approaching and Linda is wondering whom she will go with. She really likes this guy Tim but he has been going out with Susie for about three months. She sees Tim every day in her Math class and they joke around alot. One day Tim sees really upset and in no mood for joking around. Linda wonders what's wrong and so talks to Tim after the Math class. They both cut the next class and try to work out the problem. It seems as though Tim is upset with Susie because she is working so much and not spending enough time with him. Linda tries to get Tim to see that Susie needs to work because she is helping her family and that Susie really likes Tim alot. After their talk Tim feels alot better and he decides to buy some flowers for Susie. Linda is wondering about the Junior Prom.

JESUS SAYS:

- John 2: 4 "And Jesus said to her, 'Woman how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.'"
- Luke 7: 7 "Therefore I did not consider myself worthy to come to you; but say the word and let my servant be healed."
- Mark 15: 5 "Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed."
- Matthew 9: 25 "When the crowd was put out, he came and took her by the hand, and the little girl arose."

Objective: To help teenagers reflect on the value of being meek and applying that value to their own lives.

Icebreaker: The pushiest person I know is ...

Introduction: We will look at the Third Beatitude and talk about the true meaning of being meek.

TOM:

1. What do you think of what Tom did?
2. Do you think Josh would have made the team if he was less meek in his denials about taking the jacket?
3. Do you think Josh would have been meek if he found out about what Tom had done?
4. How do you feel about Josh's attitude?
5. Do you think the silent types do better in life or the people who are more outgoing?

LINDA:

1. Do you think Linda did the right thing?
2. Was Tim justified in getting upset at Susie?
3. Could Linda have exploited this opportunity to get closer to Tim?
4. If you were Susie, how would you feel about what Linda did?

Jesus says:

- John 2:4 Why do you think Jesus does not want to do this miracle? It almost seems like Jesus does not want anyone to know what he can do.
- Luke 7:7 Why does this centurion ask so little of Jesus?
- Mark 15:5 Why doesn't Jesus defend himself more with Pilate?
- Matthew 9:25 Why does Jesus do this miracle so quietly? Why is he so gentle with this girl?

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst
for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied." Matthew 5:6

Bobby is very concerned about the problem of hunger in our world.
He cannot understand why anyone in our world has to be hungry
in this day and age. He is trying to work on a solution.

Karen is very upset when she hears jokes that put down people of different
races, colors, or nationalities down. She never laughs at those
jokes and often says things to the person who is doing the "joking".

Tom is wondering why so many people pollute the earth and don't seem to
really care. He sees people his own age litter and not think twice
about it. Yesterday he went up to someone at the local drugstore and asked
them to pick up a candy wrapper that the person just dropped on the sidewalk.

Jenny can't stand it when she sees homeless men and women in our community
wandering around the streets with shopping carts. She always asks
them if they need something to eat and has brought several home for a good
meal and a place to stay for a few days.

JESUS SAYS:

Matthew 25: 40 "And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say
to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers
of mine, you did for me.'"

John 2: 16 "... and to those who sold doves he said, 'Take these out
of here, and stop making my Father's house a marketplace.'"

Luke 16: 25 "Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received
what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise
received what was bad; but now he is comforted here,
whereas you are tormented.'"

Mark 10: 21 "Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, 'You
are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and
give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven;
then come, follow me.'"

Objective: To challenge teenagers to reflect on social justice issues in their own community and in the world.

Icebreaker: When I think of a person who works for justice and to make our world better, I think of...

Introduction: We will look at the Fourth Beatitude and talk about justice issues.

Bobby: What do you feel is the solution to the problem of hunger in our world? Is this problem too large; or can you really make a difference?

Karen: Is Karen right to put people down who tell racial jokes? Have you ever told a racial joke? Is there anything wrong with telling racial jokes?

Tom: Is Tom too fanatical? How would you handle it if you saw someone littering? Are environmental concerns really that important to you?

Jenny: How would you react if your sister brought a homeless man to your house to stay for the night? Would you be afraid? What are some ways you would like to help the homeless?

Jesus says:

Matthew 25:40 When you are helping someone, do you really think you are helping Jesus?

John 2:16 Are there any ways today that we turn God's house into a marketplace?

Luke 16:25 Do you feel that we have to wait until heaven to be rewarded for our good deeds?

Mark 10:21 Would you be willing to sell everything that you had and to follow Jesus completely?

" Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy."

Matthew 5:7

True or False

1. It is merciful to help my friends only _____ .
2. It is merciful to forgive my friends who do not pay me back what they owe _____ .
3. I am not being merciful when I get angry at someone and start to yell at them _____ .
4. If one of my friends at school is into drugs, it is merciful to tell his or her parents _____ .
5. One of the girls I know at school is thinking about having an abortion. It is merciful if I talk her out of it _____ .
6. One of my friends told the principal that I stole money from a classmate's locker. It is merciful if I forgive my friend _____ .
7. My parents are divorced and are fighting bitterly. I am being merciful when I try to reconcile them and to make their marriage work _____ .

JESUS SAYS:

- Mark 5:34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."
- Matthew 12:35 " A good person brings forth good out of a store of goodness, but an evil person brings forth evil out of a store of evil."
- John 12:7 So Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial."
- Luke 22:51 But Jesus said in reply, "Stop, no more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him.

Leaders' Guide

The Fifth Beatitude

Objective: To help teenagers decide about what it means to be truly merciful.

Icebreaker: The most merciful person I know is

Introduction: We will look at the Fifth Beatitude and talk about the meaning of mercy.

True or False statements:

1. False. Are you more comfortable helping your friends? Do you find it difficult to reach out to others whom you do not know?
2. True. How do you approach your friends when they have not paid you back? How long should you keep after your friends to repay you?
3. False. What is the relationship between anger and mercy? Can you be merciful towards someone and still be angry at them?
4. True/False. Do the parents have a right to know? Do I have an obligation to tell them? What if the drug problem is a serious one?
5. True/False. Will my conversation help my friend? If she decides to have an abortion, how will I continue to reach out to her?
6. True. Should I forgive my friend if I did not steal the money? Should I forgive my friend if I did steal the money? Should I forgive my friend if he/she stole the money?
7. False. Is it my responsibility to make my parents' marriage work? Am I to blame if my parents' marriage does not work?

Jesus says:

Mark 5:34: How important is faith for healing? Why did Jesus heal people?

Matthew 12:35: How can you tell if a person is good or evil?

John 12:7: Was this woman right to anoint Jesus?

Luke 22:51: Why was Jesus opposed to violence? Should the apostles have continued to oppose those who came out to arrest Jesus?

" Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God."

Matthew 5:8

JOHN John is thinking about whether or not he should have sex with his girlfriend. They have been going together for two months and all his other friends who have been going out with their girlfriends for that long have had sex. They are all asking him about it and he is starting to feel uncomfortable. He is an altar server and he tries to be a good Catholic. He knows that the Church teaches that a young person should wait until marriage to have sex but he doesn't quite understand why the Church teaches this. It seems to him that all his friends are having sex and he doesn't want to be different.

SUSAN Susan has been going out with John for two months. She knows that alot of her friends have had sex with their boyfriends when they have been going out that long. John hasn't discussed it with her yet; but she knows they will be speaking about it soon. She knows that the Catholic Church teaches that you should wait until marriage to have sex. She was very happy that John was an altar server because she thought he would respect the teachings of the Church. She wants to follow the teachings of her Church; but she doesn't want to lose John. She really loves him.

JESUS SAYS:

Luke 9:29 While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became daziling white.

Mark 4:7 Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it produced no grain.

Matthew 5:28 But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

John 4:16 Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back."

Objective: To help teenagers reflect on the meaning of the gift of sexuality.

Icebreaker: The sexiest person I know is

Introduction: We will look at the Sixth Beatitude and talk about what it means to be clean of heart.

JOHN: Can your friends really pressure you to have sex? Why does the Church teach that we should wait until we are married to have sex? Do you feel that you should have sex if all of your friends are?

SUSAN: Is it important to discuss your feelings about sexuality with your boyfriend/girlfriend? What should you do if you have strong differences in your opinion about sexuality? What would be more important for you: following the teachings of the Church with regard to sexuality or losing your boyfriend because he does not agree with those teachings?

Jesus says:

Luke 9:29 How can prayer help us to be clean of heart? How important was prayer in the life of Jesus?

Mark 4:7 What are some temptations that can choke the good impulses within us? What are some things that can lead us to produce no grain in our lives?

Matthew 5:28 What is the relationship between lust and adultery? How does lust effect us when we are trying to be clean of heart? What is the relationship between lust and desire?

John 4:16 This woman is impressed with Jesus' knowledge. It is obvious that Jesus knows everyting about us. How does that make you feel? Is it important to you that you have secrets that nobody knows about?

" Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God."

Matthew 5:9

True and False

1. _____ Nuclear war is always wrong.
2. _____ There is too much violence in my school.
3. _____ As a country, we spend too much on the military and not enough to help people who are in need.
4. _____ If I was in the army and I was ordered to kill innocent civilians, I would obey that order.
5. _____ Peace in our world today is best accomplished through the United Nations.
6. _____ The United States was justified to drop the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the Second World War.
7. _____ People who choose to be conscientious objectors to war are really cowards.

JESUS SAYS:

- John 18:11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?"
- Luke 12:5 "I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one."
- Mark 5:39 He woke up, reuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Quiet! Be still!"
- Matthew 5:39 But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well.

Objective: To help teenagers understand what it means to be a peacemaker.

Icebreaker: The most violent person I know is

Introduction: We will look at the Seventh Beatitude and talk about what it means to be a peacemaker.

True and False:

- (1) True. Nuclear war, since it involves the destruction of innocent life, would always be considered by the Catholic Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2314).
- (2) how do you feel about the violence in your school?
- (3) how important is a strong defense? If we took the money that we spend on the military and put it towards helping those in need, would we be able to eliminate poverty?
- (4) is it more important to obey legitimate orders or to follow my conscience?
- (5) does the United States give up some of its independence when it goes along with the recommendations of the United Nations? Should we send our troops to participate in United Nations peacekeeping activities?
- (6) could we have ended that war in any other way? Were we justified in killing innocent noncombatants?
- (7) do you think we should continue to make provision for conscientious objectors in our laws?

Jesus says:

- John 18:11 Why does Jesus want Peter to put his sword away? Do you think Jesus would join the army today?
- Luke 12:5 According to Jesus, of whom should we really be afraid?
- Mark 5:39 Jesus brought peace even to storms in nature. What kind of peace can Jesus bring us today?
- Matthew 5:39 Is passive resistance really possible? If someone were to start a fight with you, could you really act in this way?

" Blessed are they who are persecuted
for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:10

ROBERT Robert was at his locker at school one day and he overheard a very upsetting conversation between two of his classmates. They were talking about selling drugs in school the next day. Robert at first thought he would just stay out of this situation; but then his conscience began to really bother him. What if one of his friends would be hurt by the drugs that were sold? Should he get involved or should he do nothing?

He decided that he just couldn't sit back and be silent. He went to the principal and reported what he had heard. His two classmates were apprehended by some undercover police in the act of selling the drugs. The classmates realized that Robert must have been the informant and they decided to make his life as miserable as possible by beating him up, degrading him in front of others, and taking things out of his locker. Robert wondered, "Did I do the right thing?"

JENNIFER Jennifer is the star goalie on the soccer team. The team is undefeated and heading for the playoffs. After the final regular season game, she hurt her ankle running during practice. She told her coach about the injury; but she was an All County player so the coach decided to keep her in the playoff games. Unfortunately she let in the winning goal in the first playoff game when she slipped because of her weak ankle. Everyone on the team was giving her a hard time about missing an easy save. She just kept her mouth shut and took it all in.

JESUS SAYS:

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.

John 15:18 If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first.

Luke 17:25 But first he must suffer greatly and be rejected by this generation.

Mark 6:18 John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Objective: To help teenagers reflect on ways that they can be persecuted for their beliefs.

Icebreaker: One time in my life when I felt persecuted was

Introduction: We will look at the Eighth Beatitude and talk about what it means to be persecuted.

Robert: If you were Robert, what would you have done?
Should you get involved if you know students are selling drugs in school?
If you don't get involved, who should?
What should Robert do now to stop the abuse he is getting?
Would you blame Robert if he was silent the next time he heard about a drug sale at school? Does intimidation like this usually work in schools?

Jennifer: Should the coach have allowed Jennifer to play?
Should Jennifer have tried to play?
Did Jennifer let her team down?
Should Jennifer let her teammates know about her injury?
If you were one of Jennifer's teammates, would you be on her case because she allowed the winning goal to score?
Have you ever been in a situation where you have just had to keep your mouth shut?

Jesus says:

Matthew 5:44 Is it really possible to love your enemies?

John 15:18 Should we expect to be hated if we really follow Jesus?

Luke 17:25 How would you feel if people rejected you because you were following one of the teachings of Jesus?

Mark 6:18 Was John wrong to say the truth to Herod? Isn't it better to be "diplomatic"?