

Meeting Jesus:

Purpose

Using a modified version of *Lectio Divina*, this evangelization session provides an engaging experience for high school participants to encounter Jesus through the lens of three different Scripture passages as well as through the contemporary, Catholic music of John Angotti. This session can be done with 15 participants or more.

Session at a Glance

- 7:00 p.m. Gathering and Welcome
- 7:05 p.m. What is Your Image of Jesus? Group Survey Activity
- 7:15 p.m. Opening Prayer Service – Who Do You Say That I Am? “God Is”
Extend the Session: Personal Journaling/Drawing Reflection Experience on Images of Jesus (add 15 minutes)
- 7:25 p.m. Let the Journey Begin! Meeting Jesus through the Scriptures
 - Group 1: The Calling of the First Disciples, Luke 5:1-11
 - Group 2: The Gathering of the Nations, Matthew 25: 31-40
 - Group 3: Be My Shepherd, Feed My Lambs, John 21:15-19

Extend the Session: Personal Journaling/Drawing Reflection Experience on Images of Jesus (15 minutes)

A great way to extend this session and “go deeper” with high school youth is to offer the participants the opportunity for more personal reflection time through journaling and/or drawing. During this time, have soft, reflective, instrumental music playing, and encourage participants to journal about and/or draw their image of Jesus as a child, what their current image of Jesus is today, and what they think their image of Jesus will be 10 years into the future.

Materials Needed

- Songs by John Angotti (World Library Publications): “God Is” (*Stand in the Light*), “Come and Follow Me” (*Common Ground*), “Whatever You Do” (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*), and “Feed My Lambs” (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*) (see #1 in Prepare in Advance)
- 4 CD-Rs (Recordable CDs on which you can burn music). On each CD, you will need to burn the 4 John Angotti songs. (See #1 in Prepare in Advance)
- 3 Bibles
- 3 CD players
- **Resource 1, 2, and 3—Let the Journey Begin!**, one copy for each of the small group leaders
- Table for prayer space, colored tablecloth, crucifix or cross, a few different images of Jesus, candle, etc.
- Newsprint
- Masking tape
- Markers
- Pens, one for each participant
- Paper (8_ x 11) cut into quarter size pieces, one quarter sheet for each participant
- Stickers (dots or stars)
- Nametags
- Refreshments

Prepare in Advance

1. ‘High Tech’ Version: Request the assistance of one of your high school youth leaders and/or adult leaders who can be the Music Coordinator for this session; it is important she/he has a basic understanding of iTunes. You will need to acquire four songs by contemporary Catholic artist, John

Angotti, whose CDs are from World Library Publications: “God Is” (*Stand in the Light*), “Come and Follow Me” (*Common Ground*), “Whatever You Do” (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*), and “Feed My Lambs” (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*).

If you do not own these CDs, you can easily download these songs for only 99 cents each from the iTunes Online Music Store, either with a credit card or through an iTunes Gift Card, which you can pick up in a Best Buy, Walgreens, etc. You will need to have the iTunes software already on your computer; if you do not have it, you can download it at [iTunes Software](#), or simply ask the young person and/or adult to do this for you.

After purchasing and downloading these four songs to your computer, create a new playlist in iTunes, right click on each song you have purchased, and click “Add to Playlist.” After you have done this, insert your first blank CD-R into your computer’s CD-ROM drive, and right click on the playlist you have just created, clicking “Burn Playlist to Disc.” This process will take a couple of minutes to copy to the CD. When finished, eject the CD, and insert your second blank CD-R, then the third and finally the fourth CD. After copying all of these CDs, check to make sure they work in the CD players you will be using for the evening, as certain older CD players may not play CD-Rs.

For an experienced iTunes user, this should take no longer than an hour of preparation time, and it is time well spent. Copyright notice: If you purchase from iTunes, you own the listening privileges to the songs you purchased and can burn copies of the songs to CD-Rs for your own personal use. However, these burned CDs and/or songs cannot and should not be distributed to others, as this would break copyright laws.

‘Low Tech’ Version: You can purchase each of the John Angotti CDs and use them in your program, or you can consider substituting a song with one of your own that fits the theme, if you choose.

2. Invite a young person to proclaim the short Scripture passage for the opening prayer. Give her/him a copy of the Bible and mark the Scripture passage, Matthew 16:13-16. Go over with the participant any words she/he may not know how to pronounce, and inform her/him that you will signal her/him at the right time during the opening prayer to read the Scripture.
3. Create a prayer space in the meeting room with the colored tablecloth, cross, Bible, and candle.
4. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and nametags. **Hospitality is important**: As the leader, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.
5. Have three sheets of newsprint out and ready, along with the markers and tape. Also, have the stickers ready for each participant – each will need five stickers total.
6. Setup three different spaces for small groups to meet with a Bible and a CD player. Also, select in advance three responsible youth and/or adult leaders to lead the small group breakout experiences. You will want to go over this session with them in advance.

Session Outline

Gathering and Welcome (5 minutes)

As participants are arriving, welcome young people into an upbeat environment, with contemporary Christian music playing in the background. Greet the participants warmly as they arrive, and give everyone a nametag. Encourage youth and adult leaders to mingle among those that are showing up, to create a sense of excitement and welcome.

Opening Group Activity: Survey—What is Your Image of Jesus? (10 minutes)

Invite all the participants to come together in a central location. Introduce the theme of the night by saying the following:

In today's world, we hear all kinds of different things people are saying about Jesus. When you think of Jesus, what images come to mind? For example, when I think of Jesus, I think of "Savior" and "servant." However, what are some of the images of Jesus that come to your mind? Together, let us try to come up with as many different images of Jesus that are possible. When you are ready, name your image out loud so we can add it to the newsprint.

Invite participants to voice out loud their images. As they voice them, write them on the left side of the newsprint, leaving a space to the right. After you have a long list of at least 20-30 images, thank the participants for their input. Begin the next part of this opening activity by saying the following:

This is a great, diverse list of images! As you all can see, there are many different images of Jesus that people have today. Now, I am going to give each of you five stickers. With these stickers, I want you to go up to the newsprint and place a sticker next to your five favorite images of Jesus. We want to find out what the Top 5 images of Jesus are in our youth ministry. On your mark, get set, go!

After the participants have finished, pick out the top 5 most popular images with the most stickers, and voice those out loud to the group. Thank them for their participation, and have them sit back down together as a group. Lead the group into the opening prayer service with the following words:

These are many different images of Jesus. But, who do you say that Jesus is? Have you ever meet Jesus before in your personal life, in Scripture, or in your prayer? (Pause for a moment).

When have you experienced Jesus as a "friend" or a "healer" or a "<insert your own group's images>." (Pause for a moment).

Did you know there is a difference between *knowing about* Jesus and *knowing* Jesus? Think about it: have you ever had someone come up to you and say they *knew* you, but really, they only knew things *about* you? While many of these images we listed are things we know *about* Jesus, tonight's experience will hopefully help us to get to *know* Jesus better, not just *know about* him.

By coming to know Jesus, you can learn to listen to his voice, follow his call for your life, and become his disciples. Through the power of Scripture, which is God's revealed word and love letter to each of us as God's beloved, and through the powerful, contemporary music of Catholic artist John Angotti, we will slow down and have an opportunity to hear Jesus' voice. Now, let us begin in prayer.

Opening Prayer Service: Who Do You Say That I Am? "God Is" (10 minutes)

Cue the song, "God Is," on the CD player.

Gather

Prayer Leader: (*begin with the Sign of the Cross*)

Gentle and Holy One, as we reflect upon this present moment, may we take a deep breath and let go of our heavy experiences and needless anxieties, so we may be softened by the silence of your calming presence among us tonight. May we be open to the mystery of You, become inspired by your Word, and be filled with the joy that is You. We ask this through Jesus, Your Son. Amen.

Listen

Invite the reader to proclaim Matthew 16:13-16. After a few moments of quiet reflection after the reading, play the song, "God Is."

Respond

Prayer Leader:

As you heard this Scripture reading and the song "God Is" tonight, reflect quietly about who you really think Jesus is in your life. (Pause for short reflection time.)

Go Forth

Prayer Leader:

Loving God, we give you thanks for your indescribable gifts to us. Open our hearts and our minds to hear your voice tonight, especially in the words of Scripture, which is your loving words to us, and in the experience of being together in this parish community. Help us to receive your word joyfully and may we learn to live it out in our ordinary, everyday lives. Let this new journey begin! We offer this prayer through Christ your Son. Amen.

Let the Journey Begin! Meeting Jesus through the Scriptures (40 minutes)

Note to Leader: The process, described below, is a modified form of *Lectio Divina* which is process for praying with Scripture that has been used in our tradition for centuries.

Give each small group leader a copy of **Resource 1, 2, or 3** (corresponding to group assignments below). The small group leader will introduce and lead this part of the session.

After the prayer, divide the participants into three small groups in a fun way of your own choosing. Next, have the youth and/or adult leaders move their small groups to the three designated small group areas.

Group 1 is going to reflect upon "The Calling of the First Disciples" in Luke 5:1-11; Group 2 is going to reflect upon "The Gathering of the Nations" in Matthew 25: 31-40; and finally, Group 3 is going to reflect upon "Be My Shepherd, Feed My Lambs" in John 21:15-19. Make sure each small group has a Bible, a CD player, and the right music for the reflection. After a group has reached their location, have the youth and/or adult leader introduce this next section:

Now that we have formed our small groups, each group will be experiencing something different tonight. First, we are going to reflect upon and break open a specific Scripture passage and have some personal and group reflection upon it. This is going to be an experience that encourages us to listen with the ears of our hearts to Jesus' message.

I am going to first read a short biblical passage to you. The first time you hear it, simply be attentive to a particular word or a phrase that strikes your attention. After I read it once, I will ask you to voice out loud your word or phrase. For example, if the word "love" strikes you, then just say "love." After we have done this, I will invite a different reader to proclaim the Scripture a second time.

After this second reading, we will reflect together about what this passage means and take the time for Jesus to respond and make his voice heard in our hearts. At this point, it is important to listen attentively to the work of the Spirit in each other's lives. Finally, I will invite another reader to proclaim the Scripture for the third time.

After this third reading, we will have a time to simply rest in God's presence, be at peace, and listen to a contemporary song about this Scripture. After the song, listen and reflect upon what God may be calling you to do or be. This way of praying with the Scriptures is a modified form of *Lectio Divina*, a sacred reading of the Scripture in such a way that it allows us to more clearly see and hear Jesus. So, now it is time to relax... breathe deeply... and be open to loving presence of Jesus among us.

In each small group, the reader proclaims the Scripture the first time, followed by group reflection upon the word or phrase that most strikes a chord in the participant. After everyone has shared, invite the second reader to proclaim the Scripture for the second time, following with a group

reflection upon what this Scripture passage means to the participants. To aid in this second reflection, use the following reflection questions:

Group 1:

1. What does Jesus mean when he says “put out into the deep”? What is Jesus calling us to do in this Scripture?
2. How can we be Jesus’ disciples in our schools, home, neighborhood, church, and world? In what ways can we follow him?

Group 2:

1. When have you participated in a service project where you helped someone in need?
2. What is Jesus calling us to do in the Scripture? How can we be Jesus’ disciples in our schools, home, neighborhood, church, and world? In what ways can we follow him?

Group 3:

1. In what ways can you be a shepherd and “feed Jesus’ lambs” in your schools, home, neighborhood, church, and world?
2. In what ways can we follow Jesus as his disciples?

After this group reflection, invite the third reader to proclaim the Scripture passage for the third time. Following this, play the John Angotti song for your specific group: Group 1: “Come and Follow Me” (*Common Ground*); Group 2: “Whatever You Do”; (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*); Group 3: “Feed My Lambs” (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*). After the song, invite the participants to take a minute to pray silently with Jesus about what God is calling them to do or be in the everyday lived experience:

What is Jesus saying to you at this moment in your life? Who is Jesus calling you to be? What is Jesus calling you to do? Take a couple of minutes, and write this down on your sheet of paper. We will invite you later in the closing prayer tonight to share a short part of this with the large group, so that you can spread the Good News to others, and so that the Spirit may speak through your words to your peers.

After everyone has finished writing, the leaders will bring their small group back to the large group, and all the participants will gather in a central location for the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer: Sharing the Good News (15 minutes)

Introduce the closing prayer in the following way:

Welcome back! I hope you all had a very meaningful experience with your special Scripture passage in your small group, the song you heard, and the personal time you had with God to reflect upon what Jesus might be saying to you. For our closing prayer tonight, I am going to invite up one group at a time. In each small group, I invite each participant to share something brief of their experience tonight, and offer their piece of paper to Jesus as an offering by placing it by the cross on the prayer table. Who is Jesus calling you to be or what is Jesus calling you to do? Is Jesus calling you to be his disciple and “come and follow” him? Is he calling you to “feed his lambs” in the world or reach out to others in need? Take a moment and listen to Jesus’ voice in your heart...

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Jesus, be with us in a special way tonight as we each offer our lives to you and your good news to our friends in our youth ministry community.

Invite each group up to come up and share a brief experience that they had tonight, and have them place their papers on the prayer table. When finished, have everyone gather in a circle around the prayer table, and pray the “Our Father” together.

Almighty God, guide and direct our relationships with You and with others. Help us to address all significant aspects of our lives, our spiritual, physical, and emotional well being, seek truth, beauty, and goodness in the diverse areas of our lives, pursue peace and justice in our encounters with others, maintain an inner joy which transcends pain and sorrow, and reach out in compassionate service to our neighbors in need. We ask this of You, our heavenly Father, through your Son Jesus, in the unity with your Holy Spirit. Amen.

This session was written by Austin Schafer, Campus Minister for Neighborhood Ministry and Faith Communities at the University of Dayton, Ohio.

Resource 1

Let the Journey Begin!

Group 1: “The Calling of the First Disciples” in Luke 5:1-11

Supplies

Bible, marked to Luke 5:1-11

“Come and Follow Me” by John Angotti (*Common Ground*)

CD player

Sheet of paper and pen for each participant

Process

Introduce the process by saying:

Now that we have formed our small groups, each group will be experiencing something different tonight. We are going to reflect upon and break open a specific Scripture passage and have some personal and group reflection upon it. This is going to be an experience that encourages us to listen with the ears of our hearts to Jesus’ message.

I’ll begin by reading a short biblical passage to you. For this first time, simply be attentive to a particular word or a phrase that strikes your attention. After I read it once, I will ask you to voice out loud your word or phrase. For example, if the word “love” strikes you, then just say “love.”

Proclaim the Scripture reading, followed by the group reflection upon the word or phrase that most strikes a chord in the participant. After everyone has shared, say:

Now we’ll listen to the reading a second time. After this second reading, we will reflect together about what this passage means and take the time for Jesus to respond and make his voice heard in our hearts. At this point, it is important to listen attentively to the work of the Spirit in each other’s lives.

Invite the second reader to proclaim the Scripture for the second time, followed by a group reflection upon what this Scripture passage means to the participants:

Reflection Questions

1. What does Jesus mean when he says “put out into the deep”? What is Jesus calling us to do in this Scripture?
2. How can we be Jesus’ disciples in our schools, home, neighborhood, church, and world? In what ways can we follow him?

After participants share their responses to these questions, say:

We’re going to listen to the Scripture passage for a final time. After this third reading, we will have a time to simply rest in God’s presence, be at peace, and listen to a contemporary song about this Scripture.

Invite a third reader to proclaim the Scripture passage, followed by a period of quiet and reflection. Then say:

As you listen to the song, reflect upon what God may be calling you to do or be. This way of praying with the Scriptures is a modified form of *Lectio Divina*, a sacred reading of the Scripture in such a way that it allows us to more clearly see and hear Jesus. So, now it is time to relax... breathe deeply... and be open to loving presence of Jesus among us.

After the song, invite the participants to take a minute to pray silently with Jesus about what God is calling them to do or be in the everyday lived experience:

What is Jesus saying to you at this moment in your life? Who is Jesus calling you to be? What is Jesus calling you to do? Take a couple of minutes, and write this down on your sheet of paper. We will invite you later in the closing prayer tonight to share a short part of this with the large group, so that you can spread the Good News to others, and so that the Spirit may speak through your words to your peers.

After everyone has finished writing, bring your small group back to the large group, and have all the participants gather in a central location for the closing prayer.

Resource 2

Let the Journey Begin!

Group 2: “The Gathering of the Nations” in Matthew 25:31-40

Supplies

Bible, marked to Matthew 25:31-40

“Whatever You Do” by John Angotti (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*)

CD player

Sheet of paper and pen for each participant

Process

Introduce the process by saying:

Now that we have formed our small groups, each group will be experiencing something different tonight. We are going to reflect upon and break open a specific Scripture passage and have some personal and group reflection upon it. This is going to be an experience that encourages us to listen with the ears of our hearts to Jesus’ message.

I’ll begin by reading a short biblical passage to you. For this first time, simply be attentive to a particular word or a phrase that strikes your attention. After I read it once, I will ask you to voice out loud your word or phrase. For example, if the word “love” strikes you, then just say “love.”

Proclaim the Scripture reading, followed by the group reflection upon the word or phrase that most strikes a chord in the participant. After everyone has shared, say:

Now we'll listen to the reading a second time. After this second reading, we will reflect together about what this passage means and take the time for Jesus to respond and make his voice heard in our hearts. At this point, it is important to listen attentively to the work of the Spirit in each other's lives.

Invite the second reader to proclaim the Scripture for the second time, followed by a group reflection upon what this Scripture passage means to the participants:

Reflection Questions

1. When have you participated in a service project where you helped someone in need?
2. What is Jesus calling us to do in the Scripture? How can we be Jesus' disciples in our schools, home, neighborhood, church, and world? In what ways can we follow him?

After participants share their responses to these questions, say:

We're going to listen to the Scripture passage for a final time. After this third reading, we will have a time to simply rest in God's presence, be at peace, and listen to a contemporary song about this Scripture.

Invite a third reader to proclaim the Scripture passage, followed by a period of quiet and reflection. Then say:

As you listen to the song, reflect upon what God may be calling you to do or be. This way of praying with the Scriptures is a modified form of *Lectio Divina*, a sacred reading of the Scripture in such a way that it allows us to more clearly see and hear Jesus. So, now it is time to relax... breathe deeply... and be open to loving presence of Jesus among us.

After the song, invite the participants to take a minute to pray silently with Jesus about what God is calling them to do or be in the everyday lived experience:

What is Jesus saying to you at this moment in your life? Who is Jesus calling you to be? What is Jesus calling you to do? Take a couple of minutes, and write this down on your sheet of paper. We will invite you later in the closing prayer tonight to share a short part of this with the large group, so that you can spread the Good News to others, and so that the Spirit may speak through your words to your peers.

After everyone has finished writing, bring your small group back to the large group, and have all the participants gather in a central location for the closing prayer.

Resource 3

Let the Journey Begin!

Group 3: "Be My Shepherd, Feed My Lambs" in John 21:15-19

Supplies

Bible, marked to John 21:15-19

"Feed My Lambs" by John Angotti (*Joy Beyond Our Dreams*)

CD player

Sheet of paper and pen for each participant

Process

Introduce the process by saying:

Now that we have formed our small groups, each group will be experiencing something different tonight. We are going to reflect upon and break open a specific Scripture passage and have some personal and group reflection upon it. This is going to be an experience that encourages us to listen with the ears of our hearts to Jesus' message.

I'll begin by reading a short biblical passage to you. For this first time, simply be attentive to a particular word or a phrase that strikes your attention. After I read it once, I will ask you to voice out loud your word or phrase. For example, if the word "love" strikes you, then just say "love."

Proclaim the Scripture reading, followed by the group reflection upon the word or phrase that most strikes a chord in the participant. After everyone has shared, say:

Now we'll listen to the reading a second time. After this second reading, we will reflect together about what this passage means and take the time for Jesus to respond and make his voice heard in our hearts. At this point, it is important to listen attentively to the work of the Spirit in each other's lives.

Invite the second reader to proclaim the Scripture for the second time, followed by a group reflection upon what this Scripture passage means to the participants:

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways can you be a shepherd and "feed Jesus' lambs" in your schools, home, neighborhood, church, and world?
2. In what ways can we follow Jesus as his disciples?

After participants share their responses to these questions, say:

We're going to listen to the Scripture passage for a final time. After this third reading, we will have a time to simply rest in God's presence, be at peace, and listen to a contemporary song about this Scripture.

Invite a third reader to proclaim the Scripture passage, followed by a period of quiet and reflection. Then say:

As you listen to the song, reflect upon what God may be calling you to do or be. This way of praying with the Scriptures is a modified form of *Lectio Divina*, a sacred reading of the Scripture in such a way that it allows us to more clearly see and hear Jesus. So, now it is time to relax... breathe deeply... and be open to loving presence of Jesus among us.

After the song, invite the participants to take a minute to pray silently with Jesus about what God is calling them to do or be in the everyday lived experience:

What is Jesus saying to you at this moment in your life? Who is Jesus calling you to be? What is Jesus calling you to do? Take a couple of minutes, and write this down on your sheet of paper. We will invite you later in the closing prayer tonight to share a short part of this with the large group, so that you can spread the Good News to others, and so that the Spirit may speak through your words to your peers.

After everyone has finished writing, bring your small group back to the large group, and have all the participants gather in a central location for the closing prayer.