

College Companion Faith Sharing Guide

To be used with
As I Have Done for You...
So You Also Should Do

By
Bishop John Kinney

SESSION 1: Introduction to Bishop Kinney's Pastoral Letter

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify ways in which individuals experience marginalization within their communities.
2. Reflect on the meaning of the Gospel call toward “the least of these” and opportunities for action in their own lives.

Supplies needed: Journals for each participant (staple about five sheets of paper together with a cover), Bible, crucifix, pencils, song – “If We Are the Body” by Casting Crowns (See YouTube link in Prayer section)

Scripture Reference: Matthew 25

Opening Activity: Power Shuffle

During your lifetime, you have surrounded yourself with variety of different people from different backgrounds and with different life experiences. In the same vein, you will continue to encountering others from different backgrounds and with different life experiences. It is important to recognize these differences and learn to respect them. By acknowledging where people are coming from, it is easier to understand their points of view.

To participate in the “Power Shuffle,” the entire group stands in a circle (this will work best in a medium to large space). The group leader reads this list as well as participates. Each time a group member has shared one of the experiences mentioned, he/she takes one step back from the circle. In the end, participants will be standing at varying distances from the center of the original circle. Feel free to add in other examples that would have a local or campus significance.

Step out if...

You've ever ridden on a motorcycle

You're wearing black shoes

You like country music

You've ever felt different from others

You speak in a language other than English at home

You've ever thought about leaving your school for the way people treated you

You have been/are in an interracial relationship

You've ever told an ethnic/gender-based joke

You've never had to worry about money

You've ever been in the minority

You know someone who is gay

You're not Catholic

You've ever wished you could permanently change something about yourself

You have ever made assumptions about other people

Any member of your family has ever been on welfare

You identify yourself as a person of color

You've ever run away from home

You've ever felt discriminated against

You say the Pledge of Allegiance with pride

Spiritual practice is a regular part of your life

People have ever made assumptions about you

You are a person with a disability

You or any member of your family has been forced into homelessness

You're adopted or have ever been in the foster care system

Wearing hand-me-downs or second hand clothing was a regular part of your childhood

You've ever felt at risk because of a neighborhood you lived in at the time

You've ever felt at risk because of a neighborhood you were in at the time

You've ever participated in racism

You've ever been silenced when you wanted to speak

You've ever silenced someone else's thought

You've ever been accused of being something you weren't

You've ever thought a situation would be easier if you pretended to be someone who you weren't

You've ever been passive when you've heard a friend or family member make a racist comment

You have been the victim of an act of hate

You've ever participated in a protest or campaigned for social change

Reading:

As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do by Bishop John Kinney

Read all of page 1 and the first paragraph on page 2.

Discussion:

Each of the experiences mentioned in the activity has the potential to make you feel marginalized, or for you to make someone else feel excluded from the community. Please take a couple minutes to reflect on the following questions. Afterwards, we will reflect as a large group.

1. Which steps were the hardest to take? Why?
2. Which steps were the easiest? Why?
3. While moving out of the circle, did you ever make eye contact with anyone? How did that feel?
4. Was there a time when you didn't step away from the circle when the statement applied to you? What feelings or thoughts kept you from moving?
5. In what ways were you made aware of people marginalized in your campus community? Who are they? Who isn't being heard? Who is blind to injustice?
6. In what ways can we reach out to those marginalized in our campus and global communities?

Prayer:

(It is advantageous to have a prayer ritual to close. Perhaps lighting a candle...sitting on the floor in a circle...holding hands at times...whatever your group feels comfortable with.)

Gather together in a circle. Light a candle, and place a Bible and crucifix in the center. Sit in silence for a second.

Play song: "If We Are the Body" by Casting Crowns
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4wojcSO9Ww>)

Allow participants time to journal on this question: Thinking about the last few weeks, how have you failed to see or acknowledge the pain of others?

Read aloud: Matthew 25: 37-40

Do a petition-type prayer: "Lord, help us to reach out to others and love like you. We pray for those who are hurting, especially..." (Invite participants to share petitions around the circle.)

Ask them to prayerfully do a random act of kindness this week and add it to their journal. Give them a moment to think about it and ask those willing to share their random act to say:

"God of love, this week I will _____."

Pray together The Lord's Prayer.

Offer one another a Sign of Peace.

SESSION 2: Our Diocese: Its Changing Face

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify a variety of needs and challenges that a diverse community faces.
2. Discuss perspectives about the Gospel message as it relates to diversity, reflecting on ways to better live out this call.

Supplies needed: *Student journals, pictures of people of diverse ethnicities and cultures, small pieces of paper, pencils, song – “Give Me Your Eyes” by Brandon Heath*

Scripture reference: *John 13:34*

Welcome and Check In:

Ask participants about their random acts of kindness. Invite them to recall and name people’s reactions and their own feelings about the acts of kindness.

Opening Activity: Read together.

U.S./Mexico Border Reflection by Alivia Tison, College of St. Benedict Class of 2011

“When ten CSB and SJU students and I met at the airport to begin our travels to one of the most controversial regions of the United States over winter break, we did not know that we would instantly find community, hospitality, and a new family within the people along the U.S./Mexico Border.

Whether learning about the Segundo Barrio community in El Paso, Texas, sharing meals with our host families, or learning from a Border Patrol agent, we may not have known the immensity of the complications of our new friends' lives yet, but upon arrival we knew that we were surrounded by exceptionally caring individuals. We learned that El Paso was recently named the "Safest city for its size in the U.S.," while across the highway Juarez has been referred to as the "Most dangerous city in the world that's not declared a war zone." As if those two extremes aren't enough, many people along the border live in El Paso but work and have family in Juarez and vice versa. Little by little, we pieced the information together, and the more I learned, the more my heart fell heavy with knowing the tremendous obstacles that people face in our own backyards.

It didn't take me long to learn that unanswered questions would haunt me during this trip.

Why should it take the class of ESL students we visited 20 years to obtain U.S. citizenship only to be greeted with a test that many U.S. born-citizens cannot even pass?

Why couldn't our site supervisor in El Paso attend his uncle's funeral in Juarez for fear of being shot only to be filled later with a mixture of emotions upon learning that every man at the funeral was killed by a drug cartel?

When will the sweet, elderly man from the Sin Fronteras Farm Workers Center be paid and treated reasonably?

The most difficult question for me came when touring the actual border fence with Border Patrol. At one point, I had one foot in Mexico and the other in the United States, literally straddling a cement line that someone deemed as the border. Looking across the highway, I could see the city of Juarez marked with mobile homes on a mountain and one large green house, which we later understood belonged to a drug cartel. I thought about all of the people living in Juarez, of the stories

my host family told me about the celebrations that used to occur there, and of how much they wish they could go back to see their families and communities. It puzzled me why this cement line has resulted in many deaths and sufferings for those who did not make it across, while many others made it to the other side only to end up feeling dejected and lost. A shiver went through me as I thought about all of the families separated, the smugglers who take advantage of their own people, and the way a line can divide human beings into two separate groups.

It is easy to look at the U.S./Mexico Border just as that - a line that splits one group into two. It's much harder to see that simply because someone creates a division does not mean that we aren't still part of one group, the group called human beings that shares the same thoughts, desires, and love. God resides in all of us, and to deprive one group of the care and love is to deprive Him of the same.

I did not know that by participating in this [service trip] I would find a family not only in the ten other students from CSB/SJU, but also in my host family, the students taking classes, and the supervisors of our trip. A cement line, a fence, or a river can separate a group into two, but that does not mean that we are separate people. The people I met along the border showed me what happens when people work together to make change. In our daily lives we can do so much to make a huge impact on the world, and I'm forever grateful to my new friends in El Paso for making me realize how possible it truly is to make an impact on a community and how we can come together to create happiness for all people.

Reading:

As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do by Bishop John Kinney

Read:

- page 4: Our Heritage section
- page 5 starting with "This growing diversity..." through the top of page 6 ending with John 13:34
- all of page 9

Discussion:

1. As you reflect on this essay, whose needs do you think were met first? Last? Why?
2. On the U.S./Mexico border, how well are we living out John's message "As I have loved you, so you also should love one another?"
3. How does our own community make room for the needs of all people in our neighborhood and the global community?
4. How does this story connect with real life in your local community? Share an example.
5. In what ways do we fail to welcome others into our faith community? Local community? National and global communities?

Prayer:

Gather together in a circle. Light a candle, and place a Bible, crucifix and pictures of people of differing ethnicities and cultures in the center. Sit in silence for a few seconds. Ask all to think about this question: What group of people do you feel negative towards just because of their religion, race, age, economic or social situation? Give each individual a small piece of paper and ask them to identify the group and write it on the paper. No one is to see what is written.

Ask them to sit quietly and pray for help to overcome this and think about how this can be achieved by asking for forgiveness, guidance, and the courage to love.

Play “Give Me Your Eyes,” by Brandon Heath (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5AkNqLuVgY>)

Ask them to prayerfully think of a random act of thoughtfulness for this week and add it to their journal. Give them a moment to think about it and ask those willing to share their random act to say:

“God of love, this week I will _____.”

Pray together The Lord’s Prayer.

Offer one another a Sign of Peace.

SESSION 3: Catholic Social Teaching: What is This?

Life and Dignity of the Human Person/Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify ways in which they, as well as others, are unique and sacred.
2. Reflect on the importance of a central theme of Catholic teaching, the sacredness and dignity of human life.

Supplies needed: *Candle, Bible, crucifix, participant journals, copies of prayer, CD with soothing instrumental music, copies of journal questions and Prayer of St. Francis*

For Option 1: *4x6 strips of colored paper, tape, markers,*

For Option 2: *Glue, a variety of magazines, poster-size papers, scissors*

Scripture reference: *Psalm 139*

Welcome and Check In:

Ask participants about their random acts of thoughtfulness. Invite two or three participants to recall and share with the group people's reactions and their own feelings about the acts.

OPTION 1: Opening Activity/Discussion: Who am I?

With everyone sitting in a large circle, hand out a piece of paper to each person and have them put their names at the top of the paper. Explain, "Often we do not take the time to tell people how good and unique they are, so we will take some time to do just that. Even if you don't know a person well, there is something that you have seen them do or heard about them that you could write about. Pass your paper to the person on your right. Now looking at the name on the top of the page, take a moment to write down a quick line or two, near the bottom, about this person telling them about the goodness you see in them. You may sign it or not. When you are finished, fold the section on the bottom over so that what you have written cannot be seen and pass it on for the next person to write on.

This continues until the sheets have gone around the room and return to their owners. If a sheet fills before all have signed it, give it to the owner and get a new sheet and put their name at the top and continue. No one is to look at their sheets until all have completed writing." When all have completed, participants are then to quietly read what others have written. Discourage any sharing with others and joking about it. You may want to have some soothing instrumental music in the background or some other appropriate music playing.

After all seem to be almost finished, ask students to take out their journals and answer these questions:

- How did it feel to read about how people in this room see me? Explain in detail.
- Name the ones that are hard to believe and tell why you think it is hard.
- Name the ones that are true. How does that make you feel?

Have markers and strips of paper in the middle of the room. Invite each student to take two of the strips and write different qualities on each of the strips that they read about on their sheets. When all are finished have each person tape their strips on a designated wall in the room.

Call attention to the fact that this is the new “DIGNITY Wall” that calls everyone’s attention to the God-given dignity present in each person in the room.

OPTION 2: Opening Activity/Discussion: We are the Human Family

Explain that to understand Catholic teaching, we must first recognize the dignity and sacredness of all human life. Without this understanding, we cannot be authentic in our loving actions. All of our loving actions feel hollow and are done for reasons other than out of respect and honor for the human family created by God. We are also called to participate in our families and communities in order to advance the well-being of all people.

Sacredness and Dignity Posters:

Using magazines, have participants partner with another person and make a poster supporting, demonstrating or portraying their idea of the dignity and sacredness of all humans. Share the posters in the large group. Put them up on the wall to make one large poster.

Call attention to the fact that this is the new “DIGNITY Wall” that calls everyone’s attention to the God-given dignity present in each human being.

Ask in large group:

- How difficult was it to find examples?
- Does our society recognize the sacredness of each one of us?
- What do you think is the main message of our society today about who we are? Give examples.
- How might these images call us to greater participation in our families and communities so that we may be sure that each others’ dignity and sacredness is recognized and protected?

Reading:

As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do by Bishop John Kinney

Read pages 13-17 of the Pastoral Letter.

Prayer:

Gather together in a circle. Light a candle, and place a Bible and crucifix in the center. Begin with a moment of silence, recognizing that God is always with us and we need only to call our attention to that presence.

Give participants the following list of questions on a small sheet of paper. Read the questions together and have each person pick two or three of the questions and journal on them.

- Do you ever consider yourself a gift to others? Why or why not?
- How does knowing that you are precious and sacred to God impact the way you think about yourself?
- When do you struggle to recognize the sacredness of others? How might you work to recognize and affirm that sacredness?
- How do you participate in your family and community? Are there additional ways that you could reach out to promote their well-being?

Copy the prayer below and highlight sections on each copy for the participants so that most/all will have a part in the prayer. You begin by reading, “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred let me sow love;
 Where there is injury, pardon;
 Where there is doubt, faith;
 Where there is despair, hope;
 Where there is darkness light;
 Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
 Grant that I may not so much seek
 To be consoled as to console,
 To be understood as to understand,
 To be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive,
 It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
 It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
 Amen.

Invite participants to write one or more letters of affirmation to special people in their lives during the upcoming week.

Ask them to prayerfully think of a random act of consideration that they would like to do this week that would reflect our theme tonight. Have them write it in their journal. Ask those willing to share their random act to say:

“God of all people, this week I will _____.”

Pray together The Lord’s Prayer.

Offer one another a Sign of Peace.

SESSION 4: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers/Rights and Responsibilities

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to:

1. Learn about the work of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers to better understand the meaning of the dignity of work.
2. Reflect on the rights and responsibilities that we have toward one another.

Supplies needed: Copies of biography for participants, index cards, candle, Bible, crucifix, Internet access to play online video, copies of Prayer of the Farm Workers' Struggle, student journals and pencils

Scripture Reference: *1 Thessalonians 5:12-18*

Welcome and Check In:

Ask participants about their random acts of consideration. Invite two or three students to recall, and share with the group, people's reactions and their own feelings about their actions.

Opening Activity: Cesar Chavez – A Voice for the Voiceless

Choose four to six volunteers and have each read a portion of Cesar Chavez's biography:

A true American hero, Cesar was a civil rights, Latino, farm worker, and labor leader; a religious and spiritual figure; a community servant and social entrepreneur; a crusader for nonviolent social change; and an environmentalist and consumer advocate.

A second-generation American, Cesar was born on March 31, 1927, near his family's farm in Yuma, Arizona. At age 10, his family became migrant farm workers after losing their farm in the Great Depression. After achieving only an eighth-grade education, Cesar left school to work in the fields full-time to support his family. Although his formal education ended then, he possessed an insatiable intellectual curiosity, and was self-taught in many fields and well read throughout his life.

Cesar's life as a community organizer began in 1952 when he joined the Community Service Organization (CSO), a prominent Latino civil rights group. While with the CSO, Cesar coordinated voter registration drives and conducted campaigns against racial and economic discrimination primarily in urban areas. Cesar's dream, however, was to create an organization to protect and serve farm workers, whose poverty and disenfranchisement he had shared. In 1962, Cesar resigned from the CSO, leaving the security of a regular paycheck to found the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America.

For more than three decades Cesar led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and humane living conditions, as well as countless other rights and protections for hundreds of thousands of farm workers. Against previously insurmountable odds, he led successful strikes and boycotts that resulted in the first industry-wide labor contracts in the history of American agriculture. His union's efforts brought about the passage of the groundbreaking 1975 California Agricultural Labor Relations Act to protect farm workers. Today, it remains the only law in the nation that protects the farm workers' right to unionize.

The significance and impact of Cesar's life transcends any one cause or struggle. He was a unique and humble leader, in addition to being a great humanitarian and communicator who influenced and inspired millions of Americans to seek social justice and civil rights for the poor and disenfranchised in our society. Cesar forged a diverse and extraordinary national coalition of students, middle class consumers, trade unionists, religious groups, and minorities.

Divide participants into small groups of three to six persons. Give everyone an index card and a pen or pencil. Explain the activity:

On your card, write a list of three to five areas that need to be improved or changed for the benefit of all people, especially the most vulnerable. Some areas to consider may include: your college, church, community, home, organizations, etc.

Allow participants to finish this task, then say:

Pick one area from your card and share with your small group. Explain why you chose it. What changes are necessary? What changes would you make? Allow some time for small group sharing; then extend conversation into large group.

Explain:

Each small group will now introduce itself to the large group and share with us what they discovered about their list and how it will benefit all people.

Reflect on the ways that Cesar Chavez worked to protect the rights and dignity of farm workers. Have each group tell how their plan addresses a particular right that must be protected or a responsibility that must be acknowledged.

*Activity adapted from “¡Sí, se puede!” – Center for Ministry Development, 2005
Biography from www.chavezfoundation.org*

Reading:

As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do by Bishop John Kinney

Read pages 18-22 from the Pastoral Letter.

Discussion:

Discuss question 1 on page 22 of the Pastoral Letter.

As followers of Christ we are called to use our gifts as we listen to God’s call in our lives. We are also called to be aware of and use our material gifts wisely and ethically. Share this quote from Critical Consumerism: “It is estimated that the average 20-year old American has seen one million commercial messages throughout his or her life. This number is sure to rise, as teens are the fastest growing consumer demographic, spending billions (\$150 billion to be exact) of dollars each year, and thus commanding the rapt attention of many companies and advertisers.”

[-http://urbandreams.ousd.k12.ca.us/lessonplans/consumerism/index.html](http://urbandreams.ousd.k12.ca.us/lessonplans/consumerism/index.html)

Watch video on child labor: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nq4TgIVSUJM&feature=related>

- What about this video catches your attention? Explain.
- What does it mean to receive a living wage? Is minimum wage a living wage for a single mother with children?
- What impact does your buying have on child labor? On unfair wages?
- Can you make a difference in this area? Do you want to? What would need to happen to make you care enough to find out about who makes what you buy?

Prayer:

Light a candle, and place a Bible and crucifix in the center, and ask everyone to reflect and journal on the following:

What word, idea, or statement will you take from the group's conversation? Why? What action will you take in response to your reflection? Name that action now, and dedicate yourself to its completion. Could this be what God is asking of you?

Hand out copies of the following prayer and pray together.

Prayer of the Farm Workers' Struggle

Show me the suffering of the most miserable;
So I will know my people's plight.
Free me to pray for others;
For you are present in every person.
Help me to take responsibility for my own life;
So that I can be free at last.
Grant me courage to serve others;
For in service there is true life.
Give me honesty and patience;
So that I can work with other workers.
Bring forth song and celebration;
So that the spirit will be alive among us.
Let the spirit flourish and grow;
So we will never tire of the struggle.
Let us remember those who have died for justice;
For they have given us life.
Help us love even those who hate us;
So we can change the world.

Written by Cesar E. Chavez, UFW Founder (1927-1993)

Ask them to prayerfully do a random act of gentleness this week and add it to their journal. Give them a moment to think about what we talked about tonight and ask those willing to share their random act to say: "God of justice, this week I will _____."

Pray together The Lord's Prayer.

Offer one another the sign of peace.

SESSION 5: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to:

1. Learn about the issue of homeless in the young adult community and reflect on God's presence among those who are vulnerable.
2. Reflect on ways to achieve social change that benefits the common good - especially for those who are poor and vulnerable among us.

Supplies needed: *Two large posters, markers, pictures of college students (may be drawn), candle, Bible, crucifix, Internet access to play online video, student journals and pencils*

Scripture Reference: *1 Thessalonians 5:12-18*

Welcome and Check In

Ask participants about their random acts of gentleness. Invite two or three students to recall, and share with the group, people's reactions and their own feelings about their actions.

Opening Activity:

Put a big piece of paper on the wall with a picture of a typical American college student in the center (or let them draw the picture). Ask everyone, one at a time, to add the words outside of the circle that represent what affects their lives and what they are thinking about, for example, sports, school, money, social life, relationships, appearance, etc. The circle then represents our shelter or support system – the things that support most American college students emotionally, spiritually and physically, for example, parents, Church, teachers, government, etc. Write in the supports participants think college students have inside the circle.

When completed, read:

Every three years, Wilder Research Center conducts a one-day study of the number of people experiencing homelessness throughout Minnesota. It is the largest and most comprehensive study of its kind in the nation. The Center conducted its latest study in October, 2010.

This study found that each night, approximately 10,000 individuals experience homelessness in Minnesota. This is up by 20% since 2007. Also, Wilder's survey results show an increasing level of distress among the homeless, with rising rates of many disabilities, especially mental illness.

Homeless Children and Youth in Minnesota

- Children, youth, and young adults age 21 and younger made up over half of all people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota the night of the survey. The survey showed a 39% rise in youth homelessness with the youngest being 12 years old.
- Approximately 89% of homeless youth are enrolled in school.
- Approximately 51% of the youth experiencing homelessness have been physically or sexually mistreated.

On a new sheet of paper, similar to the first, draw another young person, like the first one, but representing a homeless young adult in Minnesota. Add a circle around this person as well. Add the words outside the circle that represent what directly affects their lives and what they are thinking about. Write in the supports you think young adults who are homeless have within the circle.

Compare the two illustrations side by side and ask: How are their lives the same? How are they different?

View the first 10-11 minutes of this video about youth and homelessness.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TML09XtPKc&NR=1>

Discuss how they might change their depiction of homelessness among young adults done earlier. Change on paper.

Reading:

As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do by Bishop John Kinney

Have students listen and pick out a word or phrase that stands out to them in the following reading. Have them write it in their journals.

Read pages 23-24 in the Pastoral Letter.

Have everyone share their word or phrase with the group.

Spend some time in silence listening to the echo of the words they chose. Invite them to write down what they felt or experienced as they focus on their word and the words of others in the group.

Discuss how the Option for the Poor and Vulnerable relates to and affects the Rights and Responsibilities teaching from Session 4.

Discussion:

- What does it mean to you to give from what you have? Does this cause conflict for you?
- How have you experienced poverty whether in your own life or in service to others? What do these experiences mean for you?
- How might we work to alleviate poverty in a way that *empowers* those who are suffering and avoids making them feel dependent or indebted to others?

Prayer

Light a candle, and place a Bible and crucifix in the center, and ask everyone to put into this area, things that they have with them but that aren't essential for life.

Allow some time for quiet as students think about the many things they have that they could live without. Invite them to write in their journal about what everyone put into the circle and what they are thinking and feeling about it as it relates to the previous discussion.

Hand out copies of the following prayer, and divide the group into two sections. As the prayer is prayed, have each section alternate reading the lines of the prayer.

Prayer for the Poor

Who is Jesus to me?

Jesus is the Word made Flesh.

Jesus is the Bread of Life.

Jesus is the Victim offered for our sins on the Cross.

Jesus is the Sacrifice at Holy Mass for the sins of the world and mine.

Jesus is the Word - to be spoken.

Jesus is the Truth - to be told.

Jesus is the Way - to be walked.

Jesus is the Light - to be lit.

Jesus is the Life - to be loved.

Jesus is the Joy - to be shared.

Jesus is the Sacrifice - to be given.

Jesus is the Bread of Life - to be eaten.

Jesus is the Hungry - to be fed.

Jesus is the Thirsty - to be satiated.

Jesus is the Naked - to be clothed.

Jesus is the Homeless - to be taken in.

Jesus is the Sick - to be healed.

Jesus is the Lonely - to be loved.

Jesus is the Unwanted - to be wanted.

Jesus is the Leper - to wash his wounds.

Jesus is the Beggar - to give him a smile.

Jesus is the Drunkard - to listen to him.

Jesus is the Little One - to embrace him.

Jesus is the Dumb - to speak to him.

Jesus is the Crippled - to walk with him.

Jesus is the Drug Addict - to befriend him.

Jesus is the Prostitute - to remove from danger and befriend her.

Jesus is the Prisoner - to be visited.

Jesus is the Old - to be served.

To me Jesus is my God,

Jesus is my Spouse,

Jesus is my Life,

Jesus is my only Love,

Jesus is my All in All,

Jesus is my Everything.

Amen.

- *Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

Ask students to journal and commit to one specific action that will lead to solidarity with those who are poor and vulnerable among us, and will lead to their empowerment and relief of their suffering (for example: Give up your coffee shop spending for a day or a week, use that money to support a local nonprofit that works for justice; participate in programs such as the Catholic Campaign for Human Development or the CRS Operation Rice Bowl). They could also research these nonprofits on the Internet. Invite participants to share what they will do.

Pray together the Lord's Prayer

Offer one another a sign of peace.

SESSION 6: Care for God's Creation/Solidarity

Outcomes:

Participants will be able to:

1. *Experience the importance of caring for God's creation and its relation to the well-being of society.*
2. *Reflect on the meaning of Catholic social teaching along with new ways to extend that meaning in their lives and communities.*

Supplies needed: *Paper and pencils, use of worship space with a table placed in front of the altar, small candles, one large candle, copies of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching found at www.ccstcloud.org/socialconcerns, student journal and pencils*

Scripture Reference: *Amos 5:14-15*

Welcome and Check In:

Ask participants about their random acts of solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. Lead a discussion with the group, asking them about people's reactions and their own feelings about their actions.

Opening Activity:

Watch video to begin session: Brian Doerksen's song "Creation Calls" with clips of the BBC's *Planet Earth* underneath. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0&feature=related>:

Did you know?

While a college student's life can be filled with various responsibilities, and it can be easy to miss the beauty of God's creation around us, St. Cloud State has started a program for students to participate in a small action to care for creation. The SCSU Adopt-A-Block program allows student groups a chance to adopt a block around the campus and surrounding neighborhood that they agree to keep clean during the school year. Student groups are invited to come together in the spring and clean their various blocks. It's a great way for students to form community and show concern for God's creation.

Weather permitting, invite participants to go for a short walk and notice the mystery and beauty that is God's creation. Write a prayer of thanks to God in their journals.

Reading:

As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do by Bishop John Kinney

Read the paragraph at the top of page 28. Name this an explanation of what is meant by Solidarity.

Read the first three paragraphs on page 29 and the last paragraph on page 30. Explain that here Bishop Kinney is speaking about Care for Creation.

While reading the letter, have students take notes in journal, defining Solidarity and Care for Creation.

Discussion:

1. Are you able to take time to see and encounter God in nature around campus?
If so, how do you do that? If not, what prevents you from being able to do that?

2. Are you a part of any student groups that care for creation in various ways?
3. Bishop Kinney asks if we can recognize the difference between our needs and our wants. Have you ever reflected upon your own ability and/or struggle to live simply? Are there concrete ways you can live a bit more simply in your own life? How might choosing to live more simply help you to be in solidarity with others, locally and globally?

Prayer: *Pledge of Commitment to Protect and Heal God's Creation*

We have come to renew our covenant with God and with one another in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We have come to help protect God's creation.

We have come as followers of Jesus to commit ourselves anew to one another and to heal injustice and poverty.

We have come to stand together against all threats to life.

We have come to discover some new beauty every day in God's creation: the sunrise and sunset, birds, flowers and trees, rainbows in the sky, the stars, the many forms of life in the forest.

We have come to listen to the "music of the universe"-water flowing over rocks, the wind, trees bending in the wind, raindrops pattering on the roof.

We will remember always that God speaks to us through the beauty of creation, and we will try our best to answer God's call to reverence all that has been created.

- Source: Faithful Stewards of God's Creation: A Catholic Resource for Environmental Justice and Climate Change.

Final Sending Forth:

Read the following:

Bishop Kinney addresses young adults specifically in his letter on Catholic social teaching.

Read aloud to students from page 34 beginning with, "To the young people in our Diocese..." Read through the end of page 35.

Invite students to reflect on the following questions, either individually or in small groups:

- How does it feel to hear that the Church needs you in the work of charity and justice? How does that make you feel to hear Bishop Kinney's words?
- How does your faith inspire you to reach out to those in need? To work for justice?

What one student can do: An SCSU student who attended the Newman Center's spring break trip to the Red Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota saw the poverty present and wanted to do some small thing to help. She noticed that many college students throw out packages of food and usable clothing

at the end of the school year and decided to work with the university to ask students to donate gently used clothing and food items to St. Mary's Mission on the Red Lake Reservation. The idea grew to include furniture and electronic items and became a partnership between the Catholic Student Community, the residence halls on campus and SCSU's Volunteer Connection. The program continues today with the donations going to local charities.

Discussion:

- What might be one thing you can do to respond to the needs around you on campus?
- Is there an initiative that campus ministry has that you can participate in? Is there another group on campus that you might join to continue learning and acting for justice?

Closing Prayer Service:

Have unlit votive candles or tea lights in holders (one for each student) near the table in the worship space. Have one lit candle – the Easter candle, if possible. Invite participants to come forward, take a candle, light it and go back to their spot. When all have finished, have them stand in a half circle in the worship space with their candles.

Say: “You have studied and discussed Catholic social teaching for the past **six** sessions. You have been given a “light” of knowledge. What are you going to do with your light? By giving you “free will”, God gives you a choice: you can choose to blow out your light...to ignore this teaching and the commandment to love others. You might want to hang on to your light longer in order to think and pray about these teachings. For some of you the small light may have ignited something bigger and you are willing to share your knowledge and light with others through continued reflection, raising awareness, service learning, reaching out to others and working for justice in the political arena or in local institutions. If you are ready to share your light, you are invited to come forward and place your candle on the altar with the others.”

Hand out a copy of the seven key themes of Catholic social teaching to each student.

Close by forming a circle around the new combined montage. Join hands, explaining that this is a sign of solidarity, and pray the Lord's Prayer. Offer one another the Sign of Peace.

Say: “Remember, the work of Catholic social teaching does not end here but goes on to build God's Kingdom of Love in your home, your college, the community and the world.”