



Inquiry - Step 3 The Need to Belong

Aim

To explore the human need to belong, and how the Church can help fill that need.

Overview

- I belong...
- Human need for relationships
- People's search for God
- Scripture Reflection
- Different faiths and beliefs
- Creed – what do we believe?
- Closing Prayer

Resources needed

Leaders

- Come and See session notes
- PPT laptop and projector or TV
- Prayer focus items
- Large sheets of paper and pens

For Young People

- Journals
-

Prayer Focus

Expressions of our belief:

Bible - (God is with us)

Candle - (in a friendship ring holder)

Cloth - (Appropriate to the Liturgical season)

Image - (Community Celebration)

Liturgical Link

The Church is a place, where the faith community gathers and members grow in relationship with God and one another, and where important milestones are celebrated.

Preparation by Catechists

- Familiarise self with content and resources
- Sharing re your own journey of faith; the ups and downs
- Pray for the young people and leaders

Scripture Passages

- Matthew 18:20 I am with you
- Genesis 2:18 in need of relationships
- John 2:38 What are you looking for
- Luke 5:17-26 The Paralytic

Tenets of Faith (Faith Formation)

- God is with us
- We are on a journey to find God and happiness
- Different faiths have their own beliefs, and things in common.

Gathering

Setting

Create a welcoming environment by having everything in place before the young people arrive

- a sign in sheet
- name badges for each person to collect
- spares badges in case any extras turn up.

Welcome

Welcome the young people back.

Introduce any here for the first time.

Provide the context for the gathering.

Outline the process, the aim and outline of the gathering for today.

Review Previous Gathering

Check if there are any questions or reflections arising from the previous gathering which need clarification.

Introductory activity-

Places I belong (5 minutes)

(see 12-15 Inquiry Step 3-Activity-Questions – *Places I belong*) for suggestions.

invite the group to form a circle. Ask them to listen carefully to each of the statements which will be read and then to do one of the following: (*Select 6-10 items that give variety to how the young people may respond*)

- *Step forward* – if the statement applies to them
- *Remain still* – if the statement doesn't apply
- *Step back* – if just the idea of the statement fills them with dread

The further towards the centre of circle the greater their experience of their desire for involvement with others, and the farther out the lesser.

Comment on how far people have moved from their starting position and in which direction.

Invite the young people to share what helps them to belong, to feel truly connected in any of the situations.



Explain to the young people that we all belong of different groupings in society, some by desire, some by accident. The sense of belonging we have in any of these will be determined by factors such as, level of comfort, strength of relationships, reason for being there, and the level of freedom to opt in and out.

What helps us to develop a real sense of belong will be much the same for each circumstance. The chance to feel good about ourselves, to feel valued, appreciated, supported, loved and cared for, (as the responses should have indicated).

Occasionally we find ourselves wanting to belong to a particular group, but, for whatever reason, we can't find a way in. Maybe at times we try too hard to be accepted, or we go about being accepted in the wrong way. The key to being accepted is by developing good relationships with people.

Explain to the young people that the session today will explore the desire humans share to belong. Building community is a foundational aspect of Christianity. Yes, as individually we can develop a personal relationship with God, but for our relationship with others to be strengthened we need to be in community. The Church community helps us grow in love of God and neighbor.

Opening Prayer

Invite the young people into prayer.

Leader In Matthews Gospel Jesus tells the disciples, “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them”. [8:20]

Let us pray...

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the many opportunities we have to belong;
Bless the people who encourage and support us.

Lack of welcome and feeling of exclusion are also part of our experience.
May your spirit touch our hearts so that we may be open and accepting of one another,
today and each time we gather in your name.

Help us to value the contribution of each person, be willing to learn from them,
and be guided by your Holy Spirit.

Amen

Content - Exploring

→ **Activity – The Human need for relationships**

- Invite young people to work in 2's or 3's to make a list of their favourite band(s) and some of the songs they sing.
- Ask them to think about the lyrics and identify the main themes of the songs.
- Then ask them to think of their favourite TV programs and movies and ask them to think about what makes these so appealing.
- Bring the group back together and discuss how central the theme of relationship is to the songs, TV programs and movies they have identified as favourites.



Explain to the young people that some relationships we experience will be supporting, loving, and so bringing harmony and fulfillment. Others, however, may highlight a side of human nature which is destructive to building meaningful relationships such as greed,

jealousy, lies, hatred even. The importance of being in relationships is stated right from the start of creation: "the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper as his partner." [Genesis 2:18].

Activity – What is it we are looking for in our relationships.

(set up the video)

- Invite young people to work in pairs.
- Allow 30 seconds for them to write down the things that they think people are looking for in life – then allow another 30 seconds to put these in order of priority.



Watch the second segment of the Introduction to **Chosen What are you looking for** and then discuss –

- How does your list compare with the responses of the people on the video?
- The presenter suggested that faith is the one thing that will ultimately bring us happiness. How does that resonate with you?



Explain to the young people that the happiness people find through their relationship with God through the Church will happen at both a spiritual level and a personal level. Spending time in prayer, reading the scriptures participating in liturgies, and receive the sacraments help to nourish our spirit. So too does involvement in ministries and service. Many of these also provide us with the chance to make new friends, develop new skills and experience a life in a different way.

You are on this journey because you have already recognised that developing a relationship with God through the Church is important in your search for happiness and fulfilment. The support of the community and of the Holy Spirit will both be important as you journey towards the Sacraments.

Scripture Reflection

"What are you looking for?" - [John 2: 35-42]



Read *Jesus calls the first disciples*.

Discuss with the young people

- Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples "What do you want?"
- What did Jesus invite them to come and see?
- What do you think Jesus spoke to them of on that day?
- How do we know that Jesus made an impact on them?



Explain to the young people that in John's account of disciples being called, Jesus asks, "What are you looking for?" and then invites them to 'Come and See' where he is staying. They do so, keen to listen to and learn from Jesus, and are transformed by what they hear that Andrew wants his brother to share in this experience. As you embark on your journey you too will experience moments of being called into the life of Jesus, into the life of discipleship.



The search for God

Read *Jesus heals the paralytic* – [Luke 5:17-26]

- Ask the young people to listen to this scripture passage how the friends of a sick man rally together so that they can make possible the sick man's desire to meet Jesus and be healed.
- Invite the young people try to imagine what is going on for each of the different groups of people in the story.
 - What were the people in the house listening to Jesus looking for?
 - What was the paralytic looking for?
 - What were the friends of the sick man looking for?
 - What were the Scribes and Pharisees looking for?
- After the reading, allow time for personal reflection on the above questions, then take some general feedback and help give clarification.



Explain to the young people that in the time of Jesus, those who were born with a disability were regarded outcasts in their society. The society of the time believed that a person with a disability was being punished for the sins of their family. If, by some miracle they were cured, they needed to go and present themselves to the Jewish authorities, who would then determine if they could be welcomed back into the community.

Having heard of his ability to heal, the sick man was keen to see Jesus. He too wanted to be healed so that he could be accepted as a human being. The question is, did he ask his friends, or did his friends offer to take him to Jesus having heard of the wonders Jesus had already worked? Regardless they were determined, so much so that they took off the roof tiles and lowered the man in through the roof, as other avenues were closed to them. This is a truly an act of faith. On seeing this, Jesus first says, your sins are forgiven, restoring his dignity, and his spiritual life.

Looking to find fault with Jesus, the Scribes and Pharisees grumble, questioning his authority to forgive sins – which only God can do. On hearing them Jesus demonstrates his power is from God, he restores the man to full health. Jesus healing ministry was concerned with restoring human dignity, allowing people to take their place in society and this is what Jesus gave to the sick man.



Further Reflection

Invite the young people to share personal stories of feeling like an outcast

- Have you ever felt like an outcast? What were the circumstances, and the impact on you?
- When have you made a serious effort to become close to God? What has resulted?
- Are you any clearer of what you are now looking for on this journey?

Going Deeper

❖ Different faiths and beliefs

The people in the story were Jews – what do you know about the Jewish faith?

- What do you know about the beliefs of any other faith?
- What are the central beliefs of the Christian faith?

 Explain to the young people that *Judaism, Islam and Christianity* are all Monotheistic religions – that is they all believe there is one God.

Judaism, Islam and Christianity all recognise Abraham as a foundational figure in their faith – they are the Abrahamic religions. These three religions emphasise the importance of community and that each person is called to develop their own relationship and make their own response to God, and that love of God must be expressed by love of neighbour.

Hinduism and Buddhism, the other two major world religions, offer a deep sense of the spiritual through a oneness with God. They invite and challenge followers to deepen their sense of being with God and in God, leading to a deep sense of reverence for all human beings and creation.

The emphasis here, is on a personal journey towards God and in God.

Notes adapted from RCIA 'Come and See.Fr Elio Capra SDB. 2004 Archdiocese of Melbourne, Desbooks pp48-49)

Activity – Creation of a personal Creed

 Explain to the young people that the members of the Church together express their faith through a special prayer known as, The Creed. The Creed contains the main beliefs of the Church. First agreed upon in the 2nd century of the Christian era, the creed has been handed down over centuries, and is still today, used every Sunday at Mass.

Many other faiths, cultures and individuals also develop creeds, as a statement expressing who they are.

- Invite the young people to create a personal creed using the following process.

Step 1 Think of what is important to you in life – make notes.

Step 2 Think of what you believe about God the Father, as creator, and of Jesus his Son and the Holy Spirit - make notes.

Step 3 Think of what you believe to be important about human relationships and about care of our planet – make notes.

Step 4 Use these notes to create a set of statements of beliefs that are important to you your – personal Creed (*have a couple of examples to show – see handout*)

Closing Prayer

Gather the group around the prayer table and explain the significance of the items in relation to the focus of the gathering.

Invite each person in turn to read the one line of their creed they would most like to share

Bring together all these prayers by offering them to the Father in the Lord's Prayer

Closing prayer

God our Father, we thank you for bringing us together,
for the insights we have shared and the friendships being nurtured.
May your Holy Spirit strengthen us
so that we may continue following the ways of your Son Jesus
and soon be united with you in the Sacraments.
Amen

Closing Remarks & Next Step

- Check how group are feeling about today's gathering.
- Time, date and venue for the next Stepping Stone – **the Church – a building or a people.**
- Encourage personal and prayer support of one another and offer to attend Mass with the young parishioners accompanying the inquirers on the journey.