

## Overview of retreats I have led or given at various parishes for different age groups

### **Adult Retreats**

#### **Into the Wilderness – A Lenten Retreat**

This retreat allows participants to contemplate and reflect on what it means to journey into the wilderness. Throughout the Bible, the wilderness is a place of preparation; a place of overcoming temptation; a place that God leads many people to, including Jesus before he began his public ministry. The retreat provides us opportunity to reflect on moments of wilderness from music, the Scriptures, and the desert places in our own lives.

The retreat can either take place in one evening that would last about three hours, or it can be broken up over two evenings with one and a half hour sessions. A third evening can be added to include faith sharing, fellowship, confession, and Adoration.

There are the seven, 15 to 20 minute sessions:

1. A Place of Preparation
2. A Place of Testing
3. A Place of Reconciliation
4. A Place of Rebellion
5. A Place of Nurturing
6. A Place of Challenge
7. A Place of Transformation

As retreat leader, I will give a short personal witness about my own journey into the wilderness. I will also guide them through each stage; however, I am happy to meet and work with a small retreat team from the parish to take ownership of some of the different stages.

#### **A Journey into Advent**

This retreat gives each participation a chance to put aside the busy-ness of life and give rest to the body and soul during or just before Advent begins. Using the model of Ignatian imaginative prayer, we journey through the Scriptures of Advent in both the New and Old Testament to listen and contemplate on the Word of God, music, and personal witness. One of the highlights of the retreats is a personal reflection on Mary, Mother of God.

The retreat can last between an hour and a half or a full two hours if Adoration is added.

We will take time to listen to the Words of Jesus, to imagine ourselves actively in the Scriptures, and reflect on what God is saying to us through His Word in these topics:

- Jesus waiting at the Door - Prepare you Heart, Christ, our Savior is Coming
- Waiting for Jesus to come – the pre-announced One
- A shoot comes from the stump of Jesse - from Bethlehem He will come
- I will send a messenger – a voice cries out in the wilderness – Elizabeth conceives
- A virgin will conceive and bear a son - Hail, favored one, the Lord is with you
- A people that walk in darkness have seen a great light - The Word became flesh

This retreat works best with a small team to share readings and possible reflections.

## **TEENS**

### **Encountering God Who wants to be known:**

This retreat is perfect for High School or especially Confirmation. It is a three-hour session with music, Scripture, two witness talks, and different activities the students will engage and challenge the teens.

Sessions include: 1. Who is God, Part I – an exploration about who we think God is and how God helps us to understand through the teachings of the Church, Scripture, and prayer. Students explore their own understanding (or misunderstandings of God) and what obstacles are in our lives that keep us from knowing God better, God in His Word, and prayer.

2. Who is God, Part II - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – One God in a loving relationship of Three Persons. Students explore how God is love and in love with us. We will explore the two great commandments and without them, our faith is dead.

3. Encountering God in the gifts Holy Spirit and the gifts God gives us to help know Him and love others.

4. Encountering God in The Word – an exercise in Lectio Divina. Students will participate and learn about how God speaks to us through Scripture and prayer using different passages of Scripture.

5. Encountering God in Jesus, fully present in the Eucharist. This retreat is best realized when it ends in either Holy Mass or Adoration (with confession).

The retreat wraps up by asking the teens to name and try to commit to doing three things that will help their faith and relationship with God grow. 1. Learn about God and His Church; 2. Find ways to connect to your parish; 3. Seek out adults who can help you grow in your faith.

### **Strong in Jesus, Strong in Self**

This retreat works well with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and can be adapted for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The journey to understanding who we are in middle school and then as we transition to high school is a dynamic and challenging adventure. According to PsychCentral.com, in the teen years, young people begin their quest for identity. They may be disoriented, scared and alone. They become moody, secretive, and sarcastic. And yet, they yearn for love, acceptance, and belonging. A key to this journey is to help them realize that they are not alone, that God is always there for them, and that Jesus offers them a stability in their lives that will last for eternity, even if we don't see it.

Using Scripture in Luke 6 when Jesus says, "Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them... is like the one building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock." What does it mean to hear God's Word and then to do them? How is it possible a book written thousands of years ago can help a pre-teens and teens know themselves better, know that they are loved, and help them make choices that support and sustain their true identities? How also, does Matthew 16:18, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." help them to know that the Church is the foundation Jesus built to help sustain us throughout our life.

This is a day retreat with four, one-hour sessions that begin with, 1. Who am I; 2. Building a strong foundation in Jesus, part I: Hearing His Word; 3. Building a strong foundation in Jesus, part II: doing the Father's Will; 4. Me, Peter, and Jesus

## **SACRAMENTAL RETREATS FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

First Eucharist – Available Now – Wording coming soon!

First Reconciliation – Available Now – Wording coming soon!