

CONFIRMATION

Sponsor Session Where is God in my pain? GOD HAS SUFFERED

Instructions

Dear Confirmation Candidate and Sponsor, thank you for committing to growing closer to Christ together! These sponsor sessions are a great time for you to strengthen your relationship with each other and with God. Each session, you'll read some content, watch a short video, and engage in lots of discussion. For the reading portions, you can switch off reading each paragraph. Additionally, the discussion questions are for both of you to answer. I pray that these sponsor sessions will be transformative and fun for you both!

Overview

Read:

Each one of us knows what it is to suffer. Our suffering varies at different times in our lives and each of us experiences our own suffering in a unique way. We can find great hope in our suffering when we allow Jesus into our pain. He is not afraid of even the most vulnerable and painful areas of our lives. He is with us.

Jesus is with us in our suffering because He knows what it is to suffer. There is no suffering too great to give to Him. We can be united to Him even in the most painful times in our life. He sees us. He loves us and He wants us to give permission to Him to be so close to us in it all.

Theme Scripture

2 CORINTHIANS 1:5

"For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ."

CONNECT

1. Check-In

Discuss:

- What are your "highs and lows" of this week? (High - best part of your week; Low - worst part)
- How are you? How is your heart? (Are you happy, sad, depressed, anxious, excited, etc., and why?)
- What are you looking forward to doing? What are you excited about?
- What have you been frustrated with lately? What are you anxious about? What are you sad about?
- How have you been spiritually? Do you feel on fire for God... distant from Him... somewhere in between? Why do you think you feel this way?
- Where have you seen God at work in the world and/or your life lately?
- How can I pray for you this week?

2. Opening Prayer

Begin your prayer with the theme verse. Then, share prayer requests. Lastly, end with this prayer or your own prayer:

"Jesus, we do not always understand our suffering, but we trust that You understand us. Open our hearts, so that we might receive Your love even more and see You at work even in the midst of our pain."

DISCOVER

3. Video

Jot down 3 questions or things that stand out to you while watching the video.

Watch the "God has Suffered" video. You can find it on the Confirmation page on mystelizabeth.com.

4. Reflection

Discuss:

- What is your first impression of the video? Did you like it or not? Was it clear or confusing? Why?
- What words or feelings come to mind?

Read:

This video has a very personal story of a girl that was in the midst of her own suffering and pain and encountered a young man named Zach. Zach was battling cancer and courageously choosing to keep his eyes on Jesus in the midst of his own pain. In this choice, those around Zach discovered that he had a love that was beyond what any young man could possess on his own. The way he loved the people around him was most certainly through the love of Jesus.

Each of us experiences our own suffering in life and that suffering at different times of our lives changes. Perhaps the most difficult thing in our life last year doesn't even stand out to us today compared with what pain we are experiencing now.

There can also be times in our lives that don't involve a lot of suffering and there is nothing wrong with experiencing those times too. Jesus is with us in it all.

When Zach described why he liked Eucharistic Adoration so much, he said, "Jesus doesn't turn away from you when you're suffering, He looks right at you." Zach loved people in this way too. He was willing to see them, to really love them.

Jesus knows our suffering. He is not distant; he became man and suffered physically, he felt the pain of rejection and he even died. When we suffer, we know that God can empathize with our pain.

Suffering doesn't have to be turmoil and chaos. Even in suffering there can be peace, because Jesus Christ is in it with me. He reached the ultimate

limit of human suffering in this life, so He knows how to suffer with us and transform our suffering into something worthwhile.

The way to peace is to turn outward toward Christ and towards people you love. We come to know the love of Christ the more we are willing to freely give ourselves to Him.

Discuss:

- What 3 things did you write down during the video?
- Can you think of anyone in your life that you've seen handle suffering really well? Is there anyone that came to your mind as you heard the description of the way Zack suffered and loved?
- Why do you think it might help us to recognize the suffering Jesus endured for us? What difference does that make?
- The video mentioned Adoration. Are you familiar with Eucharistic Adoration? If so, what has been your experience? If not, Adoration is a time of prayer before Jesus, who is present in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in a host. The same Jesus present at each and every Mass is present in Eucharistic Adoration for us to pour out our hearts before Him in prayer.
- What are some common sufferings of people your age? Can these sometimes feel like obstacles to seeing how God is at work in someone's life?
- Can you relate to the girl in the video in the way she shared about her life? What are some of the sufferings and pain you experience?
- How can we learn to be at peace in the midst of our suffering? You can remember from the video the way Zach turned outward from himself to Jesus and also to those around him. What does this look like on a practical level? Prayer could be one essential component of this.
- What is one thing you'd like to remember from hearing about the way that Zack lived his life?

- St. Maximilian Kolbe said, “For Jesus Christ, I am prepared to suffer still more. And let us not forget that Jesus not only suffered, but also rose in glory; so, too, we go to the glory of the Resurrection by way of suffering and the Cross.” What does this mean to you?
- St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “I have found the paradox that if I love until it hurts, then there is no hurt, but only more love.” What does this mean to you and how can you relate to this quote?

COMMIT

5. Closing

Read:

No matter what we are experiencing, we can invite Jesus into our hearts. He knows our joys and our sorrows and He desires to be with us. We can experience the peace only He can offer when we open our heart to Him and allow Him to love the people we encounter through us.

This week, your challenge is to write down and pray with the theme verse. Put it somewhere you'll look at it daily and try to memorize it. Check-in with each other in a week to see if you've memorized it yet.

Close in prayer with your own prayer or something like this:

"Jesus, we invite You into our lives in all the joys and sorrows. Give us the grace to look beyond ourselves, to see You and to see You present in each person we encounter. May You give us the grace to love as You love. Amen."