

LIFE Meeting

The Masks We Wear

October 1, 2014

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Ali
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Ian
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- Next Meeting: November 5th
- Bring Pictures for bulletin board
- Vala's October 24th --\$3 and sign up
- Planning Meeting October 15th

Icebreaker

Who am I?

Have a sheet of Labels with different people on the back of them. Place a label on the back of every student. Then have everyone go around and talk to people asking them questions to figure out who they are. They can only ask the same person two questions before they must move on and ask someone else.

Opening Prayer

Hillary Duff

Fly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvUFZt8ly1E>

In a moment, everything can change,

Feel the wind on your shoulder,

For a minute, all the world can wait,

Let go of your yesterday.

Can you hear it calling?

Can you feel it in your soul?

Can you trust this longing?

And take control,

Fly

Open up the part of you that wants to
hide away

You can shine,

Forget about the reasons why you
can't in life,

And start to try, cause it's your time,

Time to fly.

All your worries, leave them somewhere
else,

Find a dream you can follow,

Reach for something, when there's
nothing left,

And the world's feeling hollow.

Can you hear it calling?

Can you feel it in your soul?

Can you trust this longing?

And take control,

Fly

Open up the part of you that wants to
hide away

You can shine,

Forget about the reasons why you
can't in life,

And start to try, cause it's your time,

Time to fly.

In a moment, everything can change.

And when you're down and feel alone,

Just want to run away,

Trust yourself and don't give up,

You know you better than anyone else,

In a moment, everything can change,

Feel the wind on your shoulder,

For a minute, all the world can wait,

Let go of yesterday,

Fly

Open up the part of you that wants to
hide away

You can shine,

Forget about the reasons why you
can't in life,

And start to try,

Fly

Forget about the reasons why you
can't in life,

And start to try, cause it's your time,

Time to fly.

Reflection:

In Fly by Hilary Duff we learn how we are the ones who can actually control our own lives. In tonight's meeting we will hear about how we are letting society and fear control what we are. Through our lives we have become familiar with a norm of what is commonly accepted by others. We have been taught how to fit in and belong to certain crowds. We have been trained to put on different masks for different people in order to be welcomed. It is hard to be yourself all the time but we have to trust ourselves and our own instincts like the song says. We cannot break free from our masks if we are stuck in the past and looking at the reasons why we cannot be ourselves. We must realize our fears, find who we truly want to be, and embrace ourselves before we can fly.

Jesus the Savior, when Your apostle Peter denied You three times he denied himself. Yet, he overcame his mask to become the Rock on which the church was built. Let him be an example of what good can come of being ourselves and reaching our true potential. We pray through Saint Peter to help guide us in our meeting tonight and let us find our real selves.

In the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

Now let us sit in silence with eyes closed for a moment before we get into our small groups to reflect on who we truly are. Think about how you act in various situations:

- When I am around new people
- When people are goofing around in class
- When people are talking to me when we are supposed to be quiet
- When I am the only one of my friend that likes something
- When the "cool kids" like something that I don't

Reflection before Small Group

Everybody, be quiet, relax, and close your eyes for a reflection on Ian's talk

Everyone has masks we wear on a day to day basis. Sometimes the masks we wear affect not only ourselves, but the people around us. It can affect the friends we have, the choices we make, the reputation we have, and a lot more. In small groups, we recognized that everybody has masks and we put them on for a lot of different reasons. Now, we're going to talk about how to overcome that mask to be who you truly are and to not be fooled by the masks that all of us wear. Here's a poem about overcoming that mask: How pertains to you

Please Hear What I am Not Saying By Charlie C Finn

Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear.
For I wear a mask, I wear a thousand masks, masks that I am afraid to take off, and none of them are me.

Pretending is an art that is second nature with me, but don't be fooled, for God's sake don't be fooled. I give you the impression that I'm secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within me as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness my game, that the water's calm and I'm in command, and that I need no one.

But don't believe me, please. My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever-warying ever-concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness, no complacency. Beneath dwells the real me in confusion, in fear, in aloneness. But I hide this. I don't want anybody to know it. I panic at the thought of my weakness and fear being exposed.

That's why I frantically create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated facade, to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation. My only salvation, and I know it.

That is if it is followed by acceptance, if it is followed by love. It's the only thing that liberates me, from myself, from my own self-built prison walls, from barriers that I so painstakingly erect. It's the only thing that will assure me of what I can't assure myself, that I'm really worth something. But I don't tell you this. I don't dare. I'm afraid to. I'm afraid you'll think less of me, that you'll laugh, and your laugh would kill me.

I'm afraid that deep down I'm nothing, that I'm just no good, and that you will see this and reject me. So I play the game, my desperate pretending game, with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within. And so begins the parade of masks, and my life becomes a front. I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that is really nothing. And nothing of what is everything, of what is crying within me.

So when I'm going through my routine do not be fooled by what I'm saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying, what I'd like to be able to say, what for survival I need to say, but what I can't say. I dislike hiding. Honestly. I dislike the superficial game I'm playing, the superficial, phony game.

I'd really like to be genuine and spontaneous, and me, but you've got to help me. You've got to hold out your hand even when that's the last thing I seem to want, or need. Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of the breathing dead. Only you can call me into aliveness.

Each time you're kind, and gentle, and encouraging, each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings, very feeble wings, but wings. With your sensitivity and empathy, and your power to understanding, you can breathe life into me. I want you to know that. I want you to know how important you are to me, how you can be a co-creator of the person that is me if you choose to.

So, please choose to. You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble. You alone can release me from my shadow-world of panic and uncertainty, from my lonely prison. So do not pass me by. It will not be easy for you. A long conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls.

The nearer you approach me, the blinder I strike back. I fight against the very thing that I cry out for. But I am told that love is stronger than strong walls, and in this lies my hope ... my only hope.

Please try to beat down those walls with firm hands, but with gentle hands, for a child is very sensitive. Who am I you may wonder? I am someone you know very well. For I am every man and I am every woman you meet.

Iron Man

Human Torch

Minnie Mouse

Mighty Mouse

Mr. Incredible

Mickey Mouse

Yoda

Scooby Doo

Sonic the Hedgehog

Buzz Lightyear

Mr. Freeze

Indiana Jones

Thor

Invisible Woman

Katniss

Elastigirl

Ninja Turtles

Mulan

Mater (Cars)

Mr. Kool-Aid

Shrek

Kim Possible

Powder-puff Girls

Power Rangers

Lightening McQueen

Superwoman

Tony the Tiger

Green Goblin

Doctor Octopus

SpongeBob Square Pa

Goofy

Lone Ranger

Robin

Zorro

Batman

Spiderman

Dash

Catwoman

The Joker

The Incredible Hulk

Superman

Wonder Woman

Pikachu (Pokeman)

Wolverine

The Flash

Jason (Friday the 13th)

Captain Planet

The Riddler

The Penguin

Captain Underpants

Storm (X-men)

Cat in the Hat

Jesus

Tinkerbell

Winnie the Pooh

Blessed Virgin Mary

Robocop

Shark Boy

Lava Girl

Captain America

1st Small Group

Scripture

Hold hands and interlock fingers so that all the weaknesses in the group are covered by each other's strengths.

1 Samuel 16

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at

the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Reflection

How often do we make assumptions based on outward appearances? We often rush to judge others- too skinny or too fat, tall or short, loud or quiet, modest or immodest, overdressed or underdressed. We are pressured to create an image for ourselves, one that is accepted by those around us. When it comes down to it, we should let our true selves show. We strive to love each other as God loves us. As God tells Samuel in this bible verse, the Lord looks at the heart.

Lord God, help us to look at all around us with a sense of acceptance and true care. Let us love as You love, without judgment. Help us to look at the heart, and open our own hearts to who you really want us to be. We offer this intention to you, and together we pray, may the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

Activity

All of us struggle with masks, they are a normal, yet not ideal part of life. We should all be honest about the masks we all struggle with. We are going to create masks to represent ourselves using paper plates and markers.

The outside of the paper plate represents the side that people see—including how we want people to view us (our "reputation") and how people label us. When most people think of us, this is what we believe they see.

The inside of the mask includes who we really are—the aspects of our lives that many people don't know. This is the opportunity to be honest about things that most people may not know about us - past experiences that have formed us, family history, hobbies, interests, hopes, feelings and dreams. What are your deepest loves in life that few people know about? The mask does not need any facial features drawn or attached - just a bunch of symbols and words covering both the front and back of the mask.

It can be very helpful if you have some examples of what you are going to put on your masks to share with the group as an example. The mask can include current masks that you struggle with or ones that you dealt with when you were a freshman.

Things for the **outside** of the mask –

1. The image/front I try to portray (tough, funny guy, cool, trendy, girly, mean, stupid, strong)
2. How I've been labeled by...
 - a. Classmates (nerd, jock, prep, stuck-up, goth, druggie, smart, slut, prude, blonde, good two-shoes, etc.)
 - b. Group of friends (quiet one, leader, jokester, etc.)
 - c. Teachers/Parents/Adults (trouble-maker, perfect one, etc.)
 - d. Family, by siblings or extended family members

- e. Where you live or go to school - are you in a wealthier or poorer part of town, etc.
3. What people typically know about what I do - sports I play, activities I do, strengths or weaknesses (soccer, piano, reading, dancing, video games, etc.)
4. What people think they know about my life - perfect family, strong in faith, happy all the time, etc.

Things for the **inside** of the mask –

1. What my personality is REALLY like, who I really am, how I act when I feel the most comfortable...(fun, lots to say, quiet, goofy, serious sometimes, etc.)
2. What I REALLY love to do that not everyone knows....(listen to oldies music, ride horses, swim, sing Disney songs, Lord of the Rings, play a certain sport, I don't like playing a certain sport, read, poetry, certain movies, plays, etc.)
3. What my life is REALLY like - family struggles, I have lots of questions about faith, I'm not always happy; I'm scared of future and nervous sometimes, etc.

Small Group Questions:

1. Share your mask that you put up? (just state your "mask", no explanation)
2. Why do you put up this "mask"?
3. Do you think it is okay to live your whole life putting up a front?
4. Share the things on the inside of you mask.
5. What makes it hard to be yourself?
6. God doesn't judge us no matter who we are, why do you think it is hard for people to follow in his footsteps and not judge?
7. What is one way you can reach out to God in help of finding your true self?

Closing

Spontaneous Prayer

2nd Small Group

Leaders pick out things that “spoke” to them in the poem and talk about that.

1. Did Ian bring about any points in his talk that you could relate to? How so?
2. What does it mean to be your true self? Do you have difficulties being your true self?
3. How do other people's expectations affect you?
4. Do you feel like you have to live up to other people's expectations? Why?
5. Why is it so challenging to separate who we really are and who we are when we try to meet expectations?
6. How do you personally determine who you are?
7. How are you going to be yourself from now on?

Closing

Spontaneous Prayer

Large Group

1. At the beginning of the meeting we discussed the different masks we wear and how that differs from who we really are, Did anyone realize something about themselves they didn't know prior?
2. Did you confess something to your small group that you might feel comfortable saying here about how you hope to show your real self?
3. Did you feel better when you were explaining your real self even though it may have been difficult?
4. Were you impressed at what anyone shared or surprised at how many people you were able to connect with?

Let us sit for a moment and think about this quote by James Baldwin as we prepare for our final prayer

“Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within. I use the word “love” here not merely in the personal sense but as a state of being, or a state of grace - not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth.”

Closing Prayer

Christina Aguilera

Beautiful

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74uNfelydc0>

Don't look at me

Every day is so wonderful
Then suddenly it's hard to breathe.
Now and then I get insecure
From all the pain, I'm so ashamed.

I am beautiful no matter what they say.
Words can't bring me down.
I am beautiful in every single way.
Yes, words can't bring me down... Oh no.
So don't you bring me down today.

To all your friends you're delirious,
So consumed in all your doom.
Trying hard to fill the emptiness.
The pieces gone, left the puzzle undone.
is that the way it is?

You are beautiful no matter what they say
Words can't bring you down....oh no
You are beautiful in every single way
Yes, words can't bring you down, oh, no
So don't you bring me down today...

No matter what we do
(no matter what we do)
No matter what we say
(no matter what we say)
We're the song inside the tune
Full of beautiful mistakes

And everywhere we go
(and everywhere we go)
The sun will always shine
(the sun will always, always shine)
And tomorrow we might wake on the
other side

We are beautiful no matter what they say
Yes, words won't bring us down, no, no
We are beautiful in every single way
Yes, words can't bring us down, oh, no
So don't you bring me down today

Oh, yeah, don't you bring me down today,
yeah, ooh
Don't you bring me down ooh... today

From the time we learn how to speak we learn about what is expected of us. We hear everything from how we are supposed to look to how we are supposed to act with certain people. The video of the little kids begins in a sober mood with everyone living in fear of being judged. After way too long everyone decides that behind a mask is no place to live. Just like in the video now is the time to move beyond the masks. Silently, let us all take our masks and look over them one more time read over both the outside and the inside. Now, rip them up, for we are not defined by them anymore.We must accept ourselves for who we are. Even if we are "strange", or "quiet", or "like to skateboard" we should always embrace ourselves. In the meeting we went through places or times when we are not ourselves, but then we found out how everyone is insecure sometimes to be themselves. We realized that it is okay to be who you are because that is when you will be truly happy and fulfilling God's plan for you. Everyone is beautiful for their own reasons because everyone is made in God's unique image.

Lord please let us keep our ideals and beliefs our own. Let us never succumb to what others may want us to be or do. We should never be afraid of being who we are for we are all loved and accepted by you our creator. Help us to remember all we have learned in this meeting and transfer it to our daily lives, and may everyone know that if they are accepted nowhere else they are accepted at LIFE and in the eyes of God.