

LIFE Meeting

Faith in the Secular World

September 26, 2018

1. Opening Prayer

Jamie

2. Icebreaker: Follow the Leader

Kaden

3. Transition to Small Groups

Kyle

4. Small Groups: Stations

5. Large Group: Wrap Up

Jamie

6. Closing Prayer

Faith

- **Next Meeting: October 17th- Life and Death**
- **Recycling**
- **Hope Totes**
- **Pictures**

Opening Prayer

Fear Not by Chris Tomlin

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

**God, He is faithful
Faithful to us
Through troubled waters
He won't abandon
Fear not!
The Lord, God is with us**

Be strong, take heart
The Lord He fights for us
Hold on, our God
Is a mighty warrior

Be still and rest
He holds the universe
Lift high your hands
To the Rock unshakable

God, He is faithful
Through every storm
He'll never leave us
He won't abandon
Fear not!
The Lord, God is with us

The truth is a sword
The battle is the Lord's
Surely He will deliver
So call on His name
He is mighty to save
Surely He will deliver

The truth is a sword
The battle is the Lord's
Surely He will deliver

So call on His name
He is mighty to save
Surely He will deliver

God, He is faithful
Through every storm
He'll never leave us
He won't abandon

Fear not!
The Lord God is with us (Fear not! The Lord
God is with us)

At many points in our lives we find it hard to remain faithful in our world today. Take a moment to think of a time when you have denied your faith and its values, not only in your actions but in your heart. I'm sure most of us can say we've been guilty of not being as faithful as we know we're called to be. Whether we denied our faith because it's not cool, we fear being judged, it makes us outcasts in society, or whatever other reason you came up with, it doesn't matter. God has done too many things for us to show us that he truly loves us for us to just deny him out of fear. God has done many things that may seem frightening and scary, but if he can remain strong and show us how powerful his love is for us, then we should not fear showing our love for Him. If God has been there for us through all the hardships he went through, we can remain there for him through our small struggles in our daily lives. Really listen in the meeting today to the ways God is calling you to be with him and to not let the outside world over shine on his love for us. And as your people let us joyfully proclaim, May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Amen.

Icebreaker: Follow the Leader

Transition to Small Group

Please close your eyes and reflect... We just played "Follow the Leader". Each of us can be a leader in our own way. Each of us has gifts and talents that we are called to use to lead the world to God. Think of the talents you've been given... How have you used them in the past? To lead others to God or away from Him? Everything about you can have an influence on someone else. Do you let your faith shine for all to see, or cover it up? In the future, how can you use your gifts and talents to praise God? To say thank you to God? To lead others to God? Please continue to reflect as we go on, and ask God for the strength and the wisdom to lead others to Him. You may be surprised by how much He can do with just a little faith from you... :)

Small Groups

Prayer

Jeremiah 23:24

"Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares the LORD "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.

Jeremiah reminds us that God is always near us and there is no place that we can hide from him. Let us invite the presence of God unto our lives today as we enjoy His creation. Allow us to see His love shine through the darkness of our world.

Are there any intentions today?

As your people let us joyfully proclaim: May the Father, and The Son, and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

Brain Break (Commons)

1. Charades: Everyone should have an envelope of topics if you want to come up with your own that is fine too.
2. Purpose in Life
 - o Fold a piece of paper into 3 sections.
 - o In the **1st Section**, list your gifts, strengths, talents, including abilities and personal qualities
 - o In the **3rd section** list problems in the world that are concerning you especially about faith or a lack thereof. (How we treat others, the lack of dignity we show people, the violence that people show, etc.)
 - o In the **Middle Section** use creativity to devise at least 3 ways to use your gifts in the first section to solve problems in the 3rd section.

People's Faith Outside of Gross (Flagpole)

1. Do you run into difficulties with your faith life outside of school? Why or why not?
2. Where do you find your faith life is stronger at home or at school? Explain
3. What aspect of your faith do you find is strengthened at home?
4. How does your faith affect your life outside of Gross?
5. Do you find that your friends who aren't from Gross affect your faith life? Do you share your faith with people?
6. In today's society, where is a place you see God at work?
7. What are some ways you can improve or add to your faith outside of Gross?

Ways we can make our school community more faithful (Gazebo)

1. Do you feel Gross has a faithful vibe, an in between vibe, or a unfaithful vibe? Why?
2. What are some ways you've seen Gross as a faithful community?

3. What are some ways you've seen Gross as an unfaithful community? Why do you think this is?
4. Even if people are not full of faith themselves, why do people feel the need to ruin other people's faith experiences?
5. Where do you think people are the most comfortable to be faithful at Gross?
6. Is there a certain person at Gross (student, staff, teacher) that makes you feel like you can let your faith truly be itself? Why?
7. What are some things you can think of right now that would make Gross a more faithful community?

Why do we make it so difficult and how to make it easier. (Horseshoe Pit)

1. In what ways do we make it difficult to have a faithful relationship with God?
2. What distractions cause us to grow distant with God?
3. How can we build a more faithful relationship with Jesus?
4. What are some simple things that we can do in order to develop a routine in our faith?
5. In what ways can we use nature as a tool to grow in our faith?
6. In what ways can we use technology as a tool to grow in our faith?

How the world has become more secular (Back Hallway Doors by Wrestling Room)

1. What is the biggest secular influence that takes a toll on your personal faith life?
2. Do you think the damage the secular world on faith life can be reversed? Why or why not?
3. What secular statement or statements that go against the faith seem to have become the normal in the world today?
4. Do you feel like the normalization of secular living is affecting your faith life at home? At Gross? Within yourself?
5. Why do you think that there is a big push to remove God from things?
6. Do you think that our world has changed because people are less faith filled?
7. What is a way you think we can push against secular mindsets?

Difference between having a religion and being spiritual (Outside of Health and Conditioning Center)

Mother Angelica, founder of EWTN and an inspiration to many Catholics once said: *"Simply believing in the existence of God is not exactly what I would call a commitment. After all, even the devil believes that God exists! Believing has to change the way we live."*

1. Do you think there is a difference between being religious and being spiritual? If so, what is the difference?
2. Why do we as Catholics think going to mass is a necessity? What's so important about mass that makes it an obligation? What about finding God in nature or elsewhere?
3. Do you get anything out of going to mass? How much do you put in to mass?
4. Is there a difference between going to confession and asking God for forgiveness in the silence of your heart? Please explain. Why do Catholics think going to confession is so important?
5. Where else do you see God outside of the Church? Where have you felt His presence in your life? Can you see God easily, or does it take some effort?
6. Are there any special places you like to go to pray? Do you think prayers actually do anything? What prayers or songs do you like to say and sing? (Feel free to get really in depth with this. :))
7. What is your favorite part of your faith? Are there any liturgies or services you enjoy?

8. What has helped your faith to grow the most over the years? Your family? Your friends? Your school? Your parish?
9. What challenges do you face when you try to grow in you faith life? What can you do to overcome those challenges?

Visual Spirituality

When you are ready for the discussion to begin, lay the pictures out so everyone can see them. Ask people to walk around and take the picture that best describes/captures their experience of faith/spirituality. After everyone has selected a picture, go around the room and have each person share.

Spontaneous Closing Prayer with your small group at your last station before heading back to the LIFE room.



Closing Prayer

What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-T6aaRV9HY>

I see trees of green, red roses too.

I see them bloom for me and you,

And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue and clouds of white.

The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night,

And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky

Are also on the faces of people going by,

I hear Louis playing, and singing too

He's really saying, "I love you."

I hear babies cry, I watch them grow,

They'll learn much more, than we'll ever know.

And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

They're really saying, "I love you."

I hear babies cry, I watch them grow,

They'll learn much more, than we'll ever know.

And I think to myself, what a wonderful world

Reflection

I want you to close your eyes. How often do you take in the beauty of our wonderful world? Think of a special place outside you like to go to escape reality. The highest of mountains, acres of grassland, and dark depths of the sea are all shaped by the hands of God. We should respect nature because the wildlife provides a home for all living things, including ourselves. Take a deep breath in and out slowly. Now open your eyes. Look at

the people next to and in front of you. Each and every one of you are beautiful in your own way, just like nature. Remember to appreciate God's creation because He made this world out of love for us. As a Marianist family, we joyfully proclaim: May the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Amen.

Ways to Incorporate Faith Into Your Life

Get a Better Understanding of Scripture

One of the best ways to get a better understanding on our faith and how to bring it into our lives is understanding scripture. Scripture is God's direct word so in order for us to have a better understanding of our faith, we need to have a better understanding of God's messages of guidance to us. In order for us to deepen our faith, we need to read the Bible closely and take the messages and signs God is giving us to Heart.

Romans 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

Challenge: Challenge yourself to read thoroughly read a chapter of the Bible a week.

Defend Your Faith Through Reasonable Arguments

Once you have come to a better understanding of the Word of God and our faith, it becomes easier to defend yourself against people trying to put you or your faith down. This will also help you put what God is telling you to the test against challenges the secular world may throw at you. And in turn, being able to defend your faith will give you a deeper understanding of your faith and make it easier to live out in confidence.

Philippians 1:16 "The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel."

Challenge: If someone tries to rebuke you for your faith, argue (reasonably) back with what the Word of God says and why you remain faithful to it.

Having a Deeper Understanding of Other Religions

Having more knowledge on other religions can be very beneficial to strengthening our faith in multiple ways. For many of us we've grown up being Catholic, it's the normal. We've never really had a choice. Looking into other religions can seriously help you choose to be a part of the Catholic faith, and not just being born into it. By making a choice to be Catholic, it helps us strengthen our faith in our own unique way. You can find out things about being a catholic that you never knew before and why it's always been

the right way for you to live your life. It will also teach you how to respect your views though people may not agree and to respect the views of others, even if they aren't the same as your own.

Proverbs 2:6 "For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."

Challenge: When you have some free time, look into a religion that interests you, but you know nothing about.

Uniting With People Just Like You

Surrounding yourself with people who don't value your faith can be very damaging to your spiritual life. It can cause you to feel like an outcast and alone, and that can lead to you giving up on your faith all together. But when you think about it, you surround yourself everyday with people that have the same faith as you. You do this by coming to Gross. You did this tonight by choosing to come to L.I.F.E. All these people accept you and your values and your faith life even if it's not perfect or it's not the same as theirs. Being surrounded by people trying to achieve the same goal will strengthen your faith in ways you may not have known.

1 Corinthians 1:10 " I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you who agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."

Challenge: Attend L.I.F.E. more often, attend another type of youth group, or a prayer group made up of people just like you.

Living Out Your Faith

It's one thing to understand your faith and God's word, but it's another thing to actually live out God's message. The way a person can truly live out their faith is by listening and living out God's word. Your faith life is not complete with doing just one, they balance each other. Being lazy but believing God's message is not going to make your faith any stronger.

1 Peter 4:10 "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Challenge: Give up one of your weekends and do service for your fellow man at places like the Open Door Mission, the Food Bank, etc.

Pray

Prayer is the easiest way to remain faithful. It's hard to keep your head high and your faith strong in a world with so many forces pushing in and ridiculing you. But praying to God will help you keep your strength in times where you're fearful and weak. Prayer also gives us our own unique and personal relationship with God that nobody else shares in.

Romans 12:12 "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

Challenge: Pray to God at least 3 times a day.

Schedule for the Stations

6:50 – 7:00 1st Group
7:02 – 7:12 2nd Group
7:14 – 7:24 3rd Group
7:26 – 7:36 4th Group
7:38 – 7:48 5th Group
7:50 – 8:00 6th Group

8:00 – 8:15 Visual Spirituality

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