

Session 3 of 3

Sent by Jesus: The Mass has ended...GO!

Objective: Jesus calls us to join him for a meal, a Eucharistic meal. Through this Eucharistic meal in which He is fully present and with our intentional participation, we are healed and nourished in preparation for discipleship. How do we *GO* from the Eucharistic celebration and *BE* a Christian?

- Group will acknowledge the ways in which their parish is BEING a disciple
- Group will acknowledge the who and how Catholics ARE disciples worldwide
- Group will brainstorm ways they as young people can BE disciples in their homes, at school and community
- Group will brainstorm some activity they can do together that allows them to BE young disciples, SENT from the Eucharistic celebration into the world

Advance Preparation: Compose a list of all the ways your parish reaches out to parishioners and others in your community. Combine that information with the information below to present a small picture of the ways Catholics all over the world *GO* about *BEING* disciples.

Materials: Bibles, Catholic Facts sheet, large paper or white board for brainstorming

Leader: Make copies for all students of the list. Let students read over this list, taking note of the interesting or surprising facts therein. Discuss who and what we are as Catholics in your community, the USA and the world.

Some interesting facts about **WHO** we are and the **WAY** CATHOLICS ARE BEING DISCIPLES of JESUS TODAY!

CATHOLIC FACTS

Did you know that...

- Of the roughly 6.5 billion people on earth, approximately 1.1 billion are Catholic
- Of the 295 million people in the U.S., 67 million people are Catholic (that is 23 % of the population)
- In the state of Florida there are 63, 985 Catholics among a total of 1.3 million population (that is 20% of the population)
- The Catholic Church is the largest single denomination in Christianity

Our Diocese of Pensacola Tallahassee...

- Was established in 1975 by dividing the dioceses of St. Augustine and Mobile
- Covers 14, 044 square miles and includes 18 counties

- Of the 7 dioceses in the state of Florida, ours is the most expansive and the least populated with an average of 4 Catholics per square mile
- 40 % of the population lives in the Pensacola area, with the remaining 60 % divided nearly equally between the areas of Ft. Walton Beach, Panama City and Tallahassee
- Has 49 parishes and 10 missions
- Is served by 1 bishop, 64 active priests, and sixty deacons
- The Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee currently has a Catholic population of 66,145, or approximately 5% of the total population of the area.
- There are seven rural counties along the 200-mile stretch of highway from the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Pensacola to the Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas Moore in Tallahassee.

Retrieved from www.ptdiocese.org

The Catholic Church in the U.S.A...

There are:

- 69.1 million Catholics (23% of the U.S. population)
- 18,992 parishes (46 new parishes in 2005)
- 42,271 priests / 5,252 brothers / 67,773 sisters
- 573 Catholic hospitals treated 84.7 million patients in 2005
- 6,511 elementary schools and 1,354 high schools, with over 2.5 million students enrolled
- 231 Catholic colleges and universities with a total of 763,757 students
- Is made up of 195 archdioceses and dioceses
- Catholic Charities (just like we have in our towns) has more than 1,600 local agencies and institutions nationwide providing help, sometimes with government funding, and creating hope for 6,597,998 people in 2003, regardless of religious, social, or economic backgrounds thanks to the dedication of more than 51,000 staff and 175,000 volunteers!
- The Knights of Columbus, the world-wide Catholic fraternal (men's) organization has 1.72 million members today
- The K of C is now the world's largest lay Catholic membership organization and in 2007 donated more than \$139 million and 64 million volunteer hours to charity

Retrieved from <http://www.usccb.org/comm/cip.shtml#toc2> and http://www.kofc.org/eb/en/anniversary/media/newsreleases/release_20070328_en.html

Some interesting facts...

- There were 1.31 billion Catholics on planet earth in 2006
- There are 3,500,000 teachers in 250,000 Catholic schools worldwide and they teach 42,000,000 pupils.
- There are more Catholics in the U. S. Congress than any other religion.
- The Archdiocese of New York has 2.5 million parishioners, 410 parishes, 279 schools, and extends 108 miles.
- The United States has more Catholic colleges and universities than any other country: 213.
- Charles Carroll was the only Catholic to sign the United States Declaration of Independence.
- The Church in the United States was established on November 6, 1789 by Pope Pius VI.
- In 2002, 938 Catholics became martyrs for the faith.
- In 2003, 100,345 Catholics went to prison for their faith.

Retrieved from <http://www.culturalcatholic.com/CatholicFunFacts.htm>

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

Leader: Break open the word... We know from other Gospel stories that Jesus called his disciples to “come and see” what He was about (John 1:35-45) and to put down their nets and “follow him.” (Matt 4:18-22) For three years they did just that, leaving their jobs and families to follow him all over the place. Thinking about the scripture we just read from Matthew, what had the disciples experienced previous to this scripture? They had experienced their “1st Communion” at the Last Supper, watched an angry crowd call for their friend’s execution and then miraculously He had risen from the dead. What a week! This scripture is known as “The Great Commission” for in it Jesus speaks His last command to His disciples. What did He tell them to do? Go! Go! Go!

How are we like Jesus’ disciples? (Gather and acknowledge their answers). We are so much like Jesus’ disciples! We have received the Eucharist at Mass and then after the priest gives us a blessing the deacon usually tells us “To go and serve the Lord” or “To go and love one another” or “Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” Go! Go! Go! Remember that the word “mass” means “to be sent.” How much attention do we pay to that sending? What “do we do” after mass? Get coffee and donuts; fight with our siblings on the way home. Or even the next day ignore the school mate who is struggling to make friends or the neighbor across the street who can’t mow his lawn? What good does it do us if we have “faith” and then *DO* nothing?

We saw from the earlier statistics that Catholics are *BEING* disciples in many ways. *BEING* a disciple is not just an adult thing to do. Discipleship is for everyone who has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our baptism calls us to

BE like Jesus, to leave Mass nourished by our community, the Word and the Eucharist so that we can *BE* disciples.

- Together make a list of the ways your parish reaches out to others as disciples of Jesus
- Together make a list of ALL the ways the young people of your parish are currently BEING disciples of Jesus
- Brainstorm new ways the youth can BE disciples at home, in school and in the community
- Brainstorm ways in which your particular group can BE disciples TOGETHER

Faith in Action: Ask the young people to make a commitment to one new thing they can each do to BE a disciple of Jesus in the community. Have them write it on a slip of paper.

Closing Prayer: Place a basket on a small table. Copy of Steve Angrisano's song, *Go Make a Difference*. (Spirit and Song)

Leader: As we bring our session to a close, we pray. Jesus, we want to be your disciples but sometimes it's hard to do. We ask for your guidance and strength as we go forth into the world as the early disciples did. Give us courage and wisdom to do what you call each of us to do today.

(Invite participants to come forward and place their slips of paper in the basket, one at a time. When they have placed the paper in the basket, ask them to say to God -out loud or silently – *Lord I make this commitment to you today.*)

End with Steve Angrisano's song: *Go Make a Difference* (available in the diocesan library)