



THE JOURNEY

PART

2

MY ENCOUNTER WITH
THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS

YOUTH

**PARTICIPANT
BOOKLET**



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PART

2

THE JOURNEY / EL CAMINO

**MY ENCOUNTER WITH
THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS**

Mary Dundas

Frank Desiano

Adapted By
Michael Bayer

YOUTH

**PARTICIPANT
BOOKLET**



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Mary Ann Dundas is the Coordinator of Evangelization and Sacramental Catechesis for the Diocese of Rochester, New York.

Michael Bayer has worked in youth ministry, college campus ministry, and parish religious education across a number of dioceses.

Frank DeSiano, CSP, is President of Paulist Evangelization Ministries.

Paulist Evangelization Ministries
PO Box 29121
Washington, DC 20017-0121
www.pemdc.org

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THE MEETING FORMAT

The sessions for **THE JOURNEY**
use the following sequence:



INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS

These are a welcome, introduction, opening questions, Scripture reading, video presentation, and initial reactions.



EXPLORATION

The group explores three questions for further conversation.



CONTEMPLATION

Members are asked to think of one word or phrase from the reading or the video presentation that sticks with them. They let this phrase enter their hearts in several minutes of silence. They may then briefly share their reflections.



PRAYER

The participants begin by praying from their hearts. This prayer segment ends with praying the Our Father and exchanging a greeting of peace. This time of prayer takes about five to seven minutes.



ACTION

The leader will encourage members to spend time between sessions, individually, to explore further how the experience of meeting Jesus can shape their lives.



ANNOUNCEMENTS & HOSPITALITY

Participants have refreshments after the session, along with a chance to chat more informally with each other.

SESSION 5

JESUS, HOST OF MEALS



In this session, we will think about the many different ways in which we experience hunger, and how our faith feeds us. Specifically, we will consider how the Eucharistic meal, basic to our experience as Catholics, provides us with spiritual nourishment, in much the same way that other meals fuel our body.

START OF MEETING

Gather with your faith community and share briefly any insights from your reflections last week.

INITIAL REFLECTION QUESTION

At the Last Supper, Jesus invited all his disciples to share a meal with him—even the one who would ultimately betray him! By offering himself in sacrifice for each one of us, he gives us the opportunity to be transformed and reconciled to himself and to the Father.

- ▶ *How do I accept the invitation each week to join with the community of faith at the Sunday Mass to be transformed and reconciled?*

SCRIPTURE READING

Listen as a group member reads from the Gospel according to Matthew, 26:17-30.

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YOUTH

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The teacher says, "My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples."'" The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me." Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He said in reply, "He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born." Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He answered, "You have said so."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Silently reflect on how this reading is making you feel. Does it evoke any images? What are you thinking?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

As you watch the video with the group, be aware of your feelings, thoughts and perhaps memories.

When the video has finished, take a few minutes of silence to reflect on your reaction to it.



EXPLORATION

Share your reaction to the video, and continue the discussion, using these questions as a guide:

1. *As Catholics, we claim that the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of Christian life [CCC 1324]. Do you feel like receiving the Eucharist is the highlight of your week? If so, how have you experienced this? If not, why not?*
2. *We believe that the bread and wine that are offered each week become, in a very real sense, the Body and Blood of Jesus. How do you explain that to friends who ask you to describe what Catholics believe about the Eucharist?*
3. *Our schedules can get very busy, and sometimes we may find it difficult to go to Mass. What are some of the other commitments in your life that get in the way of going to church, and how might you make sure that your faith is a priority that stands out from everything else?*



CONTEMPLATION

Listen to the following excerpt from the gospel passage and let one phrase or image settle in your mind. Continue to reflect quietly, letting God’s presence envelop you more fully as you open your heart.

At this time, quieting and emptying your mind so you can simply be in the Lord's presence is essential.

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins."

Be silent for a few minutes. Think of one word or phrase from the reading or the video presentation that stands out for you. Let this word enter your heart. Ponder its significance.

After several minutes, when invited by the leader, share your word or phrase with the group, if you feel moved to do so. After everyone has shared, if you feel comfortable doing so, tell the group briefly the significance of that word or phrase.

PRAYER

Join in the prayer of the group, showing gratitude for the gift of Christ in the Eucharist. When you are ready, say your prayer out loud, paying attention to the others in the group, and waiting a moment or two between prayers.

This shared prayer ends with the Our Father and a greeting of peace among the participants – a handshake or hug, if appropriate.

ACTION

Until you meet again with your group, use the section in the Participant Booklet following this session, which provides:

1. a short reflection on your response to Jesus' invitation to "take and eat, take and drink"
2. action steps
3. a follow-up question for you to reflect on and answer

HOSPITALITY

Let the sharing continue as your group has refreshments.



ACTION



REFLECT

“Did you make it to Mass this weekend?” you probably have been asked at some point. “Does this count for Sunday?” you may have turned and inquired of a parent while attending a wedding on a late Saturday afternoon.

For many of us, attending Mass can feel like an obligation—something that is required, in order to comply with the commandments or make God happy. But such an understanding of the Mass would have been completely baffling to the early Christians, who held their Eucharistic celebrations in secrecy, afraid of persecution by the Roman authorities. They recognized that the Eucharist was the life-giving nourishment that would enable them to make it through the trials they would encounter over the course of the week. They saw, in the faces of their friends who were gathered, a source of strength during times of duress and comfort through periods of pain.

The early Christians, like so many of our modern sisters and brothers around the world, had experienced, firsthand, the acute physical pangs of hunger. Of having one’s body cry out for calories and one’s stomach wince in the absence of food. While we, as twenty-first century Americans, understand the necessity of eating to provide energy, many of us have never had to worry seriously about missing a meal. And so we can take for granted how essential to our daily existence is the act of putting food and drink into our bodies.

The Eucharist is our spiritual food, given to us by Jesus as a gift to sustain us through the challenges of everyday life. The bread and wine are not abstract symbols of being fed by God; they are physical, tangible evidence of God’s enduring love for us, as they become the Body and Blood of Jesus [CCC 1322-1419].

In the same way that scrambled eggs and pancakes might give us the nutrition to take a series of exams, and we might refuel with protein bars and sports drinks following a grueling athletic competition, the Eucharist provides us with the spiritual energy to face whatever comes our way and fills us back up when we are feeling empty.

You're probably aware of when your body needs food. You feel low energy, and you might even get a bit cranky. But are you as aware of when you need spiritual nourishment? In the coming days, try to pay attention to the many ways that your soul is hungering to be fed. Perhaps you could keep a journal of when you feel sad, frustrated, hopeless, or full of doubts. Bring that list of needs to Mass with you, and during the Prayer of the Faithful, ask to be filled up by the Eucharist, so that you can be fully the person God made you to be, and be capable of bringing the love of Jesus to others.

ACT

Keep a journal of times during the week when you feel like you are out of spiritual energy. Bring that to Mass and ask for the grace to be filled up.

When you go to Mass, try to listen to how you are being fed, not only in the Eucharist, but by the Word of God in the Scriptures. How does it speak to you?

Think of someone who seems to be struggling with their faith; at Mass, keep that person in prayer, and then try to find a way to bring the healing love of Jesus to that person in the following week.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AND JOURNALING

When are you least likely to respond to Jesus' invitation to be an active member of the Body of Christ? How can you grow in your responsiveness?

What is your experience of the Mass at your local church? Are there any ways in which you wish it were different? What is one specific way that you could lend your gifts to improving the experience of the Mass for everyone? (Perhaps it is as a reader, musician, or minister of hospitality.)

Hot down below some of your thoughts.

SAMPLE

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SAMPLE



PRAYER FOR "THE JOURNEY"

God of infinite love, you chose to journey with us in your Son, Jesus Christ.
You sent him to accompany us on our journey of life,
with its joys and burdens, on paths straight and crooked.
You have allowed us to encounter him as Brother and Friend,
as Savior and Bringer of true life.
You have made us daughters and sons with him,
sharing his love in our hearts and lives.

May his Spirit renew our relationship with him.
May Jesus touch our inner being this day and always.
May his Spirit bind us to him, and empower us
to bring him to the world.
May we see Jesus in our way of life as disciples.
May we see him in our Church as community of faith.
Father, lead us further on the Journey you have invited us to undertake.

We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

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