



COMMUNITIES
OF SALT AND LIGHT

TRANSFORMED BY EUCCHARIST, SENT ON MISSION

A Service Learning Retreat Experience

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SENT ON MISSION**

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INTRODUCTION

THEME: *Transformed by Eucharist, Sent on Mission*

“Eucharistic communion includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, #14)

“The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion that brings us out of individualism so that we may follow him together, living out our faith in him. Therefore we should all ask ourselves before the Lord: how do I live the Eucharist?” (Pope Francis, *Corpus Christi Homily*, 5/30/13)

INTRODUCTION:

The Eucharist, celebrated as a community, teaches us about human dignity, calls us to right relationship with God, ourselves and others, invites us to community and solidarity, and sends us on mission to help transform our communities, neighborhoods and world. This retreat experience helps participants to reflect on our Eucharistic mission, participate in an interactive and relational service experience, analyze the experience in the light of our faith, and act to transform injustice in our local and global communities.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RETREAT EXPERIENCE:

Through prayer, worship, community, learning, reflection, and analysis, this experience will explore the personal and social transformation that is possible when we pray and act in solidarity with those who are vulnerable. On Day 1, participants begin with community-building and then begin reflecting on the meaning of the Eucharist in relation to the brokenness in our local and global communities. On Day 2, participants engage in a day of service, followed by an evening of reflection, storytelling, and dialogue, and they begin to engage in social analysis in the light of their faith. On Day 3, participants continue the process of social analysis, learn about the Two Feet of Love in Action, explore tools and resources for future action, and prayerfully discern how to put into practice what they have learned.

GOALS FOR PARTICIPANTS:

The retreat experience coordinators should keep in mind the following goals for participants:

- Reflect on how the Eucharist calls disciples to mission in the world.
- Engage in concrete acts of service which are interactive and relational.
- Develop a deeper understanding of issues faced by persons who are vulnerable.
- Engage in social analysis to understand the “root causes” of problems and issues in the light of our Catholic faith.
- Prayerfully discern and identify actions to take in response.



HOW THIS RETREAT EXPERIENCE CAN BE USED:

Here are several ideas for how this retreat experience might be used by various audiences:

- Diocesan coordinators of youth ministry can use this retreat experience to train youth ministers.
- Youth ministers can use this tool with youth as part of regular youth ministry programming. It can also be used as part of a training for young leaders, empowering a youth leadership team to foster peer-led service learning.
- Campus ministers can use the tool to implement or strengthen a service retreat experience offered by the campus ministry office, including an “alternative” Spring break experience.

PREPARATION

- **Participant journals.** The journals should be three-ring binders so that additional handouts can be added to the journals throughout the retreat experience. Be sure to three-hole punch all of the Appendix handouts that will be distributed to participants during the retreat experience.
- **Meals.** Arrange for volunteers to help prepare the meals during the retreat experience. Meals should be substantial enough to ensure a high energy level among participants, but also simple, in a spirit of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the U.S. and around the world who eat simply every day, not out of choice, but rather necessity. An example of a simple meal might be: a tossed salad, beans and rice, and cornbread. Catholic Relief Services’ Lenten program, [CRS Rice Bowl](#), offers ideas for foods and simple recipes from around the world. Maintain the spirit of solidarity and deepen the focus on economic justice by serving fair trade products where available. [CRS Fair Trade](#) offers links to products and additional resources for purchasing fair trade foods and educating about fair trade. If possible, use washable cups, plates and utensils at meals instead of disposable ones in order to better care for God’s creation.
- **Invite guest speaker for Day 1.** On the evening of the first day, a guest speaker will provide context for the service experience in which participants will engage the following day by sharing an analysis of problems facing the community/area and how and why those problems developed over time. The guest speaker should be someone with knowledge about the community/area who can provide background information about issues the community faces, and history of how and why those problems developed. This could be a staff person from an organization that works with persons in poverty, a community organizer, a professor from a local university, or another qualified person. Another option is to choose a person with expertise on one specific area or issue (such as the education system, homelessness, neighborhood violence, racial tensions, etc.) and to ask him or her to share in detail about the background behind that problem. If choosing this option, be sure that the issue the speaker is addressing relates to issues participants will encounter in their service experience the next day.
- **Select and arrange logistical details at service sites.** Here are the factors to consider in selecting sites for the service experience on Day 2:
 - The ideal service experience will provide an **opportunity for face to face interaction** with members of the human family in need. While cleaning up litter or sorting food at the local pantry are good things to do, these types of projects also offer little potential for true transformation. Nothing can replace the experience of actual



encounter and relationship with real, living human beings. Just think about it: isn't it easier to see the "face of Christ" in a homeless family at a soup kitchen or child at a tutoring program than in persons who are not seen or met?

- Choose a service experience that leads to **empowerment of those served**, with an emphasis on doing *with* and walking alongside instead of doing for. In other words, choose a service experience that affirms the dignity of those being served, and which does not encourage an "us" vs. "them" mentality. Groups that are funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development can make excellent service sites because of their emphasis on the empowerment of poor and low-income people to make a difference in their own communities. [Contact your diocesan coordinator for CCHD](#) for site ideas.
- The service experience should **include structured opportunities for being in addition to doing**. At a homeless shelter, volunteers might be responsible for preparing and serving meals. Paired with this "doing" part of the project, there should also be time for the volunteers to sit down at table in the model of Christ and to eat and converse with those in need (i.e. "being"). Upon advance request, the director of the shelter may be able to arrange a structured opportunity for volunteers to hear the stories of some of the homeless individuals, or for the director to speak with the volunteers about what he or she has seen and heard in his or her work with the homeless population.
- If the group of participants is large, consider organizing a variety of different service experiences that expose participants to a broad spectrum of realities, situations and social concerns. Seek out organizations or agencies with both local and global dimensions to their outreach.
- Additional ideas for integrating relationality, interaction and "being" are provided in the Appendix ("Ideas for Fostering Relational Service Experiences.")
- **Invite guest speaker(s) from community organization(s) for Day 2.** For dinner on Day 2, you will need to plan in advance to invite speaker(s) from a community organization that works to address the causes of the problems faced by people served at the sites visited earlier in the day. For example, if participants will visit a service site related to homelessness, identify a community organization working to address the causes of homelessness, such as lack of affordable housing, mental illness, or unemployment. The key is to invite someone who can speak to the "why" questions (e.g. *why* are people homeless in your community?), what needs to be done as a society or community to solve that problem, and what the organization is doing to help solve that problem in a structural way (e.g. through changing policies or laws, leading economic development efforts, etc.). *Also recommended: If the organization works to organize or empower low-income people to be leaders in addressing issues in their communities, ask if several of those leaders can also come in order to share their stories with participants while eating dinner with them.*
 - To identify an appropriate community organization, first check to see if there is an organization in your area that receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) by visiting the interactive [Poverty Map](#). Select "All Markers" under Places of Hope and then zoom in to your area of the country. CCHD is the domestic anti-poverty program of the Catholic bishops in the U.S. Through CCHD, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides funding each year to over 200 community organizations working to address the causes of poverty in their communities.



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- Speakers who can address the root causes and make the links between local and global poverty may also be available through Catholic Relief Services. Contact your local [diocesan director for CRS](#) or consider inviting a [CRS Global Fellow](#).
- If no CCHD-funded group or CRS-speaker exists in your area, identify another organization that works to address the root causes of poverty. If you need help, contact your diocesan office for social concerns or advocacy, your [diocesan coordinator for CCHD](#), or your local Catholic Charities agency.
- Share with your guest speaker(s) a list of the service sites that will have been visited during the day, and the problems that participants will have been exposed to (e.g. homelessness, immigration issues, etc.). Explain that during the evening session, the goal is to help participants learn about the *root causes* of these problems, what needs to be done in your community to solve that problem, and what the organization is doing to address the problem in a structural way by organizing, advocacy, economic development, etc.
- Provide the representative(s) with this list of questions so they can prepare in advance:
 - What is your story (i.e. what have you experienced personally in relation to these problems, or stories of people your organization has interacted with)?
 - What are the *root causes* of the problems we saw today while we were doing service? (e.g. *Why* are people homeless in our community?)
 - (If relevant:) What connections, if any, did you see to realities or situations beyond our local community? What did you learn about global poverty and how global situations impact people right around us?
 - How is the work you are doing helping to address these issues in the long-term? How is your work (e.g. organizing, advocacy, economic development, etc.) different than short-term solutions that others might offer (e.g. a soup kitchen)?
 - How does your organization help people who might otherwise be victims become empowered? How are people of faith involved in this work? What could a youth ministry group at a local Catholic church (or college students) do to help?
- Be sure to also communicate all of the necessary logistical details to the organizational representative(s), such as time, location, your cell phone number, etc.
- **Know and follow diocesan procedures.** When working with minors in our schools and parishes, be sure to follow diocesan policies and procedures in regards to protection of minors. Contact your (arch)diocese for more information on policies and procedures for protection of minors.



RETREAT EXPERIENCE SCHEDULE

Day 1

3:00 pm

Welcome and Icebreaker

- Begin by introducing yourself and other retreat experience coordinators (if applicable).
- Briefly go over the schedule and goals for the retreat experience. Also provide any logistical details important to share with everyone (e.g. location of restrooms, importance of prompt return from breaks, etc.)
- Explain that we will begin our time together with a couple of community-building icebreakers so that we can get to know one another. This is important because as Catholics, we believe that we become who we are in relationship with others. We are not solitary, isolated individuals but members of one human family and the community of the Body of Christ. We learn and grow with one another and become who we are when the gifts and talents of all are utilized and allowed to be shared.
- Lead the icebreakers:
 - Icebreaker 1: Help participants learn one another's names with this simple game. First, have everyone go around the circle and say his or her name. Next, instruct the group to play a game of "catch" with one twist: before throwing the ball to someone, you must say his or her name. Play this game of group "catch" for about ten minutes. By the end, everyone will know one another's names.
 - Icebreaker 2: The Mingling Game (see Appendix)

3:30 pm

Gathering Prayer

- Explain that we will begin our time together reflecting on the Sacrament of Baptism and the Gospel call to mission. The sacraments the Church celebrates are signs of grace that make a deeper reality present to us. One reality we encounter through the sacraments is Christ's presence in the Church community, his Body. This recognition of Christ's presence in the community should lead to a stronger awareness of being sent on mission to engage in concrete, love-inspired action in the world.
- Invite everyone, in silence, to become aware of the presence of God.
- Ask a reader, selected beforehand, to read John 15:1-11 ("I am the vine, you are the branches")
- Pass out copies of the handout, [Baptism: Incorporated into Christ's Body, Sent on Christ's Mission](#). Instruct participants to read the handout in silence, circling or underlining any word, phrase or idea that stands out to them. (5 min)
 - Ask participants to share with the person next to them one or two things that stood out to them.



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- Pause for silent reflection on the Word of God for about 20 seconds, then read:

Loving Father,
Open our hearts to hidden realities:
 your love for all people,
 your presence in the community,
 your call to justice and peace.
May the sacraments stir in us
that same love for those with whom we worship
and all members of our human family.

Christ Jesus,
Help us to imitate your example:
 healing the sick,
 welcoming the stranger,
 assisting the poor and vulnerable.
May the sacraments remind us
of your love and self-giving,
which we strive to imitate.

Holy Spirit,
Make visible to our eyes of faith what is invisible:
 your call to your people,
 your summons to live our faith daily
 as witnesses of justice and peace.
May the sacraments move us
to engage in love-inspired action
that transforms us and the world.
Amen.

Source: [*Sacraments and Social Mission: Living the Gospel, Being Disciples*](#)

3:45 pm Break

4:00 pm Activity: Called to Encounter—at Home and Around the World

- Introduce the activity by saying:
 - For disciples sent on mission, the first step is “encounter.” Pope Francis says:
 - “Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God” (11/24/13, no. 272).
 - “A better world will come about only if attention is first paid to individuals; if human promotion is integral, taking account of every dimension of the person, including the spiritual; if no one is neglected, including the poor, the sick, prisoners, the needy and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:31-46); if we can prove



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capable of leaving behind a throwaway culture and embracing one of encounter and acceptance” (8/5/13, World Day of Migrants and Refugees).

- Who is part of the throw-away culture in today’s world? In our country? In our parish communities?
- Although much of this retreat will focus on encounter with those who are marginalized in our own, local communities, we begin today by recalling that we are members of many layers of communities—the largest community being our global community. As we engage in the following activity, consider: do you recognize the members of the human family around the globe as true brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Select one of the following activities from Catholic Relief Services to help participants encounter their brothers and sisters around the world, available on the [CRS Education website](#):
 - [Solidarity Path](#)
 - [Crossroads of the World Activity](#) (click on “Prayer and Engagement Resources,” then “Solidarity”)

4:40 pm Break

5:00 pm Dinner

- Consider offering a grace prayer that acknowledges the 842 million members of our human family around the globe who experience hunger, as well as the 17.6 million “food insecure” (i.e. lacking regular access to nutritious food) households in the United States.

6:00 pm Session 1: *Eucharist: Body of Christ, Broken for the World*

- See Appendix for an outline of this session, including presenter notes.

7:00 pm Break

7:30 pm Service and Mission Preparation and Reflection Time

- Guest speaker (see instructions above on Day 1 guest speaker) (20 min)
- Allow time for questions and answers (10-15 min)
- Instruct participants to journal or reflect individually (20 min)
Suggested questions:
 - In what ways are the members of our faith community connected to one another? In what ways are you connected to our brothers and sisters who experience injustice globally? Locally?
 - Why are you here? What do you hope to take away from this retreat experience?
 - What pre-conceived notions (i.e. about poverty, people in poverty, etc.) do you bring with you?
 - What do you look forward to tomorrow? What makes you uncomfortable?
 - Ask God for an open heart to encounter the face of Christ in others.
- End by sharing these tips for a successful experience tomorrow (5 min)



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- Provide instructions for what to bring, what to wear, when to gather, etc.
- Encourage participants to:
 - Focus on listening and encounter. When possible, interact with and listen to the stories of others. Consider how those with whom you interact, despite being in different situations, are similar to you.
 - Be flexible. Be open to where the Holy Spirit leads, even if different than what you expected.
 - Express gratitude for the hospitality of our hosts when visiting the sites.

8:30 pm Social Time

Day 2

7:45 am Morning Prayer

- Consider using the Morning Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours. One place this is available online is <http://www.ebreviary.com>.

Breakfast

8:30 am Departure for service sites

Lunch provided at sites

4:30 pm Return from service sites

5:00 pm Session 2

- Dinner and Dialogue (see Appendix)
 - Consider offering a grace prayer before the meal that expresses thanksgiving for the service sites visited today, especially any that dealt with hunger.
- Presentation (see Appendix)

6:45 pm Break

7:00 pm Evening Processing and Reflection (see Appendix)

8:30 pm Night Prayer

- Invite everyone, in silence, to become aware of the presence of God.
- Ask a reader, selected beforehand, to read John 6:1-15 (the multiplication of the loaves)



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- Read this quote from Pope Francis:
 - “On the altar we adore the Flesh of Jesus; in the people we find the wounds of Jesus. Jesus hidden in the Eucharist and Jesus hidden in these wounds. They need to be heard! . . . The wounds should be heard by those who call themselves Christian. . . And today, all of us, here, need to say: “These wounds must be heard!” But there is something else that gives us hope. Jesus is present in the Eucharist, here is the Flesh of Jesus; Jesus is present among you, it is the Flesh of Jesus: the wounds of Jesus are present in these people.” (10/4/13)
- Ask participants to share with the person next to them what jumped out at them when they heard the reading and quote.
- Pause for silent reflection on the Word of God for about 20 seconds, then read:

Loving Father,
Open our hearts to hidden realities:
 your love for all people,
 your presence in the community,
 your call to justice and peace.
May the sacraments stir in us
that same love for those with whom we worship
and all members of our human family.

Christ Jesus,
Help us to imitate your example:
 healing the sick,
 welcoming the stranger,
 assisting the poor and vulnerable.
May the sacraments remind us
of your love and self-giving,
which we strive to imitate.

Holy Spirit,
Make visible to our eyes of faith what is invisible:
 your call to your people,
 your summons to live our faith daily
 as witnesses of justice and peace.
May the sacraments move us
to engage in love-inspired action
that transforms us and the world.
Amen.

Source: [*Sacraments and Social Mission: Living the Gospel, Being Disciples*](#)



Day 3

- 8:00 am Breakfast
- Consider offering a prayer before the meal that acknowledges the hands that made the meal possible, from the workers who labored in the hot sun to pick the grain, to those who transported the food, stocked it on shelves in the grocery stores, sold it, and prepared it this evening.
- 8:45 am Morning Prayer: *Prayer to Walk with the Two Feet of Love in Action* (see Appendix)
- 9:00 am Session 3: *Sent for Mission: Walking with the Two Feet of Love in Action* (see Appendix)
- 9:50 am Stretch break
- 10:00 am Session 4
Option 1 This session is to be used with participants who are ministry leaders (paid or volunteer) to help them take back learnings to their local situation.
- Pastoral Circle and Resource and Resource Sharing (See Appendix) (30 minutes)
 - Individual Work Plans (see Appendix) and begin Gallery Walk (20 minutes)
 - Gallery Walk (continued) and Sharing (see Appendix) (25 minutes)
- Option 2 This option is for all others.
- Action Project planning (see Appendix) (1 hour, 15 min)
- 11:15 am Eucharistic Liturgy
- Prior to the Liturgy, share with the presider about the retreat experience content to encourage connections in the homily.
- 12:00 pm End



ICEBREAKER

The Mingling Game

Instructions: This is an icebreaker to help you meet one another. Each time I ring the bell, you will walk up to someone you don't know and talk with him or her for 90 seconds, *following the instructions I give about who will go first and what your topic of discussion should be.* When I ring the bell, find a partner. The question you will discuss with that person is... [select a question from the list on the left] and the person who goes first is the person who... [select a characteristic from the list on the right]. Go! [Ring bell.]

The question is...	And the one who goes first is the person...
Who is in your family and who are you closest to? What are your hobbies? What do you do to relax or for fun? What is one of your favorite memories from your childhood? What does your baptism mean to you? Why did you come on this retreat experience? Where did you grow up? What was it like? Who has had the greatest influence on you? What type of music do you like and what artists in particular? How do you pray? What intention(s) do you frequently lift up? What is your favorite thing to do on a weekend? What talents do you have? What are you good at? Who is your favorite saint? What is your favorite season? Why? Who is your best friend? Why? If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? What is the most recent book you read and what was it about? Who would you call a hero of yours? What issues are you concerned about that face the local or global community? What is one important way you have changed in the last 5 years?	... who has longer hair ... who is younger ... who traveled farthest in the world ... who is wearing brighter colors ... was baptized more recently ... who is shorter ... who has the most siblings ... who traveled the farthest to get here ... who has lived in the most states ... who slept the most hours last night ... who can think of a Bible verse to quote first ... who knows more languages ... who has longer fingernails ... whose birthday is earlier in the year ... who has exercised most recently ... who posted something on Facebook more recently ... who has worked more jobs ... who watched a sports game more recently



SESSION 1

Eucharist: Body of Christ, Broken for the World

Time: 1 hour

Objective

In this session participants will explore the Eucharistic call to mission as disciples in the world.

Materials Needed

- 1 copy per participant of the handout, [Eucharist: Body of Christ, Broken for the World](#) from the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development
- Participant journals
- If using *Option 2* for the discussion, copies of the source reading on “The Eucharist awakens us to our own dignity and the dignity of others” for half of the participants, and copies of the source reading on “Eucharist-inspired love allows us to live our Christian vocation” for half the participants.

Session Outline

I. Personal Reflection (10 minutes)

Pass out copies of the handout on *Eucharist: Body of Christ, Broken for the World* and invite participants to find a comfortable place to read through the handout. Instruct them to use the reflection questions provided in the journal:

- Circle the words that speak to you in your first reading of this resource. As you look at the circled words, write down why these words speak to you in this moment.
- Take a moment to write down in your journal any insights sparked by your reading.
- *For ministry leaders:* How do these insights affect the way you think about your ministry?
- *For others:* How do these insights affect the way you think about your role as a disciple of Jesus?

II. Discussion (15 minutes)

Have participants break into small groups of three.

Option 1: Instruct participants to discuss: “What ‘jumped out at you’ during your reflection time on this handout?”

Option 2: Give each small group copies of either the source reading on “The Eucharist awakens us to our own dignity and the dignity of others” or the source reading on “Eucharist-inspired love allows us to live our Christian vocation,” so that about half the groups are using one source reading and half of the groups are using the other. The source readings are intended to help each group to delve into discussion about one of the themes from the handout in a deeper way. Instruct the group members



to take turns reading the paragraphs, then to answer the question: “How do these readings help you understand the meaning of Eucharist in a new or deeper way?”

III. Presentation: The Eucharist and Solidarity with Those in Poverty (25 minutes)

The presenter should be sure to cover these main points.

- The *sacrament* of the Eucharist
 - What is a sacrament? A sign of grace that makes present what it signifies. Sacraments reveal and make present a deeper reality (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1127, 1131)
 - The sacrament of the Eucharist reveals and makes present:
 - o Christ’s presence in his body—blessed, broken and shared *on the altar*.
 - o Christ’s presence *in the assembly*, which is his body. We are the Body of Christ.
 - Therefore, the Eucharist deepens our relationship *with Christ*, and *with one another*.

- The Body of Christ
 - Christ’s presence in the Body of Christ—the assembly and all of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world—speaks to the great dignity that we each have, despite all of our flaws and failings, because we are people made in God’s image and loved equally by God.
 - The dignity of each person, revealed in the sacrament, challenges us to treat and care for one another in ways that reflect Christ’s own care and concern.
 - o For St. Paul, if there were divisions within the community based on class (1 Cor. 11), status or privilege (Rom. 12), or factions in the community (1 Cor. 1) then the celebration of the Eucharist was insincere.
 - o St. John Chrysostom (4th c.) asked, "Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked."
 - The Eucharist, which reveals Christ’s presence in the Body of Christ—the assembly—challenges us to love and care for those in need.

- How are we called to love the suffering members of the Body of Christ?
 - We are called to *encounter*.
 - o “It is through an unbroken chain of witnesses that we come to see the face of Jesus. But how is this possible? . . . Persons always live in relationship. We come from others, we belong to others, and our lives are enlarged by our encounter with others.” (Pope Francis, 6/29/13, no. 38).
 - o “Jesus tells us that the path to encountering Him is to find His wounds. We find Jesus’ wounds in carrying out works of mercy, giving to the body – the body – the soul too, but – I stress – the body of your wounded brother, because he is hungry, because he is thirsty, because he is naked because he is humiliated, because he is a slave, because he’s in jail because he is in the hospital. Those are the wounds of Jesus today. (Pope Francis, 7/3/13)
 - We are called to *solidarity*.
 - o St. Augustine: “the pain of one, even the smallest member, is the pain of all” (Sermo Denis).
 - o Pope John Paul II (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis* [On Social Concern]): “Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering



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determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

- Reflecting on the Eucharist should make the sufferings of others personal for us.
 - We should feel personally responsible to take appropriate action.
- We are a mission-oriented people.
- Our ability to go and do likewise in imitation of Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet is the “criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebration is judged” (Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, no. 28).
 - The new translation of the Roman Missal includes this dismissal rite: “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord with your lives.”
 - We *gather* to celebrate the Eucharist, and then we are *sent* to live “Eucharistic” lives that contribute “with the light of the Gospel to the building of a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan” (Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, #20).
- Why do we do service and work for justice? Because we are a people on mission!

IV. Practice (5 minutes)

In groups of 2 or 3, discuss: “What is the relationship between the Eucharist and our role as members of the body of Christ in a suffering world?”



Ideas for Fostering Relational Service Experiences

The Rule of Thumb: Ensure that the service is not simply about doing, collecting or distributing, but also provides an opportunity for being, interacting and fostering relationship. With some creativity, relational moments can be easily integrated directly into the daily tasks of a service agency. Simply re-thinking how we approach service and planning in advance can move the locus of service from “behind the counter or serving line” to the dining table with an adult seeking a meal or to the playground with a child who is without a home. The ideas listed below for each type of service agency aim to promote community-building and provide some additional creativity that may help meet a need.

Head Starts / Children Services Centers:

- Organize a game day or mini-festival and develop different activities.
- Determine in advance educational needs of the children and plan a fun day of creative learning.
- Organize a toy drive and plan a play day at a children’s center.
- Organize a children’s book drive and plan a story-telling day at a children’s center or hospital.
- Invite the program director to speak with volunteers about who the program serves and what barriers they face.

Soup Kitchens / Meal Ministries:

- Prepare lunches if needed and bring to a center that provides meals for people who are hungry. If lunches are not needed, bring hand-made decorations appropriate to the season of the year. While serving meals, encourage participants to greet people with warmth and to sit and share a conversation where appropriate and possible.
- Invite the program coordinator to speak with the volunteers about who comes to the soup kitchen, why some people do not have access to food, and what solutions could be offered by the larger community to reduce the need for soup kitchens.

Street Ministries:

- Prepare lunches and urns of soup, coffee and lemonade and go to designated community areas where it is safe and permissible to distribute food. Have prayer cards or medals available to remind people that others are praying for them. Encourage participants to greet people with warmth and to share a conversation where appropriate and possible.
- Arrange beforehand for someone who works with this population to speak with the volunteers about who lives on the street, what experiences can lead to this situation, and what long-term solutions might help them.



Food Banks/Pantries:

- Collect food for a food bank, organize the food for delivery to the bank and spend a day volunteering by helping to organize and distribute the food.
- Arrange beforehand for the food bank director or another employee to speak with the volunteers about the food bank and the people it serves. Who comes to the food bank? What situations in peoples' lives cause them to utilize the food bank? What factors affect the demand for food? What could the larger community do to lessen the need for people to use the food bank? Could any changes in laws or policies help reduce the need?

Nursing homes / Retirement Communities / Resident Homes for People Living with Disabilities or Special Needs:

- Plan a craft fair or games fair setting up different stations to engage residents.
- Plan a "senior citizen prom" and bring hand-made decorations, prom favors and music from earlier eras. Encourage participants to mingle and dance with residents.
- Plan a craft fair or games fair setting up different stations to engage residents.

Homebound Parishioner Ministry

- Identify parishioners who are elderly or in need of assistance in their homes. Organize yard clean-ups and home repair. Bring lunches (check in advance for dietary restrictions). Spend time visiting while cleaning up.
- Arrange beforehand for the coordinator to speak with the volunteers about the challenges faced by those who are homebound.

Adopt a street or park

- Work with local residents on a neighborhood or park clean-up. Ideally, volunteers and residents should work side-by-side to do the clean-up.
- Provide opportunities for interaction and conversation with residents. If requested in advance, it may be possible for the program director to ask a long-time community member to share with the volunteers about why the neighborhood and community is important to him or her, what issues the community faces, and how the community is addressing those issues.
- Supplement the experience with environmental education and the positive impact that parks and greenery can provide to a neighborhood.
- Work with local artists to develop a mural or clean-up graffiti.



Immigrant Centers

- Plan a listening session and share a cultural and meal exchange with people who have migrated from other countries. Encourage young people to listen to the stories with an ear to understand the realities that led to the decision to immigrate.
- Participate in English tutorial programs for children and adolescents. End the day with recreational activity, a shared meal and prayer.
- In advance, invite the program director to share with participants about why immigrants come to the U.S. and the barriers they face once they arrive. It might also be possible for the program director to invite some persons who have migrated to share their stories with the group.

Hospitals / Veteran or Children's Hospitals

- Make get-well and encouragement cards for people in hospitals. If you choose a specific medical concern for your outreach, design the cards to express compassion, salute courage or acknowledge the challenges unique to those situations (e.g., children living with cancer, veterans recovering from war injuries, people living with AIDS, etc). Plan a visit to the hospital to distribute cards and spend time with people.
- Consider inviting an expert (such as a staff person from an organization that works with veterans or the director of a community health clinic that serves low-income persons) to talk about challenges faced by the population they work with – i.e. veterans or persons who do not have access to medical insurance.

Homeless Shelters

- Hold a blanket or clothing drive in your community. Plan a day to visit a local shelter where the blankets will be distributed. Plan activities (e.g. games) to enhance your visit.
- Encourage volunteers to sit and share a conversation where appropriate and possible.
- Request in advance for the shelter director to speak with the volunteers, addressing questions such as: Who comes to the shelter? What situations do people experience that cause them to be homeless? How does the shelter try to help them get back on their feet? What barriers do they face? What could the larger community do to address causes of homelessness such as lack of affordable housing, lack of jobs, etc.?

Project Gabriel/ Teen Pregnancy Programs / Women's Homes

- Collect necessary items for women, children or unwed or expecting mothers living in poverty. Work with local centers to distribute these items.
- Such centers are careful to protect the identity of the people they serve, but in some cases, church groups may be able to plan a game day, shared meal, or a visit to meet with some people and hear their stories of hope and courage.



Recycling and Environmental Impact Programs

- Plan a restoration, clean-up or beautification project with communities impacted by environmental disasters. Plan the service in partnership with community leaders and provide opportunities for participants to learn about the impact of such disasters on the lives of individuals, families and communities. Ideally, work should be done side-by-side with those impacted.
- Provide snacks and a large meal for adults working in restoration projects.
- Start a recycling or environmental education program in your parish community demonstrating solidarity with the people impacted by environmental disasters.

Good Will Games / Special Olympics / Therapeutic Riding Centers

- Support recreational and sports services designed for people with special needs.
- Arrange in advance for the director or volunteer coordinator to speak with the volunteers about the barriers faced by people with special needs.

Computer Skills Course

- Many vulnerable populations (e.g., children living in poverty, senior citizens) do not have the opportunity to develop technology skills for educational or communication purposes. Organize a computer seminar for working with such populations and providing basic skills in using computers and the internet.

Work Camps and Immersion Programs

- When possible, make lodging arrangements that are in the local communities being served. A parish, community center, or recreation center may be able to provide lodging.
- The ideal program will allow participants to work side by side with local community members where the work camp is taking place.
- Plan communal meals at which participants have an opportunity to interact and converse with community members. Prep participants by suggesting conversation starters and questions.
- Plan a culture night.



SESSION 2

Dinner, Dialogue and Presentation

Time: 1 hour, 45 min

Objective

In this session, participants will dialogue with one or more representatives from one or more community organizations working to address the root causes of poverty. See “Preparation” section for instructions on selecting the guest speaker(s) for dinner.

Set-Up

- If multiple speakers and/or leaders will be coming, set up the dining so that there is one speaker/leader at each table along with a small group of participants. Consider designating one seat at each table with a special sign (e.g. “Invited Guest”) and ask your guests to sit where those signs are placed. The idea is to ensure that the guests/speakers are well spread out among the participants.
- Decide in advance where the speaker(s) will be and provide a podium, chair, etc., if desired.

Session Outline

While in transit from service sites to dinner site, explain to participants that during dinner, they will have the opportunity to eat with and hear the stories of people in the community who have powerful stories to share. If the guests are associated with a particular organization, mention the name of the organization and what it does. Emphasize that the dinner hour will be an opportunity to talk with and learn from these guests. There will be one guest at each table and participants are strongly encouraged to ask them questions and engage them in conversation about their experiences. Suggest some questions that participants could ask in order to have a rich conversation, such as:

- How did you get involved with [name of organization]?
- What issues affect your friends, neighbors and community members (or you, personally), which you think need to be addressed? What “keeps you up at night”?
- What is your “story”?
- Have you been involved in any efforts for change in the community? What were you trying to change and what did you do?
- How long have you lived in this community? How have you seen it change?
- What gives you hope?
- Does your faith play a role? If so, how?



5:00 pm **Dinner and Dialogue**

Instruct guests/speakers and participants on seating instructions, as described above. Briefly introduce the guests/speakers to the participants. Explain that before hearing from the guest speaker(s), we are going to spend an hour eating dinner together having dialogue and conversation at the tables. Remind participants that this is an opportunity for them to hear the stories of the guests and to ask them questions about their experiences.

Say grace as a large group.

Dismiss tables one at a time to serve themselves and then return to the tables for conversation.

A few minutes before 6:00, announce that we will be beginning the presentation soon; take a bathroom break if needed.

6:00 pm **Presentation**

Invite the speaker(s) to the front and introduce him/her to the group. Tell participants that the speaker will be sharing about the *root causes* of some of the issues/problems faced at the sites where we served today—in other words, answering the question, “Why does this problem exist?” He or she will also be offering insight on solutions to these problems and what his/her organization is doing to address those problems. Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions. The speaker can either present his/her thoughts in a presentation format, or you can use an interview format. Either way, you may want to provide the speaker with another copy of the questions you sent to him/her previously in order to remind him/her what you wish to be the content of his/her sharing.

Allow 30 minutes for the presentation and 15 minutes for questions and answers from the group.

6:45 pm **Break**



Evening Processing and Reflection

Time: 1 hour, 30 min

Objectives

- Participants will reflect on their experiences during this day, recalling images, stories, and feelings.
- Participants will begin to engage in theological reflection and social analysis.

Materials

- Journals
- *A Place at the Table* handouts

Outline

7:00 pm Journaling

Instruct participants to turn to a blank page in their journals and answer the following questions during 30 minutes of quiet, individual reflection time:

1. Think back on your day. What images come to mind from today? Describe one or more of them.
2. Think back to your feelings throughout this day. What did you feel when you woke up? During morning prayer? In your first hour at the work site? Write down your feelings starting with this morning all the way to this moment.
3. Who were the people that you met today? Whose stories did you learn? Is there one story that sticks out in your mind?
4. What wisdom did you glean from the dinner conversation and speaker? Did the time this evening help you answer any questions? Or raise new questions?

7:30 pm Small Group Sharing

As participants finish journaling, invite them to form small groups of 2-4 people to share their thoughts and reflections from today.

7:45 pm Facilitated Large Group Discussion

The facilitator will lead a large group discussion, being sure to cover the following points and questions.

- **Eucharistic Mission:** Yesterday we talked about how the Eucharist calls us to reach out to the suffering members of the community. How did you experience Eucharistic mission today?
- **Relationship:** What was going on in the peoples' lives that you met during service? What specific problems were they facing that prevented them from overcoming their situation?
- **Looking at Root Causes:** What did you learn from our speakers and guests this evening about what larger issues might be at play here?



SERVICE LEARNING RETREAT EXPERIENCE

- Try to help participants connect problems to their possible causes. For example:
 - *The new housing developments going up are pricing people out of the neighborhood who lived there for a long time.*
 - *People who are working don't necessarily get paid high enough wages to afford basic necessities like rent.*
 - *The public school system in our city is broken and isn't educating our kids.*
 - *There aren't any grocery stores in the poorest parts of the city so people have a hard time getting access to healthy and nutritious food and this leads to obesity.*
 - *Health care is really expensive and people don't have access to primary and preventative care.*
 - *There aren't enough jobs for people without college education.*

- Who has a responsibility to address these problems?
 - *In *A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God's Children*, the Catholic bishops of the United States use the metaphor of a table to describe the four basic parties within society who have a responsibility to help meet the needs of those in poverty. These four "legs" of the table are: 1) families and individuals; 2) community and religious institutions; 3) private sector/business; and 4) government. Like a table, if any one leg on the table is missing, the table can't stand correctly.*
 - *Pass out handouts from *A Place at the Table* (below, following this outline). Choose four volunteers and have them read the summary from each handout aloud.*
 - *Help participants tie together the wisdom gleaned from this evening's dialogue and speaker, with the bishops' reflection from *A Place at the Table*. Ask: Thinking about what we learned from our conversations and our speaker(s) about the root causes of the issues, where do you think there is a failure of responsibility? Consider each leg of the table, one by one:*
 - Families and Individuals
 - Community and Religious Institutions
 - Private Sector/Businesses
 - Government

- **What now?** *As a Eucharistic people, what response are we called to now? Now that we have encountered and served our brothers and sisters today, and learned about some causes of the issues they face, how can we take the next step? This will be a topic for tomorrow.*



Excerpt from
A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God's Children

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Families and Individuals

“A first leg of the table is what *families and individuals* are called to do. Every person has a responsibility to respect the dignity of others and to work to secure not only their own rights but also the rights of others. Every day, parents throughout the world make sacrifices for the well-being of their children. Parents are the guardians of the life and dignity of their children. Support for marriage and family life is at the center of our campaign to restore dignity and to overcome poverty for children. Public policy and all our institutions must reward, encourage, and support parents, including single parents, who make wise decisions for their children. Their hard work, their love and discipline, and their time and presence within their families are a gift not only to their children, but to our society and to the common good. They are also significant investments in avoiding or escaping poverty.”

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Excerpt from
***A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome
Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God's Children***

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Community Organizations and Faith-Based Institutions

“A second leg of the table is the role and responsibility of community organizations and faith-based institutions. These institutions can help families make good choices and overcome discrimination and other obstacles. They can confront structures of injustice and build community, and they can demand accountability from public officials. Faith is a religious commitment; it is also a community resource. On the toughest problems, in the toughest, most desperate neighborhoods and villages, religious and community institutions are present and making a difference. In the United States, the growing attention to faith-based and other community institutions is overdue recognition of the work of Catholic schools, Catholic health care institutions, Catholic Charities, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and other groups. Here and abroad, our parishes and schools must continue to be clear about their identity and mission and must continue to be beacons of hope and centers of help for poor families and communities.”

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Excerpt from
***A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome
Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God's Children***

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Private Sector/Business

“A third leg of the table is *the marketplace and institutions of business, commerce, and labor*. The private sector must be not only an engine of growth and productivity, but also a reflection of our values and priorities, a contributor to the common good. Examples of greed and misconduct must be replaced with models of corporate responsibility. Both employers and the labor movement must help the poorest workers to have a voice and a place at the table where wages and working conditions are set. A key measure of the marketplace is whether it provides decent work and wages for people, especially those on the margins of economic life. Parents need to be able to provide a life of dignity for their children by their work. Workers and farmers in this country and around the world need living wages; access to health care; vacation time and family and medical leave; a voice and real participation in the workplace; and the prospect of a decent retirement. Work must be an escape from poverty, not another version of it.”

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Excerpt from
***A Place at the Table: A Catholic Recommitment to Overcome
Poverty and to Respect the Dignity of All God’s Children***

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Government

“A fourth essential leg of the table is the role and responsibilities of *government*—a means to do together what we cannot accomplish on our own. In the Catholic tradition, government has a positive role because of its responsibility to serve the common good, provide a safety net for the vulnerable and help overcome discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for all. Government has inescapable responsibilities toward those who are poor and vulnerable, to ensure their rights and defend their dignity. Government action is necessary to help overcome structures of injustice and misuse of power and to address problems beyond the reach of individual and community efforts. Government must act when these other institutions fall short in defending the weak and protecting human life and human rights.”

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Prayer to Walk with the Two Feet of Love in Action

Leader: Loving God--Father, Son, and Spirit, we pray that you will help us to reflect today on how we can put love into action in our lives and in our communities.

Be with us as we listen and reflect on words from Scripture and Tradition on how we are called to put love in action.

Reader 1: “Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'” (Matthew 25:37-40)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” (Luke 4:18-19)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 3: “The *Eucharist commits us to the poor*. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1397)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 4: “A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother--the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty--is a sterile and incomplete prayer. But, in the same way . . . When time is not set aside for dialogue with him in prayer, we risk serving ourselves and not God present in our needy brother and sister.” (Pope Francis, Angelus Address, 7/21/13)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.



Reader 5: “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs. The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.” (St. John Chrysostom, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 6: “When God sends the prophet Jeremiah, he gives him the power to ‘pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant’ (1:10). It is the same for you. Bringing the Gospel is bringing God’s power to pluck up and break down evil and violence, to destroy and overthrow the barriers of selfishness, intolerance and hatred, so as to build a new world.” (Pope Francis, Homily on the Occasion of XXVIII World Youth Day, 7/28/13)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Leader: Loving Father, guide us as we reflect today on how we are called to put love in action. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.

All: Amen.



SESSION 3

Sent for Mission: Walking with the Two Feet of Love in Action

Time: 50 minutes

Objectives

- Participants will reflect on the call to mission in the light of social sin and the need for institutional change.
- Participants will learn about the Two Feet of Love in Action as a model for living this mission.

Materials

- 1 per participant of Two Feet [handouts](#) or [brochure](#)

Session Outline

The presenter should be sure to cover these main points.

- **Called to be Disciples on Mission.** Begin by reminding participants that the Eucharist calls us to mission. As Pope John Paul II said in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 14:
 - The Eucharist “increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today.”
 - Christ in the Eucharist calls us to build “a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God's plan.”
- **Called to direct service, but also justice.**
 - What does it mean to be a people on mission?
 - Another way of asking this is: how do we put Christ’s love into action in the world?
 - The U.S. Catholic bishops use a model called the “Two Feet of Love in Action” to describe two distinct, but complementary ways we should respond to issues facing our world.
 - **Charitable Works** (green foot) are:
 - Responses to *immediate* needs of *families and individuals*.
 - Charitable works give immediate help in the *short term* to those who need it.
 - For example, giving a hungry family a hot meal at a soup kitchen, tutoring a child to help him with math, or making donations so that an agency can shelter the families and individuals affected by a natural disaster.
 - These are all *short term* responses to *immediate needs*.
 - **Social Justice** (orange foot) is:
 - Working to improve the unjust structures and systemic problems that are at the roots of the problems we face.
 - Pope Francis says: “Accompanying on its own is not enough. It is not enough to offer someone a sandwich unless it is accompanied by the possibility of learning how to stand on one’s own two feet. Charity that leaves the poor person as he is, is not sufficient. True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice. . . It asks — and it asks us, the Church, us, the City of Rome, it asks the institutions — to ensure



that no one ever again stand in need of a soup-kitchen, of makeshift-lodgings, of a service of legal assistance in order to have his legitimate right recognized to live and to work, to be fully a person.” (Message to Jesuit Refugee Service, 9/10/13)

- Social justice involves organizing and advocating for changes in society that can improve life for *many people* in the *long-term*.
 - For example, passing legislation to ensure more availability of affordable housing options for low income families, or addressing structural problems to improve the public school system, or supporting Catholic Relief Services’ international development efforts to improve infrastructure and strengthen communities in poor countries.
 - **Application:** Ask participants to identify Charitable Works they participated in at the service sites yesterday. Then ask them, based on what they learned from last evening’s session, what Social Justice solutions might help solve issues in the long-term?
- **Social justice requires confronting and transforming “structures of sin.”** Our Eucharistic mission requires that we recognize and confront the structures of sin that entangle our communities:
 - “Not only the Sunday Eucharist but the whole of Sunday becomes a great school of charity, justice and peace. The presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his people becomes an undertaking of solidarity, a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled” (Pope John Paul II, Dies Domini #73).
 - What are examples of “structures of sin”? Racism, violence, injustice, poverty, exploitation, disempowerment of communities, lack of means to participate in the decisions that affect them.
 - What “structures of sin” did you encounter during the service experience?
 - “In the memorial of his sacrifice, the Lord strengthens our fraternal communion . . . [which] leads to a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God’s image and likeness” (Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis #89).
 - What “unjust” structures need to be transformed in order to address the issues we encountered during service?
 - **Self-Evaluation**
 - Ask participants to self-evaluate whether they are walking in a balanced way, with both “feet,” or if they walk more heavily with one so that they have a limp.
 - Ask participants how they can strengthen their response to Eucharistic mission as Christ’s disciples by strengthening the foot that is weaker.



SESSION 4 – OPTION 1

The Pastoral Circle

This session is to be used with participants who are ministry leaders (paid or volunteer) to help them take back what they learn to their local situation

Pastoral Circle and Resource Sharing

Objectives

- Overview the pastoral circle (see-judge-act) model.
- Share ideas.
- Overview resources that may be helpful.

Materials

- PowerPoint slides for Session 4

10:00 The Pastoral Circle is a tool to help us:

- See (through the experience, encounter, and relationship) the problems that affect our communities and the people who live in them
- Judge or think critically and from the lens of our faith to understand the *root causes* of the problem, and the structures, laws, policies and systems that have led to the situation and are perpetuating it. We assess the issues in light of our faith values and teaching, which inform our response.
- Act to address the problem in ways consistent with and inspired by our faith. We might act through community organizing, legislative advocacy, or other efforts aimed to remedy the situation.

Pope Paul VI summarized the See, Judge, Act model when he wrote:

- “It is up to Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel’s unalterable words, and to draw principles or reflections, norms of judgment, and directives of action from the social teaching of the Church” (*Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 4).

The 3 moments in the circle are not linear: Analysis, reflection and action will lead to new ways of seeing and encountering, which in turn lead to new and deeper reflection, and so on.

Discuss this question in a large group:

- Where did we practice See, Judge and Act during our retreat experience?

Then ask participants to reflect individually for a few minutes:

- In service experiences that you lead, coordinate or oversee, how are “See, Judge and Act” practiced? Could any of the moments in the circle be further strengthened? How?
- Share responses with the large group.

Share the PowerPoint slides highlighting resources available to use back home.



Work Plan and Gallery Walk

Objectives

- Participants will identify goals to implement what they have learned, and plan specific actions in order to meet those goals.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to share highlights of their work plans with one another and lift up a few innovative and challenging examples for the whole group.

Materials

- Work Plan handout (below and in Journal)
- 10-20 colored “dot” stickers for each participant

10:30 Work Plans

- Ask participants to turn to the Work Plan and to spend the next 15-20 minutes completing the work plan. You may wish to read aloud the instructions on page 1 of the Work Plan.
- Tell participants that when they finish, they should write one of their goals and the corresponding objectives/action steps on a piece of butcher paper and post it on the wall.
- If participants finish, they can begin following the instructions at the end of the work plan to view others’ work plans and post “dots” by ideas on other’s work plans that they think are particularly good.
- You may wish to use a digital camera to take a picture of participants’ newsprint goals if you wish to follow up with them in the future to check in on their progress.
- Retreat experience coordinator(s) may also wish to view the newsprints to identify any potential problems, unrealistic strategies, etc. on which you might want to provide individual feedback.

10:50 Gallery Walk (continued) and Discussion

- Allow participants additional time to view the work plans of others and post dots. They can also feel free to get started on this early as they come back from the break.
- In a large group, spend the last 7-10 minutes getting responses to this question: Which ideas from your peers did you find helpful (i.e. next to which ideas did you post a dot)? Why? You can also ask participants to share their own ideas about which they are particularly excited.



Individual Work Plan

A work plan is a useful tool for defining specific short-term and long-term accomplishments by which you can measure your work; it provides short-term check points, and ways to celebrate success in the process of working toward a long-term vision. It's a useful tool for deciding how much is realistic and in setting priorities when you can't do everything.

To create your work plan, begin (in Question 1, below) by looking back on the retreat experience to recall ideas, activities, tools and resources that you found particularly helpful, and how they might be useful in your ministry. Then, in Question 2, you will identify goals for your ministry related to the topic of this retreat experience, as well as specific objectives or action steps you will take in order to meet each goal.

1. Begin by turning to the schedule for this retreat experience.

List any ideas, activities, tools and resources that you found particularly helpful.	Why did you find it helpful?	Indicate any ways you might incorporate it into your ministry.



2. Identify 3 goals for your ministry.

Goals	Specific objectives or action steps you will take to reach the goal.
<p><i>Example: Replicate this retreat experience for the youth in my program.</i></p> <p>1.</p>	<p><i>Example: Consult ministry calendar and select date for retreat in the Fall. By [date], form volunteer team by to begin planning retreat. By [date], connect with [name] to identify service sites.</i></p>
<p>2.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	

3. **Root your work in prayer.** Through prayer, God transforms us both individually and as members of the Body of Christ who are sent on mission in the world. Through what individual and communal prayer practices, and as part of what faith community, will you root your work in prayer?

4. **Share your work plan.** When you are finished:

- Take one sheet of newsprint and record one of your goals on it, as well as your specific objectives or tasks in order to carry that goal out.
- Post your sheet on the wall in the designated area. Be sure to put your name on your plan.
- Look at the sheets that have been posted by your peers. Note in your journal any of your peers’ goals that significantly appeal to you. For instance, the description may be helpful in your work, creative, insightful, well developed, economical or ambitious.
- Post a colored dot at the ideas that significantly appeal to you. If you think the item is exceptional, post two dots there.



SESSION 4 – OPTION 2

Action Project Planning

This session is to be used instead of Option 1 with participants who are not ministry leaders—for example, youth, college students, etc., to develop a concrete action that they will take in response to what they have learned.

Objectives:

- Help participants identify a community need that they feel called to respond to.
- Help participants develop an action plan to take concrete steps towards addressing that issue.

Materials:

- [Responding to Community Needs](#) handout

Outline:

10:00 Reflection

- Read the following Scripture passage:

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give him the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2:14-24)

Give participants a moment to reflect silently on how they personally feel called to "have works." Questions for reflection might include:

- What commitment are you willing to make to put your faith into action?
- What are you personally willing to do to respond to the needs you have encountered during this retreat?
- How is your action rooted in your faith?

10:15 Large group brainstorm.

- What problems or issues did you learn about this weekend that you personally feel called to confront?

10:10 Small group brainstorm

- List out issues identified in the large group brainstorm that multiple participants expressed concern about.



- Break participants into small groups by issue, allowing them to self-select which group to join based on the issue they are interested in.
- Distribute the “Responding to Community Needs” handout (below), one per participant.
- Ask each small group to complete the worksheet based on the need they identified. The reflection questions in Part II help to reinforce the fact that both of the Two Feet of Love in Action need to be engaged—or we're solving only part of the problem.
- Ask a member of each small group to record the highlights of his or her group's action plan on a white board or poster paper, and post these around the room.

10:30 Report back

- Ask a representative from each group to briefly share his or her small group's action plan with the large group.

10:50 Implement an action plan

- Some common and workable examples of actions for social justice include writing letters to an elected official; visiting an elected official or inviting him/her to visit you; writing an editorial to the local newspaper; or educating a parish or school community about a particular need.
 - Legislative action alerts are available through the [USCCB](#) and the joint USCCB / CRS initiative, [Catholics Confront Global Poverty](#)
- There are two options for implementing an action plan:
 1. Each small group can independently implement its action project; or
 2. Ask the large group to select one action plan that everyone can implement.
- The small groups (if # 1) or large group (if # 2) should consider:
 - Who in the community is already working on this issue? What are they doing? How can you partner with them or build on their efforts instead of starting something new?
 - Does your project empower the people impacted and allow them to take an active leadership in the project? If not, how can you invite their involvement?
 - Did you hear any ideas from other groups that appealed to you?
 - Adjust your action plan based on the considerations above.
 - Decide what steps are needed to begin implementing the project and assign roles using the table below.



Responding to Community Needs

Part I: Identifying the Need

1. What is the community issue you identified? In your own words, summarize the need you hope to address.

Part II: Brainstorming Responses: *The Two Feet of Social Action*

There are two basic ways we must respond to human needs – charitable works and social justice. Through **charitable works**, we identify people who need assistance and then go out and help them. For example, if someone is hungry, we give them food. These are important works of charity that we are all called to do. There is a second necessary response to meet human needs – through **social justice**. Social justice means we work to change the structures of our community that give rise to these needs in the first place. For example, if someone is hungry, we might ask, “Why are people hungry?” We may then write a letter to an elected official, write an opinion piece to the local newspaper or organize a hunger banquet to raise awareness about the problem and advocate a way or ways to address it.

1. Identify at least two examples of *charitable works* you can do to help alleviate this need. Estimate the amount of time it would take for each.

2. Identify at least two examples of actions for *social justice* you can take to help alleviate the *causes* of this need. Estimate the amount of time it would take for each.

3. For each example listed above, what is accomplished by taking this action?



Part III: Called to Action

You have considered different ways to respond to your identified community need. Now, you will select one way to meet this need and develop an action plan. Be sure to select steps that are realistic and can be completed with the time and resources available to you.

What is the community need?

What will you do to meet this need?

Which foot of love (*charitable works* or *social justice*) takes a step forward with this action?

Action Steps - <i>What needs to be done?</i>	Responsibility – <i>Who will complete this step?</i>	Timeline – <i>When will this step be completed?</i>	Resources – <i>Who else will you work with to complete this step? What additional resources are necessary (money, materials, etc.)?</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Through prayer, God transforms us both individually and as members of the Body of Christ who are sent on mission in the world. When, where, and with whom will you pray--before, during and after this action?

