



OneWith community, OneWith faith, OneWith Christ.

January 5, 2020

Reflection Break Outline Grades 10-11 ~ Session #8:



Session Goals

Mass Unpacked (Mass Moment):

Today we celebrate the Feast of The Epiphany of the Lord, but in fact, God's revelation - His self-revealing Word is given to us at each and every Mass through the reading of Scripture... Think about that! God speaks to us, in personal ways, through the Living Word!

[see full notes on pg. 6]

Mass Learning Goals:

- The Feast of The Epiphany of the Lord celebrates Jesus being “made known” to the world (Through prophecy/Theophany).
- Scripture is God's self-revelation to humanity, for humanity (i.e. to YOU - for YOU)

Catholicism Unpacked

Scripture makes up almost 1/3 of a typical Sunday Mass. In addition to the readings, the Bible is the source for many of the congregational responses we use in our worship during Mass.

- *The Lord be with you... And with your spirit.*
- *Thanks be to God!*
- *Alleluia!*

Catechetical (Catholicism) Learning Goals:

- *Research scripture passages connected to Catholic liturgy.*
- *The first major movement of the Catholic Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word.*
- *The Liturgy of the Word is focused on listening to – and reflection on, Sacred Scripture.*

Reflection Questions

Did you know... Catholicism and the Bible are deeply connected. Scripture makes up almost 1/3 of a typical Catholic Sunday Mass. In addition to the readings, the Bible is the source for many of the congregational responses we use in our worship. In this session we will explore the biblical roots of some of the most common congregational responses to help put what we are saying during Mass into context.

- *The Lord be with you... And with your spirit*
- *Thanks be to God!*
- *Alleluia!*

Look up and discuss the following verses:

The “call and response” - “The Lord be with you”... “And with your spirit” is used several times during the Mass. This greeting/response is echoes greetings found throughout the Bible.

Look up and compare the following...

- ~ Ruth 2:4
- ~ Luke 1:28
- ~ 2 Timothy 4:22
- ~ 2 Chronicles 15:2
- ~ Galatians 6:18

At the end of each of the first two readings the lector proclaims “*The Word of the Lord*” to which we respond... “*Thanks be to God.*” What do we mean by this?

Look up these verses & consider the following...

- ~ 1 Peter 1:25
- ~ Romans 7:25
- ~ 1 Corinthians 15:57

Before the reading of the Gospel and also during the Eucharistic Prayer, we proclaim (usually sing) “*Alleluia/Halleluia*h”. Do you know why? What does it mean?

Look up these verses & consider the following...

- ~ Psalm 106
- ~ Psalms 111-113
- ~ Psalm 146
- ~ Revelation 19:1-6

~*Alleluia / Hallelujah: Alleluia comes from a Hebrew phrase ('hallelu yah') which means Praise the Lord! 'Hallel' is the Hebrew word for 'praise', and 'Yah' is the short form of 'Yahweh - the name for God.*

Unpacking the Mass:

God's self-revealing Word is given to us at each and every Mass through the reading of Scripture... Scripture can, and should be interpreted on multiple levels.

- *Historical/literal sense: What was the message for the ancient Israelites (considering the context of their culture, literary forms, language, etc.)*
- *Spiritual sense: The underlying/enduring message or Truth that applies to all humanity – across time and cultural contexts (message that is relevant for your life today)*

Digging Deeper:

See my notes on page 5 and/or watch the [Jeff Cavans' video](#) to help break down this Sunday's Gospel.

Read Matthew 2:1-6:

- What is literal meaning of this passage?
- What are some spiritual meanings you can draw from this passage?

Read Matthew 2:11:

- What Gifts did the Magi bring? What did that signify in that time and place?
- What is the spiritual meaning of the gifts of the Magi in our time and place?

Coordinators Notes:

These two sections (Discipleship Challenge & Presentation & Prayer) can be done in any order you like. Some group leaders find that collecting the prayer intentions makes for a nice icebreaker at the beginning of the Reflection Break. I also know of at least one group that write their Discipleship Challenge on the note cards during check-in time at the very beginning of the session. I have placed them in this order as it roughly follows the Order of the Mass, but the only thing that really matters is that it happens.

Discipleship Challenge (2-3 minutes)

*With your group brainstorm some concrete ideas for the following question. Ask each member of the group to write down one of the brainstorm ideas (or one of their own) on an index card, post-it note, or **on their phone** – somewhere that they will be able to see and be reminded of the challenge to connect and act.*

- *What is one thing you can commit to doing this week to learn more about your faith?*
- *What is one thing you can do to be an example of Christ's presence to others?*

Presentation & Prayer (5-8 minutes)

Both of these are part of the Mass experience so make sure to leave time for them. They also provide a prayerful tone as you transition back for Mass.

Presentation of Gifts: Ask each teen to fill out a note card describing a contribution that they have made to the community since the last time the group has met. *Ideally it will be a response to the challenge given by the priest during the closing prayer at the previous session, but this "gift" can be pretty much anything! A good deed, a monetary contribution to a worthy cause (almsgiving), talking to a friend about God, Jesus or the Church are all examples of the gifts we bring with us to Mass. Youth will offer these gifts (drop card into the basket) along with their tithe or donation during the Presentation of the Gifts portion of the liturgy. Then watch what God can do with our ordinary gifts!*

After everyone has filled out their cards, choose one person to represent your group and bring all of the cards with them to the Worship Space. That representative will be part of the procession for the Presentation of the Gifts. Meet at the statue of Jesus & Joseph in the Gathering Space for detailed instructions. Choose a new representative each week.

Intercessory Prayer: Pray for your needs and the needs of the world. Collect prayer requests from your Discipleship Group and add them to the universal intentions. *Ask a volunteer to read the intentions aloud; and ask everyone to respond with "Lord, hear our prayer" (following each intention).*

Leader: Our prayer response is "Lord hear our prayer"

For the Church, that we may always strive to be a light
That shines in the darkness...

For world leaders: may they seek the common good for all...

For victims of violence, abuse and systematic injustice ...

For lasting peace in our world, nation and community

For our sister parish, St. Catherine's in Bouzy, Haiti...

For those who have died...

For [Read your group's intentions here...]

For the prayers we hold in silence, (pause) ...

We pray: "Lord hear our prayer"

We pray: "Lord hear our prayer"

We pray: "Lord hear our prayer"

We pray: "Lord hear our prayer"

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Session Resources

Sunday Readings: <http://usccb.org/bible/readings/010520.cfm> (US Bishop's website)

Catholicism Unpacked: Epiphany

The word "epiphany" comes from the Greek *epiphainen*, a verb that means "to shine upon," "to manifest," or "to make known." The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the many ways that Christ has made Himself known to the world, mainly the three biblical events that "announced" Jesus' divinity and mission - the visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12); Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:9-11); and Jesus' first miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11).

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBP7tf6NiRo> (short video reflection by Jeff Cavins)
- <https://catholic-daily-reflections.com/2019/01/05/the-epiphany-of-the-lord-3/> (short reflection)
- <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/jimmy-akin/9-things-you-need-to-know-about-epiphany1> (9 Things You Need to Know About Epiphany)

The Nicene Creed

*I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.*

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.*

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

What Can the Story of the Magi Teach Us About Knowing Jesus?

Most folks are probably familiar with the story of the magi found in Matthew chapter 2, if only from singing the Christmas carol “We Three Kings”. But have you ever thought about the meaning of the story or how it might be applicable to your life as a disciple of Christ? Let’s look at Matthew 2 verses 1-6 and verse 11 to discover how it’s relevant to us today.

Matthew 2:1-6 says: *“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star at its rising and have come to worship Him.”*

“And when Herod the king heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written through the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, by no means are you the least among the princes of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, One who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

The magi weren’t Jews, and they weren’t from Israel. They were (non-believing) foreigners “from the east”, who observed an unusual star – a sign that held much significance to them (announcing a royal birth). Plotting a course by that star led them to Jerusalem. So, they left their own land in an attempt to discover/make sense of the meaning of this sign.

Unlike the magi, the Jewish chief priests and scribes in Jerusalem had Scriptures/prophecies concerning the Messiah/Christ and knew them well (cf. Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 11:1; Psalm 72:9,10, etc.). They even knew the prophecies concerning the Savior’s birth, including where He would be born (cf. Isaiah 7:14, Micah, 5:2). But all of those prophecies were ancient even then – so while Herod, his chief priests and scribes knew about the Christ, they were not expecting him!

Are you “a Herod” or “a magus”?

- Are we content with just mentally knowing about Jesus/God (Herod) - Or are we seekers, willing to journey from our comfort zone to discover/encounter the truth for ourselves (Magi)?
- Are we too complacent, busy, or insecure to change our daily routine that we ignore the presence of God so near to us (Herod) – Or are we willing to risk devoting the time or our “reputation” to encounter and worship a God that we do not fully understand (Magi)?

Gifts of the Magi

[Read Matthew 2:11] The three gifts of the Magi identified in Matthew’s Gospel are: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. All three gifts were typical offerings/gifts given to royalty at that time. Myrrh being commonly used as an anointing oil, frankincense as a perfume, and gold as a valuable.

Theologically, the three gifts have an additional spiritual meaning:

- Gold - a symbol Jesus’ kingship
- Frankincense (an incense) as a symbol of Jesus’ deity
- Myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of Jesus’ suffering and death.

Mass Moment:

Happy Epiphany everyone! Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek word epiphainen (ee-piff-han-EEN), which means “to shine upon,” “to manifest,” or “to make known.” So, the feast of the Epiphany celebrates the many ways that Christ has made Himself known to the world,

God is near, and wants to be known...

Listen carefully to the readings, because – in addition to hearing a story about prophecies being fulfilled and Jesus being “made known” as Messiah – perhaps you will be able to see a pattern that is woven into the very fabric of the Scriptures themselves... which is: Our God is near and wants to be known to all humanity AND to you!

Isn’t that amazing! God WANTS you to know him, wants YOU to know him... always has, and he gives us each a little peek (if we pay attention) of himself through God’s self-revealing Word, given to us at each and every Mass through the reading of Scripture.

Think about that! God speaks to us, in personal ways, through the Living Word!

So I invite you tonight (and at every Mass) to listen extra close to hear God’s epiphainen (ee-piff-han-EEN) for YOUR life... Welcome to Mass!

~ Barry

Popular customs related to Epiphany from around the world.

Many countries in the “Roman Catholic world” have popular celebrations of “The Three Kings”. An early 6th century Greek manuscript in Alexandria gives the “Three Wise Men” the names of Casper, Melchior and Balthasar. Another tradition holds that their relics are in Cologne where they are called the three kings of Cologne. The story is that their bodies were brought to Constantinople by St Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine, and from there to Milan and finally to Cologne in 1162 by Frederick Barbarossa.

In Germany and central Europe a custom of house-blessing takes place. It begins on the evening of 5th January when doorways are sprinkled with holy water and the master of the house writes with chalk above the house and barn doors the initials “C”, “M”, “B” enclosed within the year (**20 C M B 07**), which stands for the Latin blessing “*Christus Mansionem Benedicat*” (May Christ bless this home).

In Spanish-speaking countries, “The Three Kings” receive wish-letters from children and magically bring them gifts on the night before the Epiphany travelling more or less like a Santa Claus. And children prepare drinks for them, much as children in north Europe do for Santa Claus.

In Italy, *La Befana* is the kindly old witch who brings children toys on the night of 5th January. According to the legend, the Three Wise Men stopped at the Befana’s hut to ask directions on their way to Bethlehem and invited her to join them. She was too busy and refused. Later a shepherd asked her to join him in paying respect to the Christ Child. Again she refused, and when night fell she saw a great light in the skies. *La Befana* thought perhaps she should have gone with the Three Wise Men, so she gathered some toys that had belonged to her own child, who had died, and ran to find the kings and the shepherd. But *la Befana* could not find them or the stable. Now, each year she looks for the Christ Child. Since she cannot find him, she leaves gifts for the children of Italy and pieces of coal (nowadays *carbone dolce*, a rock candy that looks remarkably like coal) for the bad ones.