

Retreat Format for Students Exploring Mary as a Model of Justice

Objective of Retreat:

- This format for a retreat is designed for students who are desiring to respond to the call to listen deeply to God speaking through their lives, through their talents, dreams, personal and academic goals, and the pilgrimage of life. This retreat focuses on the virtues of Mary.



Annunciation by Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1898
– Philadelphia Museum of Art

Component One: Preparing Reflections

Witness talks are focused on the virtues which Mary embodied and modeled. The talks are focused on real ways people are living as models of faith and discipleship and whose living example can illustrate the virtues of Mary in real life today.

Virtues to focus on:

- Boundless Hope in the midst of the impossible
- Unselfish Service in a world of radical individualism
- Radical Hospitality as a stance of being open, present and welcoming to realities and people
- Responsive to suffering with radical love, etc.

Recommended Resources to help you prepare:

Book - Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints, by Elizabeth Johnson; Continuum Publishing, 2006.

Scripture Passages: Lk 1:46-56, Luke 2:34-35, Mk 3:31-35, Jn 2:1-12, Jn 19:25-27

Component Two: Engaging the Visual

Throughout the retreat traditional and contemporary images and icons of Mary can provide the starting point to the presentation on a particular quality of Mary. The power of observation can lead into conversation and deeper understanding of the virtues highlighted.

- Pray with Icons
- Reflect and discuss an image as a large group/small group
- Look at film clips that provide illustrations

Recommended Resources to help you prepare:

Book - Praying with Icons, by Jim Forest; Orbis Books, 1997.

Book - Mary, Mother of the Lord: Her Life in Icons and Scripture, by Giovanna Parravicini; Ligouri, 2004.



Component Three: Engagement of the Auditory

Using contemporary Christian Music to provide an additional way into exploring and experiencing the themes of the retreat, play selected songs before or after presentations and provide lyrics for reflection and journal responses.

Recommended Resources to help you prepare:

Artist - Eliza Gilkyson ; <http://www.elizagilkyson.com/>

CD - Breath of Heaven, by Amy Grant

Web site - Catholic Music & Performing Artists; <http://www.gvonline.net/>



Planning Considerations:

Plan the schedule carefully to ensure you do not pack in too much activity without adequate time for prayer and reflection. Select a team of leaders and allow time for the following:

- **Contemplative Prayer:**
Be sure to provide background and opportunities for participants to experience contemplative prayer.
Resource:
Book - Beginning Contemplative Prayer: Out of the Chaos, Into the Quiet, by Sr. Katherine Hermes, FSP, Charis Press, 2001.
- **Discernment:**
Include process development of how one can discern and listen deeply to the movement of the Spirit in one's life.
Resource:
Book - Practicing Discernment With Youth: A Transformative Youth Ministry Approach, by David F. White; Pilgrim Press, 2005.
- **Social Analysis:**
Encourage ways for participants to apply the virtues presented in real-world settings and situations. Invite them to discuss, explore and express the connections to the world around them in a variety of ways including journaling, discussion, critical thinking, and problem solving
Resource:
Book - Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice, by Joe Holland; Orbis Books, 1983.
Book - The Pastoral Circle Revisited, by Wijzen, Holland and Mejia; Orbis Books, 2005.
- **Listening, Seeing and Responding:**
Engage various creative approaches for participants to express their insights, ideas and reflections. Having art materials on hand and an appropriate working space available will encourage participants to ponder and explore more deeply the workings of the Holy Spirit. Consider planning ways for participants to carry the fruits of the retreat forward. Offer them questions to respond to by committing to concrete action in their lives.
- Participants leave with an Image or Icon of Mary that will serve as a visual reminder to continue their journey in faith as they go forward from the retreat. **Resource:** To order prayer cards online see: Bridge Building Images at: <http://www.bridgebuilding.com/>