

Teen Easter Retreat/ Deepening Process

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For the teens, consider working with the Easter Story as a retreat process using songs and practices at each station. I recommend using the movie *Jesus of Nazareth* directed by Franco Zeffirelli to help tell the story while each station provides an experiential process for self-discovery. What follows are ideas to use and expand upon, creative jumping off points to fashion an Easter experience for your own group.

Stations

Hosanna (entering the city)
Clearing away what doesn't serve me (the temple marketplace)
Teaching & healing (healing practice, affirmations)
Last Supper-Communion—wine & bread—eternal Christ spirit
Hand/Foot washing ritual
Intuition—Jesus knew what would happen.
Judas—What parts of us betray us/distrust/question?
Embrace & transform these.
Garden of Gethsemane—What are our seemingly insurmountable challenges?
Crucifixion—death of the ego/smaller self, outer self
Resurrection—arising of the Christ Spirit within
(Affirmation: “The Christ Spirit within me arises today!”)
Walking Meditation—Walks of Jesus: I follow in Thy footsteps; Our own unique soul-purpose walks blended with the greatness of Christ

Dances of Universal Peace

I Am as God Created Me
I Am The Way, The Truth & The Life
The Father & I Are One
These Things Shall You Do & Greater Still

Story Narrative

Telling the story could include Jesus coming into Jerusalem and being hailed; some Garden of Gethsemane soul-searching/surrendering to God's will; a 'light' but factual version of the trial and crucifixion; and vignettes of his disciples seeing/being with him afterwards. I think the narration is what ties it all together with the metaphysical perspective, and I would recommend highlighting Jesus' spoken words wherever they appear in the text. (e.g. “I will be with you until the end of time.”) You may wish to follow up, through narration or dialogue, how the work carried on through his disciples in the years following, how Christianity expanded worldwide, and now is expressed through us, his followers.

Absorbing the Story/Thinking More Deeply About It

Discussion could happen to digest the story line, and about how they interpret and reflect on the story in their own lives.

- Did everyone celebrate Jesus as their king? What kind of king?
- Why wasn't Jesus liked by the Sanhedrin? The Roman empire?
- Who betrayed Jesus?
- Why didn't Jesus just do a miracle to get away from the people who wanted to hurt him?
- Do you think he let it happen? Why?
- What was Jesus trying to show us/teach us/do?
- Did he succeed? Did those who wanted to silence Jesus' message succeed in doing so?

Our Christ Spirit

When have you felt like Christ riding the donkey into town and being celebrated?

How do you call forth this part of you, your Christ self?

Persecution—The Crosses We Bear

Jesus had said that a prophet is not respected in his own country. (John 4:44) Have you ever had a new idea you really liked that was rejected or misunderstood by your friends, parents, or others? How did that feel? What did you do?

Do you sometimes feel like no one understands you, and that you're all alone? What do you do to help yourself move out of that feeling of loneliness?

When have you had a loss or a change in your life that you didn't want to have happen? Did you eventually accept it? How did it turn out? How did this situation challenge you to grow?

Read the Serenity Prayer (below) and share your responses to it.

The Serenity Prayer

Reinhold Niebuhr

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things
I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Resurrection

- How do you call forth your Christ Spirit to overcome your obstacles? (Prayer, meditation, reading, heart talks with a wise and loving person, walking in nature, etc.)
- What if you need help? (Teacher, prayer chaplain, Silent Unity) What other help is available?
- Do you ever call on the being of Jesus in your prayers?
- Does anyone have an example of how prayer helped move you through some challenge?

Today & the Future

- If Jesus were alive today, and looked around at our world, what do you think he would say? Do?
- How does the spirit of Christ express itself in our world today?
- How do you carry on the work of Christ today?

Easter Custom: Foot Washing

During Christ's time, people wore sandals and had to walk many miles each day on dusty road. It was courtesy and respect for a servant to wash the feet of guests when they arrived. Jesus washed the feet of all his disciples the night before he was crucified. This gesture was to show his disciples that he was their servant and he respected them. It was also to show them that in order to be good leaders, they must show respect to their followers and be willing to serve.

Kings and Lords during medieval times followed Jesus' example. They did this by washing the feet of twelve of the poorest men in their kingdom on the Thursday before Easter. In England, it was custom for kings and queens to wash the feet of as many poor people as they were in years old. This custom is still practiced by Queen Elizabeth today.

Source: www.kiddyhouse.com/Holidays/Easter/cust.html accessed on November 18, 2008.

