BREAD OF LIFE HUNGER AND THE EUCHARIST

COMMUNITY BUILDERS, LEARNING EXPERIENCES, AND PRAYER SERVICES

FOODFAST A CRS | EDUCATION PROGRAM
Through **CRS FoodFast: Bread of Life**, Catholic Relief Services helps you to create an hunger awareness experience that is unique to our shared Catholic faith through a focus on the Eucharist. **Bread of Life** explores the connections between global hunger and our faith through the lens of Catholic social teaching. Participants are encouraged to reflect on Jesus’ invitation to the table as an opportunity to effect meaningful change in their own lives and in our world.

Pick and choose from a variety of community builders, prayer resources, and learning experiences to integrate into any of the other CRS FoodFast themes and create your own unique CRS FoodFast event. Schedule templates are included in the Coordinator’s Manual and provide a framework to guide your planning. Consider using the supplemental resources on the CRS FoodFast website foodfast.crs.org or integrate your own ideas to enhance the overall experience for participants. We recognize the level of commitment many faith and school communities have to inspiring young people to live out their faith in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world. We hope the resources in this theme help you to achieve that vision.

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This collection of resources offers opportunities that foster faithful reflection while encouraging members of your community to grow in global solidarity through the joy of the Eucharist. Integrate any or all of these Community Builders, Learning Experiences, and Prayer Services into your CRS FoodFast event to help your participants develop a clearer understanding of the way service connects deeply and directly to our Catholic faith.

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OBJECTIVES

• To create a sense of community among participants and chaperones at the beginning of the retreat
• To demonstrate the interconnectedness of our lives and decisions as members of the Body of Christ

MATERIALS:

• Yarn or string, about two feet per participant
• Several pairs of scissors

PROCESS:

1. The leader begins by asking all participants and chaperones to gather and stand in a circle.

2. The leader then shows the group a ball of yarn and explains:

   We are going to spend some time getting to know each other and sharing what we hope to get out of this experience. When the ball of yarn is tossed to you, please catch it, wrap it around your wrist two or three times, and share one hope you have for this FoodFast. Then toss the yarn to another person in the circle. Once everyone has had a turn, please return the ball of yarn to me.

3. The leader wraps the free end of the yarn around his/her wrist two or three times, shares one hope that he/she has for this experience, then tosses the ball of yarn to someone else across the circle.

4. Each participant and chaperone takes a turn, wrapping the yarn around her/his wrist, sharing one thing she/he hopes to gain from this experience, and then tossing the yarn to another person in the circle.

5. The last participant should return the ball of yarn to the leader, who now explains:

   We have created a network of hopes and dreams that we have for this experience. As you can see, we are connected by our common interests in learning about our faith and helping our sisters and brothers who are experiencing poverty. Our decisions and attitudes also keep us connected and affect one another. When one of us is feeling good or makes a good decision, it can bring the whole community up. (Leader raises her/his wrist that is wrapped in yarn and part of the network to demonstrate.) But when one of us is feeling low or makes a bad decision, it can bring the whole community down. (Leader lowers her/his wrist to demonstrate.) Each member of this community is essential. We wouldn’t be able to create this web without each one of you. I invite you to wear this yarn on your wrist as a sign of our community throughout this experience.

6. Chaperones and participants can then use scissors to cut the yarn. Each member of the group should find someone else to help him or her tie the yarn around his/her wrist as a bracelet that will be worn for the remainder of the experience.
**OBJECTIVES:**
- To create a sense of community among retreat participants
- To demonstrate the necessity of each individual member in the Body of Christ

**MATERIALS:**
- “We Are the Body of Christ” puzzle, cut into pieces
- Markers, colored pencils or other art supplies
- A large, open space for assembling the puzzle, such as a large table or space on the floor

**PROCESS:**
1. **Set-up:** before the activity begins, do the following:
   a. Cut the “We are the Body of Christ” poster along the lines, so that the poster is broken down into puzzle pieces.
   b. Count out one puzzle piece for each participant and set pieces aside.
   c. Use markers, colored pencils or other art supplies to fill in the remaining puzzle pieces with information about people in our global community from the CRS Stories page. If you need more stories, you can access the archive here: crs.org/stories. Feel free to use the examples listed below...
      - Maria, a mother of eight, who used electronic vouchers from CRS to purchase chickens and seeds for her garden after a drought hit her hometown in Guatemala;
      - Bui Thi Hau, a wife and mother from Vietnam, who purchased a month’s worth of food for her family with $33 from CRS after a typhoon hit her region;
      - Téné Sawadogo, a new mother who learned about proper nutrition for her infant through a care group sponsored by CRS in Burkina Faso.
   d. After filling in these puzzle pieces, be sure to hide them from the participants’ view.
2. To begin the activity, give each participant a puzzle piece and several markers, colored pencils or other art supplies.
3. Invite each participant to use the art supplies to write her/his name on the puzzle piece, along with three facts about herself/himself. After participants have completed this task, they may spend some time decorating their puzzle pieces in a way that reflects their personalities.
4. After all participants have decorated their puzzle pieces, ask everyone to come forward and work together to put the puzzle together.
5. Participants will struggle with this task because they do not know that several pieces from the puzzle are missing. After a few minutes, check in with the participants. Be sure to ask: “How are you feeling? What seems to be the problem? What could be a possible solution?”
6. After discussing the current situation with the participants, give the participants the remaining pieces and enough time to complete the puzzle.

7. After the puzzle is completed, ask for volunteers to read the words on the puzzle pieces that were provided halfway through the activity. Ask the participants: “What do all of these puzzle pieces have in common?” (Answer: These puzzle pieces all represent people who are not in the room.)

8. Facilitate a large-group discussion at the end of this activity. Be sure to ask:

- How are you feeling now?
- How can this puzzle be a metaphor for the Church?
- What lessons did you learn from this activity?
- What actions can you take to put these lessons into practice in the real world?

(Possible answers include: The Church is like a body because each part is necessary for the body to function properly, and because no body part is more important or better than another. In the Church, each person is essential, even the people who we don’t know personally or whose life experiences are very different from ours. Just like each body part needs to be taken care of and work together, so, too, does each member of the Church need to be taken care of and work with others to bring about God’s kingdom on earth.)
OBJECTIVES:
• To create a sense of community among the retreat participants
• To illustrate Jesus’ call to give each member of our global community a “place at the table”
• To create an opportunity for participants to commit to one action that will help make their parish, school or community a more inclusive place
• To create a tablecloth that will be used at the closing meal of the retreat

MATERIALS:
• Bible with Luke 14:7-14 marked
• Large tablecloth, drop cloth or other piece of fabric in a solid color
• Fabric paint
• Paper plates and paper towels
• Foam paint brushes
• Permanent markers
• Optional: speakers and a device that provides access to the internet

PROCESS:
1. Lay the tablecloth/fabric in an open space on the floor so that all (or most) participants can access it at the same time. Provide fabric paint, foam paint brushes and permanent markers near the tablecloth.
2. Gather in a circle around the tablecloth. The leader begins by explaining:

   Jesus was known for inviting all kinds of people to eat with him and encouraging his disciples to do the same. Some people looked down on him for being hospitable toward people who had been cast out of society. However, Jesus wanted to emphasize that all are welcome in the kingdom of God. Take this parable, for instance, which Jesus told to a group of people who were gathered for a meal.

4. Ask participants to name the characters in this story. Who does Jesus encourage the host to invite to his next party? The leader should then emphasize:

   In this story Jesus is teaching his disciples to include people who are often left out, forgotten or ignored.

5. Continue by asking participants to think of people in our modern-day society who are often left out, forgotten or ignored. Give participants a few moments of silence to think about specific people or groups of people who might feel cast out from our society today.

6. Participants should then break into groups of two to three. Together, they should brainstorm one specific person or group who they think needs to be invited to a special place at the table. When they have settled on who they would like to invite, each group should work together to draw an outline of a handprint (they may trace one of their own hands) using permanent markers on the tablecloth. Then, each group should write the name of the person or group they want to invite inside the outline of the handprint.

   Optional: consider playing “A Place at the Table” by Lori True in the background while participants complete this part of the activity (available on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=KOahyJM7SHk).

7. After each group is finished, go around the circle and invite participants to share their ideas.
8. Continue by explaining:

As disciples of Christ, we are called to serve and honor those who feel left out, but we can’t forget that we are members of the community, too! Now we will add our own handprints to the tablecloth. As you claim your “place at the table,” think about one thing you can do to make sure all members of the community feel included and loved as daughters and sons of God.

9. Invite participants to choose a color of fabric paint and then use a foam brush to cover one of their hands completely in paint. Participants should then place their handprint on the tablecloth in a location of their choosing.

10. Participants should use a permanent marker to write a phrase or sentence that expresses one thing they will do to be more aware and inclusive of those who are left out around the perimeter of their handprint. If they feel comfortable, they should also write their names near their handprints.

11. After everyone is finished, go around the circle and invite participants to share their ideas. If someone does not feel comfortable sharing, she/he may say, “Pass.”

12. When the tablecloth is complete, move the tablecloth to a location where it can dry until it is needed for the final meal of the retreat.
OBJECTIVES:
• To help participants name the things that give them life and moments when they felt fully alive
• To reflect on what it means for the Eucharist to be “the source and summit of the Christian life” (Lumen Gentium #11, CCC #1324)
• To create a symbol that will help participants to remember that the Eucharist is the true presence of Jesus Christ

MATERIALS:
• “Source and Summit” poster
• Tape or easel to use to display the poster
• Post-it notes, two per person
• Pens and pencils
• Index cards, one per person
• Markers, colored pencils or other art supplies

PROCESS:
1. Create a “Source and Summit” poster similar to the example given and display it on a wall or easel so that all participants can see and access it. Each participant should be given two Post-it notes and a writing utensil to start.
   Example:

   ![Example Image]

2. The leader begins by asking participants to name one moment in their lives when they felt truly alive. Participants will be invited to write a brief description of the moment on one of their Post-it notes, and then come forward to stick their note to the top of the mountain on the “Source and Summit” poster.

3. After everyone has returned to their seats, the leader asks participants to name one thing that motivates them or keeps them going on hard days. Again, participants are invited to write a brief description of their answer on their second Post-it note, then come forward to stick their note to the bottom of the mountain on the “Source and Summit” poster.
4. The leader then explains:

The Second Vatican Council was an immense gathering of bishops and other Catholic leaders in Rome during the 1960s. After those meetings, the bishops published documents that summarized their discussions of various Catholic beliefs. In one of those documents, the bishops said, “The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.”

5. The leader writes this quote across the top of the poster: “The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.” He/she continues, explaining:

On your Post-it notes, you have just identified “summit” experiences in your life. These are times when you felt truly alive. You have also identified “sources” in your life. These are the things that keep you going on tough days. For Christians, the Eucharist falls into both categories.

6. The leader should then ask the large group to free-associate with the word “Eucharist.” What comes to mind when participants hear that word? Several participants should share what they already think or know about the Eucharist.

7. The large group is then broken into two smaller groups. One group is asked to brainstorm ways that the Eucharist can be considered the high point (the summit) of our Christian life. The other group is asked to brainstorm ways that the Eucharist can be considered the thing that motivates us on the hard days (the source) of our Christian life.

8. After several minutes of brainstorming, all participants are called back to the large group and each smaller group shares their ideas. As ideas are shared, record them on the “Source and Summit” poster under the appropriate word “Source” or “Summit.”

9. Once both groups have shared their ideas, the leader should emphasize:

The Eucharist is the source of our Christian lives because, as a sacrament, it gives us grace. Grace is help from God that we need and use when responding to God’s call. The Eucharist is the summit of our Christian lives because it draws us into community with the rest of the Church around the world and makes us who we really are—beloved brothers and sisters in Christ.

All of this is possible because the Eucharist is not just a symbol—it is the true presence of Jesus Christ. When we receive the Eucharist, we are encountering a person who gives us strength and draws us together as a family of faith.

10. Each participant should then be given an index card and several markers, colored pencils or other art supplies. Participants will be invited to create a symbol that will help them to remember what it means to call the Eucharist “the source and summit of the Christian life.” They may work individually or in groups of two or three, depending on their comfort level.
OBJECTIVES:
• To compare and contrast the four accounts of the Last Supper in the Gospels
• To reflect on the relationship between celebrating the Eucharist and service to the people who are experiencing poverty

MATERIALS:
• “The Last Supper” handout, one for each participant
• Bibles, two to three for each of four small groups
• Pens, pencils and/or highlighters
• A whiteboard, chalkboard or newsprint and markers or chalk

PROCESS:
1. Distribute a “The Last Supper” handout and a pen/pencil to each participant.
2. Break the participants into four groups, one for each Gospel: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Give each group two or three Bibles, depending on the group’s size.
3. The leader begins by explaining:
   In the next activity, we are going to examine the way that each Gospel writer described the Last Supper. Knowing that it would be his last meal with his friends, Jesus took this opportunity to share some special words and actions with his apostles. Because these stories contain some of Jesus’ final words and deeds, they are very important to Christians who are trying to follow in his footsteps today!

   Each Gospel writer had his own take on what happened during the Last Supper. First, you are going to work in groups to become experts on one Gospel’s description of the Last Supper. Then, we are going to rearrange your groups so that you will be able to share your expertise with people who studied a passage that was different from yours.

4. Round One: Ask each group to read the passage from their Gospel that is listed on the handout. As a group, they should work to fill in the boxes for “Setting,” “Characters” and “Plot” in the chart for the passage that they have just read. Each participant should take careful notes on his/her handout, because he/she will have to teach other participants about the Gospel passage in the next round. Participants should only focus on the Gospel that they were assigned.

5. After each group is finished filling out their row on the chart, give participants 30 seconds to form new groups. They must run around the room and find three other participants, all of whom read one of the other passages. When they have a complete group (one person who read Matthew, one person who read Mark, one person who read Luke, and one person who read John), they should sit down.

6. Round Two: In their new groups, participants should share what they learned from the passage that they read. Participants should listen carefully to each other and take notes in the appropriate boxes on the chart about what the members of their new group say.

7. While participants are completing the second round, the leader should draw a blank Venn diagram on a whiteboard, chalkboard or piece of newsprint. After this round is complete, ask participants to turn their attention to the Venn diagram at the front of the room. Facilitate a large group discussion using the questions that follow. Take notes on the Venn diagram as participants share their observations about the similarities and differences between these Gospel passages. Be sure to label one side of the Venn diagram “Matthew, Mark and Luke,” and label the other side “John.” Questions to help guide the discussion include:
Which passages were most similar to each other? What were the similarities between these passages? Was any passage very different from the others? Which one? What details made this passage different? What did all four passages have in common? Why do you think one version of the Last Supper is so different from the other three?

8. The leader then continues, explaining:

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the “Synoptic Gospels” because, for the most part, they tell the same stories about Jesus in the same order. (Synoptic means “same view.”) The Gospel of John is so different because it was written much later than the other three, after the Christian community had some time to prayerfully reflect on the life of Jesus and what his words and actions meant.

9. Continue the discussion by asking participants:

If the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life,” why do you think John leaves it out of his Gospel?

10. Give participants a few minutes to consider this question on their own. Then, they should turn and talk to a neighbor about their ideas. Finally, call everyone’s attention back to the large group. Ask for three or four volunteers to share their ideas with the large group.

11. Finish the activity by emphasizing:

John does not need to include the story of the institution of the Eucharist because, by the time he is writing his Gospel, the Christian community is already consistently gathering to remember Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Instead, John tells the story of the washing of the feet to emphasize what Christians are called to do with the graces received in the Eucharist: go forth and serve our brothers and sisters in need.
### The Last Supper

**GOSPEL MESSAGE**
- Matthew 26:17-19, 26-30
- Mark 14:12-16, 22-26
- John 13:1-15

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<tr>
<th>GOSPEL MESSAGE</th>
<th>SETTING</th>
<th>CHARACTERS</th>
<th>PLOT</th>
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<td>Luke 22:7-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>John 13:1-15</td>
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**DIRECTIONS:**
This activity will take place in two rounds. Follow the directions carefully so that you can complete the activity successfully!

**Round One:** Read the Gospel passage you have been assigned. Then, work in a group to fill in the row in the chart that is associated with your passage. Take notes on the setting, characters and plot of your Gospel passage. Be prepared to share your work!

**Round Two:** Listen carefully to the members of your new group as they share what they learned by reading a passage that was different from yours. Take notes on the setting, characters and plot of the other three Gospel passages. Be prepared to share your work!
OBJECTIVES:
• To define the word “sacrament”
• To identify similarities between the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and its members
• To name and accept a call to action that will help bring grace into the world

MATERIALS:
• Whiteboard, chalkboard or newsprint and markers or chalk
• “You Are a Sacrament” handout, one for each participant
• Pens, pencils and/or highlighters

PROCESS:
1. Write the word “sacrament” in the middle of the board. Invite each participant to come to the board and anonymously write one thing they know about sacraments or think of when they hear the word “sacrament.”
2. Read the definition of a sacrament from the Catechism of the Catholic Church out loud:
   “The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.” (CCC #1131)
3. Explain the definition further:
   Sacraments are efficacious. This means that they have an effect on the person who receives them. Every time a person receives a sacrament, she or he is changed.
   Sacraments are signs of grace. This means that they involve our bodies in addition to our souls. In every sacrament, there is something physical for us to experience with our eyes, hands, ears, nose or mouth. These physical signs help us to comprehend the gift of grace that we are given in the sacraments.
   Sacraments are instituted by Christ. This means that they were Jesus’ idea. We can find the roots of all seven sacraments in the Bible.
   Sacraments are entrusted to the Church. This means that the Catholic Church—and particularly bishops and priests—have been given the ability to use and celebrate the sacraments. We have been celebrating the same sacraments for centuries.
   Divine life is dispensed to us by and through the sacraments. This means that when someone receives a sacrament, he/she receives a great gift from God: they receive a piece of God’s own life!
4. Ask the participants, “Did you know that you are like a sacrament?”
5. Read the following passage from the Catechism of the Catholic Church out loud:
   “The Church, in Christ, is like a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men.” (CCC #775)
6. Break the participants into groups of three or four. Distribute one handout and a writing instrument to each participant.
7. Participants will now work together to come up with three ways that they—as individuals or as a group—are like a sacrament. Each participant should take notes on her/his own handout.
8. When everyone is finished, ask one representative from each group to report the ideas his/her group discussed to the large group.
9. After each group has shared, each participant should work independently to fill in the “So What?” box at the bottom of his/her handout. In this box, participants should write one way that they can be an efficacious sign of God's grace in the world today. In other words, they should attempt to answer the question “How can I effectively bring God's light and life to a world in need?” Give participants a few minutes to come up with one concrete idea and write it down. When participants are finished, they should stand.

10. When everyone is finished, participants should stand in a circle with their papers in hand. Each participant should crumple her/his paper into a ball. Then the leader should set a timer for 20 seconds, during which participants should throw their paper balls around the room, like a snowball fight.

11. When time is called, everyone should grab the paper ball that is closest to him or her and open it.

12. Participants should form a circle once more. Going around the circle, each participant should take a turn reading the idea in the “So What?” box out loud. If participants agree that the idea is something they could commit to doing, they should snap with their fingers. Continue to go around the circle until each participant has shared.
**SACRAMENTS**

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**SO WHAT?**
OBJECTIVES:
• To introduce participants to a style of prayer known as lectio divina
• To create an opportunity for participants to find and share personal meaning in one of the feeding miracles of Jesus

MATERIALS:
• Prayer table with a Bible, lighted candle, crucifix and other relevant sacred images to set the tone
• Hard copies of the story of Jesus feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21), one for each participant
• Pens, pencils and/or highlighters

PROCESS:
Note: This type of prayer is most meaningful in groups of six to eight people. Consider breaking your large group into smaller groups and assigning each small group a separate room for this prayer experience.

1. Distribute the lectio divina handout and a writing instrument to each participant.

2. The leader begins by explaining what lectio divina is:

   Lectio divina is Latin for “holy reading.” It is a style of prayer that developed during the Middle Ages, when monks and nuns lived, worked and prayed together in monasteries and convents. Because of this, it is designed to be experienced in community. Specifically, it is a way of reading and meditating together on Scripture as a family of faith.

3. The leader continues by explaining the process for this prayer:

   To experience this prayer, we will first decide on three people to serve as readers. Each reader will take a turn to proclaim a passage from the Gospel of Matthew. This passage may be familiar to you: it is the story of Jesus miraculously feeding 5,000 people.

   It is our hope that this prayer will allow you to experience this story in a new way. As the readers proclaim the Gospel, we invite you to ask the Holy Spirit to draw your attention to one word or phrase in the passage. After the first reading of the passage, you will be invited to share the word or phrase that stood out to you. After the second reading of the passage, you will be invited to briefly share what that word or phrase means to you in your life today. After the third and final reading of the passage, you will be invited to briefly share what you feel called to do as a result of this meditation.

   You have been given a hard copy of the passage and a writing instrument so that you may follow along as the passage is read. We encourage you to underline, circle or highlight your word or phrase. You may also use the blank space on your handout to journal or take notes on what this word or phrase means to you.

   Does anyone have any questions?

4. Once all questions from the group are answered, identify three readers and decide the order in which they will proclaim the Gospel.

5. Begin the prayer by calling on the Holy Spirit:

   In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

   God of wisdom, who inspires us and makes your presence known to us, we thank you for the gift of your Word. Send your Holy Spirit to be with us as we meditate on your Word and discern your call in this time and place.

   We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
6. The first reader proclaims the Gospel. A prayerful silence follows. During this time, participants should underline or highlight the word or phrase that has caught their attention and on which they wish to meditate for the remainder of the prayer. Then, participants are invited to go around and share the word or phrase that caught their attention. Remind participants that they should only share the word or phrase at this point. If they do not feel comfortable sharing, they may say, “Pass.”

7. The second reader proclaims the Gospel. After a brief silence, participants are invited to go around and share one or two sentences explaining the personal significance they each found in the word or phrase that caught their attention. Gently remind participants to keep their reflections very brief, so everyone who would like to share may have the opportunity to do so. If a participant does not feel comfortable sharing, she/he may say, “Pass.”

8. The third reader proclaims the Gospel. After a brief silence, participants are invited to go around and share the action that they feel called to do as a result of this time of prayer. Gently remind participants to keep their reflections very brief, so everyone who would like to share may have the opportunity to do so. If a participant does not feel comfortable sharing, he/she may say, “Pass.”

9. The leader should conclude the prayer by praying:

   God of wisdom, we thank you for this time of prayer as a family of faith. Give us the grace we need to live out the call we have received as we pray. Our Father...
“When Jesus heard of it, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” Jesus said to them, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.” But they said to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.” Then he said, “Bring them here to me,” and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.”

—Matthew 14:13-21

Written Reflection:

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OBJECTIVE:
• To create an opportunity for participants and chaperones to express what they are thankful for at the end of the retreat

MATERIALS:
• Prayer table with a Bible, lighted candle, crucifix and other relevant sacred images to set the tone
• Bible with Acts 2:42-47 marked
• Small loaf of uncut bread, placed on the prayer table in the center of the circle
• Optional: small taper candles, one for each participant and chaperone

PROCESS:
1. Gather all participants and chaperones in a circle, seated either in chairs or on the floor.
2. Begin by praying:
   
   In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
   
   Loving God, we gather to give thanks for the many blessings in our lives. As we take time to name these blessings, keep us mindful of the fact that “all good giving and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17). You are the source of our joy, happiness and hope. May we learn to use these blessings to love and serve you and our neighbors.
   
   We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.


4. The leader then explains:
   
   The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word for “thanksgiving.” Each time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we remember and give thanks for the gift of God’s grace and salvation, as well as for countless other blessings in our lives. Much like the first Christians in the passage we just heard, we now gather to break bread and give thanks for the blessings that have come from this retreat.

5. Continue by picking up the loaf of bread from the prayer table and explaining:
   
   Oplatek (pronounced opwatek) is a Polish Christmas tradition that mimics the traditions of the first disciples. Each year on Christmas Eve, Polish families gather to break and share a thin, wafer-like piece of bread and wish blessing on each other for the coming year.
   
   We are now going to pass this loaf of bread around the circle. When it is your turn, please share one thing that you are thankful for because of this retreat. Then, break off a small piece of the bread for yourself, eat it, and pass it to the next person in the circle. After each person shares something that he or she is thankful for, I invite the group to respond by saying, “We thank you, Jesus.”

   Optional variation: if there are participants or chaperones with food allergies that prevent them from touching or consuming bread, consider the following alternate activity so that everyone can be included. Give each participant and chaperone a small taper candle. The leader begins by lighting his/her taper candle from the candle on the prayer table in the center of the circle. As he/she shares what he/she is thankful for, the leader turns and lights the taper candle of the next person in the circle. The group responds with, “We thank you, Jesus.”
7. Each participant takes a turn sharing what she/he is thankful for and either breaks a piece of bread or lights another person’s candle. Continue until each person in the circle has had a chance to share.

8. End the prayer service by praying:

   In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

   Loving God, you have blessed us abundantly with family, friends, shelter and food. And yet, we know that there are those in our community and world who go without companionship, a place to call home or food on their table. As we are sent forth from this place, give us the grace we need to share our blessings with others. May our service to one another be a sign of our love and gratitude for you.

   We ask this in Jesus’ name as we pray, Our Father...
OBJECTIVES:
• To meditate on one of the resurrection accounts found in the Gospels
• To create an opportunity for participants to reflect on what it means to see Jesus in the Eucharist and in the faces of those who are experiencing poverty

MATERIALS:
• Prayer table with a Bible, lighted candle, crucifix and other relevant sacred images to set the tone
• Bible with Luke 24:13-35 marked
• Speakers and a device that provides access to the internet

PROCESS:
1. Invite participants to begin in a standing position. Play and sing along to “Open the Eyes of My Heart” by Paul Baloche (available on YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=If9UbuxDyEg).
2. The leader begins by praying:
   In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
   God of life, you have gathered us here to grow as your children and disciples. As we meditate on your word, open our hearts and minds so that we may better understand your call to love one another as you love us.
   We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
4. The leader continues by reading the following reflection on this passage:
   In this passage, two of Jesus’ disciples are returning home after a dramatic three days in Jerusalem. They stood by and watched as their leader, teacher and friend had been arrested, tortured and killed. Imagine the emotions they must have experienced. Do you think they were heartbroken? Confused? Scared? But then, as they walk, something miraculous happens. Jesus joins them on their way, but they do not recognize him at first. The recognition comes later, when they gather at a table, and Jesus blesses and breaks the bread. As the scripture says, “With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.” Why would the resurrected Jesus disappear as soon as his friends began to understand what was going on?
   Pope St. John Paul II once said, “Dear friends, if you learn to discover Jesus in the Eucharist, you will also know how to discover Him in your brothers and sisters, particularly the very poor.” Perhaps Jesus disappears at the moment of recognition in order to invite his disciples to find him elsewhere: in the Eucharist and in the faces of those who need us most.
   As we make this retreat together, let us ask God for the grace to see him in both the breaking of the bread and the hungry of the world. May he open the eyes of our hearts so that we can better see and serve him in those around us.
5. After a brief silence, the leader invites the group to stand.
6. One or two volunteers come forward to lead the group in the following petitions:

   Our response will be, “Help us to see you, Jesus.”

   In the sacrament of the Eucharist...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

   In those who are without proper food, shelter or clothing...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

   In those who are left out, forgotten or ignored...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

   In those who are treated unfairly because of their race, gender, religious beliefs or abilities...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

   In those who lead our Church and our world...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

   In our families and friends, when there is conflict and when there is joy...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

   In ourselves, when we feel broken and when we feel whole...
   **Help us to see you, Jesus.**

7. The leader concludes by praying:

   God of life, we thank you for the gift of the Eucharist, which sustains us as we serve our brothers and sisters in need. Enlighten our hearts so that we might feel your presence in the Eucharist and see your presence in the our sisters and brothers who are experiencing poverty and hopelessness. Whether we are working or praying, may we do everything for your glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

8. The leader invites members of the group to offer each other a sign of peace.
LUKE 24:13-15

“Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And he replied to them, “What sort of things?” They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer* these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”

PETITIONS:

Our response will be, “Help us to see you, Jesus.”

In the sacrament of the Eucharist...

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Help us to see you, Jesus.

In those who are left out, forgotten or ignored...

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