

youth ministry

accent

the resource for adventist youth leaders



JESUS

the
space dispenser





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viewIT: movie/dvd review

This film follows the life of Celie, a young black girl growing up in the early 1900's. The first time we see Celie, she is 14 - and pregnant - by her father. We stay with her for the next 30 years of her tough life...

Starring: Danny Glover, Whoopi Goldberg, Oprah Winfrey

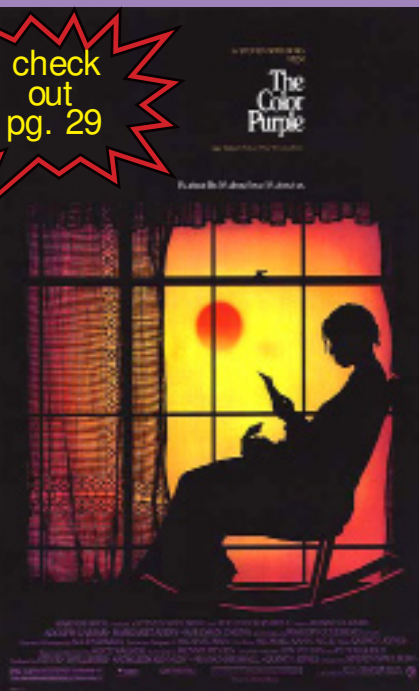
Director: Steven Spielberg

Genre: Drama more

Format: Widescreen ...

Language: English ...

PG-13 For sexual content



check
out
pg. 29



Journey back to the most momentous event in history as the greatest story ever told is brought to life in the epic drama, The Nativity Story. An inspirational tale of extraordinary faith and love that chronicles the arduous journey of Mary and Joseph, a divine pregnancy and the miraculous birth of Jesus. As the only film ever to premiere at the Vatican, The Nativity Story captures Mary and Joseph enduring a harsh trip to Bethlehem, battling sandstorms, treacherous terrain, hunger, thieves, and a snake during a river crossing. Brief scenes of innocents being slaughtered. Mention of Mary being stoned.

Starring: Ciaran Hinds, Keisha Castle-Hughes, Shoreh Agdashloo, Oscar Issac

Director: Catherine Hardwicke

Genre: Drama

Format: Widescreen ...

Language: English ...

Subtitles: English, Spanish ...

PG-13 For sexual content



restorer of the streets!


by Jonatán Tejel

"The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In." —Isaiah 58:11, 12

I know that these verses were not written for the particular purpose of explaining the need and purpose of a Youth Week of Prayer, but if you take careful note of these two verses, you will find several descriptions in these verses that fits perfectly in the focus of this special week of prayer and spiritual emphasis. The first thing to note is, "The LORD will guide you continually...", and this is TRUTH; but you have to allow Him to guide you. This special week is a reminder that you must be in contact with Jesus, at all times it's a continuous, ongoing, never-ending process.

Secondly, sometimes we complain, we do not agree with God, because we are suffering. After all, we are people of faith, we should not suffer!! So we complain. We forget that He is not the one we should accuse, He is the one who takes care of us, who protects and looks out for us. Like the verse says, He will "satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones."

I have a house with a yard; in it we have roses, a vegetable garden, and this past spring and summer it was beautiful. One of our neighbours was selling their house and their garden was almost dead; the only difference between his almost-dead garden and ours, was the water. "...you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail." There is a lesson to be learned here, a spiritual one. Just like in my neighbour's garden, you can be almost dead if you do not drink the water Jesus Christ gives you; He offers it to you constantly.

"...you shall build the old waste places." Now we have a lesson for you, the leader. Sometimes we are leading in waste places, and the Bible is telling us that we must rebuild them, the old waste places. Maybe, your "waste place" is someone. Someone who has lost their connection with God. This might be their junction-point. Now, you, the leader, can use this week of prayer and special emphasis to repair this link, to help them on the road to rebuilding this relationship with Jesus. You are the "Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In." Please do not let them down. They need you! 



FEATURES

6/Jesus the Space Dispenser by Corrado Cozzi Clarifying the differences in the terms Space and Place.

8/Sports and The Bible by Davide Sciarabba Revisiting sports, competition, and the Bible.

12/Starter Kit Introducing the Year of Sacrifice discussion questions for 2008

16/Are You Really over 40 already? by Robert Holbrook Revisiting the age factor

40/Operation Fireside by Cecily Daly Door to Door Evangelism and it's results....51 years later

44/European Valuegenesis by Manuela Casti Examining how the Eurpean Adventist Church is changing

COVER: Manu Soutullo

DEPARTMENTS

2 **viewIT/** movie and dvd review

3 **editorial /** Restorer of the Streets by Jonatán Tejel

5 **contributors** to this issue

13 **keeping it real /** Dancing... by Catherine Boldeau

14 **Bible reading checklist /** Part 1 of 3-part Bible Year Plan

16 **viewPOINT /** Are You Really... by Robert Holbrook

18 **devotional /** Compasses and... by Jonatán Tejel

19 **Bible studies /** Why Was Sin Permitted

21 **programs /** Small Group Activities and more

40 **special feature /** Operation Fireside by Cecily Daly

44 **division news /** European Valuegenesis report

46 **eatIT /** Recipes and tips

47 **listenIT /** CD review and iTunes

48 **readIT /** book reviews

contributors



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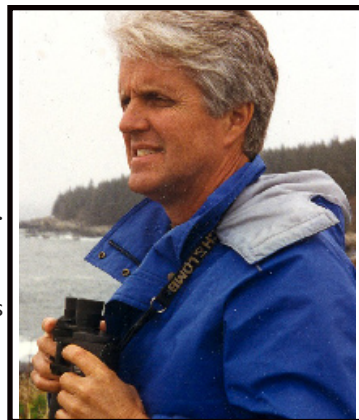
Corrado Cozzi is the youth director of the Euro-Africa Division of SDA. In this issue Corrado tries to clarify the difference between space and place. [p. 6]

Davide Sciarabba is a pastor serving as a chaplain and physical education teacher at the Colegio Adventista de Sagunto in Spain. In his article, Sports and The Bible, Davide examines the role competition and sports playing in the Bible. [p. 8]



A freelance writer and trainer. in this issue **Catherine Anthony Boldeau** keeps it real as she encourages us to resist the temptation of teasing and playing with the devil. [p. 13]

Robert “Bob” Holbrook is the youth director of the Oklahoma Conference of SDA. In this issue Bob looks at some of the mistakes leaders make after crossing that imaginary 40-wall. [p.16]



Dr. Cecily Daly is an English Professor at Oakwood College in the Department of English and Foreign Languages. The mother of two adult children, she also serves as the president of the North Alabama Prayer Federation of the South Central Conference of SDA. On **page 40** she shares her story of a small group of youth evangelizing a city.



Daniela Sciarabba is married to the World Pathfinder Youth Director, Jonatán Tejel. When she is not busy with their two daughters you can find her whipping up something in the kitchen. Check out her recipes on **page 46**.



make this
space a place

JESUS
the
space dispenser

The Christmas celebrations drive us to automatically make references to the birth of Jesus. It is normal. Although it is not the given date—Jesus was not born December 25—it is worthy to remember His birthday at least once a year. I believe that every one of us has our personal thinking about the facts told about that day, through the story reported by Luke. The story reports that there was no place for that poor girl who had to give birth. I can easily imagine Joseph's supplications becoming more and more obsessive because he was worried by the pain of his young wife.

The text says: *"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."* (Luke 2:7)

I would like to use this episode to share with you some thoughts that have come to my mind during a convention on Youth Ministry that I attended at University of Cambridge. One of the lectures focused on the place the youth have in society, and after that I wonder to myself: which is the place of youth in our church? Do they have a precise place, or are they searching for a place as Joseph? But actually, are youth really interested to have a place or are they pleased and satisfied with a simple space? Is there a difference?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPACE AND PLACE

The debate on the binomial space vs. place is part of a long series of studies involving different disciplines. The example that I'm sharing with you could be reductive, but I found it interesting enough for an opportune reflection. Let's clarify the difference of these two terms.

What is a space?

It is a separated, indefinite, neutral area without particular delimitations that characterize it; an empty area which is available to be used.

What is a place?

A physical place filled-up with a particular signification where something has happened and deserves being remembered.

"Space means an area of freedom, without coercion or accountability, free of pressures and void of authority. Space may be imaged as a weekend, holiday, a vacation, and is characterized by a kind of neutrality or emptiness waiting to be filled by our choosing."

Place is space that has historical meanings, where some things have happened that are now remembered and that provide continuity and identity across generations." [1]

Place belongs to me, I feel, as its owner—space does not belong to me particularly. A place protects, a space only contains. A place is somewhere you go willingly; a space can be pleasant, but it does not move particular interest.

When a young person leaves the church, do they leave a space or a place? Let's go deeper.

HOME, CHURCH: SITES OF MEANING

Houses, churches, are places with special meaning, and are connected to the social, moral and spiritual development of our young people.

I'm aware that I'm not saying something new if I assert that the family house is essential during childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. A particular part of the house is the children's bedroom. What happens in the children's bedroom?

"The bedroom, which throughout their teenage years is a site of multiple cultural and social articulations and expressions, is often the first space in which they are able to exert some control, be creative and make that space their own. It is a space in which their cultural biography can be nurtured." [2]

continue on p. 15

cover story

To speak about sports in the Bible could seem odd. Indeed the Bible remains almost silent about sports and games. Its references to games of competition are very rare, although these types of contests were frequent among the Mediterranean people, were they Arabs, Romans or Greeks, were they warriors, shepherds or farmers.¹ The Bible episodes speaking of competition refer to real rivalries, like those between Joseph and his brothers, or to the relation between Rachel and Leah (Genesis 30:8).



SPORTS AND THE BIBLE

by Davide Sciarabba

cover story

In the entire Old Testament there are only a few allusions to children and team games in the streets and squares.² Apparently the Bible makes allusion twice to archery as if it were a game.³

"The indications of the Bible about play activities among Hebrews are succinct. It is evident that amusement was not the prophets' taste. Nevertheless, archaeological diggings have permitted to discover several society games from Mitspé, Kiriath Sepher, Beth Shémesh, Gézer, Meggido, Debir: we have the artifacts, but we do not know the way in which children or adults played."⁴ Archeology has been able to detect the use of dice in sacred and recreational games although it is difficult to know the way they were used.⁵

The games mentioned in the Old Testament are rare⁶ compared to other ancient people, who practiced commonly hunting, racing or striving between gladiators. The Bible speaks about contest of enigmas and games of music and dance that followed banquets.⁷ The only explicit reference to sport, namely race, is given in Ecclesiastes 9:11. But this reference proves that race competitions were well known in Israel several centuries before Christ.

But why, in fact, the Bible does not like to mention the competition games, so frequent among the Mediterranean peoples like Greeks or Romans?

There may be several reasons.

(1) To begin with, we must say that in ancient societies: "the games were not only a sportive competition but above all a religious party"⁸. The Olympic games, born officially in 776 B. C., were at the beginning rites of adoration to the gods. The night before the games' opening, the athletes and the competition organizers, who were the rulers of the country, would participate to a sacrifice to the gods of the city. For example at Corinth, a black bull was offered in holocaust to Palemon. After that there was a sacred libation: the blood of the bull was mixed

with the blood of the athletes in a kind of covenant in which the participants engaged their own life. In case of victory, competitors would receive divine honors, symbolized by a crown. The festivities would end with banquets and religious acts of thanksgiving.⁹

It is therefore easy to understand that the participation of Jews in sports celebrated in the Olympic Games was perceived by the teachers of the law as a transgression of the divine Law, an idolatrous act, associated to the adoration of Hercules or Palemon.

(2) Besides, we must know that most athletes who participated in the official games of the antiquity were professional soldiers, contrarily to the Hebrews who, besides some rare exceptions, only became warriors in war situations. Therefore, the bloody Roman spectacles of putting men to death during wrestles or exposing them to the beasts were alien to the Hebrew culture. We can imagine that these sort of games would have been condemned by all the prophets in Israel.¹⁰

(3) Third, we must consider that the participation to such games, required a lot of time for physical training and preparation. After long days of intense physical work, study of Scriptures and worship of God, few would still have the required energy to train themselves for the games.

Even if the Bible does not speak about these competition games for the mentioned reasons, this does not mean the Hebrews did not know about the practice of sports.¹¹ Indeed, from the second century B. C. on the Israelites knew a strong Hellenistic influence. Athletic activities were introduced in Palestine towards 165 B. C. by the Hellenists under the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanus.¹² Archaeology has confirmed the presence of a gymnasium in Jerusalem with capacity for more than 50,000. "In other cities of Samaria and Galilee the remains of other gymnasiums, hippodromes, and theatres have been found, all constructed at this period of time."¹³ The books of the Maccabees testify of the existence of a gymnasium and a hippodrome built

cover story

by Antiochus Epiphanus with the strong support of the high priest Jason.¹⁴

The Israelites had even known the Olympic Games during the kingdom of Herod the Great, who was not only an admirer of the games, but the very promoter and sponsor of these Olympic Games in Israel. He constructed a stadium for 42,000 people in Caesarea, and organized in the year 12 A.D. the 192nd Olympic Games¹⁵, building and restoring for this occasion stadiums and theatres in several cities of the kingdom.

So we can affirm that even if the biblical texts do not mention these competitions, the Israelites may have well known some kind of sports and even participated in Olympic Games, at least during a short period of their history. We must observe, however, that Paul refers to sports in many metaphors in his letters¹⁶. There is no surprising to find such references if we take into consideration the historical and cultural context of the Pauline epistles. In fact, several big towns of ancient Greece had an important sports tradition. Corinth gathered every two years the Isthmic games and the Nemeses festivals, and in year 51 A. D., it welcomed two important sportive manifestations: the Isthmic games and the imperial games.¹⁷ From the chronological point of view, it is possible that

Paul had witnessed these games which disrupted the usual life of the town and attracted necessarily the attention of the Corinthians.

On the other side, given that the apostle had grown up in the Hellenistic world, it is almost impossible for him not to have been confronted with the numerous sportive images used by the ancient philosophers. Some of these images had become classics, such as teaching that life is a struggle, that this world is a stadium where human beings are called to exercise virtues, etc. For many philosophers¹⁸, the Olympic Games were mirrors of everyman's life. Before Paul, the moralist Jews who lived in the Hellenic world used these sportive metaphors too in order to illustrate their speeches on the conviction that life is a training exercise subject to the demands of the law. Philo of Alexandria described life like an agonistic competition.¹⁹ In the deuterocanonical books, apocryphal and intertestament literature²⁰ life is compared to a battle, a competition, a constant struggle in which men are engaged. If the confrontation is lost, man will suffer uselessly, but if he wins he will receive important rewards.

The world of sports was so familiar to Paul's ears, that probably he had even participated, assisted,

or attended the athletic games in order to announce the gospel. Personally, I like to think that Paul haunted sometimes the stadiums between two evangelistic campaigns.

In any case, his language proves clearly that the world of sports was not unknown to him. He has not found any better metaphor for the Christian life than that of cross county track, maybe marathon.

Paul takes from his cultural patrimony a sportive language that was very familiar to his audience. "Each citizen of the Greek world knew sport because its practice was not only very popular, but it characterized a culture who worshiped the body".²¹ It can only be normal that the apostle used, in his epistles, sportive metaphors. The best known are found in I Corinthians

cover story


9:24-27; Philippians 3:12-16;
2 Timothy 2:4-6; 2 Timothy 4:6-8;
Hebrew 12:1,2.²²

Paul uses these diverse metaphors to convey the good news, and to preach the gospel. Although sport can also lead to negative consequences, Paul underlines the values that can be conveyed through its practice. On the other hand, he takes advantage of the positive aspects of sport in order to speak of the necessary virtues to reach victory in Christ. In fact, all these sportive metaphors convey the same values that the gospel invites us to practice in our spiritual life while we wait for Jesus' return.

Discipline and engagement; concentration, targeted effort and real self-sacrifice; patience, perseverance and determination in keeping towards the goal; respect of rules, loyalty and "fair-play"; balance and satisfaction for the accomplished duty; certainty in hoping to receive the prize, enthusiasm and happy acceptance of the prize. Here you have some of the human qualities needed in sport or play, but also in our spiritual life.

Paul had well understood that "the values reflected in sports make of it something more than a pleasant diversion and recreation. If exercise can help to relax and evacuate anger, to sooth nerves, to digest an eating excess, if it teaches us to respect others and cooperate

with them, to smile in front of the limits we discover in our bodies, then we can qualify exercise as a faithful friend and we should speak more about its holiness, say how it contributes to our spiritual growth. The human qualities that are involved [in] sport activities are the same that underpin the activities of spiritual life".²³

We may conclude that even if the Ancient Testament remains silent about games and sports for reasons that we have already mentioned, the New Testament, through Paul, refers to sports to illustrate the gospel for our edification. Through the values that may be found in some sports, Christians are invited to be winners for Jesus. Paul helps us trough the sport metaphors to understand that there is not a holy life and a profane life in our existence. We have just one life that can be oriented to the holy or to the profane. It all depends on us. Even when we, "simply" practise sport or play we have the choice to serve God or someone else. **Now, you play!** 

(Endnotes)

¹ S. Fernández Ardanaz, "Las Olimpiadas y el espíritu deportivo de la vida en la Biblia y en el cristianismo primitivo", in *Reseña Bíblica*, Otoño, 1994, nº3. p. 45.

² Isaiah 11 :8,9 ; Jeremiah 6 :11 ; 9 :20 ; Zachariah 8 :5

³ Job 16:12, 13; 1 Samuel 20:18-39.

⁴ A. Chouraqui, *La vie quotidienne des Hébreux au temps de la bible*, Paris:

Hachette, 1971; p. 144.

⁵ S. Fernández Ardanaz, art. cit. p. 49.

⁶ Psalms 58 (59): 4; 118 (119): 32; Proverbs 1 :16 Isaiah 59 :7 ; Jeremiah 8 :6.

⁷ Cf. Judges 14:12; Zechariah 8: 5; Job 21:11.

⁸ S. Fernández Ardanaz, art. cit. p. 49.

⁹ A. Melero, "La cultura olímpica en la antigüedad", *Simposium Los juegos Olímpicos ayer y hoy*, UIMP, Valencia, 1-5 junio 1992; p. 7.

¹⁰ A. Chouraqui, op. cit. p. 144.

¹¹ See J. Garner (éd.), *Recreation and Sport Ministry: Impacting Postmodern Culture*, Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003, p. 25.

¹² M. Mayeur, *A la conquête de l'absolu*, *Signes des Temps*, Février 1992; p.12.

¹³ S. Fernández Ardanaz, art. cit.; p. 50.

¹⁴ 2 Maccabees 4:10-19; 3 Maccabees 4:11; 4 Maccabees 4:19, 20.

¹⁵ Josephus Flavius, *War I*, 21, 8.12.

¹⁶ V.C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967; pp. 76-81.

¹⁷ Voir Davide Sciarabba, *Métaphores sportives et valeurs chrétiennes dans les écrits pauliniens: contribution a une philosophie biblique des sports*, *Mémoire, Collonges s/Salève, Faculté Adventiste de Théologie*, 2004.

¹⁸ Voir par exemple Crisipe, Zénon, Aristocreonte, Philocrates, Arquedeme et Antipatre, les deux Antenodores etc., qui étaient contemporains de Paul. Cf. H-D. Wendland, *Le lettere ai Corinti*, Brescia : Paideia, 1976; pp.146-147.

¹⁹ Phylum, *Somn.* II, 145.

²⁰ Wisdom of Solomon 4 :2; 4 Ezra 7:127; 3 Maccabees 4:11; 4 Maccabees 6:10; 11:20; 16:16; 17:10; 18:23; Testament de Job 4.

²¹ G. Barbaglio, *Lettere di Paolo*, vol.1, Roma : Borla, 1980; p. 410.

²² See also Romans 15 :30 ; Galatians 2:2; Philippians 1 : 27-30 ; 2:16 ; Colossians 1 :29-2:1 ; 2 :18 ; Thessalonians 2 :2 ; 1 Timothy 4 :7-10 ; 6 :12.

²³ T. Ryan, "Vers une spiritualité du sport", *Concilium* 225, 1989. p. 132.

Introduction

William Booth couldn't sleep one night, so he got up and went for a walk. His midnight meandering took him to the poor side of London where, in the darkness, he saw the impoverished and hopeless souls who were trying to survive in that portion of the great city. A cold rain was beating down on some of London's forgotten as they slept by the curbside.

When Booth returned home, he told his wife, "I've been to hell." Out of that terrible experience came the dream of starting an organization to help those in need. From that nighttime walk, was born the Salvation Army.

Had Booth not left the security of his comfortable and warm home, he might never have witnessed the needs of the friendless masses.

Our precious savior sacrificed glory, honor, and the comforts of heaven to come to this cold, desolate earth to show us the Father; to bring us hope; to wrap us in warm love. Christ's life is an example for us to follow as we consider our role in reaching those around us.

Sacrifice should be a badge of honor worn by every Christian. It means that we've put nothing between us and our spiritual destiny. It means we've stepped out of our "comfort zones" and followed our hearts to where the need is greatest. When we truly sacrifice ourselves in the cause of God, we'll find that our gain is much more than our imagined lost. It's a matter of priority; what we consider to be most important in our lives. The world sacrifices everything in order to gain riches and glory. The Christian sacrifices riches and glory in order to bring the knowledge of Christ to all who need a Savior.

This year, the goal for our youth is that they will more fully understand what true sacrifice is and experience it with a heart filled with God's compassion. With Christ as our example, we turn our attention to the hopeless, the impoverished, and those in need of love.



MINISTRY

Invite each member of your youth group to choose one Adventist ministry to support with their time or money (ADRA, Voice of Prophecy, local church outreach, etc.). Ask them to support the ministry at the expense of a luxury they usually enjoy. Have them give reports of the group about the work of their chosen ministry, explaining how their support is being used to reach others.

WIDOW'S MITE

Ask your group to collect a "widow's mite" offering each week. This offering is made up of money that members would normally spend on themselves. Then choose a local need that the funds from this collection can fulfill. Have the group personally see the results of their sacrifice.

DANCING WITH THE DEVIL ON YOUR BACK

By Catherine Anthony Boldeau

The ballerina stood in the centre of the stage. Silent. Poised. The mirrored stillness in the large auditorium was rich with anticipation. The pathos of the opening bars of the anthem was a fitting introduction for the start of a breath-taking performance.

Nothing! She tried to arch her back. Nothing! She stepped to the side. To the left. To the front. The right. Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!

They watched mesmerised as the world-class performer, *perfected* movements that would make even the most amateur ballerina look good.

What went wrong?

Someone noticed that there was something on her back. On closer inspection, the offending item was identified as a baby kitten. Even though small, it clung so hard to the ballerina, she was not able to move with the grace and bearing that was part of her original training.

And all because of a baby cat that the ballerina had befriended a few days before.

Many of us as young people experience something similar in our lives. We are raised in Christian homes with good values and morals. Our parents have done their best to ensure that we know the difference between right and wrong, but somehow along the way, something seems to hold us down from doing the right thing. It's the devil on our backs.

The Bible encourages us to "resist the devil." And sometimes we do. But at other times, we don't really resist him. We play on his ground. We tease him, we act like he's harmless. He then assumes that you and he are friends and sometimes when you least expect it, he is on your back and you can't get rid of him.

So, how can you avoid dancing with the devil on your back? "...here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking around life – and place it before God....Don't become so well-adjusted to the culture that you fit into it without even thinking...fix your attention on God". (Romans 12: 1, 2, The Message).

Why not start today? 



Catherine
Anthony Boldeau
is a freelance
writer and trainer.

1-year Bible Plan (part 1)

A 3-part chronological study of the Bible

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Genesis 1, 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 32. Exodus 12, 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 63. Numbers 26, 27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Psalm 8, 19, 29, 33 | <input type="checkbox"/> 33. Exodus 14-16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 64. Numbers 28-30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Psalm 93-101, 103, 104 | <input type="checkbox"/> 34. Exodus 17-20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65. Numbers 31, 32 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Genesis 3-6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35. Exodus 31:18—35:29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 66. Numbers 33, 34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Genesis 7-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 36. Exodus 34; 24, 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 67. Numbers 35, 36 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Genesis 11-15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 37. Exodus 26-28 | <input type="checkbox"/> 68. Dueteronomy 1, 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Genesis 16-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 38. Exodus 29-31:17 | <input type="checkbox"/> 69. Dueteronomy 3, 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Genesis 20-23 | <input type="checkbox"/> 39. Exodus 35-37 | <input type="checkbox"/> 70. Dueteronomy 5-7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Genesis 24, 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40. Exodus 38-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 71. Dueteronomy 8-10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Genesis 26-28 | <input type="checkbox"/> 41. Numbers 1, 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 72. Dueteronomy 11-13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Genesis 29, 30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 42. Numbers 3, 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 73. Dueteronomy 14-16 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Genesis 31, 32 | <input type="checkbox"/> 43. Numbers 5, 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 74. Dueteronomy 17-20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Genesis 33-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 44. Numbers 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75. Dueteronomy 21-23 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Genesis 36-40 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45. Numbers 8-10:28 | <input type="checkbox"/> 76. Dueteronomy 24-26, Psalm 90 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Genesis 41, 42 | <input type="checkbox"/> 46. Leviticus 1-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 77. Dueteronomy 27, 28 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Genesis 43-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 47. Leviticus 5-7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 78. Dueteronomy 29-31 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Genesis 46-48 | <input type="checkbox"/> 48. Leviticus 8, 9 | <input type="checkbox"/> 79. Dueteronomy 32-34 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Genesis 49, 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 49. Exodus 21-23 | <input type="checkbox"/> 80. Psalm 119:1-88 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Job 1-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50. Numbers 10:29 - 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 81. Psalm 119:89-176 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Job 6-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51. Numbers 14; Leviticus 10, 11 | <input type="checkbox"/> 82. Joshua 1-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Job 11-16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 52. Leviticus 12, 13 | <input type="checkbox"/> 83. Joshua 5-7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22. Job 17-21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 53. Leviticus 14, 15 | <input type="checkbox"/> 84. Joshua 8, 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 23. Job 22-27 | <input type="checkbox"/> 54. Leviticus 16-18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85. Joshua 10-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24. Job 28-31 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55. Leviticus 19-21 | <input type="checkbox"/> 86. Joshua 13-15:19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25. Job 32-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56. Leviticus 22, 23 | <input type="checkbox"/> 87. Joshua 15:20—8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 26. Job 36-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 57. Leviticus 24, 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 88. Joshua 19-21 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27. Job 40-42; Psalm 111, 112 | <input type="checkbox"/> 58. Leviticus 26, 27 | <input type="checkbox"/> 89. Joshua 22-24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 28. 1 Chronicles 2; Exodus 1, 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 59. Numbers 15, 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 90. Psalm 105-107 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 29. Exodus 3-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60. Numbers 17-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 91. Judges 1-3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30. Exodus 6-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61. Numbers 20-22 | <input type="checkbox"/> 92. Judges 17-19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31. Exodus 9-11 | <input type="checkbox"/> 62. Numbers 23-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 93. Judges 20, 21 |

continued from page 8

This appropriation of space becomes place. The children's bedrooms are conceived, organized and used for creating and recreating identity, meaning and motivation.

And what about the church? Let's examine this some more.

1. If we understand the space/place axiom, then how can we help our children to find a place in the church and not just live in a space?
2. What makes the church a place and not a space?
3. Where do we give the youth in the church a place: the last pews in the church? In the balcony? In short: a place to be simple spectators?
4. Which experiences are "hidden" in the church to allow the youth to recognize it as a place of their own?
5. Do the kids really consider the church as a place where they can feel the same ownership as their fellow adults?

On several occasions I have asked young people their opinion about the church service, and I'm sure you can guess the answers: boring, meaningless, out of touch with the youth and their culture, not attractive, a site where it would be difficult for them to invite their friends to. And then there is AY. The Sabbath afternoon program produces different reactions, because it is a youth program, lived in a space where relationships are closer, more friendly; the activities are more interactive and they are owners of the space available. In short, they do not feel "out of place." But when the program is well planned, the youth meeting becomes a **place** that contributes to forming individual spirituality and growth. On the other hand, a superficial and poorly organized AY meeting becomes one of the most contributing factors to the spiritual poverty of our youth, and without doubt, one of the reasons they leave the church. I'm aware that church has its im-

portance in the spiritual development of youth, but this development depends, to a great extent, on how the young people view and experience the church and its programs.

Personally, I'm in favour of a church that crosses generational barriers, all the different age groups worship together, where everyone can find his/her place, especially during the Sabbath morning service. Being in a significant place can encourage young people to become aware of what they are doing. For example, the Sabbath can be considered only as a neutral space, empty, that needs to be personalized. What do you think?

JESUS: PLACE DISPENSER

Allow me one more thought that seems to me in tune with the concept of space—place applied to one's own spiritual experience. In Matthew 4:17, Jesus introduces, for the first time, the kingdom of God. Is it a **place** or a **space**?

At first when Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven, He tries to get His audience to become aware—emotionally involved, in this new experience of faith. Because without personal involvement, without understanding what it means to be *citizens of the kingdom of God*, without a direct experience, this application of Jesus, can to them, remain no more than an offer of space.

The objective of Jesus was not to make us realize that the *kingdom of heaven* exists and is close to us (Matt 4:17). I believe that Jesus' true intention was to make this space a **place**; in order to do this He said, *the Kingdom of God ...it's inside you* (Luke 17:21; *The Clear Word*, 2005). What makes the difference between these two declarations? Is it the invitation to feel an integral part of the project of God? In this case, the dimension of prayer also assumes the meaning of a

“physical” meeting between us and God. Not in an abstract space, but in a defined place, inside of us.

Let’s help our youth meet God in prayer, help them gain spiritual maturity, create in them a feeling of belonging, and encourage a “citizens-of-the-kingdom-of-God” attitude. Before he left, Jesus said: “I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.” (John 14:1-3; ESV).

Let us help our youth to live this feeling of waiting for the Kingdom of Heaven in an active way, so that their **space** is transformed into their place, their own special **place** that nobody can ever take from them.

On that special day, the day of His birth, there was no place for Jesus to come into this world. He had to be content to stay in a manger, becoming the symbol of humility. Today, it’s still very important to remember that Jesus came to this earth to teach us how to develop all the potentialities He has given us; and able to recognize the great opportunity to have our place in His kingdom. Can we ask for a better gift? A priceless gift, easy to share. **a**

[1] Brueggemann, W. (2002), *The Land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*, Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, p. 4

[2] Lincoln, S. (2005), “Feeling the Noise: Teenagers, bedrooms and music”, in *Leisure Studies* 24: 399-414.

Are you really over 40 already?

By Robert Holbrook,
Oklahoma Conference Youth Director

Hardly seems possible doesn’t it?

Time flies when you’re having fun in Youth Ministry and before you know it, you’re no longer so young and doubts begin to seep in under the door. Wondering if you can keep up the pace with today’s youth? Wondering if someone younger should take over the reigns? Wondering what others think of an “old” person still trying to lead kids?

Several years ago I came across an article about the 10 worst mistakes leaders make after crossing that imaginary 40-wall. Some of those points bear re-visiting. First of all though, I like several person’s comments about age: “It is just a number.” A friend once told me “Age is an issue of mind over matter, so if you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter!” My Dad has often called us who are getting a little bit older “chronologically gifted.” I like that. The truth is, that age/years has nothing to do with being able to mentor youth. In fact, often more years behind makes mentoring easier—IF.... And here is the critical turning point where all this is going.

IF...(there are several mistakes we can make that will reduce our potential at best and eliminate us at worst.)

1. Don’t Serve Others. Baby Boomers—those of us who are now “getting old” have been described as being the “most self-centered, self-seeking, self-interested, self-absorbed, self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing generation in history.” Nice isn’t it? Comforting! Yet, it is a fact, that as we get older, if we do not devote an increasing share of our time to helping others, we will truly grow old. The spiritual uplift one receives from reaching out and helping others (and there are many ways of doing that) actually sets an emotional tone that preserves a youthful spirit. We have little or no time to worry about trifling or imaginary ailments that plague those more egocentric persons.

2. Live in the Past. This is very true, especially of those of us who have “moved up the ladder.” We find ourselves living in a past that each day gets farther and farther from reality. Our experience becomes stale and canned instead of fresh baked every morning. Hulda Crooks took up mountain climbing after she retired and was still doing it in her 90’s. My Dad took up scuba diving and Indian cooking in his 70’s. We cannot rest on our laurels—we can only rust on them if we give it a try. Spending our time telling people what it was like “in the old days” puts us in a rocking chair on the front porch very quickly. Today is today. We must know how to use our past to continue being effective today. Remember those 3 key words you used to hear in those leadership training courses? “Adaptability, Adaptability, and yes, you got it: Adaptability!”


3. Don’t Adjust to Young People. When you’ve past 40, failure to adjust to the younger generation can age you quickly. I have talk with colleagues and since I love nature, the subject usually comes around to exploring nature sooner or later—rock climbing, caving, back packing—you know—all those fun high adventure things. Soon one of those in the circle will comment “Yeah, that’s maybe fun, but I’m too old for that now.” I cannot help to give a look of disgust—the person is invariably 20 or more years younger than I am (and often an overweight couch-potato who needs such activity badly.) Young people want adventure. Young people do not do everything just the way we want them to. They seek adventure out of doors; they seek adventure by taking roads in their lives we do not approve of. But behaving in an authoritarian manner towards those who are nearly full grown gets us nowhere. Criticizing their behavior, their marriages, their social skills or lack thereof only marks you as a “fuddy-duddy” and your potential for influence when they are needing and asking for it is gone—they will seek out someone else’s counsel.

4. Don’t Have Any Outside Interests. I see so many people whose lives are totally wrapped up in a day to day routine with no “hot peppers.” They work hard, which

is good, they lead their church’s youth as asked by their church, which is good, but that is all their life consists of. They don’t seem to have time to develop their own interests—to grow and adjust to each new phase of life. The empty nest syndrome eats them alive and destroys them; they age fast, sicken and soon loose the will to live. It shows in their weight, general health, and attitudes. They become critical of their church, its leadership and the new generation of kids.

5. Don’t Simplify Your Wants. It is so easy to set a lifestyle that measures up to these peak years of your earning power, not realizing that very soon, you will be retiring and earning perhaps half of your current salaries. If you are not ready to simplify your wants, you will soon be in big trouble and the ensuing worries and resentment will literally cut years off your life.

6. Don’t Face Reality. Yes, indeed, you are getting older, so slow down (don’t stop), but take a comfortable pace, leave the hectic rat race behind. You are not a hot-rod, don’t run till you drop. There is a huge difference between staying young spiritually and emotionally and recognizing the realities of life. Don’t try to flee reality by moving to the country or to the city or south or wherever. Yes, you can move, but be sure it is not just an attempt to get away from reality. Recognize the due process of aging but don’t let it control you. Look ahead and make plans that will protect you from financial or emotional dependence on others (your kids) as long as possible. Let God continue His plan of action for your life and keep the doors of your home and heart open to your youth.

For us who recognize and avoid these mistakes (along with a few more), the best years of our life will indeed still be ahead and we can enjoy watching how God uses us in some pretty cool ways we would never have imagined as we walked along our road of life. And we will be able to look back with great satisfaction at the lives of others God has given us to touch and help. We will know for sure that even though life may be short and life may seem very unfair at times, GOD IS GOOD! 

COMPASSES AND WEATHERCOCKS

By Jonatan Tejel

It's so easy to control a kid and make them do what you want. You only have to tell them: "If you do it I'll buy you the toy you like the most."

Do you remember when you were growing up, how you always wanted the latest toy? The toy that every kid had to get? And sometimes your parents would say, "If you do it I'll buy the toy for you." It's easy to get children to do what you want them to do; just say the magic words, "I'll buy you the toy." And bingo, you have them under your control. I call it the weathercock effect...going where the wind blows, in this case where the toy leads.

The weathercock effect in children is quiet normal, because they are in the process of learning confidence, learning how to focus and head in the right direction; they are becoming like compasses. Sometimes we find young people and adults who never seem able to come out of that mode. They continue to move where the wind

blows, they are fickle, and like the wind they are constantly blowing, one way or the other.


It is important that, as youth leaders, we try to educate our children and teenagers to be like compasses. A compass always positions to the north, no matter where you place it; it is not affected by the changing winds, it is always faithful to the north.

I worry that sometimes instead of teaching our children to think for themselves, we train them to do only what we tell them to do. If all they know is what we teach them, they have not learned how to think for themselves, how will they know what is good or bad in our lives? We are not perfect. We can make the mistakes, and if and when we do, how will they know not to do the same thing? To choose another path? To know the difference between right and wrong, when all they know is to be like us. This is something we do unconsciously, but we do it on several occasions. Here is what we need to do.

We should guide them to Christ. He should be our example. He must be the *North* in their lives. This is the reason why it is important that we teach our youth to always have their eyes set on Christ. Let me share with you a couple of Bible texts that I believe are essential to us, the youth leaders, and the youth we are called to lead.

1. **1 Timothy 4:12** *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.*

2. **Psalms 119:9-12** *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.*

Every day give Christ as a gift. This is the best gift we can give to our children, adolescents, youth and adults...Christ. 

SESSION TARGET: To get a better understanding of the origin of evil.

SCRIPTURE READING: *Psalm 89:13-18 (NIV)*

Your arm is endued with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD. They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness. For you are their glory and strength, and by your favor you exalt our horn.^[a] Indeed, our shield^[b] belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Footnotes: a. [Psalm 89:17](#) Horn here symbolizes strong one. b. [Psalm 89:18](#) Or sovereign

**ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 1
The Origin of Evil, Ellen G. White**

WHY WAS SIN PERMITTED?

With whom did evil originate? God? Satan? In heaven? On the earth?

INTRODUCTION: Sometime after the beginning of this world the problem of the origin of evil has worried, and still continues today to worry human beings. Everyone tries to find answers for all the questions that come to mind when we say “origin of evil.” In this Bible Study we will try to explore many of these questions and find answers to some of them. As a youth leader, be prepared to get questions you may not be able to answer on the spot. That is okay, if you do not know the answer, tell them you will research the topic and get back to them, dig through the Bible to see what God has to say about the topic. If you know the question is impossible to answer (there are some questions that can only be answered by Jesus, Himself) tell them so.

GOD IS LOVE

“God is love.” 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. “*The high and lofty One that inhabited eternity,*” whose “*ways are everlasting,*” changeth not. With Him “*is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17.

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings....

...The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love.”¹

1. How does the Bible define God? (1 John 4:8)
2. What are some of the other qualities of God’s character? (Deut. 32:4)
3. What makes up the foundation of God’s government? (Psalm 89:14)
4. What is constantly happening in heaven? (Psalm 103:20-22)

EVIL IN HEAVEN

1. What is the transgression of God's Law? (1 John 3:4)
2. With whom did sin originate? (1 John 3:8; John 8:44)
3. Who was Lucifer? (Ez. 28:14)
4. Was Satan created a sinner? (Ez. 28:15)
5. How did sin first manifest itself in heaven? (Ez. 28:17)²
6. What caused Lucifer to sin, rebel, and fail in heaven? (Isa. 14:13, 14)
7. What happened to Lucifer after he failed in heaven? (Isa. 14:12)
8. What happened to Satan and the angels who rebelled against God, along with Satan? (Rev. 12:9; Jude 6)

HOW SIN CAME TO EARTH

1. What did God tell Adam and Eve to do in the Garden of Eden? (Gen. 2:16, 17)
2. How can Satan transform himself? (2 Cor. 11:14)
3. How did Satan manifest himself to talk with Eve? (Gen. 3:1-3)
4. Who did Jesus call a "liar and the father of lies"? (John 8:34)
5. What's the lie Satan used to trick Eve? (Gen. 3:4, 5)
6. What was Adam and Eve's first act of disobedience? (Gen. 3:6)
7. After disobeying God, what happened to the earth as a result? (Rom. 5:12)
8. Are people born sinful or do they become sinful? (Rom. 5:12)

After human beings continued sinning, how did God prove His deep love for us? (John 3:16)

(Endnotes)

1. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Chapter 1: Why was Sin Permitted? , pg 33.
2. This verse and the one in John 8:44 shows us that Satan was created perfect and he walked in the way of truth. Peter talks about the angels who sinned (2 Peter 2:4); and in the book of Jude we see "...the angels who did not keep their positions..." (Jude 6). We can see that those angels were also created perfect, but at some point they lost their state of perfection.

2008 Discussion Questions:

QUOTABLE QUOTES

I asked of life, "What have you to offer me?" The answer came, "What have you to give?"

– Anon

2

I have found that if you love until it hurts there is no more hurt, only love.

– Mother Teresa

3

None can be at peace while others wallow in poverty and insecurity.

– Nelson Mandela

4

At the end of the ... century most of us will not have to repent of the great evils we have done but of the apathy that prevented us from doing anything at all.

– Martin Luther King



for Adventist Youth prepared by the
YOUTH MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®

The year 2008 has been designated by the General Conference Youth Ministries Department as a year of Sacrifice (Compassion). This is part of the yearly themes for the youth around the world.

This year, the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world will be focusing on the joys and benefits of Sacrifice through Discipleship, Leadership, Evangelism and Service. Young people will learn how to close the gap that exists between belief and action, knowledge and practice.

These small group discussions have been developed to be used during Youth Meetings when youth meet for their weekly programs. There are enough programs for the whole year. Youth leaders should feel free to pick any topic from the document for their youth groups.

It is the prayer of the General Conference Youth Ministries Team that these discussions will help youth to grow in love with Jesus Christ and become His vehicle on earth to bring hope to the suffering world.

“It is through sacrifice that God’s work must be carried forward. Of every child of God self-sacrifice is required. Christ said: ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself; and take up his cross daily, and follow me’ Luke 9:23. To all who believe, Christ give a new character. This character through His infinite sacrifice, is the reproduction of His own” (*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 449).

This year, the goal of our youth is that they will more fully understand what true sacrifice is and experience it with a heart filled with God’s compassion. With Christ as our example, we turn our attention to the hopeless, the impoverished, and those in need of love.

General Conference Youth Ministries Team

2008 — *The Year of Sacrifice (Compassion)*

“For you did sympathize and suffer along with those who were imprisoned, and you bore cheerfully the plundering of your belongings and the confiscation of your property, in the knowledge and consciousness that you yourselves had a better and lasting possession.”
—Hebrews 10:34 (KJV, Amplified)

Giving when it hurts is sacrifice and only as we are filled with the Holy Spirit are we able and willing to repeatedly give in this way. Jesus sacrificed the glory, honor and comfort of heaven to come here and serve us so that we would know the truth about the Father.

Jesus is our example of true sacrifice and service. This year our goal is for our youth to more fully understand not only what true sacrifice is but to experience it with a heart full of God’s compassion.

Renewing through:

- Discipleship
- Leadership
- Evangelism
- Service

The word *compassion* generally evokes positive feelings. We like to think of ourselves as compassionate people who are basically good, gentle, and understanding. We more or less assume that compassion is a natural response to human suffering.

But, if being human and being compassionate are the same, then why is humanity torn by conflict, war, hatred, and oppression? Why, then, are there so many people in our midst who suffer from hunger, cold, and lack of shelter? Why, then, do differences in race, sex,

or religion prevent us from approaching each other and forming community? Why, then, are millions of human beings suffering from alienation, separation, or loneliness? Why, then, do we hurt, torture, and kill each other? Why, then, is our world in such chaos?

Questions such as these suggest that we need to take a critical look at our understanding of compassion. The word *compassion* is derived from the Latin words *pati* and *cum*, which together mean, “to suffer with.” Compassion asks us to *sacrifice* – to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. When we look at compassion this way, it becomes clear

that something more is involved than a general kindness or tenderheartedness. It is not surprising that compassion, understood as suffering with, often evokes in us a deep resistance and even protest. We are inclined to say, “This is self-flagellation, this is masochism, this is a morbid interest in pain, this is a sick desire.” It is important for us to acknowledge this resistance and to recognize that suffering is not something we desire or to which we are attracted. On the contrary, it is something we want to avoid at all cost. Therefore, compassion is not among our most natural responses. We are pain-avoiders and we consider anyone who feels attracted to suffering abnormal, or at least very unusual.¹

But in showing compassion, we are reflecting our Maker, in whose image we were created, for the Bible emphasizes that compassion is an attribute of God, as you’ll study more in the following lessons. God is called the “Father of Compassion” and according

to Midrash creation was born of the divine compassion toward creatures.

To say that God is compassionate is to say that God suffers at the sufferings of others. God suffers. God is in pain. Human compassion then becomes the relief of the pain of God as well as the relief of human pain. This theme of God in pain is an ancient one, well developed in Judaism and in certain thinkers but very much underdeveloped in much of Christian spirituality....

According to [Kazoh] Kitamore, who has devoted a book to the *Theology of the Pain of God*, God is in pain because God embraces “completely those who should not be embraced” and God’s love comes from a love that is rooted in pain....²

Do we do the same? In *A Scandalous Providence: The Jesus Story of the Compassion of God*, E. Frank Tupper relates the following story:

“Look, I’m an atheist. I don’t believe a [damn] thing. They tell me I have five to eight months to live, and I want you to help me die.” So began the conversation of Will Campbell with a young woman he hardly knew just out of exploratory surgery in a Nashville hospital. The lung cancer had metastasized throughout her entire body and far beyond the help of surgery. The bad news brought Will to her bedside. Since she had made her confession, penance was supposed to follow, but

Will thought penance contrary to the gospel of unconditional grace. So he ignored the necessity of penance, struck his most professional pose, and asked: “Would you like to talk about this God who has damned what you don’t believe?”

“Don’t give me any of your counseling [stuff], Reverend!” she said. “I just chased that [blankety-blank] nurse out of here when she said, ‘And how do you feel about what has happened to you, Millie?’ Thirty-five years old and just figured out what I’m doing in this world and they tell me in six months I’ll be [blankety-blank] gone from it.” She began to cry, and Will was glad, glad she could get some of the hurt and anger out, glad for the time it gave him to do penance. He had been more offended by her profanity than concerned with her condition.

How often do we miss the opportunity to show compassion because we make a judgment, deem someone not “worthy,” or encounter some other trivial obstacle? The compassion we are called to is not a surface sympathy or pity, but the deep compassion that allowed Jesus to die on the cross for a sinful people. He acted. He didn’t just have empathy about our hopeless situation. He did something about it.

Indeed, God’s bowels are said to turn with anguish and with pain. Here lies the origins of true compassion,

from the bowels and not the heart; from the true seat of deep emotions according to Jewish thinking. God then experiences compassion at the gut level where we all do. Compassion is passionate. Compassion is about being moved. It is a movement.

The doing is outward-directed – it is toward others and toward society and this is how Rabbi Heschel describes the prophet’s task. The prophet’s compassion is “the opposite of emotional solitariness.... Not mere feeling, but action, will mitigate the world’s misery, society’s injustice or the people’s alienation from God.” It is for this reason that the prophets ... “were not in the habit of dwelling upon their private experiences.” The prophet does not turn inwards to find peace and calm there, for the prophet knows that peace without justice is a lie and a cover-up. Rather, insists Heschel, the prophet turns outward to find God and the God who is found is a verb and not a noun. “What the prophet faces is not his own faith. He faces God. To sense the living God is to sense infinite goodness, infinite wisdom, infinite beauty. Such a sensation is a sensation of joy.” It is ecstasy, the beginning of all prophetic and compassionate spirituality.... As Heschel puts it: “Asceticism was not the ideal of the Biblical man. The source of evil is not in passion, in the throbbing heart, but rather in

hardness of heart, in callousness and insensitivity.” ... The divine Word that the prophet calls the people back to is not a noun but a verb. ... Compassion and the giving birth to compassion is its name.³

A.W. Tozer: warns:

Christian churches have come to the dangerous time predicted long ago. It is a time when we can pat one another on the back, congratulate ourselves and join in glad refrain. “We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!” It certainly is true that hardly anything is missing from our churches these days except the most important thing. We are missing the genuine and sacred offering of ourselves, and our worship to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... We have been surging forward. We are building great churches and large congregations. We are boasting about high standards and we are talking a lot about revival. But I have a question and it is not just rhetoric: What has happened to our worship?

Do we consider the sorrow of the city, the country, and the world? What about the sorrow of the homeless people asking for money on the streets..., what about the young men and women dying of AIDS, what about the thousands who live in prisons, mental hospitals, and nursing homes? What about the broken families, the unemployed?

And when we look beyond the boundaries of our own city and country, the picture of sorrow becomes even more frightening: parentless children roaming the streets of Sao Paulo.... young boys and girls being sold as prostitutes in Bangkok. ... people in Ethiopia and Somalia wandering aimlessly in the eroded desert...millions of lonely, starving faces all over the world, and large piles of the dead bodies of people killed in cruel wars and ethnic conflicts. Whose cup is this? It is our cup, the cup of human suffering. For each of us our sorrows are deeply personal. For all of us our sorrows, too, are universal.

Now look at the man of sorrows. He hangs on a cross with outstretched arms....Jesus, the man of sorrows, and we, the people of sorrow, hang there between heaven and earth, crying out, “God, our God, why have you forsaken us?”

“Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?” Jesus asked his friends. They answered yes, but had no idea what he was talking about. Jesus’ cup is the cup of sorrow, not just his own sorrow but the sorrow of the whole human race. It is a cup full of physical, mental, and spiritual anguish. It is the cup of starvation, torture, loneliness, rejection, abandonment, and immense anguish. It is the cup full of bitterness. ...

When the moment to drink that cup came for Jesus, he said: “My soul is sorrowful to the point of death” (Mat-

thew 26:28). His agony was so intense that “his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood (Like 22:44). His close friends James and John, whom he had asked if they could drink the cup that he was going to drink, were there with him but fast asleep, unable to stay awake with him in his sorrow. In his immense loneliness, he fell on his face and cried out: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus couldn’t face it. Too much pain to hold, too much suffering to embrace, too much agony to live through. He didn’t feel he could drink that cup filled to the brim with sorrows.

Why then could he still say yes? I can’t fully answer that question, except to say that beyond all the abandonment experienced in body and mind Jesus still had a spiritual bond with the one he called Abba. ...

Jesus didn’t throw the cup away in despair. No, he kept it in his hands, willing to drink it to the dregs. ... This was a deep spiritual yes to Abba, the lover of his wounded heart.

When I contemplate my own sorrow-filled heart...and the immense anguish of men, women, and children far and wide on our planet, then I wonder where the great yes has to come from. In my own heart and the hearts of my fellow people, I hear the loud cry “O God, if it is possible, let this cup of sorrow pass us by.”...

From where then will come that great yes? “Let it be as you, not I will have it.” ...

In the midst of Jesus’ anguished prayer asking his Father to take his cup of sorrow away, there was one moment of consolation. Only the Evangelist Luke mentions it. He says: “Then an angel appeared to him, coming from heaven to give him strength” (Luke 22:43).

In the midst of the sorrows is consolation, in the midst of the darkness is light, in the midst of the despair is hope, in the midst of Babylon is a glimpse of Jerusalem, and in the midst of the army of demons is the consoling angel. The cup of sorrow, inconceivable as it seems, is also the cup of joy. Only when we discover this in our own life can we consider drinking it.⁴

In his commentary on Galatians, Martin Luther said, “To love means to bear another’s burdens. Christians must have strong shoulders...” We must have compassion like Christ’s that we may – as Luther goes on to say – be like “little Christs” in the world.

Endnotes

¹ Adapted from Henri J.M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison, *Compassion*

² Adapted from Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Can You Drink the Cup?*

INTRODUCTION DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

When we take a critical look at ourselves, we have to recognize that competition, not compassion, is our main motivation in life. We find ourselves deeply immersed in all sorts of competition. Our whole sense of self is dependent upon the way we compare ourselves with others and upon the differences we can identify...It is by our differences, distinctions, that we are recognized, honored, rejected, or despised. ...It is upon these positive or negative distinctions that much of our self-esteem depends. ...Thus, we define ourselves in ways that require us to maintain distance from one another. We are very protective of our “trophies.” After all, who are we if we cannot proudly point to something special that sets us apart from others?

This all-pervasive competition, which reaches into the smallest corners of our relationships, prevents us from entering into full solidarity with each other, and stands in the way of our being compassionate. We prefer to keep compassion on the periphery of our competitive lives. *Being compassionate would require giving up dividing lines and relinquishing differences and distinctions. And that would mean losing our identities! This makes it clear why the call to be compassionate is so frightening and evokes such deep resistance.*

This fear, which is very real and influences much of our behavior, betrays our deepest illusions: that we can forge our own identities; that we are the collective impressions of our surroundings; that we are the trophies and distinctions we have won. This, indeed, is our greatest illusion. It makes us into competitive people who compulsively cling to our differences and defend them at all cost, even to the point of violence.

– Henri J.M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison, *Compassion*

>>>small group discussion on next page

BREAKOUT TIME

****divide into small groups**

1. Do you agree/disagree with the assertion that “competition, not compassion, is our main motivation in life”?
EXPLAIN.
2. What would life look like if compassion were the main motivation?
3. Develop and perform skits demonstrating how various situations would look different, depending on the main motivation – competition or compassion.
4. Have individuals list as many descriptive qualities as possible about themselves. Stand as a group and have people read defining characteristics (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity, hair color, eye color, age, honors, etc.), separating until everyone stands alone. Find on descriptor to bring everyone back together.

DISCUSS.

INTRODUCTION LEADERSHIP

Essence

What is lost when compassion becomes ego-centric and narcissistic? Transcendence itself, according to José Miranda. “Love which is not an acute sense of justice and an authentic suffering-with-my-outraged-brother, such love *does not transcend*. It is satisfied with itself although with its words it denies that it is so; and thus it remains in itself and does not transcend.” Compassion, then, that is truly directed outward is the new word for transcendence. This is what John says in his first epistle, also, when he declares that “no one has seen God” and so God is to be seen only in love of neighbor. It is interesting that in this powerful passage (1 Jn 12-21), the archetype for love is not love of parent for child or even husband for wife, but it is fraternal love. True compassion is fraternal and sororal and not paternal, patriarchal or even parental. ...Without [compassion’s] active presence in the world of economics and in the arenas of public decision-making, we will all perish....

Personalism, or the caring of one person for another, may be an instance of compassion and may truly lead to development of compassion, but compassion is far fuller than personalism. This is not only because compassion leads to justice-making and therefore to the recreation of society’s structures but also because compassion is about energy we give and take from all creatures, not just from human beings. ...The selling of psychological personalism has often ignored compassion and reduced it to ego-feeling alone, just as it often tends to ignore the mystery and riches of silence and solitude where so much compassion is learned and developed.

Krister Stendahl characterizes our times as being “cosmically scared,” frightened as we are by “principalities and powers where tiny little human beings just know that they cannot do much, that they are not in control, that they are just caught.” In such a situation he cautions against still more introspective and individualized religion....

2008 Discussion Questions

Compassion is a spirituality of meat, not milk; of adults, not children; of love, not masochism; of justice, not philanthropy. It requires maturity, a big heart, a willingness to risk and imagination. Yet for many persons with good spiritual intentions spirituality has meant either meditative disciplines or introverted contemplation. Compassion moves beyond these beginning stages of spiritual searching to a fuller stage of dialectical living that experiences both cosmic contemplation and local pain and then gives birth to alternative healing of that pain.

—Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion*

>>>small group discussion next

BREAKOUT TIME

****divide into small groups**

1. Read 1 Jn 12-21.
2. **DISCUSS** why you think fraternal love is the archetype for love as opposed to other types of love.
3. **DISCUSS** the quote on page 15 by Krister Stendahl. What can be done in this “cosmically scared” time?
4. **DISCUSS**: “Yet for many persons with good spiritual intentions spirituality has meant either meditative disciplines or introverted contemplation.”
5. **CREATE** a compassionate society. Assign each group a societal institution – economics, politics, religion, education, etc. have the groups share with the larger group what their “compassionate” institution would look like. **Discuss** how the parts fit together and what the “compassionate society” they have built looks like. What needs to happen to make this a reality? What concrete actions can be taken in the week ahead to move closer to make your society more compassionate?

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) PROVIDE THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY WITH A BLUEPRINT ON HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD’S POOREST PEOPLE.

Things You Should Know About the State of the World:

Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are two regions facing a crisis in child survival. According to UNICEF around 50 percent of child deaths happen in sub-Saharan Africa, and another 32 percent are found in South Asia. Around the world, 60 ‘priority countries’ have high rates of child mortality. Of these, only seven – Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal and the Philippines – are considered to be on track to meet MDG 4.

What does UNICEF say we should do to increase the chances of child survival?

In the State of the World’s Children report for 2008, UNICEF makes a call to unite for child survival. This means that from the community to the global levels, we must harmonize our efforts to save the lives of children who are dying from mainly preventable causes. To achieve this, UNICEF promotes community partnerships, continuums of care, ‘scaling up’ health programmes and global health partnerships. Find out more about what each of these strategies means below.

Why are communities important?

In many parts of the world, the culture and customs of the local community are almost as important as the laws of the national government. Through their regular interaction with families, community leaders – including local politicians, elders, religious leaders, teachers and health-care workers – can help families change their behaviours, including customs and practices that affect the health and survival of women and children.

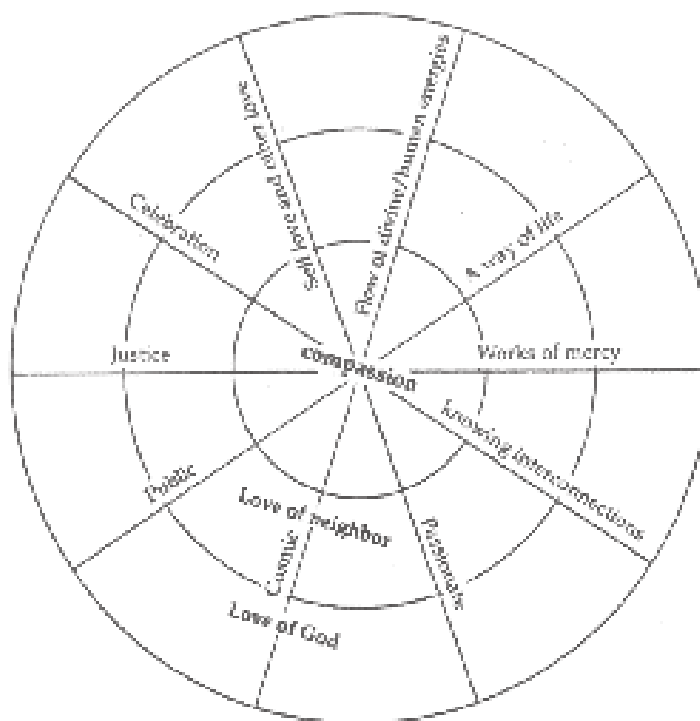
—<http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/youth/informed.php>

INTRODUCTION EVANGELISM

Essence

All elements of compassion are themselves interconnected, and to fail in one of these is to threaten compassion altogether, for each energy depends on the others, much like spokes on a wheel.

– Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion*



1a. Discuss the diagram above.

1b. Take time to discuss each “spoke” and give examples. How does failing in ONE area threaten the whole of compassion? Have individuals identify what “spokes” are weak in their lives and concrete actions that can be taken over the next week to strengthen these.

INTRODUCTION SERVICE

Note

Each week focusing on service will include possible service project ideas and less “study.” Suggested projects are excerpted from *Everybody Wants to Change the World: Practical Ideas for Social Justice*. You’ll want to look ahead at future service ideas, as some may take considerable preparation.

If your group is not already engaged in ongoing service, use this introductory lesson to explore the role of service in the Christian’s life and to plan future service projects.

Involve the youth in the identification of appropriate projects and discuss the need for various types of service, and how essential commitment and follow-through are in starting any given service project.



check out page 2 for more information

MESSAGE: **SOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

Parents should know that this adaptation of Alice Walker’s powerful Pulitzer Prize-winning book deals with intense subject matter, including incest, sexual abuse, physical abuse, virulent racism and sexism. Celie is also separated from her sister and children. Teens who have experienced any abuse, and more sensitive children may find the film too traumatic for viewing, but others will find the tale of moving from abuse to independence inspiring.

Families who watch this film may want to encourage family members to read *The Color Purple* novel.

What feelings did the abuse scenes bring up in you?

How did Celie’s relationship with Sophia help her survive?

How can family members help one another survive and heal from traumatic experiences?

Sexual Content

A fair bit of sexual activity, much of it abusive. Shug helps Celie’s discover her own sexuality but the scene is handled delicately. No nudity. Celie is physically abused by her husband, and suffered sexual abuse from her stepfather. Another character is convinced to beat his wife.

Celie survives with the help of good friends and finds the tenacity to go on. She’s a role model for people struggling through their own abusive situations. But the film also shows a great deal of racism and sexism that families may want to discuss. This film showcases the lives of African-Americans in a way that most American films do not.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

1
You loved us first, oh God. Alas, we speak of it as if you loved us first one time only, historically speaking, when in very truth, without ceasing, you love us first all the time. When I awaken in the morning and my soul turns at once toward you, you are first. You have already turned toward me. If I rise at dawn and in the very first second of my awakening my soul turns to you in prayer, you have beat me to it. You have already turned in love toward me. Thus, we speak ingratitude if, unthankful and unaware, we speak of you as having loved us first only one time.

– Søren Kierkegaard, *Provocations*

2
An unjust situation does not happen by chance; it is not something branded by a fatal destiny: there is human responsibility behind it. The prophets said it clearly and energetically and we are rediscovering their words now. [The characterization of the state of things ... as a “sinful situation,” as a “rejection of the Lord”], in all its breadth and depth, not only criticizes the individual abuses on the part of those who enjoy great power in this social order; it challenges all their practices, that is to say, it is a repudiation of the whole existing system – to which the Church itself belongs.

– Gustavo Gutierrez

Scripture

1. Look up the following texts and note what they reveal about the example Jesus sets for us:
 - a. Matthew 4:23-25 _____
 - b. Matthew 6:1-4 _____
 - c. Matthew 10:1; 7-8 _____
 - d. Matthew 19:13-15 _____
 - e. Mark 1:35-39 _____
 - f. Mark 6:31-34 _____
2. Look up the following texts and note how the early church continued in service after Christ’s death and resurrection:
 - a. Acts 4:32-35 _____
 - b. Acts 6:1-7 _____
 - c. Acts 9:36 _____
 - d. Acts 11:27-30 _____
3. Read Matthew 10:24-25. In following Jesus’ example, what is one thing we can expect to encounter?
4. Read Mark 10:13-15. How can service/interaction with the world help us in our Christian walk?

Consider

1. Discuss together the role of service in the Christian church, reflecting on the introductory quotes and the texts you’ve just read. Make plans for how you can serve others more effectively, both individually and corporately.
2. Explore the role “compassion” plays in service. Discuss the difference between compassion and pity and how each manifests itself in service. What should be the Christian’s approach? Explain, using Biblical examples.

Reflections on
Christ Our Example – Servant
DISCIPLESHIP

Essence

...Jesus' teaching on compassion derives much if not all of its insight from the matrix of Jewish spirituality in which he was born, raised and nourished. His admonition in Luke (6:36) to "be compassionate as your Father is compassionate" is identical to Jewish admonitions...with the slight alteration that was so characteristic of Jesus: namely his calling God "Father." ...Like the Jewish prophets before him, Jesus insisted on compassion's being an action of justice, a *mispat* a deed of love and justice. "Happy the compassionate: they shall have compassion shown them" declares Jesus (Mt 5:7). Compassion breeds compassion.

Two words are used in the Gospels in expressing Jesus' experience of compassion and his teaching about compassion. The first, *eleeo*, ...is used by the sick and suffering who appeal to Jesus for relief from their pain. ...

The second word used in the Gospels apropos of Jesus' compassion is the Greek word *splanchnizomai*, which means literally "to be moved in one's bowels." We have seen this understanding of the experience of compassion to be a basic Jewish grasp of the experience. This is the word used to express how Jesus responded to these cries for mercy and compassion...

It is evident that Jesus was a compassionate person and that people approached him for exactly that purpose, because they were seeking compassion. The Gospel writers identified this compassion of Jesus with its being a divine attribute in him, as is clear in the restoring of the son of the widow of Nain to life: There, for the first time in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is called "Lord." The sentence reads: "When the Lord saw her he felt compassion for her." (Lk 7:13) This title of "Lord" has been strictly reserved to Yahweh up to this time. Thus Jesus becomes the Son of the Compassionate One for Christians. Jesus is compassion incarnate, compassion made flesh and historical. Jesus becomes the Son of God, the Son of the Compassionate One.

– Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion*

2008 Discussion Questions

Scripture

1. Look up the following verses employing the first term for compassion – *eleeo*; note who uses the term:

Mt 9:27 _____

Mt 15:22 _____

Mk 9:22 _____

Lk 17:13 _____

Lk 18:38 _____

2. Now look up the following verses employing the second term for compassion – *splanchnizomai*; again, note who is being referred to in having this compassion and for what reason:

Mt 9:36 _____

Mt 14:14 _____

Mt 15:32 _____

Mt 20:34 _____

Mk 1:41 _____

You know that feeling you get in your stomach when you are going down the first drop of a roller coaster or when you hear horrible news? Your stomach feels like it has just been kicked in. It's this term used in the New

Testament, literally meaning bowels or guts, but translated "Compassion." The only person that this word is associated with is Jesus.

3. Reflecting on the above verses and others with which you're familiar, discuss the various ways God's compassion manifests itself. How can we heed the call to "be compassionate as your Father is compassionate"? Be sure to include *concrete* ways you can follow this admonition in the coming week, noting Jesus' insistence on compassion being action – a deed of love and justice. How does the above assertion that "compassion breeds compassion" fit into this?



AT HOME MISSION PROJECTS

Many times we think doing Mission Work means going overseas or far away from home, but here is something you can do with your youth group. Look around your community and identify at least two projects you can do over a 5-7 days period. Ideally, all participants should live in close proximity to each other. This could be a school, church, library or some other public building that needs cleaning/painting, a park that needs landscaping, flowers planted, or every-day upkeep.

Reflections on *Christ Our Example – Servant* LEADERSHIP

Essence

Jesus, God's compassion became visible to us. Jesus not only said, "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate," but Jesus also was the concrete embodiment of this divine compassion in our world. Jesus' response to ... all those who came to him with their suffering flowed from the divine compassion which led God to become one of us. We need to pay close attention to Jesus' words and actions if we are to gain insight into the mystery of this divine compassion. We would misunderstand the many miraculous stories in the Gospels if we were to be impressed simply by the fact that sick and tormented people were suddenly liberated from their pains. If this were indeed the central event of these stories, a cynic might rightly remark that most people during Jesus' day were not cured and that those who were cured only made it worse for those who were not. What is important here is not the cure of the sick, but the deep compassion that moved Jesus to these cures.

There is a beautiful expression in the Gospels that appears only twelve times and is used exclusively in reference to Jesus or the Father. That expression is "to be moved with compassion." ... It was out of his compassion that Jesus' healing emerged. He did not cure to prove, to impress, or to convince. His cures were the natural expression of his being our God. The mystery of God's love is not that our pain is taken away, but that God first wants to share that pain with us. Out of this divine solidarity comes new life. Jesus' being moved in the center of his being by human pain is indeed a movement toward new life. God is our God, the God of the living. ...The great mystery is not the cures, but the infinite compassion which is their source.

We know too well what it means when cures are performed without compassion. We have seen men and women who can walk again, see again, speak again, but whose hearts remain dark and bitter. We know too well that cures not born out of care are false cures leading not to light but to darkness. Let us not fool ourselves with a shortcut to new life. The many cures by Jesus recorded in the Gospels can never be separated from his being with us. They witness to the infinite fecundity of Jesus' divine compassion, and show us the beautiful fruits of his solidarity with our condition. The truly good news is that God is not a distant God, a God to be feared and avoided, a God of revenge, but a God who is moved by our pains and participates in the fullness of the human struggle.

– Henri J.M. Nouwen, Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison, *Compassion*

****DIVIDE INTO SMALL GROUPS**

1. Discuss the following quote:
“The great mystery is not the cures, but the infinite compassion which is their source.” Explain why you agree/disagree with the statement.
2. Discuss God’s “motivation” for compassion. Reflect on some of your possible “motivations” for compassion. How can you bring your motivation more in line with God’s?
3. Discuss the “problem of pain” in light of the above excerpt. One author has suggested that the mystery of God’s pain is also the mystery of God’s love [Jer 31:20; Is 63:15].
4. Find texts to support your understanding of whether or not God experiences pain. Be sure to explore all the implications of this idea.

Reflections on *Christ Our Example – Servant* EVANGELISM

Essence

Jesus and His followers are walking into the town of Capernaum. Jesus sees Matthew sitting in the tax booth collecting taxes. Tax collectors were looked upon as the scum of the earth. They worked for the Roman government and were looked upon as traitors by other Jews. They made their living by overcharging and cheating the very people they collected taxes from.

Matthew was despised by the Romans because he was a Jew, and despised by fellow Jews because he was working for their enemy.

...When Jesus saw Matthew he saw a man with a lonely heart. Jesus saw his pain, his loneliness and his lack of purpose in life. Jesus saw a man who needed a Savior.

Jesus had compassion and love toward Matthew the tax collector and called out to him, “Matthew, come be my disciple.” Matthew got up and followed him.

To follow Jesus meant for Matthew to give up a lucrative business and an income that provided for a comfortable life. Matthew made a radical decision that forever changed his life. He became a follower of Jesus. He didn’t care what the Romans might say or what his fellow Jews might do. He left his way of life and followed Jesus.

... Jesus didn’t care what the Pharisees and others thought of his partying with Matthew and his spiritually lost friends. Jesus said that His

2008 Discussion Questions

mission was to seek and to save the lost. The Pharisees said that by His very association with tax collectors and sinners, Jesus was also a sinner.

Jesus saw the worth of Matthew and looked beyond his faults. The Pharisees worried about associating with sinners and following the letter of the law.

Jesus was concerned about mercy and compassion. The Pharisees were concerned about their reputation in the community. Jesus was concerned about the lost souls in the community and how to reach them.

Do you believe Jesus is still radically changing the lives of people? Do you have confidence enough in Jesus to do your part in reaching out in love and compassion to people who are spiritually lost?

Paul gives us this admonition in Romans 12:11, “Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically.” What is your level of passion for spiritually lost people? [Jesus did not give up on Matthew. He gave the call and Matthew responded to the call.]

When do you give up on praying for a friend or family member? ...

Our task as a church and as individuals is to never give up on reaching out in love to people. Jesus didn’t wait for people to come to Him. Jesus went to where people lived and worked. Jesus took the initiative and got involved in the lives of people.

Jesus worked with them in the synagogues.

He went to their weddings.

He went fishing with them.

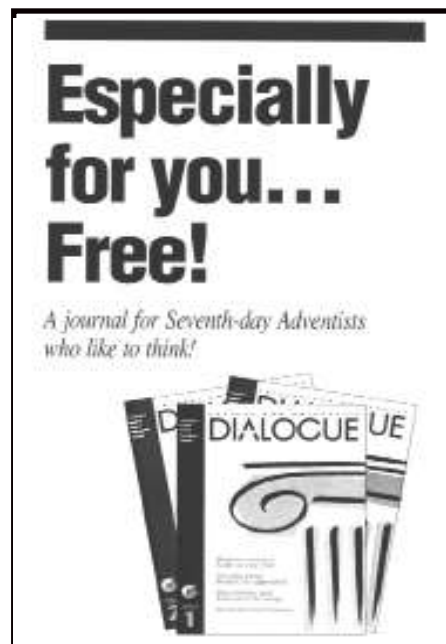
He laughed and cried with them.

Jesus healed their hurts.

– Ray Ellis, *Pursue a Heart of Compassion and Love*

1. Review Christ’s calling of Matthew in Mt 9:9-13. Note Jesus’ compassion for spiritually lost people, and their response to Him as opposed to the “spiritual elite.” Discuss where you see yourself and your church in this scenario. What can you do to be more in line with Jesus’ compassion?

2. Who are the “tax collectors” of today? How can you show them compassion? How can you “take the initiative and get involved in the lives of people”? How can you persist in showing compassion even when challenged for your actions?
3. Discuss the advantages / disadvantages of compassion for compassion’s sake as opposed to as an opportunity for “evangelism.” Be prepared to defend your answers.





“What a thrill to see hundreds of Seventh-day Adventist young people opening the word of God, praising His Name in song and witnessing for their Lord throughout Taiwan.

I came to Taiwan [*the 2nd World Conference on Youth and Community Service*] to be a blessing but I was blessed. I came to give these young people hope but left with a great deal of hope for the church in the future. There is a growing youth movement in the Seventh-day Adventist church for deep spirituality. God is raising up a generation of youth who are serious about sharing their faith and witnessing for their Lord. I praise God for them and pray their numbers will increase.”

Dr. Mark A. Finley, Vice President,
General Conference of SDA

Reflections on *Christ Our Example – Servant* **SERVICE**

Essence

In *Greatest Story Ever Told* we see the young man Jesus standing in the shadow of a doorway in a town in Palestine observing the misery of mankind such as could be found on any street, in any town in that part of the world, in that day or in ours: the lame, the sick, the mentally deranged, the mean, the cruel, all the inhumanity of the world.

He watched it all. For years he watched it – and it rubbed his feelings raw, but he developed no callouses. He kept his sensitivity intact, and that’s what made him the perfect vehicle through which the divine compassion could enter the world. . .

As he was growing up, Jesus saw the human condition all around him. He saw sickness, he saw death, he saw poverty, he saw broken relationships, etc. He saw it all. So when his time for ministry began, he had already developed the compassionate heart that was needed. Now he could do something about the human condition. He healed the sick, he gave support to the grieving, he told the people that God loved them as they experienced the human condition.

So when the crowds followed him, he did not send them away but he had compassion on them. He saw their brokenness and he extended the compassion of God’s Son to them.

And that brings us to the question, if Christ had compassion on the crowds, what are we to do?

– Tim Zingale, *Compassion*



SERVING

service *PROJECT* ideas

VISIT <http://www.hesaidgo.net/index.php> • <http://www.adventistvolunteers.org/> • <http://hishands.adventist.org/>

☞ **Tunnel of Oppression:** In 2000, a group of students and staff at the State University of New York created a walk-through experience on their campus as a means of pulling students into a discussion regarding the subject of oppression. Called the “Tunnel of Oppression,” the exhibit featured a number of rooms in a multi-room set that depicted shocking scenes of genocide, rape, racism, and sexism. The props included video footage, skits, posters, sculptures and paintings....

...Choose the subjects that are most meaningful to [you] ...and those ideas can often be related to local events... For more information regarding the Tunnel of Oppression, check out the features archive of the *New Paltz Oracle*,...at www.newpaltz.edu/oracle. Or, for creative ideas on how others have put together a Tunnel of Oppression, simply do a search for “Tunnel of Oppression” on the internet.

☞ **Give to the Sick and Disabled:** People who are sick are often hesitant to ask for help, even when they are connected to a caring church or community. That response is understandable: They want to preserve their dignity and do not want to feel like a burden. One church ... learned to be sensitive to this situation.... The pastor announced a special meeting and invited members who were willing to give a few hours a month for friends and neighbors who were sick. ...When the volunteers arrived, the pastor stood at a blackboard and asked members to shout out things they wished they could ask people to do for them when they were sick....

The pastor then asked everyone to think through 12 activities they would be willing to do throughout the year for someone else who was sick – one activity a month. Each volunteer made up 12 special coupons on poster paper, with each coupon describing a specific service they would be happy to perform, and listed their name and phone number on the paper. All of the coupons were collected, shuffled and arranged into packets of 12 (each volunteer appeared no more than once in each packet). Members made colorful envelopes for each of the coupon sets and included the church’s phone number and address on the packets.

As the church received calls regarding people who were experiencing serious illnesses, volunteers sent one of these packets to be delivered by the regular visitation team that was already in place. At the end of the visit, the team handed the packet over to the sick person as a gift from the church. ...Taking action for [people with disabilities] could be just as easy, if not exactly the same....However you go about this, keep in mind that it always needs to occur in the spirit of equality and dignity.

Ready-to-use resources **EVANGELISM**

Program Target: To help youth understand and have the experience of conversion.

Scripture: Psalm 23:3, first part.

Songs: It Is Morning in My Heart, If You Want Joy,
Let Him In, Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

ACTIVITY

Before the program ask some of the young people to tell in a few words the story of their conversion, and open the way for others to express their desire for a daily conversion

HE RESTORETH MY SOUL

Dolly grew up in a good Seventh-day Adventist home. She attended Sabbath School from the time she was born. Her mother and father spent many pleasant hours telling her Bible stories and instructing her in the right way. She went to church school and made high grades and many friends. You might say that Dolly was “the model child.” She was pretty, smart, talented, and well-behaved, and had a pleasing personality. At the age of 12 she was baptized, making her full commitment to God.

But during those dangerous academy years something happened to Dolly. She began yielding to the insidious temptations of pride. Because she was popular with the other students, she began to feel a little superior. Her spiritual decline came so gradually that she didn’t realize it herself. She finally began to feel she knew more than her teachers. It wasn’t long until she was slipping out of the dormitory and attending worldly parties, movies, sometimes even going to a nightclub. She became acquainted with a fast crowd of young people, and even

influenced some of her fellow schoolmates to join her in her “adventures.”

Eventually the dean became aware of Dolly’s secret night life, and she lovingly and tenderly talked to her, trying to get her to see the terrible direction she was going. But Dolly would not listen, and she was dismissed from the school she had so flagrantly misrepresented. Her parents were heartbroken when they discovered that their lovely daughter was so completely out of their control. She had deliberately made wrong choices until she was now over on the devil’s enchanted ground. Her new crowd of friends led her deeper and deeper into sin. Dolly wasn’t really happy with this life, and she often longed for the happiness of her childhood.

She married a nightclub entertainer and became the mother of three children. But she was never at peace with herself; that still, small voice whispered to her continuously, “Come home, Dolly. Come home.”

(A vocalist or small group starts humming softly in the background “Softly and Tenderly.”)

One day a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist came to town, and Dolly received an announcement of a series of meetings. She attended out of curiosity—just once, she promised herself. But she felt impressed to return night after night.

(Group or vocalist sings the song through.)

On the very last night of the series Dolly surrendered and tearfully but joyously made her way to the altar. That night she “came home.” That night for the first time in a many years peace came into her heart. She was given a new heart. With the psalmist she exclaimed, “He restoreth my soul.”

LIFE'S GREAT DECISION

"What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" Matthew 27:22

When Pilate asked, ***What shall I do with Christ?***
 He made his great decision while enticed
 By popularity, and compromised
 With principle—but while he temporized
 He toyed too long with conscience and with truth,
 As many adults since, and many youth,
 Have done to their eternal loss,
 And crucified the Christ upon the cross!

Is destiny decided by one act,
 By what we do when faced with some great fact?
 Will we be judged by God's all searching eye
 By what we do with truth or with a lie?
"What shall I do with Christ?" Each must decide.
 He waits our answer. Can He be denied?

Oh, let's decide for Christ and stand with Him
 Lest earth-born clouds should make *our* vision dim.
 Make your decision now, decide today
 To walk with Christ along His living way.
With Christ we have an endless hope, my friend,
Without Christ we will have a hopeless end!

—Adlai A. Esteb. , *Rosewood*, p. 39.

QUIZ

1. Complete: Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be _____ (born again), he cannot _____ (see the kingdom of God)." *John 3:3*

2. "Except ye be converted, and become as _____ (little children), ye shall not enter _____ into the _____ (kingdom) of _____ (heaven)." *Matthew 18:3*

3. "The law of the Lord is _____, _____ (perfect, converting) the _____ (soul)." *Psalms 19:7*

4. 'Repent ye therefore, and be _____ (converted), that your sins may be _____ (blotted out), when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." *Acts 3:19*

5. What does James say a brother that converts a "sinner from the error of his way" does? ("Shall save a soul from death." *James 5:20.*)

6. To what element did Jesus compare conversion in His talk with Nicodemus? (Wind. *John 3:8.*)

Operation Fireside

by Dr. Cecily Daly

Friday evening dawned clear. There was no indication that it was going to be a memorable day in 1956. As we sat together at the right side of the church in the vesper service, Pastor Youth Director strutted in and with a strong demanding voice spoke:

1956

"Sister Youth Leader, youth work is no corner work! Why aren't you and the young people in the middle pew instead of sitting in the side pew?" In front of my young people and under his barrage of words, I wilted, but he continued as if nothing had happened. "Have you started the youth project in your church—the Operation Fireside?" breathlessly, he continued, "Is your youth group involved yet?" To both those questions my answer was "No!" I responded quietly, but truthfully, as I caught sight of the look of impatience that clouded his face. After that moment, I heard nothing else that he said, because I was too embarrassed for comfort and his words burned me to the core.

Door to door evangelism was neither my interest nor my commitment. Moreover, I had no desire to lead a whole youth group into such a large community project as "Operation Fireside." Therefore this vesper service encounter brought me hastily to a decision, which I declared to myself in the following words:

"Since, this is my responsibility, I will do my job and lead the youth onto the evangelistic outreach project, and when they are fully involved, I will back out. Yes I will back out. I will do just that. They won't even miss me." I framed my decision and carried out the plan. It seemed easy enough to do, so reluctantly I decided how I would proceed with the outreach project. Organization was the first step. My aunt, Lilly Scott, helped me interpret the strategic evangelistic plan, and

programmed it for our Jamaican soil in Spanish Town. Central Village was the place earmarked, since there was no Seventh-day Adventist presence already there. We proceeded to organize the youth society under eight different leaders, with eight different sets of lessons for eight different mobile groups. Then we numbered each group accordingly: Group #1—Bro. Garcia's group; Group #2—Bro. Robinson's group; and so on. The goal would be to have study groups set up in eight different locations of a community at the same time.

The date and time was set for us to meet at our church and later drive to a location in Central Village to begin our project. As a large group we first prayed, and dedicated the project to God. Each group then left Spanish Town church caravan style for the Central Village community.

We had no idea where we should go, but God led us first to a woman who was getting water at a stand-pipe. We like to call her our “woman at the well” for many reasons. She invited our group into her front yard and set up chairs for us under a mango tree. Then she invited her friends to come to the first Bible Study group session of Operation Fireside. This kind lady, Sister Collosingh, was our first greatest supporter and as you imagine, our very first convert.

Everything continued smoothly but strange enough, my plans did not go as I figured. The outreach project, abundantly blessed of God, became so interesting to me that I was unable to pull out as planned. I was hooked on this evangelistic thrust and so were all the young people. For us it was a grand experience! At the end of the operational period, all eight groups met in a discussion session. They shared experiences, counted contacts and planned for the next Sabbath afternoon’s program when the groups would progress to the next set of homes. Group 1 would move on to the home where Group 2 first met. Group 2 would move on to the home where Group 3 first met; and Group 8 would move on to the home where Group 1 first met. Thus we would move in a circular fashion and each home would get eight lessons, Lessons 1-8. That was the plan until each location was seen and serviced by each group.


This program continued for eight weeks and at the end, we realized that we needed a place large enough where all the groups could meet together so that we could have a unified branch Sabbath School immediately afterwards. At that time, the plan was that the church would formally take over and continue the Bible Study as a mini-church group. However, there was a delay, but the children’s group continued with approximately 70 children and some interested parents.

Soon we started looking for a suitable place. That was when we met Mr. Tailor Brown who owned a vacant plot of land on which he was going to build a house. This lot he willingly lent to us to build a temporary structure for a church. That was great, but the awesome thing was that one day our “woman at the well” took her stand for Jesus and we witnessed her baptism. God used us, young people, and we were awed.

2007

Last Summer (2006) I visited this place and God spoke to me. “I will use your availability even without your commitment. I will set it straight and I can do it.” This little project seeded into a church with a weekly attendance of about 250 members, and a day school of it’s own. Central Village SDA Church is now a shining light in its community. This surely is proof that God does bless our efforts and will use it to His glory.

Through this experience I have learnt two lessons. The first is that God’s plan supercedes our plan because of His grace. The second is that God will use our availability to work His will out in our lives. He said it best, and Jeremiah wrote, Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you and set you apart to be a prophet.” Jer. 1:5. Nothing will stop His plan for us. The mistakes we made yesterday, He uses as a master key to open doors for us.

It definitely is a miracle of saving grace that He gives us a place to work for Him. Truly the fields are ripe but the laborers are few. Give God your availability. He will bless you richly, and in return will use your gift of service to His name’s honor and glory. 

Dr. Cecily Daly contributed this article. She is an English Professor at Oakwood College in the Department of English and Foreign Languages. The mother of two adult children, she also serves as the president of the North Alabama Prayer Federation of the South Central Conference of SDA.

The Communion Service/Agape Feast

Submitted by Corrado Cozzi, Youth Ministries Director, Euro-Africa Division



NOTE:

All ingredients—plates, glasses, bowls, etc.—should be enough for each participant. Try and do a count ahead of time, so you can have an idea how many to prepare for.

If there is not enough space for everyone, place some chairs against the walls all around the room, or in a central spot.

Arrange ahead of time someone who can play a musical instrument, not necessarily a piano; any musical instrument will help enhance the musical program.



What you will need:

- candles (50-100, small with the aluminum base)
- white disposable plates
- white disposable soup bowls
- clear disposable glasses (small)
- forks and knives (white)
- disposable napkins
- disposable tablecloth (white)
- glass pitchers for water
- glass pitchers for grape juice
- serving plates
- a wicker basket for the bread

Preparing the food

- unleavened bread
- uncooked/raw green vegetables
- lightly steamed green vegetables
- cooked with with oil, garlic and salt
- standard soft asiago/edam or available cheese
- dried fruits (almonds, nuts, hazel figs, dates)
- pitchers for the water
- pitchers for the red grape juice
- fresh fruits of season (so desired)

Preparing the room/place for feast

- tables can be arranged in the shape of a cross
- Establish a place for projection/viewing film(s)

Preparing the table

- White tablecloth
- Arrange the plates along the sides of the table, with napkins, glasses, cutlery
- Candles—laid out along the tables down the center; make sure candles cover all the tables
- Bread—place in a basket at center of the table or the center of the cross
- Pitchers—laid out on the table with water and grape juice

- Food subdivided in plates to serve
 - o Plates for the cheese
 - o Plates for the greenery
 - o Plates for the dry fruits

Persons in charge

- Two for the food
- Two to prepare the table
- Two for the distribution
- One for the opening and the closing program
- One for the songs and the prayers

Program in general outline

- Welcome, songs and initial prayer
- Video clip (*Watch the Lamb* or other video)
- Special song or Bible reading/background music
- Beginning of Communion Service (music to create an atmosphere of joy but also of respect)
 - Distribution and eating of food (towards the end of the meal, while everyone is still eating, leader will deliver a short message/sermon)
- Watch part of film on John
- Short talk about the importance and meaning of the foot-washing ordinance. Everyone should be in groups (men, women, youth, etc.)
- Foot washing
- Ambient chants and/or music
- Watch part of film on John
- Introduction to the bread and the grape juice
- Holy Supper/Communion
- Short comments of circumstance surrounding the first Communion service
- A special song to prepare for prayer
- Prayers and silent moments
- Final song

EUROPEAN VALUEGENESIS *The Story so Far*

By Manuela Casti

European Valuegenesis project leader, Youth Director of the Euro-Africa Division of SDA

How is the European Adventist Church changing? What will Adventism become in the next decades, as far as Europe is concerned? What vision of the Church is slowly growing among our younger generations? Are we being successful in transmitting the faith to the next generation? Not just as a text and a heritage to be watched and preserved, but as a brave, creative passion “to be with,” present and fully engaged with our contemporary world, the arena and better test of any Christian call?

These are crucial questions for any young person who needs to find a sense of coherence in the choice of being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian today. Are we surviving by transmitting Adventism (or even more basically, Christianity) mostly as an individual cultural heritage linked to the family where we were born and the friends we have met? Are we communicating meaningful, convincing answers to the question: Why and for whom should I be a Seventh-day Adventist, today?

In the last two decades the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has led the way in opening the debate concerning the transmission of faith and values to our younger generations. At the end of the 80s, the North American Division took a first initiative in this sense by organising one of the most extensive research projects ever promoted by a Christian denomination in North America: the Valuegenesis study.

The survey involved about 10,000 Adventist young people and was repeated twice: at the end of the 80s and at the beginning of the 2000s. Valuegenesis represented a substantial investment in terms of finances and human resources, with a specific goal: *Valuegenesis was designed to provide a picture of the value system of Adventist youth—particularly those in our schools—and to determine what factors in Adventist homes, schools and churches nurture the values and faith that we cherish in our young people*. (Dudley, Gillespie, 1992:12–13)

Sociologists affirm that in absence of research evidences a Church needs about 20 years to produce significant changes. Organising a survey significantly reduced this time by helping the Church to assess the situation in many different areas (family spiritual life and religious education; understanding of doctrines and values among the younger generations; the relationship between the church and young people, only to mention a few). Valuegenesis highlighted issues which had not been detected and helped to find effective strategies of action.

Starting from this experience, the Euro-Africa and Trans-European Divisions have been trying to organise a similar survey in Europe. The challenge was immense, as our young people cannot be contacted through an extensive network of Adventist schools, like in the USA, but are scattered in thousands of different church congregations at the four corners of the continent.

The problem was solved by having recourse to new technologies and specifically, to the Internet.

Organising online surveys is becoming more and more common, but using Internet to promote such an extensive study is relatively new and it was in absolute the first time it was done (at least, on this scale) in the Adventist Church.

The new “online” strategy presented several advantages: the opportunity to reach young people everywhere in Europe; a real time monitoring of the answer rate available for all Union Youth Directors; the possibility to dramatically reduce the time (and costs) necessary to get the results; no risk of mistakes in transferring the answers from a printed questionnaire to a database; direct guarantee of anonymity for all the respondents.

What was the outcome?

The challenge of reaching young people living at the four corners of Europe, from Portugal to Romania, from Norway to Italy has required a complex organisation, but it has globally worked well.

During the last 8 months the different European Valuegenesis teams (international organisation, research design, and data collection) have worked hard to contact and involve young people. The target group was made of *“both baptised and not baptised young people aged 14-25, regularly or irregularly attending the church during the last two years.”* Youth leaders at all levels worked hard to contact and involve young people everywhere in Europe. As a result, more than 6,000 answers were collected.

Behind this good result are all those church leaders at all levels and young people who believe that speaking and listening to each other is the only way to build a stronger Church. In terms of concrete data:

1. Actual respondents in both Divisions: 6,000 young people aged 14-25 (in some Unions the answer rate was above 50%);
2. Despite the relative length of the questionnaire young people covered all the questions;
3. The survey company has edited preliminary, descriptive reports by Union; to make them easy to read for everyone, the reports have been elaborated in cooperation with the Valuegenesis Research Committee, an international team of experts from three Adventist Universities: Newbold College (UK), Friedensau (Germany) and Collonges (France).
4. These reports are currently being sent out to the Unions. Some Unions have already started debating the results and making plans to give concrete following to the findings, which are extremely interesting.

During the next Autumn, the European Valuegenesis Research Committee will release the following:

1. **In the summer of 2007**, the two Divisions involved (Euro-Africa and Trans-European) will receive their global reports, with the results of each Union;
2. **In the autumn of 2007**, the Research Committee


will release new Division reports where the results will be presented differently and in a more detailed way. They will also be organised by age and gender, to better understand specific trends (14-15 year olds, for instance, may be very different from 21-25);

3. Immediately after the release of the Division reports (**autumn of 2007**), the Unions will also receive a new report, with the same detailed presentation and a comparison (benchmark) with the global result for each Division.

4. At the same time the **Valuegenesis Research Committee** will be at work to publish an in-depth study, which will be made available as a book.

Beyond all the figures, the European Valuegenesis reports will give us an insight into how we are doing as a Church today—young people, adults, parents, church leaders, and lay people. They will be discussed at all Church levels: Division, Union and Conference committees, among pastors, youth workers, and young people. Some immediate areas of interest will be:

1. To understand how European Adventist youth live out their faith today; what are their needs, questions and struggles.
2. To find out what helps young people develop their faith and a positive relationship with the church.
3. To identify areas of ministry and church life where we need to improve or to re-orient our approach.
4. To develop strategies to help parents, church members, youth leaders, pastors and young people to build a stronger Church.
5. To help young people better understand themselves, the Church, and the role we have today, as Christians, in our contemporary context.

We could say... mission accomplished, for now. But actually, the most important work is starting now. We will soon be in contact with you to provide highlights and information about the results of this important project. If you want to keep in contact and discover more, please go to the website www.jfcentre.org. 

SMART CHOICE

Almonds are high in protein, containing about 20%. One ounce contains 12% of our daily protein needs. Because almonds are a plant food, they contain no cholesterol.

Vitamin E, considered a powerful antioxidant with cancer-fighting qualities, is plentiful in almonds. They're also high in magnesium, containing even more than spinach.

Almonds are abundant in phosphorus, which is good for bones and teeth. One ounce (28 g) contains 143 mg of phosphorus. They also contain potassium, iron, zinc, copper, manganese, and trace amounts of the B vitamins thiamin and riboflavin.

Almonds are higher in calcium than all other nuts. One ounce (28 g) of raw blanched almonds contains 66 mg calcium. One ounce of almonds, approximately 20 to 25, has as much calcium as 1/4 cup (59 ml) of milk.

Almonds are also higher in fiber than any other nut. One ounce (28 g) of blanched almonds contains 1.5 g fiber. Unblanched almonds are nearly double the fiber as blanched. If you are pregnant, almonds can be a nutritious way of preventing certain birth defects because of their high folic acid content.

PUMPKIN SOUP

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 lb. Pumpkin
- 2 Potatoes
- 1 Onion
- 4 Garlic cloves
- 1/8 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/4 tsp Rosemary
- 1/3 Cup Tapioca
- Black Pepper to taste
- Hot Chili to taste
- Vegetable Broth
- 1/4 cup Walnuts
- 1/4 cup Almonds

Directions:

1. In a pot put garlic and onion and sauté. Add pumpkin, potatoes, herbs, chilly black pepper and vegetable broth. When it starts to boil add tapioca. When it is cooked turn the heat off.
2. Add walnuts and almonds.
3. Blend all.
4. Serve hot.

Although almonds, like all nuts, are high in fat, they are very low in saturated fat. One ounce (28g) contains 15g fat with only 1g saturated. Most of the fat in almonds is monounsaturated, considered beneficial fat.

EASY APPLE PIE

Ingredients:

- 2 Eggs
- 3/4 cup Sugar
- 1/3 cup Oil
- 2 cups Flour (1 white, 1 wheat)
- 3/4 cup Milk
- 1/2 tbsp. Cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp Salt
- 3 Apples chopped
- 1 1/4 Lemon
- 2 Apple or more sliced for garnish, plus 1/4 lemon
- 1/4 tsp Baking Soda
- 1/2 tbsp Baking Powder
- Cinnamon and Sugar to taste for garnish

Directions:

1. In a large bowl mix eggs and sugar well. Add oil, flour, milk, cinnamon, and salt. Then add the apples chopped; mix well. Finally add the baking soda and the baking powder.
2. Put the mixture in a baking pan about 3-4 inches high.
3. Arrange the sliced apples (previously put them with 1/4 lemon), and at the end strew the cinnamon and the sugar.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F, put the pie in the oven preheat 375°F until brown (35-40 minutes).

