



THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION GUIDE

✠ ...Tips on ways to “process” with your Family

After (or during) the service learning activity

Immediately after each service learning activity, **it is a good idea for you and your family to “process,” reflect, discuss and pray about your experience.** We need to **make the connections to scripture and our Catholic Social Teachings.** Allow time at the end of your activity **for this process.** There are many different ways to serve AND many different ways to do **theological reflection/processing with your family.**

The best approach depends on your family group...

What is Theological Reflection/Processing?

Essentially, taking time to **INTENTIONALLY reflect** upon our own personal experience, and the wisdom scripture and the Church’s Catholic Social Teaching, to figure out how we have grown from it. This process can be formal or informal and should be done so on a continuing basis. *Any committed Christian has probably done this many, many times.*

The main objective is to think through our experiences and to ask some bigger questions about life: *How do I feel about the situation? What is God trying to say to me (teach me), through this experience? What does the Church and scripture teach about this? How does this experience affect my perspective?*

Am I responding or reacting as God would have me? What related justice issues are there? How do I move forward from here? How will my life be different, now that I know...?

The following are some general ideas:

- Have each family member fill out an individual questionnaire, followed with discussion of answers.
- Have each person go one by one, and share their experience and what they learned.
- Conduct a mini Bible study focusing upon relevant Scripture passages.
- Pair family members up and have them illustrate their experience with a drawing.
- Relate the concept of helping someone to the Parable of the Good Samaritan or the Beatitudes, expanding their concept of service by talking about what it means to “love thy neighbor.”
- Have them complete open ended sentences like:

My first impression was...

I thought... or I felt...

I realized that my first impression was right/wrong because...

I wish I could... or I can't stop thinking about...

Today I witnessed Jesus when...

Because of today, in the future I plan to...

If time or circumstances do not allow for reflection that day, then try and discuss the activity the next time you gather for a family meal. Remember...There are times when people have had a powerful experience, but do not feel like talking about it right then.

Do the best you can. You can discuss and reflect on your experience during the activity. Perhaps you discuss it afterwards, but it only takes 10 minutes...that is fine!

All we ask is that you make some attempt to incorporate reflection and discussion into your service activity.

You could concentrate on one of these methods, use a combination of them or come up with something completely unique. *Please share successful techniques with us, so we can better prepare other families!*

The main purpose is to have Family members reflect upon their experience and to make some connections with their faith, parish and civic communities, scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.

*An important objective in this is to stress the fact that **Jesus has CALLED US to practice gospel values in everything we do.** We are not being consistent to that “call” if we lovingly volunteer at the nursing home, but gripe when mom asks us to do the dishes or we continually fight with siblings. Jesus said to love thy neighbor is to love everyone...even the “unlovable.” Of course, this is much easier said than done. However, this **IS** what we are called to do and must continually strive to do it.*

MAKE CONNECTIONS to your CATHOLIC FAITH!