



## SESSION 23 NATIONS

### GOAL

The goal of this session is to help the teens know what it looks like to share the Gospel with the world and become equipped with the tools needed to evangelize those they encounter.

### KEY CONCEPTS

Evangelization is about spreading the good news that Jesus Christ has come into our world, has given each of us the chance to be reunited to God the Father, and has saved from our sins.

The Church exists to evangelize; each of us, in our identity as Christians and members of the Church, share in this mission of evangelization given to us by Jesus Christ in the Great Commission.

Our personal testimony, the way that God has worked in real and concrete ways in our lives, is the most powerful way that we can share the Gospel with the world and those we encounter.

### KEY TERMS

**Evangelization:** The proclamation of Christ and His Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of Christ's command.

**Great Commission:** The call of Jesus to "make disciples of all the nations" found in Matthew 28:19-20. It is the call and mission of the Church and of all disciples.

**Testimony:** A public recounting of a religious conversion or experience.

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 1:16

**CATECHISM:** 849, 1303

### ABOUT THIS CONFIRMATION SESSION

The Gather is an activity based on the idea of building relationships and learning how to effectively communicate with other people. In the Proclaim, the teens learn about the reality of evangelization and how to practically evangelize. After a small group discussion about the difficulties and trials of sharing our faith with others in the Break, the teens have the chance to write a personal testimony. The Send closes the session with a time for the teens to share their testimonies.

## SUMMIT

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space. Welcome them to the session and begin in prayer.

Summit (20 min)

Divide the teens into their Confirmation small groups. Use the modified *Summit* session to lead the teens through a *lectio divina* based reflection on the Sunday readings.

## GATHER

Speed Friending (10 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and have them sit in two circles, facing one another. Set a timer for 60 seconds, during which the teens have to ask and answer three questions with the person sitting across from them. Once the time is up, have the teens in the outer circle move one to the right.

Call out the following questions one-by-one during the allotted amount of time, making sure to ask three questions of varying depth each round:

- Where do you go to school?
- What is your favorite movie?
- What is your favorite genre of music?
- What is your favorite animal?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?
- What is your dream job?
- What is one thing you have been given by God that you are thankful for?
- How have you seen God's mercy in your life recently?
- How would you explain the love of God in your own words?

The Dos and Don'ts of Evangelization Video (5 min)

Play the video "*The Dos and Don'ts of Evangelization*" as an introduction to the teaching.

## PROCLAIM

"*Nations*" Teaching (15 min)

*The goal of this session is to share the joy of sharing the Good News with those you will encounter. In the midst of this Proclaim, insert stories and examples from your life of people who shared the Gospel with you and times you shared the Gospel with others.*

In the midst of our day-to-day lives, we meet a lot of people. We meet people who share our faith, but we also meet people who disagree with our faith. We meet people who are joyful and filled with life, and we also meet people who are sad and angry. Each of these people, wherever they come from and whatever they have been through, have been created in the image and likeness of God and therefore, have an inherent dignity. Today, we are going to talk about how we encounter those people — how and why we should share the Gospel with them.

*Read Romans 1:16.*

### **What Is Evangelization?**

The process of sharing the Gospel is called “evangelization”; evangelization means to share the Good News. When we evangelize, we share the Good News of Christ with those we encounter.

The Church exists to evangelize. Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, confirmed that this is what the Church is about: to preach and share the Good News. From the time of the Great Commission, the Church has always understood this as a central part of her identity; she exists to preach and to share the Gospel. Each of us, as members of the Church, are called to share in this mission in a real and intimate way.

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 14; CCC 849; Matthew 28:19-20

Ultimately, evangelization is the sharing of the basic proclamation of the Gospel over and over again. Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, echoed this sentiment, stating, “On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; He gave his life to save you; and now He is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you’ ... nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation.”

*Evangelii Gaudium* 164

As we move forward in our lives as disciples of Christ, we must place this initial proclamation at the center of our lives and trust in the fact that it is the very Good News of the Gospel for the world.

### **Confirmation and Evangelization**

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, we are sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and are sent forth in grace to share the faith. In our baptism, each of us was claimed as a son or daughter of the Father. The Sacrament of Confirmation confirms that identity and sends us forth to bring Jesus and His Church to the world. In Confirmation, we are confirmed in our mission to bring Christ to the whole world and are given the strength to fulfill that mission. It is in our confirmation that we are affirmed in our call to share in the call of the Church, that of spreading the Good News to the whole world.

CCC 1303

### **Giving What We Have Received**

First and foremost, we must receive the mission of the Church in our lives. The Church’s mission is to preach Christ to the whole world and bring Him into relationship with all people. If we are going to live out the faith we have received, we must first accept that gift into our hearts. This is the central principle throughout our entire time of preparation for this moment: before all else, we must encounter Christ and be loved by Him.

Once we have encountered Christ, we have no choice but to share Him. When you receive good news, you automatically have a desire to share it with others; it is our natural response. In the Gospel, we receive the best news we could ever imagine: each of us has been saved from sin and death by the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Him, we

have been reunited to the Father and now have the chance to invite others into that same relationship.

As Pope Benedict XVI said at World Youth Day in 2013: “Evangelization is not our initiative, and it does not depend on our talents. It is a faithful and obedient response to God’s call and so it is not based on our power but on God’s... For this reason, I encourage you to make prayer and the sacraments your foundation. Authentic evangelization is born of prayer and sustained by prayer. We must first speak with God in order to be able to speak about God.”

Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day 2013

As long as we are striving for communion with God in a personal relationship and are continually returning to Him in prayer and the sacraments, we are ready to go forward and bring the joy of the Gospel to the world.

### **Living Our Testimony**

First and foremost, people will know our encounter with the Gospel by our lives. The way that you love those around you — through service, friendship, and giving — is the main way that you can preach to those around you. When you encounter someone, they will first take note of the way you act. Do you want to interact with them? Do you have genuine concern for those around you? If you are not genuine in your encounters, you will lack credibility. We must be doers of the Word and not simply hearers, meaning we love all of those we encounter and by calling them all to holiness.

1 John 3:14-18; James 1:22

### **Giving Our Testimony**

As important as the witness of our lives is, it is vitally important that we do not stop with our actions, but rather, continue the process by sharing what God has done in our lives. We are meant to not simply use our actions to preach the Gospel but, in many circumstances, to share the Gospel with our words. In fact, as St. Paul said, we have an obligation to preach the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:16

Our testimony is the story of what God has done in our lives. For each of us, God has worked in marvelous ways. God created us in His image and likeness and He has not stopped working in our lives since. Our testimony is the most effective means we have to share the faith. No matter the intellectual arguments we make, people can always argue with what we have to say. When we share our testimony, however, no one can argue as it is simply what God has done in our lives.

Sharing our testimony is simple and easy, but we ought to prepare it. As St. Peter tells us, it is important that, at all times, we are ready to share with others why we believe what we believe and where our hope comes from.

1 Peter 3:15

A testimony has three main parts: the time in our lives before we encountered Christ, the moment that we encountered Christ, and the change in our lives since that encounter with Christ. In the first part of our testimony, we have the chance to share who we were before

our encounter with Christ. Then, in the second part, we give a detailed account of what God has done in our lives. Finally, in the third part of our testimony, we share how our lives have changed since we met Christ and the ways that we are striving to grow and become a better disciple of Christ.

Our testimony is simply the story of what God has done in our lives. Throughout our lives, each of us will have many different moments that we can share as testimony of what God has done. God is active in our world today and if we are continually seeking a relationship with Him, we will have many moments to encounter Him. In sharing these moments, we have the chance to share Jesus, whom we have encountered and know, with a world that desperately needs Him.

### **The Heart of the Matter**

In all of this, the goal is simple: to proclaim Christ to the person we encounter. In sharing our story, we have the chance to proclaim the person of Christ, testify to what He has done in our hearts and our lives, and invite the person to encounter the living God. No matter what we do, we must remember this fact: Jesus is alive and well and we have the ability to bring Him to those we meet in our daily lives.

*Read Matthew 28:16-20. Then, read the following quote from Pope Francis:*

“Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.”

*Evangelii Gaudium 120*

Brothers and sisters, as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation — a sacrament that sends you forth with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to be Christ’s witness in the world — know that we are called in that same grace to bring Christ to the world each and every day.

## **BREAK**

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Divide the teens into their Confirmation small groups. Begin in prayer and then use the following questions to facilitate a discussion:

- Why is it important to share the Gospel with others?
- How have you shared your faith with other people in the past? Was it received well? Why or why not?
- What is the most effective way to share your faith with others?
- Why is it sometimes difficult to share your faith?
- How can you grow in your willingness to share what God has done in your life with the world? How can you be bolder in your faith?

Preparing a Testimony (15 min)

After the discussion, give each teen a pen and a copy of the *Preparing Your Testimony* handout. Invite them to spend time in prayer preparing a personal testimony about how God has manifested His love in their lives.

## **SEND**

Giving Your Testimony (10 min)

Gather the teens in the main meeting space and give them an opportunity to share their testimony with the large group. Close the session by praying that they may have the courage to share the Good News with those they encounter throughout the week.