

1st SUNDAY CYCLE A TEEN groups

Materials: Bible, candle, crucifix, paper, pencils, board, nails (one per teen, two for leader), hammer

Opening Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for bringing us together as we begin our Lenten journey. With your help, may our lives impact the world in a positive way. Amen.

Reading Scripture: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Psalm 51:3-6, 12-13, 17; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

Let's Reflect

Everything we do impacts our lives and the world around us.

Leader: The reading from Genesis shows that the choices of our first parents left a mark on God's creation. In the Gospel, we see that Jesus' actions also left a mark. Our choices for good or evil impact our world and us.

This board represents God's creation. The nails represent human actions. I'm going to hammer two nails into the board and then pull them out. The marks on the board represent the positive and negative effects of our actions.

Let's Explore!

Leader: Think about choices you have made – good and/or bad. Write these choices on a paper and fold it in half. Take turns hammering a nail through your paper into the board and then pull the nail out with the paper.

Papers and nails can be taken home as a reminder of how your actions impact the world for good or evil.

Let's Talk!

Form small groups and discuss the following.

1. How did the *Let's Explore* activity help you to realize the impact of your actions on yourself and others? What mark did our first parents leave? What mark did Jesus leave?
2. Much time is spent with Ipods, Xbox games, Internet, MySpace, text messaging, etc. What are the positive and negative effects of these activities? As you engage in these activities, are you aware that God is present with you? Discuss.
3. Think about how much time you spend praying, reading Scripture, attending Mass, or helping others. How do these activities impact your life and that of others?
4. Have there been situations in which you felt pressure/temptation to do something wrong or immoral? How did you respond? How did you feel afterwards?
5. In what group or place are you most tempted to sin? When you face temptation, do you turn to God? Share.

Let's Live It!

Select one or more actions and be prepared to share next week.

1. Reflect on your actions and how they impact (help or hurt) you and those around you. Keep a record of these.
2. Identify one temptation that occurs often in your life. Ask God for the grace to overcome this temptation.
3. Choose one activity on which you spend an excessive amount of time, and limit this activity in order to have more time for family, study, and prayer.
4. Mark as one of your "favorites" www.FindingGod.org and go to it daily.
5. Write the Memory Verse on a card and place it where you can see it and pray it everyday.

Let's Pray!

Gather around the table with the Bible opened to the Gospel reading, a crucifix, a candle, and the board with the nail marks.

All: Dear God, during Lent help us to let go of the "nails" of bad habits and behaviors. May we impact our world with the "nails" of kindness and self-giving. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. *Share a sign of peace with one another.*