

CALLED TO LISTEN

— in the quiet of our hearts we can listen to God —



In the quiet of our hearts we can listen to God. May we never lose sight of what lives in the silence.

The previous session, '*Called to Be*', focused not on action but on how we must *be*.

Some of your young people may be looking at the world and thinking, '*Why is this all happening?*'. It is our job to accompany them, helping them develop resilience, a worldview based on the Gospel, a desire for social action and a belief that things can change.



Continuing with an emphasis on healing and transformation, we must listen to one another, bridge divides and reconnect with ourselves, one another and God. A documentary called *The Big Silence*, made ten years ago, made clear the value of silence and how important it is for us to stop and reflect. In order to make sustainable and transformational changes (for example, addressing inequality, racism, sexism, oppression and climate change) we must integrate silence into our lives. This gives us the chance to understand what is happening to our lives, our society and the planet. It starts with making time for silence, for meditation and prayer, and **stripping away distractions** that take our attention away from where God is calling us. Silence must be part of our everyday lives - we are **Called to Listen**.

The aim of this session is to help your young people to reconnect with God and develop a daily spiritual practice. How can we hear Him or know Him if we are not listening? How can we know who we are?

Reflections

For a short reflection:

True inner peace coexists with that profound discontent. As Saint Augustine said:

“

You have created us for yourself, Lord,
and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you

”

Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit* #138

IT'S TIME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

What have you appreciated during this difficult time?
What have you learnt to appreciate about yourself?
What have you come to appreciate about others?

For a longer reflection:

'...silence does not make us close in on ourselves. "We must remember that prayerful discernment has to be born of an openness to listening – to the Lord and to others, and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways. **Only if we are prepared to listen, do we have the freedom to set aside our own partial or insufficient ideas...** In this way, we **become truly open to accepting a call** that can shatter our security but lead us to a better life. It is not enough that everything be calm and peaceful. **God may be offering us something more, but in our comfortable inadvertence, we do not recognize it**".'

Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, #284

How often in our day do we allow for silence?
How do you feel about silence?
What is distracting you? Your phone? Social media? Just being too busy?
Why should we make time for God?
What would God have to say about this crisis, the pandemic, but also what humans are doing to the planet and each other?
Let's take a moment to slow down, fit silence into our day and make time to listen to what he might have to say to us.

Watch one, or all, of the video clips below.

Video clips

As one friend speaks to another - Christ is Alive:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x5G0RdrPhc>

Alone Together: Silence is Your Friend - Isolation Poem (1:41 minutes):

<https://www.alonetogether.org.uk/post/the-silence-is-your-friend> ;

How to Find Silence (10:47 minutes) Father Christopher Jamison OSB offers advice on how to find a time of deeper silence: <https://www.alonetogether.org.uk/post/how-to-find-silence>

Reflective exercise / Let's practice:

- Take a moment just to sit in silence and let your mind rest. Listen to your breathing. (Stay in this silence for a couple of minutes). Invite your young people to imagine God looking at them with great love. Remember that right now we *are* in God's presence and for all that we are, our hopes and dreams, our flaws and insecurities, He *wants* us to be alive and that we all belong to His kingdom.
- If you want to do this again at another time, the next stage in this exercise is to notice God, noticing you. And from here, notice God, noticing you noticing God. An interesting and potentially insightful exercise.

Discussion questions:

Why is prayer important?
How do the people in the video pray?
What are your distractions?
What can you take away from the video you watched?
What are you willing to sacrifice for God? What would you want in return?

If you have longer or want to continue this theme...

With your group, watch (parts of) this interview:

- Youtube video (Called to More), 'What is contemplative prayer?' (8 minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpBpAr14GiE>
- How to overcome dryness in prayer? (6 minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSEFiVsQVDo>

After watching these clips ask your young people:

Why is prayer important?
How do the people in the video pray?
What are your distractions?
What can you take away from the video you watched?
What are you willing to sacrifice for God? What would you want in return?

Further resources:

Youtube video (Called to More), the whole interview (48 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThuUE2Ra0IE>

Alone Together – video resources for 'Creating a rhythm for the day':

<https://www.alonetogether.org.uk/shapingtheday>

The Daily Examen (Ignatian Spirituality): <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/> A prayer of gratitude – what has been the gift of the day? [In St Ignatius' spiritual exercises / Jesuit spirituality¹ = 'finding God in all things, not needing to retreat from the world, being contemplatives in action, leading active lives but rooted in prayer, and freedom and detachments, learning how to be free of idols such as status, money and power in order to be more able to serving to God and others'.

'Pray as you go' tools – for encountering God and, in turn, our true selves: <https://pray-as-you-go.org/prayer%20tools/>

Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan Friar, sharing his thoughts on how the tradition of the Church - especially drawing on his Franciscan heritage - can offer us a basis for caring for well-being: <https://millionminutes.org/conversation-7-resources>.

World community of Christian meditation: <http://www.wccm.org/>

Audio of Luke's Gospel can be found here: <https://soundcloud.com/catholicchurch/sets/the-gospel-according-to-luke> The Gospel according to Luke, a four part audio series.

Particularly relevant Bible passages:

- Even Jesus had to take time for prayer: 'Now it happened in those days that he went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God'. Luke 6:12
- Parable of the sower: 'Anyone who has ears for listening should listen.' Mt 11:15
- Parable of the lamp: 'For nothing is hidden but it will be made clear, nothing secret but it will be made known and brought to light. So take care how you listen; anyone who has, will be given more, anyone who has not will be deprived even of what he thinks he has.' Luke 8:16-18
- Parable about the need to pray continuously and not lose heart in Luke's Gospel: 'When the son of man comes, will he find any faith on earth?' 'anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it.' Luke 18:8
- Now that we've listened, how might we put our faith into action? Luke expresses the importance of this, since when we act on God's word, we become his true disciple: 'Someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became.' Luke 6:48

¹ From The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical, Austen Ivereigh