

WHY YAHAD?

INTRODUCTION

WHY YAHAD?

This series is based on YAHAD, a document prepared by the Justice & Peace Commission to help us reflect on how we can act constructively to build peace within our nation. You can find the full document here:

<https://yahad.mt/>

YAHAD is a term in Hebrew is used in the Bible most often as an adverb in the sense of “together” and “with each other”. It also conveys the sense of unitedness and community.

AIMS OF THE SERIES

- To present to young people social justice themes.
- To link Scripture and the Teaching of the Church to real-life situations happening in our country.
- To give time to young people to reflect on the world around them.
- To help young people see matters of justice in light of Scripture.
- To encourage young people to be the positive change they long to see in the world.

CONTENTS

The series includes 6 different sessions, each one based on the Gospel readings of the first 5 Sundays of Lent, and Ash Wednesday. The titles of each session are:

1. Goodness - Teaching & Discussion
2. Temperance - Teaching & Discussion
3. Courage - Film Night
4. Merciful Patience - Discussion
5. Reconciliation - *Lectio Divina*
6. Creativity - Activity

Although this resource tries to be thorough, it is not thought out to be read off the paper as is, but to serve as a basis for sessions given by leaders. Each group is different, and therefore activities, discussion methods and teaching all need to be tailored according to the dynamic of the group. Should you need assistance in developing the resources further, or have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

SESSION OUTLINES

- Each session plan has an outline on the first page in order to give a brief overview of the meeting.
- A team overview can also be found before each session in order to help people lead different parts of the session smoothly.
- Each session is timed to be around 1 to 1.5 hours. The timings are estimates and are not there to be strictly adhered to.



GOODNESS

PREPARATION FOR ASH WEDNESDAY



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GOODNESS
PREPARATION FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session aims to explore the theme of virtue and being virtuous people. The session doesn't go into too much depth but aims to be an introductory session to the rest of the series.

GOAL

- The goal of this session is to reflect on what it means to be an honest citizen and virtuous person.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Shoeboxes with creative contents (refer to activity below)
- Room divider or sheet (refer to activity below)
- Papers and pens

SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 6:1, 16-18

GOODNESS

Summary & Team Overview

Welcoming & Opening Prayer

Box of Lies

Our World

Role Play Debate

Teaching

One Minute Papers

Closing & Prayer

SEE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Activity: Box of Lies (20 mins)

This game originated on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8vNn0WfUnY>

Resources needed:

- Boxes with creative things to put in boxes for the game (watch video for ideas)
- Room divider or sheet

How to play the game:

- Choose 2 contestants, one to be the guesser and the other to describe what's in the box or a lie.
- Set up a divider between 2 contestants facing one another, leaving the top open for the 2 contestants to be able to see one another's faces.
- Have the first contestant choose a box.
- Have them explain or lie and give a made up explanation to the other contestant of the contents of their box.
- Their opponent will guess whether they are telling the truth or lying.
- This game could go on as long as you wish, depending on how many boxes you have prepared.

Reflection on the Activity (5 mins)

- How could you tell when the contestants were lying?
- Who surprised you the most with their 'performance' in this game?
- How is this game like real life?
- Why do you think people aren't honest?

Our World

Every year, the Maltese people give large sums of money to different charities. We can all visualize the line-up of people with large cheques on our TV screens every Christmas. However, the principle of solidarity which gels a society together and without which all slogans about "being in this together" are null and vacuous, is not lived primarily by giving donations to worthy causes. In Malta, data published in parliament in 2021, indicates that an estimated half a billion euros worth of taxes went undeclared over a 10-year period.¹

¹ <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/half-a-billion-in-undeclared-taxes-over-10-years.879143>

JUDGE

Watch: Small Talk, Goodness (3 min)

<https://youtu.be/4awrCe0YOQ0>

Discussion (10 min)

Role Play Debate

- Have the young people split into groups of 3.
- In each group, one person needs to take on the role of a “good person,” another one of a “bad person,” and someone as a “inbetween” person (ie. not perfectly good, but not bad either).
- Each young person has to answer the following questions in their role:
 - Are you a good person? Why?
 - What makes someone “good”?
- The young people can ask each other other questions too.
- After allowing around 5 mins of debate, ask the young people to share what they consider attributes of a “good person” and a “bad person” to be.

Teaching: Being Good vs Looking Good (15 min)

St Paul tells us “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is

admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”²

What is meant by a “virtue”?

- A virtue is an interior disposition, a **positive habit**, a passion that has been placed at the service of the good.
- “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). That means that we must change, we must become more perfect, on our way to God. By our human abilities we can do that only in fits and starts. With his grace God supports the human virtues and gives us, above and beyond that, the theological virtues.³

By definition, a virtuous person is someone who does good even when no one is looking and who acts from a sense of one’s own dignity and that of others.

“The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.”⁴

“The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.” St. Gregory of Nyssa

In recent years, in place of virtue, we have witnessed the expansion of regulation. However, unless citizens, like you and me, choose to live virtuously, to be honest citizens, no rule, regulation or law will ever be enough to uphold the rule of law.

² Philippians 4:8

³ YOUCAT 299

⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1803

The consequence of the lack of honest citizens, of virtuous people, is a lack of trust. Trust is truly in short supply in our society. Many of the scandals which have recently hit the headlines – whether in Malta or abroad, in the political/economic world as well as in the Church – can be described as a betrayal of trust.

We often underestimate the importance of trusting that someone is good/virtuous in our daily lives.

- When using a debit card to pay, one trusts that the right amount will be debited from the card;
- When boarding a plane, one trusts that the pilot will safely take the passengers to their intended destination.

If we had to start doubting these daily transactions and operations which are largely based on trust, our lives would become unlivable.

Trust is a fragile thing – easy to lose and hard to regain. The Justice & Peace Commission strongly believes that, apart from an ethically and rule-of-law founded reform of many of our social, and economic institutions, in order to rebuild trust, the virtue of honesty is crucial.

As opposed to the hypocrites mentioned by Jesus in the Gospel, a righteous person doesn't perform righteous deeds to attract praise and doesn't refrain from breaking the law only when there is a high risk of getting caught. We therefore need honest citizens, and more than that, we need to be virtuous people to counteract the narrative of sleaze, opportunism and dishonesty which is poisoning our social fabric.

This video can come in handy while preparing:

<https://aquinas101.thomisticinstitute.org/where-does-virtue-come-from>

ACT

Debrief activity: One-Minute Paper (4 mins)

Give participants exactly one minute to answer each of the following questions. (It is suggested that you present one question at a time, with a timer so that young people can know how much time passed.)

- Who did you identify with (from the first discussion): 'the good person,' 'the bad person,' or 'the in-between person.'? Why?
- What is one thing you can change in order to be a more virtuous person?

Encourage young people to think of that "one thing" which they can do in light of Lent: Can they make this small change for the first week of Lent? Or maybe for longer?

Prayer (5 mins)

During closing prayer, read a short excerpt from Ash Wednesday's Gospel.

Matt 6:1, 16-18

"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to

you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

For the following session

Ask a few young people to research and learn about the story of St Augustine, looking particularly at the difference between his life before and after his conversion. Invite them to prepare a presentation for the following session. (The theme of the next session is temperance).



TEMPERANCE

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



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TEMPERANCE
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session speaks about temperance. Our society tends to live in excess, and so this session aims to teach young people about this virtue, and help them practice it in their own lives.

GOAL

- To teach young people the meaning of temperance.
- To encourage young people to practice temperance in their own lives.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Jenga (optional)

SCRIPTURE

- Luke 4:1-4

TEMPERANCE
Summary & Team Overview

Welcoming & Opening
Prayer

Game (Jenga)

Session Content

Discussion
(Speed dating)

Final discussion
(Traffic Lights)

Closing & Prayer

SEE

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)

Opening activity (15 mins)

Jenga is a good game to start this session with. If you get your hands on a giant Jenga set, it is quite a crowd pleaser!

Our world

On the 2nd of March 2020, Miriam Pace was dug out from under the rubble of her own house. What was supposed to be a place of safety and comfort became a tomb. Various court proceedings are still ongoing to determine the culpability of the persons involved. But what is certain is that Miriam was a victim of injustice and unbridled greed.

JUDGE

Teaching (15 min)

Video: Is Self-Control a Virtue? https://youtu.be/ByDqzk41t_0

Temperance is one of the four cardinal virtues

- The other 3: Prudence, justice, fortitude
- Existed before Jesus did - ancient Greek philosophers recognised there as the 4 cardinal virtues
- There are also the theological values of faith, hope and charity.

Temperance is the moral virtue that **moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods**. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honourable.¹

Temperance is a virtue because excessive behaviour proves to be a destructive force in all areas of life. Someone who is excessive abandons himself to the rule of his impulses, offends others by his inordinate desires, and harms himself.²

- Temperance concerns the good things of the earth, such as food and drink.
- Temperance is about regulating our desires wisely and finding the middle ground between desires running wild and denying them.
 - It's easy for us humans to allow our desires to get the best of us.
 - The desire to eat is important - it keeps us alive.
 - Temperance is about recognising the desire and eating the right amount and type of food which is good for us, and not indulging in gluttony.
- The fact that it concerns good things makes it harder to find the middle ground, to have self control and discipline.
- It's a habit, something which we build over time
- It's not about just saying "no." Sometimes it's harder to find perfect moderation than practising abstinence.

¹ CCC, 1809

² YOUCAT, Question 304

- For example, with regard to technology: tempering our use is making sure we don't use it all the time, and we use it well.

Temperance is often praised in the Old Testament:

"Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites." Sir 18:30.

In the New Testament it is called "moderation" or "sobriety."

We ought "to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world." Titus 2:12.

Opposite vice: intemperance (or overindulgence).

- Leads to sins like drunkenness, lust & gluttony.

"To live well is nothing other than to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul and with all one's efforts; from this it comes about that love is kept whole and uncorrupted (through temperance). No misfortune can disturb it (and this is fortitude). It obeys only [God] (and this is justice), and is careful in discerning things, so as not to be surprised by deceit or trickery (and this is prudence)." St. Augustine

More about temperance: <https://youtu.be/9BU1zMipFcA>

Story of a Saint (5 mins)

Ahead of the session, ask a few young people to research and learn about the story of St Augustine, looking particularly at the difference between his life before and after his conversion. Invite them to prepare a presentation to share with their peers.

Invite the young people assigned this presentation to share with the group.

Discussion (25 min)

Speed Dating:

- Have participants form two concentric circles.
- Each person from the circle on the inside is paired with someone on the outside. They are to stand/sit facing each other.
- The leader asks a question to the whole group and pairs discuss their responses with each other, for a set amount of time (for example 3 minutes).
- When the time is up, the leader signals the young people to rotate: Those in the outside circle move one or two spaces to the right so they are standing in front of someone new.
- Have the new pairs discuss the same questions.

Questions

- Where in our lives are we making excuses? Where are we overindulging?
 - Netflix/YouTube, social media, food, alcohol.
 - The point isn't to demonise everything but using good things well.
- What desires are good that we look at suspiciously?

After a few rounds, have the group highlight the most common answers shared during the one-to-one discussions.

ACT

Ask young people to think of one scenario where they need to exercise more temperance (this should come naturally after their previous conversation). Encourage them to commit to practising temperance for the coming week. Young people can also be paired up to keep each other accountable throughout the week.

Coming up with a strategy for when they feel a desire for something good but want to use it poorly is also a good idea. You can help young people to come up with their own strategy or share with them the simple traffic light system.

SEE: Name the desire and recognise your feelings.

JUDGE: What is right or wrong in this situation?

What can I do to be temperate?

ACT: Take action.

When 'doing the right thing' feels too difficult, ask for God's help: "Christ, you need to help me here. Teach me self-control."

With things like spending too much time on TikTok or watching Netflix, you can help young people to come up with practical solutions such as setting app timers on their phones.

Closing Prayer (2 mins)

Reflection from YAHAD Lent Resource

In our society it is much easier to say "is that all?" than "thanks". But today's Gospel, says no to more prestige, power and possessions, thus inviting us to rediscover the values of simplicity, sacrifice and sobriety.

Correctly understood, temperance and sacrifice are never an end in themselves. They are counter cultural values which lead us in the direction of happiness, greater freedom and care for others on a personal and communitarian level. When we distinguish between our wants and our needs, we can overcome that limitless greed and "idolatry of money" which leads to the disintegration of our social fabric and which leaves in its wake countless victims.

However, even when faced with grave environmental threats, many refuse to live simply so that others may live. Such a response betrays not only an irresponsible short sightedness, but also an insensitive unwillingness to pay a price to stand in solidarity with those who will suffer the most from the devastating effects of climate change.

As Christians, we should be at the forefront in agreeing to respect the limits imposed by our love towards others and our common home. When denying the urge to always have more and be more, we are guided by the hope that one person living temperately gives a good example. A community living temperately represents a political force which can change a society for the better.



COURAGE

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT



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COURAGE
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session takes on the theme of courage through watching the film *Just Mercy* (2019).

Film synopsis: It explores the work of young defence attorney Bryan Stevenson who represents poor people on death row. The film is based on Stevenson's 2014 memoir of the same name, in which he explored his journey to making his life's work the defence of African-American prisoners.

GOAL

The goal of this session is for young people to listen to the story of a man who, with courage, fought for justice.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Film: *Just Mercy* (2019)

If you have enough time after the session, reflect on the following questions:

- Were you inspired by the movie?
- What struck you most about the story?
- Which character had the biggest impact on you?

For the following session

Ask a few young people to research and learn about the story of Pope St John Paul II's shooting: how it happened, and the saint's encounter with his aggressor. Invite them to prepare a presentation for the following session. (The theme of the next session is merciful patience).

Our World

On the 16th of October, 2017, a car-bomb ripped through a car in Bidnija and took the life of Malta's foremost investigative journalist: Daphne Caruana Galizia. In more ways than one, we can say that this was truly a watershed moment when it comes to Malta's modern political history. There is a clear before and after.

Reflection from Lent Resources #YAHADMT

In the face of widespread opposition and scorn, it's never easy to stand up for what is right and just. It takes courage to take a principled stand, whilst seeking real dialogue, in the public sphere. It's the courage of those pioneers who choose the less trodden path, of those bridge-builders who risk being misunderstood by all sides and labelled as outsiders by everyone, of those upright people who end up politically homeless, of the fool who chooses the well-being of the marginalised and the promotion of the common good over the comfort of the crowds.

It takes courage to abandon the comfort of your "clan" or the comfortable neutrality of the armchair critic.

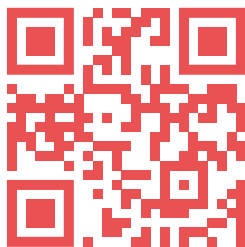
As a community of faith we always have to ask ourselves if we are sometimes guilty of living the complacency of those who find themselves on the side of social privilege and thus fail to work courageously to transform the sinful structures of society. The transforming force of the Gospel can never be domesticated, and it's up to us to make sure that a holy restlessness continues burning from within as we engage in the hopeful renewal of society with courage and creativity. And if we ever get

scared, let's turn to the Lord who is our "light", our "salvation" and our "refuge".



MERCIFUL PATIENCE

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



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MERCIFUL PATIENCE
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session aims to get young people thinking about how they react to things happening around them (ex. anger, judgement, indifference, love). It does so by presenting a recent national tragedy, namely the death of Paulina Dembska.

This session may be distressing for some young people and so leaders ought to be sure the session is led in a caring and sensitive way.

GOAL

- To look back on reactions, our own and those of others, and to discern how we should have responded.
- To answer the question “How does one respond to injustice with mercy?”

RESOURCES NEEDED

- A way to project concerning news articles.
- Sticky notes
- Pens/pencils
- Psalm 103:6-12 (projected or printed)

SCRIPTURE

- Psalm 103: 6-12

“Justice without mercy is unloving; mercy without justice is degrading.”
Friedrich Von Bodelschwingh

MERCIFUL PATIENCE
Summary & Team Overview

Welcoming & Opening
Prayer

Opening Game
(The Sun Shines On)

Discussion
(Sticky Note Mapping)

Cont. Discussion

Story of a Saint

Closing & Prayer

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 min)**Game¹ (10 mins)****Discussion (45 mins)**

It is advisable that whoever will be leading this part of the session is familiar with the facts, and is aware of their own reactions, judgements and responses. Some helpful articles are linked in the appendices.

Our world:

The body of 29-year old Polish student Paulina Dembska was found in Sliema's Independence Gardens early on Sunday, 2nd January, 2022. She often went there to feed and spend time with the stray cats in the gardens. An autopsy confirmed she had been raped and strangled. She had head injuries and marks on her neck which indicated she had been suffocated.

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/paulina-dembska-identified-as-sliema-murder-victim.925273>

There was a wide spectrum of reactions to this murder and the news of who the perpetrator was, and what he had done. The incident highlighted issues of violence against women and mental health. People commented on the news as it unfolded: hate, disgust and insults were spewed all over social media. The aim of this session is to look back on reactions, our own and those of others, and to discern how we should have responded.

¹ Refer to appendices for a game idea.

Activity: Sticky Note Mapping

- Present to the young people 3 main questions:
 - a. How did you react to the death of Paulina?
 - b. How did you react to the news of who the perpetrator was and what he did to her?
 - c. How did the people around you/people on social media react?
- Have the participants generate responses by writing their answers on sticky notes (one response per note). Designate 3 different spaces/walls where young people can leave their answers according to the question. Encourage young people to write at least 5 responses (even if their answer to a question is "I don't know"). Each response should be written anonymously.

Once everyone is done, ask the young people to sit down and discuss their answers. Once the answers on the sticky notes are discussed, ask the following question:

- When the news broke out, what did you do? What did you post? What did you tell your friends? How did you speak about those involved?
- What happened on social media?

JUDGE

Ask young people to stand up and reorganise the sticky notes, grouping them into similar categories.

Continue the discussion:

- What would have been a just and merciful way of responding to the murder of Paulina, and the news about who the perpetrator was?
- How would Jesus have responded?

Story of Saint (10 mins)

Ahead of the session, ask a few young people to research and learn about the story of Pope St John Paul II's shooting: how it happened, and the saint's encounter with his aggressor. Invite them to prepare a presentation to share with their peers.

Invite the young people assigned this presentation to share with the group.

Closing Prayer (10 mins)

Pray Psalm 103 together

- Which of God's qualities stand out to you the most?
- Which do you need to practice more?

Young people can be invited to go round in a circle and pray for a particular quality out loud. For example: "I pray that I may be more kind."

Take some time to pray for the soul of Paulina, for her friends, family and those suffering her loss.

Pray also for the perpetrator, his family and friends, and those who he might have hurt in the past.

ACT

Appendices

Helpful articles

Activist react to Paulina Dembska's murder (Gender-based violence)

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/paulina-dembskas-two-bodies-ranier-fsadni.928885>

<https://lovinmalta.com/news/sheer-lack-of-sensitivityactivists-balk-at-malta-police-saying-paulina-dembska-murder-was-not-gender-based/>

Suspect being admitted to Mount Carmel Hospital

<https://newsbook.com.mt/en/sliema-murder-suspect-to-be-released-from-mount-carmel-hospital/>

Hate speech online

<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2022-01-04/local-news/A-girl-was-killed-a-mother-is-being-murdered-PL-MP-6736239515>

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/why-do-we-judge-so-much-fr-frankie-cini-mssp.929530>

Icebreaker Game: The Sun Shines On

Aim: This game is a simple task of trying to find a chair to sit on, made hard by everyone else also looking for a chair. It's great for getting young people to know each other better.

Supplies: Enough chairs for everyone in the group. minus one.

Basic Structure:

- Have your group sit in a large circle with everyone but yourself sat on chairs.
- The objective is to always have a seat to sit on. There will always be 1 missing chair, as someone is always left to stand in the middle.
- To get out of the middle, the person standing up must say "Hello, my name is (Name) and the sun shines on (Topic)."
- The topic the person chooses can be anything that is true about them. For example: "Hello. my name is Fred and the sun shines on:
 - Ex. 1 All the people wearing yellow
 - Ex. 2 All those who like chocolate
 - Ex. 3 All those who support Manchester United.
- Once the person has said this, everyone who this statement refers to must now get up and find a new seat.
- When changing seats, they can't sit back in their own seat or either seat on their left and right. It is only ever one person to a chair; no sharing chairs or sitting on someone's lap

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnMvDr0FUBs>

Reflection from the Lent Resource #YAHADMT

Our attempts at building a reconciled society founded on truth and justice do not always seem to bear fruit. Like Peter along the lake of Gennesaret, we work hard all night without catching anything. Like him, besides trusting in God, we are called to be patient, with ourselves and with others.

In this long journey, marked by uncertainty and frustration, we also have to learn the importance of being merciful. The companions we choose to accompany on this journey will at some point or another disagree with us. The temptation to surround ourselves with like-minded people is never far off. Even more challenging is the fact that, if we truly want this journey to be one of reconciliation, we will share at least parts of the journey with people who are in need of our forgiveness.

Having received God's mercy, we joyfully share with others the Good News of God's everlasting mercy towards the world. In a political context where the desire to crush the opponent is ever-present, in which political parties seek to outdo their opponents by engaging in daily shows of strength, there hardly seems to be space left for weak-looking mercy. And yet, if our aim is that of building a society, in which no one is crushed or eliminated, we first have to meet each other in our humanity. Instead of looking upwards and indulging in an alienating exultation of strength and power, we look downwards as we strive to create a culture of encounter which can only be born out of our common brokenness.



RECONCILIATION

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



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RECONCILIATION

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session takes on the theme of reconciliation by reflecting on Scripture. It gives young people the opportunity to discuss where and how as Christians we can be agents of reconciliation.

GOALS

- To give young people the opportunity to pray with Scripture.
- To question how we can be agents of reconciliation.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- A Bible or a copy of the passage which will be used for each young person.
- Ideally, participants also have something on which they can write their own reflections, such as a paper or a prayer journal.
- A torch (which can be taken apart) (optional)

SCRIPTURE

- 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

RECONCILIATION

Summary & Team Overview

Welcoming & Opening
Prayer

Icebreaker

Lectio Divina

Discussion (w/ activity)

Closing discussion

Closing & Prayer

PREP

It's highly advised that the person leading the lectio divina would have prayed through the scripture passage before leading it.

SEE

Welcome & game¹ (10 min)

Before starting, explain to the participants the process of the Lectio Divina (reassure them that this is not a complicated prayer, even though it has a Latin name.)

- The term *Lectio Divina* means reading the Word of God. This exercise is not just about reading the Bible. It also means meditating, praying, and contemplating the passage from Scripture, and letting it have an effect on you.
- Explain the four steps of the process.
- Explain that the point is to find out more about who God is and what he wants to tell us. Sometimes this happens easily. Sometimes you may feel that your prayer was useless. However, time with God is never wasted, even if it doesn't feel productive.

Take note of the mood of the group. Assess whether you can do something to help the group get into a prayerful atmosphere.

- *In some groups it may help if there is some instrumental music playing in the background.*
- *For others, it would be more beneficial if the Lectio Divina is done casually, as though it was just a conversation between friends.*

The important thing is that while Scripture is approached with respect and reverence, the environment in which this is done is comfortable.

Throughout the Lectio, the young people can use a journal or paper to write down their reflections and take-aways.

Lectio Divina (30 mins)

Step 1 – Lectio/Read (5 min)

- Ask the young people to open their Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.
- Read the passage slowly.
- Ask the young people to think of a word or phrase that stood out to them. They don't have to know why it stood out.
- Invite everyone to share their word/phrase. There is no right or wrong answer!

Step 2 – Meditatio/Think (10 min)

- This time, ask the young people to imagine themselves in the story, either as one of the characters or seeing it from the outside. Ask them to imagine what it looked like, smelt like, felt like. As you read the story, ask them to think about how they feel, and how they react to what is going on in the story.
- Read the passage and leave time for quiet.
- Give some time for reflection (and if they want to, write). Afterwards, invite them to share what they had imagined and what stood out to them this time around. Again, no right or wrong answer!

Step 3 – Oratio/Pray (10 min)

- Ask the young people to think about what God might be trying to say to them in this passage.

¹ Refer to appendices for a game idea.

- After you read the passage leave a slightly longer time for quiet.
- Ask the young people to talk to God in their hearts about what this passage means and what God is saying to them through it.

Step 4 – Contemplatio/Contemplate (5 min)

- After reading the passage the fourth and final time, ask the young people to ponder what God has been saying, and they'd like to take away from this prayer time. Maybe some teaching, revelation or action point.
- After some time of quiet, invite the participants to share with each other what they will take away from this prayer time.
- Finish with a Glory Be and a sign of the Cross.

JUDGE

Our World (2 mins)

On the 6th of April 2019, Lassana Cisse Souleymane, a 42-year-old migrant worker from the Ivory Coast, was killed in a drive-by shooting in Ħal Far, in what is believed to be Malta's first racially-motivated murder. Two other African migrants were also injured in the attack. From what we know so far, it seems as if Lassana was killed for no other reason than that he "looked different".²

²<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/lassana-cisse-remembered-two-years-after-his-murder.862944>

Discussion³ (15 mins)

- As a society, who are we hurting?
 - Encourage young people to think out the systemic injustices in Malta such as that against migrants.
- Are any of your daily actions perpetuating these injustices?
 - Take time to reflect on whether you're making your mind up about people based on hearsay or flimsy evidence. Challenge yourself to put those thoughts aside and meet people as they really are.

Should you want further content about reconciliation, this video may be helpful: <https://youtu.be/im2hU2yg3Eo>

ACT

Discussion (5 mins)

Encourage young people to find concrete answers to the following questions.

- How will you implement/live out your takeaways from the *lectio divina*?
- How can you be agents of reconciliation?

Closing Prayer (2 mins)

³ Refer to appendices for a discussion activity idea.

APPENDICES

Elsa & the flash light

Any other game can be used instead of this.

- Take apart a flashlight and hide the parts throughout the youth center/room.
- Ask one young person to be 'Elsa'. Elsa can freeze any participant in the game by tagging them. If someone is frozen, they can't move.
- The rest of the group has to work together to find the parts of the flashlight, assemble it, and shine it on Elsa to stop her from freezing more people.

Pyramid Discussion

Aim: To facilitate a discussion which is inclusive to the entire group.

Basic Structure:

- Participants begin in pairs, responding to a discussion question only with a single partner.
- After each person has had a chance to share their ideas, the pair joins another pair, creating a group of four.
- Pairs share their ideas with the pair they just joined.
- Next, groups of four join together to form groups of eight, and so on.
- Repeat until the whole group is joined up in one large discussion.

Reflection from the Lent Resources #YAHADMT

Faced with numerous centrifugal forces which drive us further from each other, as Christians who have been reconciled to God by grace, we dare to propose a path which brings us together. Besides tending to the wounds of all the victims of injustice, we are called to listen to their voices and learn about how they ended up there and seek concrete and creative ways to put spokes in the wheels of the underlying injustice.

Only by listening attentively to these voices can our hearts and minds be moved. True listening allows us to be true seekers of that truth without which justice and reconciliation will remain forever an illusion. True listening will allow us to meet others as fellow brothers and sisters. If we dare to do so, our lives will become wonderfully complicated, as we experience intensely what it means to be ministers of reconciliation in this beloved country of ours.



CREATIVITY

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



yahad.mt

CREATIVITY
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

ABOUT THIS SESSION

This session is an activity-based session in which young people are invited to just hang-out and create something together. It is based on the premise that young people especially have the creativity and capacity to bring positive change to the world around them.

GOAL

- To give young people the space to think of solutions to problems they see in the world around them.
- To give young people the time to create something tangible.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Anything and everything that can be used for a craft: paper, boxes, paint, string, clay, old magazines, used wrapping paper, rags, glue... anything you can get your hands on.
- It is highly encouraged to use pre-used materials.

SCRIPTURE

- Isaiah 43:16-21

CREATIVITY
Summary & Team Overview

Welcoming & Opening
Prayer

Explanation of Activity

Closing & Prayer

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 mins)

Activity (60 mins)

- Divide young people into small groups of between 3 and 5.
- Ask each group to identify what they consider a major problem in today's world.
- Invite them to think of a way to improve this problem and present their solution through something they create with the resources available.
- Let the young people have some fun and have the time to create something physical.

Young people tend to have less opportunities to just do practical things, so let them enjoy "wasting time" on creating something, even if it's abstract.

This will give them the opportunity to:

- *Reflect on the world around them,*
- *Discuss with their peers to think of a creative solution,*
- *Work together in teams,*
- *Practice temperance with the resources they need to share,*
- *Create something tangible, and be hands on.*

After the allotted amount of time has passed, invite each group to share what they've created and the thought behind it. Make sure that there is enough time for each group to share.

Closing Prayer (2 mins)

During closing prayer, read a short excerpt from Sunday's First Reading.

Isaiah 43:18-21

"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise."

Invite young people to offer up their own intentions, based on what they had just created, to the Lord in prayer.

Our World

In May 2021, it was reported that a staggering 1,500 homeless people, including 400 minors, applied for refuge at YMCA's shelters in the previous two years. Given that homelessness is often hidden or invisible, we often think that as a country we are immune to this social issue. Unfortunately, the truth is that many individuals and families are facing this reality on a daily level, very often in silence.

Reflection from Lent Resources #YAHADMT

As we read in the Book of Proverbs: "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov 29, 18). This failure of vision is also a failure of imagination, a failure to creatively imagine a different future than the present we live in, a failure to dream that another world is possible. Ultimately, this widespread lack of vision reflects a lack of hope.

In this context, our society urgently needs to hear and rally around a prophetic and credible vision for us and our children. The vision proposed by the Church and specifically by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* and *Fratelli Tutti* speaks of a society built on justice, truth and solidarity. Many are those who will object to this vision, not in principle, but by arguing that it is an impossible and hopeless task. It is our duty, as Christians and citizens of goodwill, to provide indications of hope.

We are maybe in the presence of something new which is being born which, alas, is not clearly discernible in the alternatives of the present. The prophet Isaiah in today's first reading, speaks of a God who does something completely new and makes a way in what at first appears to be a barren desert and wasteland. Likewise, the Church itself ought to

be a key indication of hope, a living alternative, creatively infusing and challenging the social sphere with a more radical vision of God's dream for humanity: In the priority we give to those with no economic value, in the way we strive for justice even when all seems lost, in the way we continue to faithfully engage in dialogue when all around us. walls of prejudice are being erected.