

Junior High Bible Discussion Group

Doulos: Andrew, Priscilla



St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi

Living Out the Gospel Literally

This week, I'll probably be asking if any of them are willing to commit their lives for Christ. I think the first thing I should say is that we should not think of this as a "measure of success", because seeds for sure are planted, but when they will grow is up to God. But for those who are willing to take that step to commit their lives for Christ, I'd like to ensure that somebody is there to walk them along. I don't know how exactly, but I surmise that we can maybe set up non-doulos (but mature Christians) senior highers to meet with them. That's just a surmising, so let me know what you think.

This week's BDG and next week's (taught by Meli) will be about responding to the Gospel with our lives. This week, we'll be focusing on wealth and the poor. While Mother Teresa might be one of the first names to come up, she's more about loving people regardless of their state. For me, when it comes to the poor/wealth, the first name that comes up is the great saint Francis and his best friend, the great saint Clare.

Schedule of the Evening:

1. Activity (10 min)
2. Lesson (15-20 min)
3. Discussion (15 min)

ACTIVITY:

Originally, I had something in mind, but since Jon Mann will be preaching in the gym just outside, we'll settle for something a lot quieter. My math professor at Wheaton had a habit of taking a video of everybody in class, and I think it'd be good (both for all of us to know them) to take a video of everybody in junior high (excluding doulous and myself). It's simple. I start the camera, and basically move down the line, and everybody says their name... and maybe their favorite... ethnic food, I guess (which excludes McDonald's, Burger King, school cafeteria food, etc.)

LESSON OUTLINE:

1. Recapping last BDG's lesson and the Journey of Prayer
 - a. The last BDG lesson was about the Gospel!
 - b. The Journey of Prayer focused on reordering ourselves around Christ.
 - i. However, this is not something we do once—it's something that we should live our lives around. In other words, it takes commitment.
2. Their Ministries
 - a. Francis' ministry
 - i. One day, he was praying at a run-down church called San Damiano. There, the Lord (supposed speaking from behind a cross) told him to "rebuild his Church".
 1. Francis thought that it meant the church building, so he rebuilt it. He also rebuilt another church called the Portiuncula.
 - a. He later found out that God was metaphorically speaking.
 2. San Damiano became the headquarters of St. Francis. The church is still there today.
 - ii. His ministry focused on preaching about salvation, and living a life of simplicity and poverty.
 1. A very wealthy daughter of an aristocrat listened to one of his sermons, and she was so moved that she decided to follow him in living a life of poverty.
 2. Francis gave her to a nearby convent where she became a nun, much to her father's anger. Her name was Clare.

3. He later moved her and several of her followers to a house near San Damiano.
 - iii. Eventually, Francis went to the Pope and asked for permission to start a new order. It's called the Order of Friars Minor, but today, we refer to them as Franciscan monks.
 1. The Franciscans live a life owning nothing, wearing no shoes, sleeping on the ground, and fasting regularly.
 - b. Clare's Ministry
 - i. Francis later made Clare the leader of the "Poor Clares". In some ways, they were even more stricter than the Franciscans.
 - ii. Several Popes offered to donate money to her ministry, but she refused all of them, believing that money would bring only conflict.
3. Lessons from St. Francis and St. Clare's Life
 - a. Scripture Passages: Luke 18: 18-29, and Luke 12: 13-21
 - b. The Gospel implies that we don't forget the poor and the suffering.
 - i. Just as Christ loved all sinners, we must love everybody!
 - c. But what about wealth? Is it wrong to be rich?
 - i. Luke 18: 18-29
 1. What's the young man's problem?
 - ii. Luke 12: 13-21
 1. What should our main purpose in life be?
 - d. But why are St. Francis and St. Clare examples to follow?
 - i. Living Simply: having only what you need.
 1. Henry's view: and maybe a little extra, but not going overboard.
 - ii. Our world today enjoys excess.
 1. If the Gospel is really that important to us, we cannot enjoy excess when there are others who don't even have enough.

DISCUSSION:

As you do discussion, I think it might be good if the guys focus on St. Francis and the girls on St. Clare. Come up with one or two questions that might be of interest to them. Examples: would you give away everything you own and live a poor life?