

## WHERE DID EVERYBODY GO?

### YEAR 1, 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Print the answer key for yourself and print the Expressions of Doubt and Loneliness page for each participant.

Explain to the group that we cannot freely love unless we, ourselves, are absolutely confident in love.

We must trust God in all that He is and all that He does. And the only way that we can come into this confidence is if we start counting all the gifts our God has given us and always look at those gifts first and foremost. We have to keep a grateful heart.

“Let the wicked forsake their way, and sinners their thoughts; Let them turn to the LORD to find mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways...” (Isaiah 55:7-8)

Explain that we, as sinners tend to think that there is power in violence, anger and grudges. We feel like, if we raise our voices or force people to do things for us, we have more control over a situation but we don't. Power in violence is the greatest illusion. We seem to have “control” because we can see ourselves having our way. However, this violence often leads us to loneliness and doubt about our true worth and we lose all control of seeking our love and happiness.

God is our real worth our real empowerment. He asks us to walk confidently in “control,” in any situation we face. All His commandments plant our hearts firmly on love, a rock that will never budge, a home that can weather any storm. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Explain that our hospitality is a real indicator of our confidence in God's love: The more confidence we have in love then the more hospitable we want and know how to be. The less confidence that we have in love then the less hospitable we want and know how to be.

Often we complain about the world being cruel but we too are often being cruel. We are push everyone away in our expressions of doubt and loneliness. Hand out the Expressions of Doubt and Loneliness page. Quickly go over the list and then read aloud the first Hospitality Failure scenario. Have the group match the Expressions of Doubt and Loneliness to a corresponding Hospitality Failure, work out the remedy and revise the situation into a “hospitality success”. Read the next scenario and repeat until you've run out of time.

# Expressions of Doubt and Loneliness:

1. **All or Nothing:** Believing work and/or relationships need to be perfect or that they are no good; you beat yourself and others up over trivial things, not being thankful for the gifts that outweigh any trials.
  - Accept that God has chosen to uphold and magnify an imperfect world – that's life. Work with what He's given you. Count your blessings.
2. **Overgeneralizing:** Hesitating, in belief that bad past experiences will recur; doubting the mercy of God.
  - Be present to the current moment. Don't think about the past. Recall that God is good and that He is more present to you than you are even to yourself.
3. **Mindreading:** Thinking that you know someone's thoughts .
  - Remember that an assumption is just an assumption. There is no possible way to really know anyone's mind unless they directly tell you what they are thinking.
4. **Catastrophizing:** Envisioning and anticipating the worst to happen.
  - Remember that God is in control and He will never give you anything that you cannot handle. Pray for a clear perspective and pray for courage and help to fight the evil you face everyday.
5. **Minimizing/Filtering:** Giving attention to the bad things and downplaying or disregarding the good things.
  - Count on the good things first and foremost. Make a point to look for the good, look for God first.
6. **Magnifying/ Exaggerating:** Amplifying an issue; believing that things are much worse than they really are.
  - Recall what you know to have actually happened. Be creative rather than destructive: respond with love and charity in any situation rather than choosing self-righteousness and overreacting.
7. **Fortune Telling:** Foretelling a bad situation, even when you have no proof that bad things will happen.
  - Believe that God wants the best for you and that His love for you is greater than your own. Let go and let God. Look at the gifts he has given you and use them for good.

## Hospitality Failures:

- John is a university student invited to move in with a family during his last semester. After thankfully accepting the offer and moving in, he realizes that the husband and wife have become strangers to each other and want John to satisfy their needs for affection. John soon feels pulled apart by the questions: Are you for him or for me? Are you on her side or my side?
- Kyle and his little sister Eulalia have generally gotten along but when it comes obeying their parents Eulalia always redirects the attention to Kyle by being the first to point out what Kyle has done wrong and cries when Kyle picks on her at all. Kyle has watched her get away with so many things while He's gotten most of the punishment and repercussions and he's getting sick of it. This week especially, Eulalia is acting really innocent and has been really quiet so Kyle has decided to keep his distance from her. She keeps bothering Kyle to hangout but he knows that would be a great opportunity for her to set him up. He has decided to not take any chances and maybe this will teach her a lesson if she really wants his attention. Kyle has decided that she really isn't worth the trouble anymore.
- Kim is single, forty years old, working, living alone and has invited her niece to stay with her for the summer. Kim even accumulated some vacation time so that she could use it to spend some more time with her niece. Gladly accepting, her niece moved in a couple weeks ago but is hardly ever available at the house. She is always taking off in the evenings, staying out late and then waking up around noon to watch some TV before she goes out again after dinner. Kim is now a bit irritated and upset because the girl she wanted to get to know better does not seem to be interested in getting to know her. Kim would like to ask her to leave but does not want to encourage any more distance between their relationship. Kim is now considering all the things she could possibly do to keep busy this summer and distract herself away from her house guest's ill manners.
- Betsy attends a small private school and has grown up with one very close friend there. In the cafeteria, Betsy waits for her friend, as she always has, only to notice that this friend is already making her way through the lunch line with another girl. Confused, Betsy makes her way through the lunch line and sits down to meet this new girl. Both are very friendly toward Betsy when she joins them and then they pick up talking about a TV show that Betsy has never seen. Betsy listens but feels left out and doesn't contribute anything to the conversation.

*Answer Key:*

- *Husband and Wife's hospitality failures:*
  - *All or Nothing - If you don't give me all your attention then you don't care about me.*
  - *Overgeneralizing - John should spend his quality time with me.*
  - *Catastrophizing - I'll never have an intimate relationship again.*
  - *Fortune Telling - I'm going to always be lonely if I don't always have attention of others.*
  
- *Kyle's hospitality failures:*
  - *All or Nothing - Treat me with respect or I'll never respect you.*
  - *Overgeneralizing - The only reason I get into trouble is because of her.*
  - *Catastrophizing - She is trying to sabotage me.*
  - *Minimizing - She's just acting nice so she won't get into trouble.*
  - *Fortune Telling - If I'm nice to her now then I'll pay the price later.*
  
- *Kim's hospitality failures:*
  - *All or Nothing - Show me appreciation or I can't appreciate you.*
  - *Overgeneralizing - She's going to do this every day.*
  - *Mindreading - She thinks I'm old and boring.*
  - *Catastrophizing - If I tell her how I'm feeling then we'll never speak again.*
  - *Minimizing - If I just ignore her when she's busy than all of our problems will go away.*
  - *Magnifying - All she does is party and I can't relate.*
  
- *Betsy's hospitality failures:*
  - *All or Nothing - If you don't give me all your attention then you don't care about me.*
  - *Mindreading - They could care less about whether I was their friend or not.*
  - *Catastrophizing - If I don't watch this show then I won't have any friends.*
  - *Minimizing - They are just acting friendly so that I won't get mad at them.*
  - *Magnifying - I've lost my best friend to this new girl.*