

One truth shared: Jesus refocuses our attention in worship to the Father.

His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

John 2:17

Secret Shopper – How's your worship life?

Have you ever heard of the Secret Shopper program? A person gets a gift card, maybe a free meal in exchange for feedback on their experience at a nice restaurant. The secret shopper provides an honest look at things going well... and areas that need improvement.

In our reading today, Jesus makes a not-so-subtle visit to the house of the Lord. It was during the sacred festival of Passover. God's people were celebrating the rescue God provided from slavery in Egypt and the rescue from death by the death of a lamb. Well, they were supposed to be... but the focus had shifted. The Father's house was turned into a market! Jesus called out the distractions and cleared it out.

What has Jesus seen in your worship life lately? Does it seem boring, empty, a check-list-type activity? What distractions might Jesus clear out of the temple of your heart over the weekend? Let's clear the air and refocus our worship. Worship is not focused on me, although I will benefit. Worship is not about people, but I will gather with others. Worship is celebration of all God does for us and collectively responding to his gifts with thanks and adoration. God works in worship when we are there in body, mind, and spirit. Refocus, hear the Word of the Lord.

Worship in God's house is still special. For all the trials and fears we face throughout the week, worship brings us into the presence of God. It allows us to gather with fellow Christians and leave our sins at the foot of his cross. God speaks to us through the message of the songs, readings, and sermon to announce forgiveness and life. This is worth getting excited about, longing for, and sharing with others.

Prayer: Dear Father, thank you for the opportunity to gather for worship every week at church. Seeing Jesus' zeal for your house, I see how far too often my worship life lacks focus. Worship is about what you have done and continue to do. You are the one who promised a lamb to be offered in our place. You are the one who sent your Son, your only Son, who you love to shed his blood for me. Thank you, Lord. You are worthy. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year B – Lent 3

Rethinking Religion

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Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Pull up on your phone, or better yet, print out some Magic Eye pictures and see if the students can see the hidden 3D picture. Some will see it, some probably won’t. What helped people see it? What got in the way? (*Tips: Hold the center of the printed image right up to your nose. It should be blurry. Focus as though you are looking through the image into the distance. Very slowly move the image away from your face until the image starts to appear.*)

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they’ve looked at it.*

When you have someone helping you with firsthand experience, it usually makes it easier to see the full picture more clearly. Jesus walks us into an all too familiar worship experience... people distracted in worship. Have you ever experienced distracted worship? Jesus refocuses our attention in worship to the Father.

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Read John 2:13-22: Jesus clears the temple courts.
- Why did the Jewish people celebrate the Passover every year? (Exodus 12:26,27)
- What made this Passover extra special? (v. 13) (*The Lamb has come into his temple.*)
- What was distracting the people and Jesus during this trip to the temple? (v14)
- Is there anything you find especially distracting in worship? How does verse 17 encourage you? (*Jesus’ active obedience covers us. His example also inspires us.*)
- How does the picture of Jesus’ zeal with a whip and shouts of “Get these out of here!” align with Jesus’ message of “love your neighbor as yourself”?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

- Brainstorm ways to encourage a person who comments, “I don’t want to go to church, I don’t get anything out of it.”
- What are some fitting ways you can express zeal for the house of the Lord this week?