



LEADER GUIDE

WHO AM I? SESSION 1



**WHAT I
WANT &
HOW I'M
MADE**

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Imprimatur: Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila, Archbishop of Denver

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SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session, we are looking at who we are as human beings. Everyone can identify with the reality that in our human nature, we have these deep longings within us. Some of these longings, like for food and water, we must satisfy in order to survive. Still others are more spiritual in nature. In this session, we will identify four basic longings: happiness, love, purpose, and peace. The *Catechism* reference we use for this lesson talks about how our desire for happiness is connected to our desire for God Himself. The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to Himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for (CCC 27). By the end of this session, teens in your group will understand the deep desires and longings that they have within them. But even more importantly, they will see the distinction between seeking earthly fulfillment for those desires and allowing God to be the source of fulfillment for them.



SESSION SNAPSHOT

Review the entire lesson plan in advance so you are prepared to lead and discuss comfortably. Gather necessary supplies and review video segments prior to your gathering. Use the time allotments in the session outline below as a guideline, as the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

TIME	SECTION	SECTION OVERVIEW
20 minutes	 CONNECT	Lead teens in two activities to get them thinking about the deepest desires of their hearts; then introduce the topic and open in prayer.
50 minutes	 DISCUSS	Watch and discuss these video segments. Scene 1: The Rich Young Ruler Scene 2: Treasure in Heaven Scene 3: What Holds Us Back Scene 4: The Desires of Our Hearts
20 minutes	 COMMIT	Have teens review the key points and commit to 30 minutes of mental prayer a day; then close in prayer.



SUPPLIES NEEDED

- » Media device to show video segments
- » A Bible
- » Teen Sheets
- » 2 sheets of paper
- » Pen or pencil

PREPARE IN ADVANCE

- » Have snacks ready.
- » Create a welcoming environment.



LEADER TIP

- » We often include possible responses and material from the *Catechism* after the discussion questions to help you facilitate the conversation. It is best to let group members respond first and share the concepts in parentheses only as needed.



CONNECT



ACTIVITY

FUN QUESTIONS

Gather teens for a casual discussion about their dreams for the future with these questions:

- » What would be your dream college to attend?
- » What would be your dream job?
- » Where would be your dream honeymoon?
- » Where would be your dream location to live?



ACTIVITY

GUIDED DIALOGUE: WHAT DO YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE?

SAY: I have a question I want us to think about as we start this session: What do you want out of life? In fact, I think I already know the top four answers you are going to give. To prove it, I'm going to write what I think your top four answers are going to be on this sheet of paper, and then I'll fold it. I have a second sheet of paper here to write what your answers actually are. When we're all done, we'll see if I guessed right.

Write "happiness, love, purpose, and peace" on one sheet of paper and fold it over. Make sure the teens cannot see what you're writing.

Use the following "script" as an example of how to lead this dialogue. Not everyone will imagine the same paths to happiness, love, purpose, and peace; the intent of this activity is to see how the deeper answers to these questions lead to the same basic needs.

SAY: So let me ask: Who here wants to go to college and get a degree? Stay with one of the teens who answered in the affirmative and ask them more questions:

- » **Why do you want a college degree?** *(To get a good job.)*
- » **Why do you want a good job?** *(To earn good money.)*
- » **Why do you want to earn good money?** *(To be able to buy things.)*
- » **Why do you want to have things?** *(To meet my needs, have fun, enjoy life and be happy.)*

So it sounds to me like you want to go to college and get a degree so that ultimately you will be happy. So let's write down "happiness" as the first thing on the list.

Let me ask another question: Does anyone here want to have a successful career? Stay with one of the teens who answered in the affirmative and ask them more questions:

- » **How would you define "success"?** *(To be good at what you do, advance in your career through hard work and promotion, and make a contribution to society.)*
- » **What is the problem when people define success strictly in terms of "making a lot of money"?** *(People have made a lot of money using unethical means and/or by neglecting people in their lives like their spouse and children. This is not success. It is failure.)*

Would you say that you desire to be successful because you want your life to make a difference in the lives of others? In other words, that your life will have purpose and meaning? Then I am going to write "purpose" on my sheet of paper.



Let me ask another question: Who here wants to get married and have a family? *Stay with one of the teens who answered in the affirmative and ask them more questions:*

- **Why do you want to get married and have a family?** (*I don't want to be alone.*)
- **Why don't you want to be alone?** (*I want to be in loving relationships.*)

So it sounds to me like you want to get married and have a family so that you have people in your life that you love and that love you. Is it fair to say that another deep desire you all have is for love? Then I will write "love" on my sheet of paper.

Finally, who here would desire to have a cabin in the mountains, or a home on a beach, or a ranch in the country? In other words, a place to get away from the stress and pressures in life. *Stay with one of the teens who answered in the affirmative and ask them more questions:*

- **Why does a place like that appeal to you?** (*There are times that people are difficult to be around and/or there are so many distractions in life.*)

Would you say that you would like a place like this to escape to, or maybe even live, because you desire to have peace? I am going to write "peace" down on my paper.

You have probably figured out by my line of questioning that the words I wrote down on this paper are going to match the words on my folded piece of paper. Let's take a look.



INTRODUCTION

SAY: It doesn't take much reflection to be convinced that all of us have desires in our hearts for happiness, love, purpose, and peace. In fact, God has placed those desires within us. In this session we are going to explore why God has purposely placed those desires in our hearts.



OPENING PRAYER

SAY: Let's begin in prayer.

Have a teen read CCC 27 from the Teen Sheet.



"The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for."

—CCC 27



PRAY: Gracious heavenly Father, You desire at every moment to give us good things. We know that Your plan for our lives is to give us happiness, love, purpose, and peace. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for making this plan possible for us because it is our sin that prevents us from experiencing these good things. Help us to become more faithful disciples so that we might experience life to the full. And Holy Spirit, we invite You now to draw us together in stronger brotherhood/sisterhood and inform our minds and hearts with the truth. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.



DISCUSS

SAY: We are going to use a story from Scripture to launch us into our discussion today. It is the story of the conversation between Jesus and a rich young ruler in Luke 18:18-23. We are going to read it three times in order to provide the Holy Spirit an opportunity to really speak to our hearts. Pay close attention to the words and see if they inspire new thoughts in you.

Have three different teens read the text to the group. Allow a brief pause between each reading. Then discuss the following:

- » Was there anything about this conversation Jesus had with the rich young ruler that has provoked questions in your mind or given you a new insight?
- » Did anyone sense a particular “call to action” in meditating on this text? In other words, do you feel the Holy Spirit might be speaking directly to your heart about something?

SAY: Let’s watch our first video segment.



Watch the first video segment. The video will last about 2 minutes. At the end of the segment, discuss.

SAY: The rich young ruler in Luke 18 approaches Jesus, asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. This reveals a deeper longing, one that his riches have not satisfied.

» According to a University of Texas study, over half of college students surveyed have had suicidal thoughts. This was determined from a survey of 26,000 college students attending 70 different colleges and universities. Why do you think that there is so much hopelessness among young people today?

(Like the experience of the rich young ruler, we all have a deeper longing that cannot be satisfied by things in this world. When we try and satisfy this deeper longing with things of this world, it leads to hopelessness. Unfortunately, popular culture feeds us a constant message that “worldly things” will make us happy. Many young people have not been given a compelling vision of why they are here. We are not simply passing through this world; we are here for a specific purpose and therefore our lives have great meaning.)

» What commandments does Jesus *not* mention to the young man?

(If your teens need help identifying the missing commandments, have them look them up in Exodus 20:1-17. The missing commandments are: I am the Lord your God, You shall have no other gods before me; You shall not make for yourself an idol; Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.)

» What do these missing commandments have in common?

(The missing commandments are about our relationship with God. This young man had been faithful in his observance of the commandments regarding his relationships with others, but not the commandments regarding his personal relationship with God.)

SAY: Let's continue with Scene 2.



Watch the second video segment. The video will last about 1½ minutes. At the end of the segment, discuss.

SAY: The rich young ruler wants the right thing—eternal life in heaven—but for the wrong reasons. Many people are the same way today. They want to go to heaven because they view heaven like winning the lottery.

» What does the rich young ruler actually love? And what is wrong with this view?

(It is a view of “what I get” and not “what I give.” Healthy, joy-filled relationships are not focused on “what I get” but rather “what I give.” The joy of heaven is found in an eternal relationship with God. If you have not experienced a relationship with God here on earth, it is difficult to conceive of what heaven will be like.)



SAY: Let's talk about a couple of hypothetical conversations. Here's one: Sarah is talking to Ethan at lunch. Ethan asks her why she spends so much time at her church. She replies: "My relationship with Jesus is the number one priority of my life." Ethan responds: "I don't believe in all that. I think you just need to be a good person to go to heaven." Sarah then asks: "How do you know when you're good enough?"

» **What is the point Sarah is trying to make?**

(Are any of us good enough? If that were so, then why would Jesus have had to become man, die on a cross, and rise from the dead for our sin? Heaven is not earned just like faith is not earned and grace is not earned. They are God's gifts to us. Our job is to be good stewards of those gifts and certainly trying to be a good person is part of that stewardship. But it is God who saves us and makes us holy. We can cooperate with Him or refuse Him. That is the freedom He gives us. We will desire heaven not because we think we deserve it, but because we love Jesus.)

SAY: Here's another conversation: Father Bill tells a group of teens: "If you do not pray and have no desire to pray, then when Jesus invites you to heaven you'll likely tell him 'no thanks!'"

» **What does Father Bill mean by this?**

(CCC 2744 says, "Those who pray are certainly saved; those who do not pray are certainly damned." In the video, Jeremy said we love with our intellect and will. With our intellect we come to know the person we love. Prayer helps us to know God more deeply and love Him more deeply. We can't love what we don't know. Our will is our ability to choose to love even when the feelings fade. Setting aside time for prayer is our choice to show God we love Him. Bottom line: If you don't know and love God, you will not desire to be in a loving relationship with Him forever.)

SAY: Let's watch Scene 3.



Watch the third video segment. The video will last about 2 minutes. At the end of the segment, discuss.

SAY: Jesus is showing the rich young ruler that it is not what he possesses that will keep him from eternal life but rather what he doesn't possess: a loving relationship with God. Jesus is constantly inviting us to leave behind the things that prevent us from growing in our knowledge and love of Him.

» **St. Francis of Assisi said: “I have been all things unholy. If God can work through me, He can work through anyone.” How does this contrast with the rich young ruler?**

(St. Francis recognized that he is only worthy because God has made him worthy. In other words, he gave all credit to God and was dependent upon God for his salvation. St. Francis understood that he could not earn heaven and that nothing in this life could compare to life with God.)

Read Luke 19:1-10.

SAY: Zacchaeus wasn't the most popular person in town. He wasn't just a tax collector; he was a Jewish tax collector, which made him a traitor and a great sinner in the eyes of many Jews. Most tax collectors were well known for collecting much more than the actual tax and pocketing the difference.

» **How does the story of Zacchaeus contrast with the story of the rich young ruler?**

(The rich young ruler clings to his possessions, while Zacchaeus willingly offers to give away all that he has. Ironically, Zacchaeus gets the very thing that the rich young man wanted in the first place.)

SAY: Let's watch the last scene of this session.



Watch the fourth video segment. The video will last about 3 minutes. At the end of the segment, discuss.

» **If Jesus were to ask you today to leave all of your possessions and follow Him, what would be your response?**



COMMIT



ACTIVITY

TAKE-AWAY

SAY: I am going to go around the circle, starting with the person on my right, and I'd like each of us to share something we remember that this person said tonight.

Take a minute and go around the group, asking everyone to share briefly. Then continue.

Now, I want to go around the circle again, this time starting with the person on my left, and I'd like each of us to share one take-away from tonight. In other words, share something that resonates in your heart as a truth to live by.

Give everyone time to share. Then follow up on last week's commitments before discussing the new commitment.

SAY: How are your spiritual H.A.B.I.T.S. coming along?

Encourage your group to share how they have grown spiritually since your last meeting by practicing spiritual H.A.B.I.T.S. Ask them if there is any way that you can help them in their commitment to developing spiritual H.A.B.I.T.S. You can find the H.A.B.I.T.S. in the Leader Guide for Follow Me, Session 5: The Cost.

SAY: This week's commitment is to increase our daily prayer to 30 minutes. Setting aside 30 minutes in a quiet place with no distractions is like saying "yes" to Jesus' invitation to leave all your possessions and follow Him. Even better is to try and visit Jesus in the adoration chapel for 30 minutes of prayer. I promise you that if you commit to this, you will not be the same person next time we meet. Prayer changes everything!

I would like to personally pray for each of your intentions in my daily prayer this week.

Choose a method of communication that works best for your group; for example, take notes as teens share prayer requests out loud, have teens write them on paper, or invite teens to text you with prayer requests.



CLOSING PRAYER

SAY: Let's close in prayer. Would anyone like to lead?

Choose a teen to lead the prayer. Then close with the following:

PRAY: Lord Jesus, give us the courage to leave everything to follow You and be Your disciples. We desire to have our treasure be in heaven with You. Amen.