

## Invest in your spiritual health: *The Divine Service*

LESSON AT A GLANCE	
<p><b>Facilitator Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Your Journey episodes can be found on the <a href="#">NAC USA YouTube</a> channel <i>and</i> in the <a href="#">NAC USA mobile app</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>I wonder...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why do we have Divine Services?</li> <li>➤ What is the format/liturgy of a Divine Service?</li> <li>➤ What is my role in the Divine Service?</li> </ul> <p><b>I believe...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In the Divine Service, people come together to worship God, praise Him, thank Him, hear the Word of God, and receive the sacraments. (Catechism Q&amp;A question 613)</li> <li>➤ The liturgy of the divine service is the order and combination of music, prayers, Bible readings, preaching, dispensation of the sacraments, and blessings.</li> <li>➤ Through prayerful preparation, the listener is to accept the word in faith and put it into practice in daily life in thought, word, and deed. (Catechism question Q&amp;A 628)</li> </ul> <p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ IGNITE Bible</li> <li>➤ Catechism Q&amp;A</li> <li>➤ For Your Journey                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Episode 9 – Why Go To Divine Service?</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Something to play a video (TV, computer, tablet, projector, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>References:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bible: Numbers 6:22-27, Matthew 18: 20, Acts 2:42, Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 13: 14 ,Colossians 1:28, Hebrews 10:25</li> <li>➤ Catechism Q&amp;A questions 370, 613-630, 643-653</li> </ul>
PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
<p>What do a Major League Baseball game and the Divine Service have in common? Join us tomorrow for small group at _____ to find out.</p>	
POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)	
<p><b>Facilitator Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This message can be customized with local information as necessary.</li> <li>• “For Your Journey” episodes can be found on the <a href="#">NAC USA YouTube channel</a> and in the <a href="#">NAC USA mobile app</a>.</li> </ul>	<p>Dear Parents,</p> <p>This week we started a new semester of the Youth THRIVE small group curriculum, “Invest in your spiritual health”. The specific topic this week was the Divine Service Experience. The Divine Service is an encounter between God and Man and we have an active role in the experience. Considering sharing with your child ways that you prepare for a Divine Service, or perhaps even coming up with a family routine to help each other prepare for Divine Services. A possible conversation starter is <a href="#">Episode 9 of “For Your Journey”</a></p> <p>Partnering with you,                      Your Youth Leaders</p>

**SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)**

<p><b>Facilitator Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday’s sermon?</li> <li>➤ What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?</li> <li>➤ So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?</li> <li>➤ Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?</li> </ul>
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**HOOK (up to 10 minutes)**

<p><b>Facilitator Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How are you and how are you feeling today?</li> <li>➤ Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week?</li> </ul> <p>Ask the students, “How would you define ‘health?’”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consider listing their answers on a whiteboard or chart paper</li> <li>➤ After the students have had a chance to contribute some answers, supplement with the dictionary definition (from merriam-webster.com) :             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The condition of being sound in body, mind, or spirit</li> <li>▪ The general condition of the body (freedom from physical disease or pain)</li> <li>▪ A condition in which someone or something is thriving or doing well</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Clarify with the students that someone or something could be in good health or bad health. Something described as “healthy” is generally good as opposed to something described as “unhealthy”.</li> </ul> <p>Introduce the new semester. Say something like, “With this discussion we are starting the next semester of the Youth THRIVE small group curriculum, ‘Invest in your spiritual health’. Why would it be important to invest in your spiritual health?”</p> <p>This week’s discussion will explore the divine service, which is one of the ways we invest in our spiritual health.</p>
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**SET THE STAGE (1 minute)**

<p><b>Facilitator Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Preview the “I wonder” questions with the students.</li> </ul>	<p><b>I wonder...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why do we have Divine Services?</li> <li>➤ What is the format/liturgy of a Divine Service?</li> <li>➤ What is my role in the Divine Service?</li> </ul>
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**LESSON (up to 25 minutes)**

**Facilitator Notes:**

**Student Question #1 Why do we have divine services?**

- A divine service is the activity of God upon human beings. At the same time, it is a work of human beings for God.
- In the divine service, people come together to worship God, praise Him, and thank Him. They also gather in order to hear the word of God and receive the sacraments.
- A divine service is an encounter between God and man. In the divine service, the congregation perceives the presence of the triune God and experiences that God serves them in love.
- The service is “divine” because of the presence of God in the divine service through the invocation “In the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”, the Trinitarian opening formula (Catechism Q&A question 617)
- In the divine service, we hear a sermon message. Since the sermon is inspired by God, listeners experience that the spoken word is “alive”, and therefore that:
  - Questions of life and faith are answered
  - Faith is strengthened
  - Comfort is given
  - Confidence is imparted
  - Admonitions and help in decision-making are provided

The word from the altar provides orientation in order to live in accordance with the will of God. (Catechism Q&A question 624)

**Student Question #2 What did divine services look like in the Bible?**

- The term ‘divine service’ doesn’t appear in the Bible, yet based on the previous definition of what a divine service is and why we have them, the event of a divine service definitely appear in the Bible.
  - In Old Testament times, the divine service consisted primarily of the sacrificial service, in which the priests would bring gifts to God. They also had the commission to impart the blessing of God to the people, like in Numbers 6:22-27. (Catechism Q&A question 614)
  - In New Testament times, Jesus’ teaching, death, resurrection, ascension, and promise to return impacted peoples’ encounters with God. Particularly after Jesus’ death, gatherings of the early Christian congregations consisted of the proclamation of the gospel, the professions of the congregation, collective prayers, hymns, and the celebration of Holy Communion. (Catechism Q&A question 615)

**Student Question #3 What does ‘liturgy’ mean? Why do we need a liturgy?**

- Liturgy is the customary public worship performed by a religious group, according to its beliefs, customs and traditions. As a religious occurrence, liturgy is a communal response to and participation in, the sacred through activity reflecting praise, thanksgiving, supplication or repentance. (Wikipedia)

- The word "liturgy" has its origin in Greek words meaning 'public workings' or 'the participation of the people'.
- A liturgy helps create order, structure, and security through repeated and established formulas so that people can participate in the overall experience.
  - From the pre-discussion text message: even sporting events have a form of liturgy.
    - If the students have ever been to a baseball game before or have seen one on TV (particularly a professional baseball game), they know that there is a set order to what happens at that experience:
      - The National Anthem is sung and people know to stand up, remove their hat if they are wearing one, and perhaps sing along.
      - The first pitch is ceremoniously thrown out by a celebrity or some public figure
      - The actual game starts
      - Perhaps there is a team chant or hand motion
      - At the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, everyone stands up and sings a song (Take me out to the ballgame) for the 7<sup>th</sup> inning stretch
    - Not only is there an order to what happens, there are other components that contribute to the liturgy of the experience:
      - Perhaps there are team colors or other garments that spectators wear at the ballgame
      - Perhaps there are certain foods that are only eaten at the ballgame
  - Overall, the order of events, the music, the food, the clothing all contribute to the experience. Having certain elements repeated help create order and provide security to spectators because they are able to know what to expect from the experience.
    - Just like if you were to bring a friend to their first ballgame and explain what was happening, you would most likely explain to a friend what was happening if you brought them to their first divine service as well. After someone has experienced it, they are able to know what to expect because the order is established.

**Student Question #4 What is the format / liturgy of the divine service?**

- The liturgy of the divine service is the order and combination of music, prayers, Bible readings, preaching, dispensation of the sacraments, and blessings.

- Consider writing the youth's answers to Student Question #5 on a whiteboard or chart paper as they contribute ideas.

**Student Question #5 What is my role in the divine service?**

- Through prayerful preparation, the listener is to accept the word in faith and put it into practice in daily life in thought, word, and deed. (Catechism Q&A question 628).
- Like so much in life, what we get out of a divine service will be determined by how much we have put into the divine service: pre-service preparation, in service participation (listening, note-taking, singing, praying, etc.), and post-service (application to our life; change in our thoughts, words, deeds)

**Student Question #6 What are ways to prepare for the divine service?**

Ask the students to contribute ideas. After the students have had an opportunity to list a few, affirm and/or supplement with tactics from the below list:

- Already during the week, pray for the upcoming divine service
- Through prayer and contemplation, identify parts of yourself that need God's intervention or truth (ask God to reveal what He wants you to learn through the divine service)
- Arrive early enough to quiet your mind and be ready to receive from God
- Arrive early enough to participate in the worship experience
- Reduce distractions like cell phones or other technology
- Pray for the minister holding the service
- Take all opportunities to attend divine services
- Come to the divine service with a sincere desire to know God's word
- Prepare your heart before you hear the message
- Reflect on how the message applies to you
- Pray that God will grant you a will and ability to put into practice what you hear in the divine service
- Reflect on the week and be repentant for moments that go against God's will
- Contemplate the sacrifice of Christ and ask to experience His strength, presence, and virtue through the celebration of Holy Communion
- Read the words of the hymns that will be sung that day
  - Sometimes the headings or margins of a song show if a song is based on Scripture.

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)**

**Facilitator Notes:**

**Wrap up the lesson with how practicing the discipline of submission can deepen our relationship with God.**

**Close with the "I Wonder...." questions**

- Ask a student to read an "I Wonder..." question, and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe..." statement or an "I Believe..." statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.
- Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to renounce Satan and surrendering themselves to God in obedience. We gain strength to renounce Satan and surrender to God in the divine services.

**I wonder...**

- Why do we have Divine Services?
- What is the format/liturgy of a Divine Service?
- What is my role in the Divine Service?

**I believe...**

- In the divine service, people come together to worship God, praise Him, thank Him, to hear the word of God and to receive the sacraments (Catechism Q&A question 613)
- The liturgy of the divine service is the order and combination of music, prayers, Bible readings, preaching, dispensation of the sacraments, and blessings.
- Through prayerful preparation, the listener is to accept the word in faith and put it into practice in daily life in thought, word, and deed (Catechism Q&A question 628)

**Point to Ponder....**

Another point to appreciate about the liturgy is how it is rooted in tradition and links us to our past. There is an element of heritage knowing that Christians, and perhaps some of our own family, have brought praise to God in worship, said prayers, received blessings, and celebrated Holy Communion together in the context of a divine service, like we do today.

**A Call to Action....**

This week, commit to at least one of the tips from question #6 as a way to prepare for upcoming divine services. Document afterwards how that tip impacted your divine service experience.

**Weekly Reflections**

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

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What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

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So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

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Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

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**Point to Ponder...**

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**Call to Action...**

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**1. Why do we have divine services?**

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**2. What did divine services look like in the Bible?**

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**3. What does 'liturgy' mean? Why do we need a liturgy?**

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**4. What is the format / liturgy of the divine service?**

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**5. What is my role in the divine service?**

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**6. What are ways to prepare for the divine service?**

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**Point to Ponder:** Another point to appreciate about the liturgy is how it is rooted in tradition and links us to our past. There is an element of heritage knowing that Christians, and perhaps some of our own family, have brought praise to God in worship, said prayers, received blessings, and celebrated Holy Communion together in the context of a divine service, like we do today.

**Call to Action:** This week, commit to at least one of the tips from question #6 as a way to prepare for upcoming divine services. Document afterwards how that tip impacted your divine service experience.