

Weekly Reflections

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

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

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

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

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *What are spiritual gifts?*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What are spiritual gifts? ➤ Are spiritual gifts the same as natural talents, fruit of the Spirit, or spiritual disciplines? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spiritual gifts are gifts from God that are revealed when we engage the Holy Spirit. ➤ I believe and understand that while my spiritual gifts are different than my natural talents, the fruit of the Spirit, and spiritual disciplines, all four are important for my life as a follower of Christ.
References: <i>Spiritual Gifts Definitions</i> handout, Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:11-16	

1. What are spiritual gifts?

2. What are the differences between spiritual gifts and natural talents or abilities?

3. What are the differences and similarities between spiritual gifts and fruit of the Spirit?

4. What are the differences between spiritual gifts and spiritual disciplines?

Point to Ponder: Being guided by the Holy Spirit and the apostles, the first Christians helped each other and built up the church. Today we are asked to do the very same thing using our spiritual gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Call to Action: This week, think about what spiritual gifts you have seen being put into action around you. What gifts have you seen your parents display? What gifts have you seen your teachers display?

Write a prayer to thank God for empowering and equipping us to do His work, and to help each other.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Accepting God's call*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Does God have a specific purpose for my life? ➤ What if I don't feel I am able to carry out what God has called me to do? ➤ Does my calling from God affect all parts of my life? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God designed and created me with a purpose in mind. ➤ God has given me spiritual gifts to help me in my calling. ➤ The gifts that I have through the Holy Spirit are active in every part of my life. I can live out what I am called to do in my church, school, family, and community.
References: Exodus 3-4, Isaiah 6:8, Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:1-16	

1. What do you think of when you hear the word "call" or "calling"?

2. How did Moses respond to God's call?

3. How can we hear God's calling for us?

4. How does God equip us for what He calls us to do?

5. What do you feel your calling could be right now?

Point to Ponder: What gifts might I have, and how will those help me to fulfil God's calling?

Call to Action: Take some time for prayerful reflection and introspection, and ask God what He is calling you to do. Read the **FLASHPOINT: Communication** on page 74 of your IGNITE Bible. If you feel that God is calling you to do something, think about starting a journal to document the journey. Write down how you feel God is directing or speaking to you. Write down people who know God and know His Word that you can talk to about what you feel called to do.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Put it into action, in your family*

What are some ways you could serve Christ by serving your family?

What is needed in order to implement some of these serving ideas?

If the serving idea is something that would only happen once, how could you turn it into a way of serving that gets repeated?

Why is it important to serve Christ by serving your family?

A Point to Ponder....

- Why is it sometimes difficult to serve the people closest to us?

A Call to Action...

- This week, serve Christ by serving your family.

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Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Edifying the Body of Christ*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is the Body of Christ? ➤ What responsibility do I have in the Body of Christ? ➤ How can I appreciate the gifts of others in the Body of Christ? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Body of Christ is made up of all those who are baptized, believe in, and profess Christ. (Catechism Q&A question 375) ➤ I am called to use and develop the gifts that God has given me to edify and build up the Body of Christ. ➤ Many different gifts are necessary and I can recognize and affirm them in others.
References: Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-31, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 4:11-16; Catechism Q&A questions 374, 375; Catechism 6.2.3.1	

1. What does the image of the Body of Christ mean?

2. What has God given to all who are a part of the Body of Christ?

3. How can you edify the Body of Christ?

4. How can you appreciate the gifts of all who work along with you as members of the Body of Christ?

Point to Ponder: Think about your gifts, passions, and godly purposes as part of the congregation, your family, and community.

A Call to Action: This week, read the **FLASHPOINT: Maturity** in your IGNITE Bible on page 1237. Think about the people you have been called to serve with in the congregation, and write two of them a thank you note showing your appreciation and thankfulness that you can serve God together with them.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *My mission*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why does our church have a mission statement? ➤ Why should the mission statement be important to me? ➤ How could the mission statement influence my actions? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In any organization, a vision statement tells me where we are going, and a mission statement tells me how to get there. ➤ I believe in the mission of our church, and as a member, I want to invest and contribute to it with my time, possessions, and gifts. ➤ I believe I should live my life in a way that reflects the gospel of Jesus Christ and the love of God to those around me.
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References: Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 2:10

Our Mission is reaching out to all people in order to teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptize them with water and the Holy Spirit. Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others.

1. Why does our church have a mission statement?

2. Write each phrase of the mission statement in your own words.

3. Why should the mission statement be important to me?

4. How could the mission statement influence my actions?

Point to Ponder: Why is having a mission statement important? What might happen if our church (or any organization) didn't have a mission statement?

Call to Action: Memorize the church's mission statement, so that you can more easily filter your words and actions through it and determine what contributes to the mission and vision of the church.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Put it into action, in your congregation*

What are some ways you could serve Christ by serving your congregation?

What is needed in order to implement some of these serving ideas?

If the serving idea is something that would only happen once, how could you turn it into a way of serving that gets repeated?

Why is it important to serve Christ by serving your congregation?

A Point to Ponder....

- What would happen if everyone in the congregation decided to just stop serving and contributing to the congregation?

A Call to Action...

- This week, serve Christ by serving your congregation.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *A living sacrifice*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What compels me to serve Christ? ➤ How do my reasons for serving Christ affect my life? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I serve and devote myself to Christ out of thankfulness for what He has done and accomplished for me through His sacrifice. I surrender all that I am, have, and do for the sake of His glory. ➤ I believe that my life should be a profession of Christ, not just in words, but through my actions.
References: Catechism Q&A 732-736; Bible: Romans 12:1-8, Ephesians 2:1-10	

1. What are some differences between sacrifices in the Old Testament and sacrifices in the New Testament?

2. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice?

3. What compels me to serve Christ?

4. How do my reasons for serving Christ affect my life?

Point to Ponder: Can you be a Christian and make the decision to not be a living sacrifice?

Call to Action: Refer to the hook activity. Whichever item you chose to give up for the week, replace the time you would spend doing that activity with deepening your relationship with Christ. (You may want to consider continuing your reading of Romans that was begun in the lesson.)

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *What is enough?*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does it mean to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind? ➤ What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fulfilling Jesus' commandments is not easy. God wants my best, deserves my best, and demands my best. I must fully devote my life to Him, and pray for His grace to cover me where I fall short. ➤ Loving my neighbor means looking for opportunities to serve them, and sometimes that might mean buying and accumulating a little less for myself, so I have more to give.
References: Malachi 1:6-14, Matthew 16:24-25, Luke 8:4-15, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 13:2-8	

1. How do you respond to God's love?

2. What does it mean to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind?

3. What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

Point to Ponder: Is there such a thing as "easy Christianity"?

Call to Action: Take a few moments alone with God to think earnestly, and journal about the following questions: *Am I willing to say to God that He can have whatever He wants? Do I believe that wholehearted commitment to Him is more important than any other thing or person in my life? Do I believe that nothing I do in this life will ever matter unless it is about loving God and loving the people He has made?*

DEAR WORLD: LET'S STOP GIVING OUR CRAP TO THE POOR

I was getting ready to leave for a trip to Kenya a couple of years ago, when a church emailed and asked if Mercy House had any specific needs. I quickly responded and told them I wanted to give Maureen, our Kenyan Director, an iPhone, so we could communicate during (almost weekly) power outages. I told them if they would buy one instead, we could use the money for other needed items.

On the church's Facebook feed a few days later, I saw an appeal that said something like, "We want to support a ministry with a used iPhone. If you have an old one you can donate, please let us know." I was given an older iPhone a week later. On the ground in Kenya, I realized it wouldn't hold a charge for more than 10 minutes. The phone was junk.

So, when I left Kenya, I gave Maureen my used one that worked.

The church contacted me after the trip and asked how Maureen liked her new phone? I told them it was useless and said, "Don't worry about it. I gave her mine." "Oh, we feel badly, please let us replace your phone! We want to buy you a brand new one, an upgrade. You deserve it," I told them I used my husband's upgrade and already had a replacement phone. "Ok. Instead we would like to write you a \$500 check for the inconvenience."

"Give it to Maureen," I said.

And they did. While the church tried to make it right, I was bothered by the fact they were more than willing to buy me a new phone I didn't need. I have noticed this mentality permeates the Church as a whole: *The poor will be happy with our leftovers. They don't know any better. They live in Africa or Honduras, they don't need the latest technology or the best brands like we do. They will appreciate anything we give because something is more than nothing.*

Why do we give others – often those in service to the poor or the poor themselves – something we wouldn't keep or give ourselves?

Somehow collecting clothes for immigrants has become the perfect opportunity to get rid of stuff we don't want and gathering baby items for new moms is the perfect excuse to toss out stained and worn clothing we wouldn't dare use again. I've packed suitcases with beautiful donations, but mostly I've pilfered through piles of junk donated in the name of Jesus.

It's time to stop giving our crap to the poor.

There's nothing wrong with used or secondhand. It's often my first and favorite choice. Many organizations and ministries depend on used gifts. But if we give used, it should be our best. I'm not saying when we clean out older clothes or toys or things we don't use any longer and donate them – that this is wrong. I am saying if we give it away, it should be something we would use ourselves.

The poor may not have wealth, but they have dignity. I've met people without electricity or running water who swept their dirt floors daily, pressed their clothes neatly, walked miles to work

on muddy roads, dodging sewage and never had a speck of dirt on them. They value their own worth, we should too.

I'll never forget meeting a woman in Africa who supported her large family by reselling used clothes from America. But when she held up clothes to show me what was for sale – clothes Americans had donated in clothing drives – they were tattered and stained. I was embarrassed. Her *best* depended on our *worst*.

Just because our donation feels like we are helping, in reality, we could be hurting. Bales of used clothes are sold to African countries for resale and they end up flooding the market and often put local textile businesses and seamstresses out of business.

It's time to think about not only what we give and how we give it, but also why we give it. Just because it makes us feel better (and cleans out our garage at the same time), doesn't mean it's the best for those in need. Perhaps we should look a little deeper into our hearts and wallets when we can say, I don't have money to give to the poor, but I have a lot of stuff. Maybe we need to buy less stuff, so we have more to give?

"We're not giving what we're called to give, unless that giving affects how we live – affects what we put on our plate and where we make our home and hang our hat and what kind of threads we've got to have on our back. Surplus Giving is the leftover you can afford to give; Sacrificial Giving is the love gift that changes how you live – because the love of Christ has changed you. God doesn't want your leftovers. God wants your love overtures, your first-overs, because He is your first love." - Ann Voskamp

There have been times over the years, I've gasped and grinned at the beautiful items I've sorted and packed for the impoverished. When we give our best, we are living our best. We are saying with our donation, *you are valuable*. We are whispering with our gift, *you are worthy of the best*. We have the opportunity to speak self-worth when we give generously.

It's a promise for them. It's a promise for us.

"Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed." - Proverbs 19:17

The next time we have the opportunity to share what we have with someone who is in need. Let's give from the pile we want to keep, not from the one we want to throw out.

- by Kristen / October 13, 2014 / www.wearethatfamily.com

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Characteristics of a trader*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Should I feel compelled to serve others? ➤ What does Jesus teach me about serving others? ➤ Who is my neighbor? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I show my love for Jesus and fulfill His commandments by serving those around me. ➤ Jesus teaches me that being a Christian means a life of service. ➤ My neighbor can be anyone with whom we come into contact. (Catechism Q&A question 287)
References: Bible verses: Matthew 25:31-46, Mark 9:35, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 12:22-34, John 15:9-17, 1 John 3:17 ;  Catechism Q&A questions 286-290	

Student Question #1: Given what you see on the news and social media, what would you say most people think life is all about?

Student Question #2: What four things are characteristics of a trader?

Student Question #3: What must we choose to do daily?

Student Question #4: In following the Samaritan's example of being a neighbor, we too want to strive to have:

Point to Ponder....

Why isn't talking about faith in Jesus enough? Why do I have to help people too?

A Call to Action....

Think of a distraction that deters you from having alert eyes as a neighbor. Commit to reducing that distraction. Ask a parent or friend to help hold you accountable to the commitment.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Broken relationships*

<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is my relationship to the world around me? ➤ Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends? ➤ Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others? 	<p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God created me with 4 relationships: my relationship to God, to myself, to others, and to creation. ➤ When Adam and Eve sinned, these 4 relationships were broken. And because we are all broken, the systems (economic, social, political, and religious) we've created are also broken. ➤ I believe that when I serve others, I'm walking alongside them as we both work to reconcile our broken relationships with God and the world around us.
<p>References: Genesis 1:27-29, Genesis 3:7-19, Matthew 22:37-40,</p>	

1. What is my relationship to the world around me?

2. Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends?

3. Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others?

4. In what ways could we reconcile the broken relationships in our lives? In the lives of others?

Point to Ponder: Take a few minutes to think of the people closest to you (parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.). All of those people are also broken. Do you believe that?

Call to Action: Whether we consider ourselves to be in poverty or not, we still experience the same 4 broken relationships: our relationship with God, with self, with others, and with creation. Write down how you think these relationships in your life are broken.

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Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Recognizing and responding*

I wonder... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What should my perspective be when I'm serving others? ➤ How do I respond to those in need? 	I believe... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I believe that every person is made in the image of God, that we are all broken, but that we all have something to give. ➤ I believe that as a Christian, I have the responsibility to respond to opportunities that God gives me to serve the people around me in ways that utilize my gifts, my possessions, my time, and my talents. My serving will take into consideration their natural and spiritual needs.
References: Matthew 25:35-40, Luke 12:22-34, Ephesians 2:10	

1. What should my perspective be when I'm serving others?

2. How do I respond to those in need?

3. What does Jesus teach about responding to those in need?

Point to Ponder: *What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like. – St. Augustine*

Call to Action: Think back on last week. Where did you miss the opportunity to serve others? Where did you miss the chance to be kind? Write a prayer asking God to give you open eyes and an open heart to those around you. Pray that you can depend on Him to show His love to the world through you.

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Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Put it into action, in your community*

What are some ways you could serve Christ by serving your community?

What is needed in order to implement some of these serving ideas?

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Why is it important to serve Christ by serving your community?

A Point to Ponder....

- Philippians 2:3-5
Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

A Call to Action...

- This week, serve Christ by serving your community.