

5

Walking with the Poor

- Themes**
- Walking in the shoes of another
 - Empathizing with those in need
 - Praying for peace and justice
 - Stepping outside of ourselves

- Suggested Uses**
- In a class on Catholic social teaching
 - On a mission trip
 - As a morning prayer on a peace and justice retreat
 - For a Christian leadership program

- Forms of Prayer**
- Scripture
 - Reflection
 - Music
 - Shared prayer
 - Symbolic prayer
 - Petition

- Extra Prayer Ideas**
- A. Invite the teens to pray the stations of the cross in bare feet or stocking feet.
 - B. Imagine the type of sandals Jesus wore. What were they like? What can they tell us about the simple carpenter?
 - C. Ask the teens to reflect on Matthew 25:31–46. How does this Scripture reading relate to the saying “Do not judge your brother until you have walked a mile in his moccasins”?
 - D. Ask the teens to count the number of shoes and boots in their closets at home. Challenge them to donate a certain amount of money or time for every pair they own. Suggest that every time they put their shoes on, they pray for those who are poor.

In Jesus's Shoes

- Materials** Gather the following items before beginning the prayer service:
- pillar candles, one for each group of six to eight
 - matches for each group of six to eight
 - a CD of reflective music
 - a CD player
 - a copy of the CD *Big Tent Revival Greatest Hits*, by Big Tent Revival (Ardent Records, 2002)
 - one copy of resource 5–A, “Walking in Jesus’s Shoes”
 - THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE* or another Bible
 - eight copies of resource 5–B, “Prayers of Petition for Those That Are Poor”
 - pens or pencils
 - small pieces of paper in the shape of a shoe
 - safety pins, one for each teen

- Preparation**
- Place the pillar candles where the small groups of teens will be sitting on the floor.
 - Ask one teen to prepare the Scripture reading:
 - John 13:3–5, 12–15 (Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet)
 - Ask one teen to prepare the reflection on resource 5–A, “Walking in Jesus’s Shoes”
 - Ask eight teens to prepare the prayer on resource 5–B, “Prayers of Petition for Those That Are Poor.”
 - Have quiet music playing as the teens enter the prayer space.
 - As the teens enter, ask them to take off their shoes and leave them outside the prayer space.
 - Invite the teens to sit in close circles with their small groups.

Order of Prayer

Call to Prayer **Prayer Leader:** We are called to proclaim God’s justice and to strive to change the causes of oppression and poverty. We must witness the Gospel in a world of excess, wealth, and selfishness. We are called especially to promote the dignity of the poor. We must make a radical response to Christ and be daring in the ways we reach out to those in need.

Opening Song Play the song “What Would Jesus Do?” from the *Big Tent Revival Greatest Hits* CD.

Reflection

Reflection Leader:

Imagine walking in Jesus's shoes (or sandals),
talking to a Samaritan woman,
healing someone on the Sabbath,
walking on water,
tossing money changers out of the Temple,
standing up to the Pharisees,
reaching out to lepers,
urging people to love their enemies,
telling people, "Blessed are those who are persecuted" [*Matthew 5:10*].
We have some pretty big shoes to fill!

Reading

Direct the Scripture reader to read John 13:3–5, 12–15.

Prayers of Petition

Prayer Leader: The Gospel calls us to be hope for those who are poor. Let us listen to the voices of teens, in our country and throughout the world, that desperately need hope. Let us add our prayers to their voices. Our response is, "We will love you and pray for you." **All respond.**

Voice 1: My name is Josef. I have lived my whole life in a country torn apart by war. I am always afraid. I can only dream of what it must be like to be at peace. Please pray for me, my sisters and brothers. **All respond.**

Voice 2: My name is Miguel. A hurricane came through and destroyed our island. There is nothing left where my home once stood. I can't even find some of my friends. Please pray for me, my brothers and sisters. **All respond.**

Voice 3: My name is Sanche. Our land has been without rain for a long time. Nothing grows here anymore. We sometimes go for days without anything to eat. And many of us are dying. Please pray for us, my sisters and brothers. **All respond.**

Voice 4: My name is Anna, but you will never meet me. I will never get to live a life like yours and see the pain and joy of being a teenager. My mother decided to have an abortion. Please pray for me, my brothers and sisters. **All respond.**

Voice 5: My name is Matthew. It all started at a party where everyone was trying cocaine. I never thought I could get addicted. Now all I think about every minute is getting more coke. Please pray for me, my sisters and brothers. **All respond.**

Voice 6: My name is Andrew. My parents are going through a divorce. All they do is fight and blame me for everything. I feel like I am torn apart. I want it all to end. Please pray for me, my brothers and sisters. **All respond.**

Voice 7: My name is Kristin. I ran away from home when I was twelve, and I have lived on the street for two years. Most of the time I am hungry, cold, and scared. I wonder if I can ever go home again. Please pray for me, my sisters and brothers. **All respond.**

Voice 8: My name is Jean. I am really frightened about growing up when I see all the awful things that are going on in the world. It is almost as if people have forgotten all about God. Please pray for all of us, my brothers and sisters. **All respond.**

Prayer Leader: Sisters and brothers, we offer these prayers to our Lord Jesus, who not only calls us to hope but also to help build a just and peaceful world. We offer these prayers of hope in the name of the risen Lord. Amen.

Small-Group Prayer

Prayer Leader: I invite you now to think about someone who is poor, sick, lonely, scared, beaten, neglected, abused, or helpless. The person could be someone you have met and perhaps know by name or face, or it could be someone you have never met but want to pray for.

Share with others in your group the person you would like to pray for. Invite them to walk in the shoes of that person for a few moments and share with your group what the person might be going through.

[Distribute the pens or pencils, the pieces of paper in the shape of a shoe, and the safety pins.] After you pray for that person, write his or her name (or a simple description, such as “homeless woman”) on your shoe intention slip. Say the following prayer: “I will keep you in my prayers and close to my heart.” Then pin the intention over your heart.

When each person in your group has had a chance to share his or her story and prayer, gather your shoes and leave quietly.