

## Family Formation

Session 21: Fort Calvary

Handout: “An Intercessor Responds”, “Safe inside My heart”

### Background for Parents

We have everything that we need to answer Jesus’ call to come into His Heart. We have every weapon and protection necessary. We are all being asked to accept this role of being an intercessor and carrying each other’s burdens. We can not do this on our own power, but we are being invited into Jesus’ most Sacred Heart. He can do it all!! He just needs our “yes” to use our lives.

### With the family

Prayer experience: (// indicates “pause”) Have the family close their eyes and go down deep. Read, “Imagine a tall, sturdy castle// There is a drawbridge and a moat around the castle. // This castle seems very inviting. // Imagine being invited by Jesus into the castle// and you find out that Jesus Himself is the castle!!! Jesus is the heart, deep inside the castle// and you feel this tremendous draw to come inside. // You are on the drawbridge, walking very carefully.// You can feel this tremendous pull to go across the bridge// right into the castle. // You are being invited by Jesus Himself into His heart. // // You can open your eyes.” Discuss experience.

Jesus Himself is the castle. We are being drawn into Jesus’ Sacred Heart. We retreat into this castle of Jesus’ Heart—He is our defense. We are all being drawn into the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The drawbridge is our invitation, but the moat represents things that get us off track. What are the things in our lives that can get us off track? What are the lures of the world? Possible dangers of the moat can be a desiring to be popular, having lots of money, going the way of the world, sinning, watching bad TV programs, etc.

We have everything that we need to answer Jesus’ call to come into His Heart. We have every weapon and protection necessary. What are our weapons? God’s love, being able to always rely on the Lord for everything, the Lord’s direction on how to “fight” in battle, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, seeing what God sees, working together as a team, love for others, etc.

Our wall of defense is that God loves me and will protect me, God’s armor, being fed by God’s love, not being alone as we have our family, the good angels, and the saints.

Ask the family what they think Jesus’ life was like. Do they think everyone loved Him and it was an easy life? Or did Jesus have to face disappointments, hurts, and suffering? (John’s Gospel especially reveals the struggle Jesus went through on our behalf.) So when bad things happen to us, does it mean that we’ve lost God’s favor, or does it mean that we are truly following in Jesus’ footsteps? Are we becoming like the Lamb?

As we are being drawn into Jesus’ Sacred Heart, He is also inviting us to accept this call to be intercessors. Jesus is asking us to pray for His people and to accept hardships on behalf of others. He is reassuring us that He will provide us with all the weapons and defenses that we could possibly ever need. Are we willing to accept this call and accept suffering in our life? Will we allow our lives to be like Jesus’?

When Jesus allows us to experience difficulties, it just may be because we are willing and strong enough to carry other people’s burdens—maybe it’s because we are strong in our love for God and He knows that we will not abandon Him. Maybe difficulties happen to strengthen us.

Part of being in this battle is accepting transferences. Have 2 backpacks. Fill one with heavy things labeled anger, greed, hatred, etc. Fill another one with light things, Holy Spirit things such as white styrofoam pieces labeled kindness, gentleness, mercy, etc. You can use anything that doesn’t weigh much. Give these backpacks to two people in your family. Have the person with the light load accept one burden from the one with the heavy backpack. The person with the light backpack is accepting a “transfer” of another’s pain, emotions, or sin into their own life. Keep switching the load until there is a noticeable difference. Now, because their load has been lightened, the original heavy load person feels like they can do more and the original light load person is starting to feel burdened. Imagine being a person weighed down with much pain and sins, carrying a heavy burden for a long time!

So we are being called into the ministry of intercession. But just what does this mean? How can we do this ministry in my life? Fill out worksheet, "An Intercessor Responds."

Possible points to include from "An Intercessor Responds" worksheet. (These are suggestions—some of them are very hard to do in real life—hopefully this will give you an idea of how an intercessor works prayer into their everyday life.)

- 1) This presents an opportunity to . . .
  - pray for patience for themselves and all those who need patience.
  - pray for all those who are facing difficulties with people "messing up" things in their lives.
  - pray for peace and love in your family and in all family situations.
- 2) This presents an opportunity to . . .
  - look to Jesus on the Cross and think of how He was whipped, mocked, and rejected. Add your pain and sufferings to His.
  - pray for all people who are rejected—ask God to let them know how special they are.
  - pray for those who have hurt you—pray for love to fill children's hearts.
- 3) This presents an opportunity to . . .
  - give up something that you really wanted, to help you thank God for all that He has provided you with in your life. You can give away your bag of Doritos.
  - share with this classmate. Pray for generosity to share all the gifts we have been given.
  - gather your friends and see if everyone can contribute one thing from their lunch for this classmate.
  - you can pray for all those who have trouble sharing.
- 4) This presents an opportunity to . . .
  - thank God for this special honor.
  - pray for yourself and all those who have been blessed with intelligence to use all their gifts for the glory of God.

Point out that being an intercessor and praying for others and carrying their burdens can zap all our energy!! It can be really hard. How do we stay strong and not be fatigued?

- 1) Know who the real enemy is. In Ephesians 6, St. Paul tells us to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens." Knowing who the real enemy is, is half the battle!
- 2) St. Paul also tells us "Draw your strength from the Lord and from His mighty power" (Eph 6:10). We just have to acknowledge that we can't do it on our own; it will need to be all the Lord and His power to love.
- 3) We need to know who we are, who God wants us to be, and most of all, we need to know and believe very deeply that God loves ME and will never abandon or forsake me.
- 4) We have to be willing to be in this battle and get dirty!
  - Jesus was in the desert 40 days, battling the devil but it made Him strong.
- 5) We are not to judge others and their sins. The intercessor is constantly aware that they themselves are not completely pure. The intercessor is still working at becoming more like Jesus themselves, so they have no time to judge another's sin. Judging another can really weigh us down and impair our ability to fight this battle. Recall that our battle is not against people, but evil spirits that are trying to tempt people to sin.

Are you willing to play on Jesus' team? There is a cost.

- Sometimes we will have to love when we don't feel like it.
- Point out in the backpack example, the one with lighter backpack may or may not be willing to take on some of the other one's pain, anger, hatred, etc.

As we love even when someone has hurt us, what will happen to our hearts?

Imagine two hearts—one filled with stone versus a heart like a sponge. God's life-giving water just pours off the stone heart, but the sponge-heart absorbs the water and gets bigger. When we love, care, and sacrifice for others, some of the hard stone within our heart will turn soft like the sponge. Then we will be able to soak up God's love more easily. We will have more room to love and to receive the love of others.

Satan wants to make you think that you're just a kid, that you can't really make a difference

-Satan wants to defeat you before the battle even starts, BUT DON'T LISTEN!

-You have been working at hearing God's voice for about 5 months now, and the fact that you can hear God's voice, or are working on hearing His voice, makes you a major threat to Satan. We listen for what God says, and then we do whatever He tells us.

-There are many young saints, so you are not too young: Blessed Jacinta and Francesco, St. Rose of Lima, St. Therese, St. Dominic Savio, to name a few.

Whenever you are being tempted, you always have to look beyond the temptation to see what you are being distracted from. What greater good will be accomplished that it's so important to get me off course right now?

So what is our answer? Will we allow Him to use our lives?

**GOD HAS CHOSEN A GOOD TEAM IN YOU!!**

#### Throughout the week

Read a book on one of the young saints mentioned above. Emphasize to your family, that it's not your age that matters, but the love in your heart.

Possible activity: Act out "Fort Calvary." What are the 4 walls, who are the bad guys in the moat trying to prevent you from crossing the drawbridge? What are your weapons?

## An Intercessor Responds

The way that we are to act as intercessors is in a very hidden way. Most of the time, no one will even know that we are praying or making sacrifices. If we can do this in secret, it will strengthen us. It will bring many graces to others who need them and in turn, will bring much glory and honor to God, our Father. Jesus tells us, "As I have done, so must you do."

We need to challenge ourselves to consciously be aware to act like Jesus as often as possible.

1) Your sister goes into your room and starts to mess with your things.

Automatic response: \_\_\_\_\_

Intercessor's response: \_\_\_\_\_

2) You are the last one picked for a team at school. You hear someone say that it would be better to play 1 person short than to have you on their team.

Automatic Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Intercessor's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

3) You are at school. A classmate has forgotten their lunch and does not have money for a hot lunch, so they will have to go without any lunch. You brought your lunch and you are very hungry. You were looking forward to your lunch, especially that bag of Doritos.

Automatic Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Intercessor's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

4) You are chosen for a special Math award at school.

Automatic Response:

\_\_\_\_\_

Intercessor's Response: \_\_\_\_\_

Some good ways to help me to remember to CHOOSE to act like Jesus:

\_\_\_\_\_

Our whole life can be a prayer if I choose to be aware of my opportunities throughout the day. "Lord, help me to be ready and willing to pray for Your people at all times. Open my eyes and my heart to recognize opportunities to serve You. Amen."

# Safe inside My heart

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Connect:

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|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| D1-B3   | D1-F3   | D3-C4   | D3-E4   | C4-C5   |
| E4-E5   | C5-E5   | F3-F13  | M2-M7   | N2-N7   |
| P2-P5   | R3-D6   | R3-V6   | O1-M2   | O1-N2   |
| O1-P2   | M2-P2   | B3-B13  | B3-V13  | V13-Z12 |
| P10-P13 | Q9-Q13  | R9-R13  | S9-S13  | T10-T13 |
| P10-Q9  | S9-T10  | Q9-S9   | F6-G6   | G6-G7   |
| G7-H7   | H7-H6   | H6-I6   | I6-I7   | I7-J7   |
| J7-J6   | J6-K6   | K6-K7   | K7-L7   | L7-L6   |
| L6-M6   | R4-R6   | Q5-S5   | Y6-Z6   | Y6-Y7   |
| X7-Y7   | X6-X7   | W6-X6   | W6-W7   | V7-W7   |
| V6-V7   | U6-V6   | O6-O13  | O6-V6   | V6-V13  |
| Z6-Z12  | P10-T10 | P11-T11 | P12-T12 | R1-V1   |
| R1-R3   | R2-V1   | H9-I8   | I8-J8   | I8-K9   |
| K9-L8   | L8-M8   | M8-N9   | N9-K12  | K12-H9  |