

Week 1: Theme – Mission & Service

St Therese of Lisieux, Patroness of Missions

Welcome:

Welcome to our Lenten session of House Groups. Lent is such a special time for drawing closer to God. The theme that we will follow through Lent is *Mission and Evangelisation* which is also this year's Come & See theme.

So, to begin, introduce yourself to the person next to you and share what you are thinking of doing for Lent this year. (If people do not know each other, have a time of introductions as a whole group.)

Worship:

Gather around a crucifix, an open Bible and a lighted candle.

Sign of the Cross

Pray together

The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

One thing I ask of the LORD,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,

to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

Psalm 27: 1, 4-6.

In a moment of silence, (or with some quiet music in the background) ponder on the words of the Psalm.

Word: Jesus and St Therese speak to us

Jesus teaches us about mission through his life and example. St Therese of Lisieux is Patroness of the Missions. Her health was not good enough for her to travel the world, sharing the Good News of Jesus, but she was able to pray for souls.



Read the passage aloud, then give time for quiet reflection

The Bible

Matthew 4:18-20

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Now read the following quotation, then pause for further reflection.

St Therese of Lisieux

On that night of light began the third period of my life, the most beautiful and the most filled with graces from heaven. The work I had been unable to do in ten years was done by Jesus in one instant, contenting Himself with my good will which was never lacking. I could say to Him like his apostles: "Master, I fished all night and caught nothing." More merciful to me than He was to His disciples, Jesus took the net Himself, cast it, and drew it in filled with fish. He made me a fisher of souls. I experienced a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners, a desire I hadn't felt so intensely before. I felt charity enter into my soul, and the need to forget myself and to please others; since then I've been happy!

You may wish to hear the readings again after a short time of silence

Questions for discussion: -

Is there a word or phrase that particularly catches your attention?

What do the readings tell us about Jesus, ourselves, others?

What does it say to you personally in this time of Lent?

What opportunities are there to pray for the missions as a parish?

Witness:

In the light of the gospel and the words of St Therese, let's have a short time to pray for others, especially those who do not know the love God.

Holy Spirit, we invite you to be here with us. Inspire us to think of the names of people you wish us to pray for. Come Holy Spirit.



Each person is invited to take a small piece of paper and write the names of people who do not know God's love, or who have walked away from him. The names will **not** be read out.

Play some quiet music as the names are written and collected in a basket. As you place the basket before the cross, say together:

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Keep the names and the basket for next week.

Closing prayer:

Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with your divine charity so that we may learn to practise fraternal charity towards all those we meet. Teach us how to forget ourselves and to seek to serve others. With Therese, and full of confidence in your mercy for sinners, we pray to you: grant us the grace of conversion so that we too might become apostles of mercy in your service. Amen.