

A Virtual Retreat With Oddwalk Ministries

Supplies needed: a “screen” with an internet connection; a few pieces of paper, a pen or pencil, and markers (or crayons, colored pencils,) — or a tablet and “smart” pencil with sketching software.

Approximate duration: 2 hours and 45 minutes.

60 Minutes - Ice Breakers, Our Journey To and With God

Load the following Oddwalk video on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/Vy8cjMzEFR8>

and sing along with us, and follow along with the talks and directions within to explore our individual and communal journeys of faith using the language of everyday road signs.

30 Minutes - 40 Days, Jesus's Retreat

What does it mean to “retreat?” It means to pull back, and to ponder what the right next steps are. Jesus himself had a 40 day retreat, just following his baptism, where in the desert he fasted, prayed, was tempted by satan, and ministered to by angels.

Before watching the following video, invite all to ponder the following questions:

- 1) There will be 40 different images depicting Jesus's time in the desert. Place yourself in one of the images. About halfway through, you will see Jesus staring intently at a small flower. Do you feel Jesus watching over your life that closely at times? Place yourself in that image as the flower. Or, pick from any of the other 39! There are no wrong answers.
- 2) Is there anything about any of the images that surprises you, that catches you off-guard, that makes you wonder “why did the artist choose to draw *that* in *that way*?”

Load and watch the following video from YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Xb8-mkSNSg>

After watching, discuss with others or take some time to journal on the two questions presented before the video.

After that, take some time to reflect on how Satan in the video was presented as looking just like Jesus. But, he was tinted red, just like the apple and serpent were — all symbols of temptation.

When temptation visits us, as it did Jesus, it does not come to us looking like it actually is: a brown and steaming, warm and gooey pile of sin. No, it comes to us looking like the right thing to do, the most perfect and beautiful thing in fact. Of course we know that the most right, perfect and beautiful thing in the world is not thing but a person: Jesus. It is in the training of our senses to distinguish right from wrong by which we become better disciples, better students, disciplined in the teachings of the Lord.

15 Minutes - Break!

45 Minutes - Stewardship of Dignity

The Bible tells us that we are, each of us, created in the image and likeness of God, and that we are all Temples of the Holy Spirit. Our dignity is a gift from God, and is something we all have to take care of, both our own and that of others. That's what being a steward is, you are trusted to take care of something.

Watch the following YouTube video. A newscaster is responding on air to an email she had received a few days earlier. Keep track of her (Jennifer), her husband (Mike), and the person who wrote the email. Do any of them try to take care of their own dignity or of anyone else's?

Load and watch the following video from YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUOpqd0rQSo>

Following the video, reflect, discuss, or journal on the following questions:

What was mean or wrong about the email the person wrote Jennifer?

Did the author intend to be mean?

Did anyone take good stewardship of their own dignity? Of someone else's?

Is it okay to protect someone's dignity if it means attacking someone else's?

How might this situation have been different had the two people met face to face?

Take a moment to visualize the person who wrote the email: what does he look like; what does he sound like; how old is he, etc.?

Then watch the following YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9CbT6QQhWw>

Did Kenneth match the person you created in your imagination before the video?
Do you have any different answers to the earlier questions?

To be a bully, someone must meet three definitions: 1) they must strive to lessen someone's self worth, 2) they must be able to do so or threaten to do so repeatedly, and 3) they must do so from a position of power or authority — like physical strength, or being someone's boss at work, etc. Is Kenneth a bully? Is Jennifer?

Did anyone, Jennifer, Mike, or Kenneth, fully take care of not only their own dignity but of everyone else's?

Think of times where you have seen someone's Christian dignity abused. Describe the situation in detail. What do you think the root causes of that behavior are? What is our response as Christians when we see such an abuse taking place?

Take some time to create a pledge. The pledge will begin with these words:

"We, disciples of the Lord, in the name of Christ, pledge to:"

Then write at least one, perhaps as many as three, action statements, based on real abuses of Christian dignity. In a moment of prayer, offer to God your promise to enact your pledge, and ask the Holy Spirit for strength and perseverance.

15 Minutes - Closing Prayer

Take a minute or two of silence to think back through the activities of the various moments. Where did God speak to you today? What appears to be that next step toward God, with God? How will you be able to take that step?

Then, take a moment to listen to the following song as closing prayer. At the end, join in the final refrain, asking the Holy Spirit in song to help you with every step of your journey: "Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit Come!"

Load the following Oddwalk YouTube Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqM_Xg721AU

End by saying: "Every prayer we make is + in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."