



College Meeting 4: Faith

1. OPENING PRAYER
2. BETHLEHEM FARM IS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
 - a. All are welcome at Bethlehem Farm, no matter their beliefs or religion
 - b. The Bethlehem Farm community is grounded in the Catholic faith and is motivated by the desire to love our neighbor and give fully of ourselves as Christ taught
 - i. Most of our home repair clients are Christian but not Catholic, so we are happy to be examples of the Catholic faith in service to others, and we share many beliefs in common with our homeowners and often pray with them as we start the workday
 - ii. Our Vision Statement asserts that we: “embody genuine Catholic beliefs to counter existing misconceptions regarding the Catholic Church and its people, letting our actions witness to our faith” and that we “strive to be one Body in Christ by pursuing ecumenical ventures and always giving a favorable interpretation to others’ views as a sign of mutual respect.”
 - c. EUCHARIST: Our Vision Statement asserts that we strive to: “be a center of reflection and prayer in the service of action, inspired by the Eucharist and open to the Spirit.”
 - i. The Eucharist is central to our lives and mission, especially as it calls us to emulate Christ’s total self-gift.
 - ii. We are privileged to have the Eucharist on reserve in our chapel at the Farm, and to celebrate mass on the farm with our local pastor or visiting priests each group week.
 - d. Points for large or small group discussion:

- i. Did you grow up with a certain religion or faith? How has this impacted you?
- ii. What is one struggle you have had with your faith?
- iii. How do you participate in your own Church community?
- iv. Share an experience you have had with the power of the Eucharist.
- v. Did Bethlehem Farm's Catholic identity affect your choice to come on the trip?

3. PRAYER

- a. At the Farm, each day begins and ends with group prayer to center ourselves on God and keep us moving on our journey of loving our neighbors
- b. Our Vision Statement asserts that we: "pray in both traditional and creative ways in order to foster spiritual growth, keep the focus on Christ, and mutually encourage one another."
- c. What is prayer?
 - i. The Catholic Catechism defines prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God, or the requesting of good things from God"
 - ii. St. Therese continues by calling prayer "a surge of the heart; a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."
 - iii. St. Augustine simply said that prayer is a conversation with God
- d. Discussion
 - i. How does prayer fit into your life right now? Are there any ways you have grown or that you want to challenge yourself in prayer?
 - ii. What types of "creative" or traditional prayer bring you closer to God?
 - iii. What are your expectations for prayer, both group and individual, at Bethlehem Farm?

4. INSPIRATION FROM POPE FRANCIS

- a. Read Encouragement for Young Adults by Pope Francis
- b. Discussion in large group or small groups:
 - i. Is there anything from these excerpts that speaks to you?
 - ii. Do you feel up to these challenges from Pope Francis? What are the barriers to "saying yes to Jesus" like he suggests?
 - iii. If you do not identify with the Catholic faith, what message can you glean from these encouragements?
 - iv. How might this trip to Bethlehem Farm connect to your faith or be part of your faith journey?

5. INTEGRATION ACTIVITY

- a. Provide paper and markers, possibly glue, scissors, and colored paper, etc
- b. While playing reflective music, ask students to draw a representation of their own faith journey and how Bethlehem Farm fits in. Encourage creativity!
- c. Share with the group.

6. CLOSING PRAYER