

## God's Friendship

### Introductory information for the team member:

This presentation is given by an adult member of the team. It is extremely important because it sets the entire tone of the retreat. It is also a difficult talk because the retreatants sometimes have no viable reference point to cling to in relation to God's friendship. In many cases this friendship has gone unrecognized and has only been addressed in an intellectual way.

The basic theme of this talk is salvation history, with special emphasis on Jesus Christ, and how man has failed to see God's friendship through the ages. Or how he has simply rejected it. There are two basic styles that can be followed. One is historical and theological, while the other, more effective presentation is one that is personal. The major points are: God's love for man throughout his history and throughout each individual life.

Personal examples, honesty and sincerity are of the utmost importance. Keep in mind that what is important is adult witness on the integration of God and your daily life. The whole idea of God having something to go with my daily routine is often foreign to adolescents. Your own experience of faith, friendship, and the challenge of belief in your vocation, family, husband/wife, children, teaching, etc. becomes important here.

### Outline for Talk:

#### Introduction:

Friendship. What is it? Part of it is mystery; part of it is freedom, and part of it is gift. Please write those 3 aspects of friendship in your notebooks—mystery, freedom and gift. (Speak briefly about each of these qualities.)

Who comes to mind when you think of friendship? Why? I am going to play some instrumental music while I read a poem about God's friendship and friendship in general. I want you to think of your best friend in the world right at this moment. Close your eyes and put your head down at the table. When the poem is finished, continue to listen to the music and jot down in your notebook a list of adjectives or qualities that describe the person who is your best friend right now. (Start music – “Gabriel's Oboe” from “The Mission” is suggested – and read. J

God's Friendship is very similar to our special human friendships. Every one of those attributes you wrote down earlier when you thought about your best friend can be applied to God – and so many more.

God's message of salvation throughout history came to a focal point in the person of Jesus Christ. When Christ God really got involved in human history. Christianity is not a philosophy, but a person—Jesus—Who demands a radical commitment to himself. (Write)

God deals with us as human beings, for that's the only way he can. God loves me now just the way I am. (Write)

- 1) God visits us in the flesh through Jesus. (This sign of God's presence in the world.)
- 2) Jesus' message was simply that we are loved by his father. We are invited to share his life in the kingdom. This begins here.
- 3) Jesus returns to the father, but is still present to us through the Spirit, the Eucharist, and the Christian Community.

This talk, "God's Friendship", is a grace—the life of God in us. Grace is the gift of God himself in such a total way that he becomes a man again in us. It is being known and loved by the spirit.

This friendship of God is a gift. We are free to do with it what we want. Our acceptance is faith. (Write) (Here it would be good to share your own faith journey.)

### Conclusion:

Remember that friendship affects each of us, that it makes us a better person, a stronger person. Please continue to think about friendship in your life – and especially God's friendship.

Start your closing song, leave, change to informal clothes and join the entire group in the main room or in the dining room.

### The Rector now takes over:

Tell the retreatants to discuss question #1 at their tables with the student leaders in charge and then to directly to lunch.

## Lead in Questions for Discussions

### Introductory information for the team member:

These questions are offered as a help in initiating discussion. Leaders should be sensitive to adapt to the situation of the small group and the ideas of the speaker. The key to a successful discussion is 'catch the spirit' of the talk and the group and to proceed from there.

### Questions for discussion following the God's Friendship talk:

- 1) Have you personally had any experience where it became obvious that God made a difference in your life.
- 2) Do you believe God loves and likes you? Does that make a difference to you? Why?
- 3) You have heard the concept of the importance of faith and friends before—do you see this in a new light on KAIROS?