

Reflection: In my prayer, through my fasting, with my gifts

(45 minutes)

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FACE THE FAST

Objective

Through this activity participants will reflect on how their prayer, fasting, and giving of themselves during this Food Fast can help them gain a better understanding of what God is calling us to do in our world.

Activity Summary

Participants will consider reflections on the practices of prayer, fasting, and giving of ourselves, and consider these reflections in the context of this Food Fast.

Materials Needed

- pens
- paper

Procedure

Invite participants to seat themselves comfortably and quietly. Pass out pens and paper to each person. Then lead the group through a guided reflection using the following script.

Leader Throughout this Food Fast we have been spending time in prayer together, fasting from food, and considering actions we can take to help others. Let's now spend a few minutes considering these three things: prayer, fasting, and giving of ourselves.

First, let us consider prayer.

In our prayers we seek to connect ourselves to God, lifting our minds and hearts to Him. At different times our prayers may be focused on requesting guidance or assistance, expressing our thoughts or sharing our challenges, or simply worshipping God.

We know that God hears us and listens to all of our prayers. In the first letter of John (1 John 5:14), the apostle tells us, "And we have this confidence in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

Our prayers can also help clear our minds and open our hearts so we can better hear God's message for us. Let us now take a few moments to consider what we have "heard" during our prayers throughout this Food Fast. What is God telling us through our prayers? What do we hear when we turn our attention away from ourselves and towards God?

Allow a few minutes for reflection on this statement about prayer. Ask participants to write the phrase, "In My Prayer" on their papers, and then write a word or phrase about what they have heard in their prayers during this Food Fast.

Now let us consider our fasting.

We have consciously and willingly decided to go without food for the duration of this Food Fast. There are many examples of fasting in the Bible and throughout history. Jesus himself fasted in the desert for forty days, telling us, "One does not live by bread alone." (Luke 4:4)

As our Food Fast progresses we begin to feel the pangs of hunger. Our hunger pangs are a ready reminder of our inability to sustain ourselves, of our reliance on God and on the divine generosity we receive from the earth, His creation.

We ask ourselves, how will this fast help me to recognize my dependence on God and to love Him with all my heart, mind and soul? Through the pangs of hunger that I feel, am I better able to recognize my neighbor in those who struggle with hunger and poverty? Will I be better able to love my neighbor as myself?

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Allow a few minutes for reflection on this statement about fasting. Ask participants to write the phrase, "Through My Fasting" on their papers, and then write a word or phrase about what they have experienced through their fasting.

Finally, let us consider giving.

In Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, he invites us to consider, "whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

When we reflect on the many gifts that we have received from God, we feel grateful. We feel compelled in our gratitude to share our gifts with others. God provides for us through His overwhelming generosity, and in turn, we are called to be generous towards others.

Spend a few minutes thinking about the gifts and talents you have received from God. What "abundant graces" has God provided you? How does God give you all that you need? How can you use these abundant gifts to "give back" to our brothers and sisters in need?

Allow a few minutes for reflection on this statement about giving. Ask participants to write the phrase, "With My Gifts" on their papers, and then write a word or phrase about how they intend to share their gifts with others after this Food Fast.

At the end of the reflection, invite participants to share with each other some of the words or phrases that they have written in response to the reflections on prayer, fasting, and giving of themselves.