



Student Worksheet

Lesson 5: WHAT IS HOPE AND WHY DO YOU NEED IT?

Opening Prayer

LEADER

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord God, fill us today with the perspective that comes from hope. Instead of being dominated by our circumstances or our mood, we ask that you fill us with hope as an anchor for good times and bad, for joys and for sufferings. Turn our eyes toward you and toward the promise of happiness with you forever as we pray today. Amen.

Fr. Mike's Thought Train

THE BIG QUESTION

What is hope and why do you need it?

THE SHORT ANSWER

Hope is a theological virtue, rooted in a relationship of trust in God (faith) extended into the future.

THE BREAKDOWN

- Hope is relational.
- To live joyfully in this world, we need the virtue of hope.
- Hope is supernatural. It is one of the three theological virtues—the other two being faith and love.
- Hope is rooted in faith.
 - * *Faith is when we entrust ourselves to another. Faith in God means I place my trust in him.*
- Hope means trusting God as I look to the future. Hope says, “This relationship will be the thing that bears me up.” Jesus’s victory, strength, and power are what sustain me.
- Hope is real, even if things do not go well for us. When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, Jesus will be at my side.
- The *Catechism* points out two places where hope goes wrong.
 - * *Presumption: This is the “excessive distortion” of hope. It says, “God is going to forgive me no matter what ... so what I do doesn’t matter.”*
 - * *Despair: This is the “deficient distortion” of hope. It says, “I can’t entrust my weaknesses to God because I don’t believe he will walk with me.”*

Talk It Out

1. How are the theological virtues different from the cardinal virtues?
2. How is faith relational? How is faith related to hope?
3. Why can we hope even when things are not going well?
4. What is presumption?
5. What is despair?
6. Fr. Mike says that hope is bigger than the experience of things going well. How does hope transform a bad day? Whom do you know who seems to exemplify this kind of hope?
7. What makes it hard for you to have hope?
8. Why do you think it is important that hope is rooted in a person and not just a set of ideas?
9. Even though presumption and despair seem like opposites, might they coexist in the same person? What would that look like?

Hands On

HOPE SURVEY

- a. I am more of an optimist.
- b. I am more of a pessimist.
- c. I am a realist.
- d. I am having a good day.
- e. I am looking forward to this weekend.
- f. Before this lesson, I had not thought about heaven today.
- g. I think about heaven and eternity often.
- h. I worry about where I will be five years from now.
- i. I am confident in God's love.
- j. I want to be more hopeful.

Food for Thought

1. Why can't money, fame, or pleasure be a source of real hope?
2. What gives you hope more than anything else?
3. Have you ever felt drawn toward either presumption or despair—or both—in your life?

Closing Prayer

READER (ROMANS 5:1-5)

“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

LEADER

We pause and pray that the hope poured out into our hearts will transform us and strengthen us today.

EVERYONE

O my God, relying on your almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.