



6-Week Series: Sacred vs. Secular

WEEK 1 — Sacred vs. Secular

Theme: *Seeing the sacred in the ordinary*

Opener: Worry, Wish, Welcome

Facilitator Note: This opener fosters a sense of rhythm and safety. Each youth shares one worry, one wish, and one welcome *without interruption, judgment, or commentary*. (Use a talking piece if helpful.)

Say: Let's begin with Worry, Wish, Welcome.

Each of us shares one of each. We listen without fixing, comparing, or taking on anyone else's feelings.

Ask:

- What worry are you bringing into the space this week?
- What's one thing you wish to change in your world but can't do alone?
- What's one thing you welcome into the week to come?

Wisdom (Light a Candle)

Facilitator Note: Lighting the candle signals a shift into sacred listening, reflection, and wrestling with text. Move slowly and intentionally.

DO/SAY: Invite one of the youth to light the candle to mark the lesson beginning.

Read: "There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun." — *Thomas Merton*



Say: “Merton reminds us that everything—every person, every act, every moment—can hold sacredness if we look with love and awareness.”

Scripture: Read: *Matthew 6:19–21* “Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Facilitator Note: For Each Set of Scripture:

- This teaching moment helps youth understand that Scripture is not a flat text.
- It invites us into a layered world of meaning, context, and relationship.
- You may choose to name all lenses quickly or focus on 2–3, depending on the week.

Ask (after reading): [*Matthew 6:19–21*](#)

- Which lens feels most alive for you today?
- Which lens helps you see something new or challenging?

Ask: Take a moment—silently or in your journals—to reflect on how this passage invites us to reimagine what truly matters and where we place our heart’s attention.

Circle Time: Wondering Questions (small group time)

Facilitator Note: These questions do not require answers. They can be journaled, pondered, or spoken aloud. Allow spacious silence.

Say: “These are wondering questions—there are no right answers.”

Ask:

- “I wonder what it means to find sacredness in people or things?”
- “I wonder where your heart feels most at peace and filled with love?”



- “I wonder how we can tell what someone values by the way they live?”
- “I wonder how people from different faiths show what they treasure most?”

Facilitator Note: Invite youth to sit with these questions or share in small groups. Allow silence as they move into small group time (can be in the same room)

Contemplative Project: Sacred or Secular?

Do:

- Give each youth two cards: labeled *Sacred* & *Secular* at the top.
- Read a list like: TikTok, prayer, friendship, homework, sports, sunsets, etc. (give them 12-16 options)
- Let them place each card in the category that makes sense to them.

Ask: The youth to share their lists, both sacred and secular, perhaps, invite all or a few to share as time permits.

Ask: What surprised you?

Say: What if nothing is outside the reach of sacredness when seen through love?

Facilitator Note: Encourage the youth to carry this wonder into the week.

Closing Prayer + One Word (come back together)

Say: Would you be willing to join in a simple breath prayer?

Do:

- Inhale: *All is sacred.*
- Exhale: *Even this.*



One Word Check-Out: Share one word you're taking into your week.

DO: Invite one of the youth to gently blow out the candle.

Say: As the smoke fills the room, may that be a reminder to us to take what we do, learn, and experience in this space out into the world.

WEEK 2 — Sacred Elements & Sacred Moments

Theme: *Discovering holiness in what we touch, taste, and share*

Opener: Worry, Wish, Welcome

Facilitator Note: This opener fosters a sense of rhythm and safety. Each youth shares one worry, one wish, and one welcome *without interruption, judgment, or commentary*. (Use a talking piece if helpful.)

Say: Let's begin with Worry, Wish, Welcome.

Each of us shares one of each. We listen without fixing, comparing, or taking on anyone else's feelings.

Wisdom (Light a Candle)

Facilitator Note: Lighting the candle signals a shift into sacred listening, reflection, and wrestling with text. Move slowly and intentionally.

DO/SAY: Invite one of the youth to light the candle to mark the lesson beginning.

Read: When we truly see with the eyes of gratitude, everything becomes a prayer.
— Brother David Steindl-Rast

Say: Gratitude transforms ordinary moments into sacred space.



Scripture: Read *Luke 22:19*

“He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and shared it...”

Facilitator Note: For Each Set of Scripture:

- This teaching moment helps youth understand that Scripture is not a flat text.
- It invites us into a layered world of meaning, context, and relationship.
- You may choose to name all lenses quickly or focus on 2–3, depending on the week.

Ask (after reading): *Luke 22:19*

- Which lens feels most alive for you today?
- Which lens helps you see something new or challenging?

Say: Every act of sharing and giving thanks can become a sacred experience.

Circle Time: Wondering Questions (small group time)

Facilitator Note: These questions do not require answers. They can be journaled, pondered, or spoken aloud. Allow spacious silence.

Say: “These are wondering questions—there are no right answers.”

Ask:

- I wonder how sharing food becomes an act of love and remembrance?
- I wonder if something ordinary ever became deeply meaningful to you?
- I wonder how different cultures make things sacred through gratitude?
- I wonder what it feels like to create a sacred moment with others?

Contemplative Project: Sacred Table



Do:

- Split into two groups.
- Lead a playful debate: “What’s More Sacred?”
 - A concert vs. church service
 - A nature walk vs. a Bible study
 - Cooking dinner vs. communion
- End with a shared snack or bread.

Ask: What makes this simple act sacred right now?

Closing Prayer + One Word (come back together)

Pray: As we break bread, may we break open our hearts.
May every meal, every moment, become holy.

One Word: What word describes what you’re taking with you?

DO: Invite one of the youth to gently blow out the candle.

Say: As the smoke fills the room, may that be a reminder to us to take what we do, learn, and experience in this space out into the world.

WEEK 3 — Sacred Stories

Theme: *Listening to the stories that hold our hearts*

Opener: Worry, Wish, Welcome



Facilitator Note: This opener fosters a sense of rhythm and safety. Each youth shares one worry, one wish, and one welcome *without interruption, judgment, or commentary*. (Use a talking piece if helpful.)

Say: Let's begin with Worry, Wish, Welcome.

Each of us shares one of each. We listen without fixing, comparing, or taking on anyone else's feelings.

Wisdom (Light a Candle)

Facilitator Note: Lighting the candle signals a shift into sacred listening, reflection, and wrestling with text. Move slowly and intentionally.

DO/SAY: Invite one of the youth to light the candle to mark the lesson beginning.

Read: "Stories are the way we understand ourselves in the world."

— Madeleine L'Engle

Say: Our stories reveal our sacred connections.

Scripture: Read: *Mark 4:33–34*

Facilitator Note: For Each Set of Scripture:

- This teaching moment helps youth understand that Scripture is not a flat text.
- It invites us into a layered world of meaning, context, and relationship.
- You may choose to name all lenses quickly or focus on 2–3, depending on the week.

Ask (after reading): *Mark 4:33–34*

- Which lens feels most alive for you today?
- Which lens helps you see something new or challenging?



Say: Jesus told stories to reveal truth, and we do the same when we share our lives.

Circle Time: Wondering Questions (small group time)

Facilitator Note: These questions do not require answers. They can be journaled, pondered, or spoken aloud. Allow spacious silence.

Say: “These are wondering questions—there are no right answers.”

Ask:

- “I wonder why stories help us feel love and belonging?”
- “I wonder what story in your life feels sacred?”
- “I wonder how stories from different traditions share a similar truth?”
- “I wonder what it feels like when a story opens your heart?”

Contemplative Project: Story Stones

Do:

- Provide stones + paint/markers.
- Ask the youth to create a symbol representing a meaningful story.
- Invite each youth to share the story behind their stone in 1–2 minutes.
- Place all stones together in the center as a “Sacred Story Altar.”

Closing Prayer + One Word (come back together)

“God of every story, teach us to listen deeply,
to honor the stories of others as sacred.”

One Word: What word describes what you’re taking with you?

DO: Invite one of the youth to gently blow out the candle.



Say: As the smoke fills the room, may that be a reminder to us to take what we do, learn, and experience in this space out into the world.

WEEK 4 — Sacred Connection

Theme: *Finding the sacred in our relationships*

Opener: Worry, Wish, Welcome

Facilitator Note: This opener fosters a sense of rhythm and safety. Each youth shares one worry, one wish, and one welcome *without interruption, judgment, or commentary*. (Use a talking piece if helpful.)

Say: Let's begin with Worry, Wish, Welcome.
Each of us shares one of each. We listen without fixing, comparing, or taking on anyone else's feelings.

Wisdom (Light a Candle)

Facilitator Note: Lighting the candle signals a shift into sacred listening, reflection, and wrestling with text. Move slowly and intentionally.

DO/SAY: Invite one of the youth to light the candle to mark the lesson beginning.

Read: "We meet God in one another, or not at all." — *Dorothy Day*

Say: Connection is the heart of the sacred.

Scripture: Read *John 4:24*

Facilitator Note: For Each Set of Scripture:



- This teaching moment helps youth understand that Scripture is not a flat text.
- It invites us into a layered world of meaning, context, and relationship.
- You may choose to name all lenses quickly or focus on 2–3, depending on the week.

Ask (after reading): *John 4:24*

- Which lens feels most alive for you today?
- Which lens helps you see something new or challenging?

Circle Time: Wondering Questions (small group time)

Facilitator Note: These questions do not require answers. They can be journaled, pondered, or spoken aloud. Allow spacious silence.

Say: “These are wondering questions—there are no right answers.”

Ask:

- “I wonder what it means to connect in truth and love?”
- “I wonder what helps you feel connected to something greater?”
- “I wonder how loving others honors the sacred?”
- “I wonder what sacred connection you’re longing for?”

Contemplative Project: Sacred Object Sharing

Do:

- Invite youth to bring a meaningful object (or choose from provided items).
- Each shares for 60–90 seconds:
 - What makes it meaningful?



- What does it remind you of?
- End with 30 seconds of silent gratitude.

Closing Prayer + One Word (come back together)

Prayer: “God of connection, may our love for one another be the truest expression of our love for You.”

DO: Invite one of the youth to gently blow out the candle.

Say: As the smoke fills the room, may that be a reminder to us to take what we do, learn, and experience in this space out into the world.

WEEK 5 — Sacred Walk

Theme: *Encountering the divine in creation*

Opener: Worry, Wish, Welcome

Facilitator Note: This opener fosters a sense of rhythm and safety. Each youth shares one worry, one wish, and one welcome *without interruption, judgment, or commentary*. (Use a talking piece if helpful.)

Say: Let’s begin with Worry, Wish, Welcome.

Each of us shares one of each. We listen without fixing, comparing, or taking on anyone else’s feelings.

Wisdom (Light a Candle)

Facilitator Note: Lighting the candle signals a shift into sacred listening, reflection, and wrestling with text. Move slowly and intentionally.



DO/SAY: Invite one of the youth to light the candle to mark the lesson beginning.

Read: “If you truly love Nature, you will find beauty everywhere.” — *Vincent Van Gogh*

Scripture Read: *Matthew 6:26*

Facilitator Note: For Each Set of Scripture:

- This teaching moment helps youth understand that Scripture is not a flat text.
- It invites us into a layered world of meaning, context, and relationship.
- You may choose to name all lenses quickly or focus on 2–3, depending on the week.

Ask (after reading): *Matthew 6:26*

- Which lens feels most alive for you today?
- Which lens helps you see something new or challenging?

Circle Time: Wondering Questions (small group time)

Facilitator Note: These questions do not require answers. They can be journaled, pondered, or spoken aloud. Allow spacious silence.

Say: “These are wondering questions—there are no right answers.”

Ask:

- I wonder how it feels to be loved just as you are?
- I wonder how the birds trust life to care for them?
- I wonder where in nature you feel most at peace?
- I wonder how creation reflects the sacred?



Contemplative Project: Nature Walk

Do:

- Take a silent walk outside.
- **Encourage mindfulness through the senses:** color, texture, sound, and movement.
- **Journal/draw:** “What did I notice about God, myself, or others?”
- **Invite** 2–3 youth to share.

Closing Prayer + One Word (come back together)

Prayer: “Creator of all, open our eyes to the beauty that surrounds us.”

One Word: What word describes what you’re taking with you?

DO: Invite one of the youth to gently blow out the candle.

Say: As the smoke fills the room, may that be a reminder to us to take what we do, learn, and experience in this space out into the world.

WEEK 6 — Sacred Together

Theme: *Celebrating, integrating, and co-creating the sacred*

Opener: Worry, Wish, Welcome

Facilitator Note: This opener fosters a sense of rhythm and safety. Each youth shares one worry, one wish, and one welcome *without interruption, judgment, or commentary*. (Use a talking piece if helpful.)

Say: Let’s begin with Worry, Wish, Welcome.

Each of us shares one of each. We listen without fixing, comparing, or taking on anyone else’s feelings.



Wisdom (Light a Candle)

Facilitator Note: Lighting the candle signals a shift into sacred listening, reflection, and wrestling with text. Move slowly and intentionally.

DO/SAY: Invite one of the youth to light the candle to mark the lesson beginning.

Read: “Community is not where we perfect one another, but where we belong together.” — *Henri Nouwen*

Scripture: Read: *Matthew 18:20*

Facilitator Note: For Each Set of Scripture:

- This teaching moment helps youth understand that Scripture is not a flat text.
- It invites us into a layered world of meaning, context, and relationship.
- You may choose to name all lenses quickly or focus on 2–3, depending on the week.

Ask (after reading): *Matthew 18:20*

- Which lens feels most alive for you today?
- Which lens helps you see something new or challenging?

Circle Time: Wondering Questions (small group time)

Facilitator Note: These questions do not require answers. They can be journaled, pondered, or spoken aloud. Allow spacious silence.

Say: “These are wondering questions—there are no right answers.”

Ask: Can be answered aloud, in journals, or in silent reflection



- “I wonder what you’ve learned about what is sacred to you?”
- “I wonder when you’ve felt most connected to love or community?”
- “I wonder how we bring sacredness into our neighborhoods and schools?”
- “I wonder what it means to be sacred together?”

Contemplative Project: Collective Creation (also done in a small group)

Do: Invite youth to co-create a piece representing the journey:

- collaborative art
- poetry wall
- sacred moments photo board
- gratitude circle with affirmations

Encourage them to identify what they’ve learned and how they’ll apply it moving forward.

Closing Prayer + One Word (come back together)

Prayer: “Spirit of unity, thank You for gathering us in love.”

One Word: What word describes what you’re taking with you?

DO: Invite one of the youth to gently blow out the candle.

Say: As the smoke fills the room, may that be a reminder to us to take what we do, learn, and experience in this space out into the world.

Reach out with questions, concerns, comments: pastorkrisjordan@gmail.com



As we read the scripture, we will hold it up through multiple lenses. These lenses help us see with depth, compassion, and curiosity instead of assuming there is only one ‘right’ interpretation.”

The Literal Lens:

- *What does the text actually say on the printed page?*
- *How does hearing it in different translations illuminate the meaning?*

The Literary Lens:

- *What genre, form, or structure is being used? Parable? Poetry? Narrative?*
- *What themes, images, or patterns emerge?*

The Historical Lens:

- *What might this have meant then—for the people who wrote it and the community who first heard it?*

The Psychological / Personal Lens:

- *What does it stir in me today, in my actual life, with my real challenges and hopes?*

The Mystical Lens:

- *What does this text reveal about our deep unity, connectedness, or the Divine presence within all things?*

The Archetypal Lens:



- *What universal human story is being told here?*
- *What patterns show up across cultures and time?*

The Mythological Lens:

- *What other stories does this remind me of?*
- *What is it echoing, hinting at, or tapping into?*

The Ethical Lens:

- *How could this text be misused?*
- *What troubles me?*
- *Where does it fall short of love—and how does that discomfort push me beyond the literal into deeper truth?*

The Prophetic Lens:

- *What does this text mean right now for those who are marginalized?*
- *What action, solidarity, or advocacy might it be inviting us into?*