



Gathering Guide Materials

C.H.R.I.S.T Discipleship Path Tour

WEEK 3 – October 5-12, 2025

The Discipleship Path is a roadmap for deepening your relationship with Christ.

BEGIN YOUR GROUP MEETING WITH AN OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God, we thank You for the guidance that Christ gives us from His life and from this discipleship journey. We ask that You help us to understand the importance of the Retreat step that we are exploring this week: why You ask this of us and what you bestow upon us when we do. Please give us the grace to balance the busyness of our lives to find time to retreat with You every week. And help us to invite others to experience the gift of retreat with You, too. Thank You for loving us. Amen.

Last week's journey took us through the H in Christ: Holiness! We recognized that holiness is all about how we live our lives; how we make choices that keep us separated from sin and grow us closer to God. And we came to realize that by living holy lives, following Jesus' example in His Way, we also help others to become holy, too.

This week, we build on our evolving understanding of **living holy lives in community** with others by taking time to **retreat**.

VIEW THIS WEEK'S VIDEOS ON YOUR PARISH TOUR HOME PAGE

ST. JOHN VIANNEY

ST. MARY CHURCH

CLICK HERE TO VIEW THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS

R is for RETREAT

A disciple deepens their relationship with God by setting aside intentional time for reflection and renewal.

In the fast-paced world we live in, the idea of taking time to retreat seems nearly impossible ... and, somehow, even lazy (by contemporary standards!)

But do you know that God truly wants us to retreat?

Let's first consider what retreat means. The "R" in CHRIST is packed full of meaning for us. You see, there are actually 5 more "R's" to retreat: rest, relax, reflect, and renew which lead to relationship.

We need all the first R's for the final R, in order to develop and deepen our relationship with God.

Slowing down and taking a step back allows us to reconnect with God (there's another "R"!), to reflect on His Word and His loving action in our lives, and to renew our spirits. Retreating can lead us to a place of calm. When we establish moments of stillness, we allow God's peace to enter our lives, to remind us of His awesome love for us. And when we achieve peace in retreat, we can truly recognize and appreciate God's incredible mercy and grace in our lives.

The final words of our **first reading** [*Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4*] tell us that the just one will live because of faith. When we call out to God in times of trial, as the speaker in our first reading does, we must then step away from our burdens and take time in retreat to truly listen to God's response and reassurance ... and, in doing so, we will live, truly and fully.

And when we do hear His voice, we must entrust ourselves to Him and not harden our hearts out of fear that His will may be painful or difficult, as we learn in the **Responsorial Psalm** [*Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9*].

In the **second reading** [*2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14*], St. Paul calls us to "stir into flame" the gifts that God has given us. If we are constantly moving and distracted, how will we have time to even recognize, let alone stir into flame, those gifts? We must intentionally set aside the time to rest, relax and reflect on God's gifts, renewing the flame in our hearts to use our gifts to serve God.

And in our **Gospel** [*Luke 17:5-10*], Jesus teaches us that even a small amount of faith can accomplish great things and He emphasizes the importance of humility and service in the Kingdom of God. How do we cultivate such faith, humility and service amidst the busyness of our contemporary lives? Only in regular retreat will we find the quiet, the peace and the clarity we need to do so.

A Disciple Knows Jesus... Through RETREAT

*We are all disciples, followers of Jesus, always learning from Him.
And a disciple knows Jesus through time spent in Retreat.*

Jesus, Himself, established a new day of rest and worship as part of His New Covenant. He wants us to "be still" and to "know that He is God". He wants us to take the time to reflect on and delight in His Word. Especially when times are tough, He wants us to come to Him and He will give us the rest we need! And when we do, He will reward us with peace, tranquility and clarity. He will refresh and restore us, then transform us and make us strong, firm and steadfast. We can then know Him better and have confidence in His good, pleasing and perfect will for each of us.

Questions for Consideration and Dialog

- How would you describe "retreat"?
- How do the lessons from this week's readings surprise you? Challenge you?
- What joys do you experience or give to others from taking retreats?
- What changes must you make to give yourself time to retreat?
- What must you embrace or abandon to practice retreating more regularly?

Guidance from the Bible

The Bible is always a powerful source of spiritual nourishment and a guide for our lives. Here are some passages that speak to the importance of retreat for you to ponder.

"Be still, and know that I am God" – Psalm 46:10

"But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His Word day and night." – Psalms 1:2

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” – Matthew 11:28

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.” – Hebrews 4:9-10

“He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name’s sake.” – Psalm 23:2-3

“The Lord replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’” – Exodus 33:14

“Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.” – Psalm 62:1

“...be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” – Romans 12:2

“And the God of all grace ... will, Himself, restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” – 1 Peter 5:10

Here are ideas for you as you seek to know Jesus in Retreat:

PRAY

- **Thank God** for loving you so much that He wants frequent time alone with you. Ask Him for His help in committing time to retreat each week. Trust Him to guide you during the time you reserve for your retreats.
- **At the end of each day**, prayerfully consider whether you have spent time in retreat. If you did, recall the joys of your retreat; and if you did not, make an effort to plan a specific time to retreat with God in the near future.

ACT

- **Set aside time on your calendar** at least once a week to retreat with God. Sundays are perfect times to do this; but, if a Sunday doesn’t work for you, seek another time in the week and reserve it for God.
- **Retreat can also be about taking time for fellowship** and learning more about your parish. Come to the St. Mary Church International Festival this weekend - October 4th from 5:00pm - 8:00pm. While you’re there, visit the St. Mary Museum which tells the story about our 140 year history in the Walnut Creek community.
- **Retreat to St. John Vianney on October 3** at 6pm for a Mass dedicated to peace in our nation **and on October 15**, 6:30pm at St. Mary for a Special Benediction.

INSPIRE

- Let other people know about your retreat plans and experiences. Encourage them to do the same.
- Model your retreat practice for family members, especially children. Invite them to join you in times of silence to begin their own retreat times.

Close your group meeting with:

- **Intersessions for the Group:** Take some time to pray together for the group members.

CLOSING PRAYER:

*Loving Father, we thank You for this time together and for the gift of retreat that draws us closer to You. As we step back from the busyness of life, help us to rest in Your presence, to relax in Your peace, to reflect on Your Word, and to be renewed in spirit. May these moments of retreat deepen our relationship with You and strengthen our faith so that we may serve others with humility and love. Grant us the courage to make space for You each week, and let the flame of the Holy Spirit within us shine brightly in all we do. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.***