

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Archdiocesan Virtual Asynchronous Retreats

TIME WITH GOD ON YOUR TIME

User Guide for Individual Retreats



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It is recommended that you read through this guide before you begin your retreat.

Purpose

These retreats offer the opportunity to step away from the busyness of ministry and pressures of daily life to reflect on the Catholic faith, prioritize spiritual wellness, inspire witness and recharge one's missionary activity by way of an engaging and easy to navigate format. Finding a quiet place to retreat to from time to time helps us to refresh and recharge. Jesus was no exception; He needed to find times to slip away from the crowds and from His work so that He could reconnect with God the Father. We go on retreat so that we can come to know God more fully, know ourselves more fully and to have the strength to carry out what God might be asking of us.

Audience

These retreats were created to meet the spiritual needs of catechetical leaders, catechists and youth ministers, with the intention of expanding additional topics for use by catholic school principals and teachers, parents and all adults in the Archdiocese of Chicago with the potential of sharing beyond our area.

Retreat Goals

In alignment with the Archdiocese of Chicago vision of Renew My Church, these online retreats are designed to help parish ministers, volunteers and all lay people encounter Jesus and grow in their sense of missionary discipleship, build community through prayerful reflection and discussion and become inspiring witnesses of faith. Grounded in prayer and reflection, these retreats are designed to breathe new life into methods of sharing the Gospel and invite others to bring the Good News of Christ to the world.

Sample Timeframe for a 45-60 Minute Retreat

While this sample timeframe may help you envision the length of each section of the retreat, it is important to remember that the Holy Spirit will be guiding your retreat experience and therefore flexibility with the timing of specific aspects of the retreat will be helpful.

RETREAT TOPICS	APPROXIMATE TIME
Welcome Video	2 minutes
Opening Prayer	2 minutes
Topic Introduction	4 minutes
Scripture	5 minutes
Video Reflection	8 minutes
Personal Reflection	15 minutes
Action Steps	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	3 minutes
Presenter Information	1 minute

Creating a Sacred Space and Reflective Atmosphere

When a gathering space is decorated with tangible symbols of our faith, we are able to more easily step away from the chaos of daily life and enter into a mindset of prayer and reflection. Before you begin your retreat, consider creating a sacred space in your home by gathering some religious items (e.g., a Bible, a Crucifix, images of Mary or the saints, candles, holy water, prayer cards or flowers) and displaying them in the room you'll be in during the retreat.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Take a few moments before starting the Welcome Video to prepare your space and have a Bible, a pen and some paper close at hand so that you are prepared to reflect and take notes if you'd like. You may also want to print out a copy of the Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions (see Resources for Ongoing Enrichment section on page 7).

Before starting the Opening Prayer Video, quiet yourself, set aside the worries and concerns of your day and place all your needs in the loving arms of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to be with you during the retreat to guide your thoughts toward God. Begin your time of prayer "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Topic Introduction

There is a PDF linked in the Resources for Ongoing Enrichment section of each retreat that provides the text of the introduction. You may want to print this out to have in front of you as you reflect throughout the retreat.

Scripture

Lectio Divina is a flexible and easy way to pray with Scripture. Learn more about Lectio Divina with these short videos: **Lectio Divina** and **What Is Lectio Divina?** You may decide to extend your Scripture reading and reflection during your retreat using the steps of Lectio Divina's "Divine Reading" of Scripture:

1. Invoke – Call upon the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer
2. Lectio – Read the passage slowly and thoughtfully while imagining yourself in the scene
3. Meditatio – Meditate on the passage while pondering what stands out to you and what you feel God is saying to you
4. Oratio – Rest with your thoughts, allowing them to become your prayer as you respond to God from your heart
5. Contemplatio – Contemplate the passage as you continue to rest in God's love and listen to Him
6. Actio – Consider what action God is calling you to and offer a resolution for today

Reflection Video

The video reflection is intended to help participants grow both spiritually and in their knowledge of the faith.

There is a PDF linked in the Resources for Ongoing Enrichment section of each retreat that provides the text of the reflection video. You may want to print this out to have in front of you as you reflect throughout the retreat.

Personal Reflection

The personal reflection questions were created to help participants ponder the retreat topic and Scripture passage, become more attentive to the voice of God in their lives, and to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This period of silent and reflective pondering allows the Holy Spirit to deepen one's awareness of what God is revealing to us during the retreat. During personal reflection, you are encouraged to do some of the following:

- Journal your thoughts on the introduction, scripture reading or video reflection
- Ponder what words, images or ideas stood out to you and how those relate to your life now
- Follow the prompting of your heart as you dialogue with God
- Consider what God is saying to you or encouraging you to do
- Reflect on the personal reflection and discussion questions

There is a PDF linked in the Resources for Ongoing Enrichment section of each retreat that provides the text of the personal reflection questions. You may want to print out a copy of this before starting your retreat to have the questions on paper in front of you.

Discussion Questions

While the provided discussion questions are meant to help start conversation during group facilitated retreats, they offer beneficial points of reflection for personal use as well. There is a PDF linked in the Resources for Ongoing Enrichment section of each retreat that provides the text of the group discussion questions. You may want to print these out for further personal reflection.

Action Ideas

Prayer often moves us to action. In this section of the retreat, we offer some ideas and ways to respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit and turning prayer toward action. These action ideas are intended to spark your own ideas for how you will work to live out your faith as a missionary disciple working to build community.

There is a PDF linked in the Resources for Ongoing Enrichment section of each retreat that provides the text of the retreat action ideas. You may want to print these out and keep them in a place that will help you to consider practicing one of the suggested action ideas as an extension of your retreat experience.

Closing Prayer

As your retreat time comes to an end, pause to reflect on the inspirations that came to you during your retreat. You might also like to remember any personal intentions prior to the Closing Prayer in the retreat presentation and ending “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Resources for Ongoing Enrichment

While the online retreats have been designed with a 45-minute timeframe in mind, each retreat presentation includes a list of resources for ongoing enrichment which can help you to turn the 45-minute retreat into a longer retreat experience.

There will be retreat-specific PDFs of the Introduction and Reflection Video texts, Personal Reflection and Discussion Questions and Action and Enrichment Ideas linked at the beginning of this section of each retreat. You may want to print some or all of the PDFs before starting your retreat. Within the retreat presentation, if you click directly on these links, they will take you out of the retreat and to the PDF. However, if you “right click” on the link, you can select “open link in new tab” which will allow the retreat to remain open in one tab while the linked PDFs open in separate tabs.

Presenter Information

For additional follow-up of the retreat topic, you are invited to visit the links included in the retreat presentation for the presenter’s website, blog and additional resources for further learning and inspiration.