Lord, Make me an instrument of your peace

Friday evening welcome/overview
7:00 – 8:30

Outline
7:00 – 7:30 Welcome
7:30 – 8:00 Mixers/Getting Aquainted
8:00 – 8:30 The Prayer of Saint Francis and God’s Peace

Supplies and set up
• Poster with the prayer of Saint Francis
• A piece of flipchart paper divided into three sections labeled “Seeds,” “Fields,” “Names”:
  o Under “Seeds”: Love, Pardon, Faith, Hope, Light, and Joy
  o Under “Fields”: Self, Family, Community, Nation, World
  o Under “Names”: Sarah/Hagar, Rachel/Leah, Hannah/Peninnah, Mary/Martha.
• Name tags for each retreatant

Mixers/Getting Aquainted
Have the group gather in pairs, triplets, or small groups according to the labels on the backs of their name tags. Share your names and also share:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gather with . . .</th>
<th>Share . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One or two others who have matching “Seeds” on your nametag. Pairs or triplets who all have “Love” printed on your nametag, for example.</td>
<td>The place in my life where I find the greatest ____________ is . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(fill in the blank with your seed, then complete the sentence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or two others who have matching “Fields” on your nametag. Pairs or triplets who all have “Self” printed on your nametag, for example.</td>
<td>I have the greatest hope for my ____________ when . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(fill in the blank with your field, then complete the sentence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or two others who have matching “Names” on your nametag. Pairs or triplets who all have “Sarah” printed on your nametag, for example.</td>
<td>I feel most like ____________ when . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(fill in the blank the Bible character name, then complete the sentence; give yourself extra credit if you know who Peninnah is)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four to six others who each have a different “Seed” on your nametag. 

To be at this retreat with an easy mind, I had to . . .

Three to five others who each have a different “Field” on your nametag.

The last thing I did before leaving for this retreat (not related to getting myself ready) was . . .

Six to eight others who each have a different “Name” on your nametag.

When I leave here I hope to take with me . . .

When all of these questions have been answered solicit responses to the last three from the whole group. Thank everyone for being here and acknowledge that as women we sometimes find that it takes more effort to get our families ready for us to leave for a weekend than it takes to get ourselves ready.

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Ask the group to pray together:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen


- Review the parts of the prayer
- Offer tips for memorizing it
- Explain how we will incorporate it into the weekend retreat activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Prayer Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday evening worship</td>
<td>Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday morning workshop</td>
<td>Where there is hatred, let me sow love;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where there is injury, pardon;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where there is doubt, faith;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where there is despair, hope;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where there is darkness, light;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and where there is sadness, joy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday evening workshop</td>
<td>O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to be consoled as to console;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life and Legacy of Saint Francis

Saint Francis was lived in the central-Italian town of Assisi from 1181 to 1226. His feast day (the day he died) is October 4. He is the patron saint of ecology, nature conservation, and animals.

Francis was the son of a dealer in luxury fabrics, part of the rising middle class in Italy who, by the time Francis was born and coming of age, had grown quite wealthy. Francis grew up spoiled. He was prone to wandering the streets of Assisi late into the night drinking and carousing with a band of other young men and was, for the most part, their ringleader.

The city of Assisi was suspicious of papal power and the nobility and in 1202, when the nobility of Assisi had fled to nearby Perugia, Francis, who was 20 by then joined in the battle that raged between the middle class of Assisi and the nobility of Perugia. Francis was captured during that battle and held prisoner for a year until his father ransomed him. The conditions in which he lived for that year we so appalling that he contracted malaria and was mostly bedridden for more than a year.

In 2004, Francis set out to participate in the Fourth Crusade, but he did not get far before a he was struck with a bout of malaria and was forced to return home. At home, he tried to return to his former group of friends and to his previous riotous living, but it was an empty and meaningless life and he sank into a kind of depression.

In 2005, Francis began to give generously to the poor and to embrace lepers. His old friends mocked him for this behavior and he began to seek solace and solitude in abandoned churches and caves. In one such church, San Damiano, Francis heard a voice saying, “Go, repair my house which, as you see, is falling completely to ruin.” Francis took this voice quite literally. He responded by stealing a bolt of fabric from his father, selling it, and giving the money to the priest there the repair the church.

In 2006, Francis’s father renounced him before the bishop of Assisi. Francis responded by stripping himself naked before the bishop and his father, returning his clothes to his father, repaying him the value of the cloth he had stolen, and severing all ties with his family.

By 2008 Francis was practicing poverty and preaching peace and repentance. Several young men left their families and possession and began to follow him.

By 2009, Francis has written a rule of life for his followers and was granted papal approval to live in community with his order, which he called the Friars Minor, or “Little Brothers.” Today the Order of Friars Minor and its sister order the Order of Saint Clare is the largest monastic order in the
world. Today there are not only Catholic communities of Franciscans, but also Anglican, Lutheran, ecumenical, and non-denominational orders.

Saint Francis taught:
- Repentance
- Simplicity of life
- Poverty
- Service to the poor and to lepers

Saint Francis is credited with popularizing the Christmas crèche: (from Wikipedia)

Around 1220, Francis celebrated Christmas by setting up the first known three-dimensional presepio or crèche (Nativity scene). His nativity imagery reflected the scene in traditional paintings. He used real animals to create a living scene so that the worshipers could contemplate the birth of the child Jesus in a direct way, making use of the senses, especially sight. Thomas of Celano, a biographer of Francis and Saint Bonaventure both, tell how he only used a straw-filled manger (feeding trough) set between a real ox and donkey. According to Thomas, it was beautiful in its simplicity with the manger acting as the altar for the Christmas Mass.

Resources

Point out resources available for use during the retreat in the parlor.