

Ten points about how to create a “Safe Space”

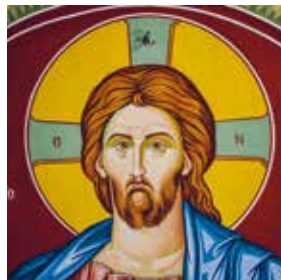
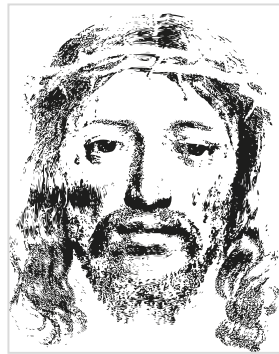
1. Create a space without segregation based on money, gender, language, status, and level of faith. You will succeed if you approach the participants like Jesus (better yet: with Jesus).
2. The first commandment of “Safe Space” is absolute discretion. What is spoken remains in the room. This does not only concern spiritual things but all areas of life. When secrets are shared, we don’t judge – secrets like abortion, homosexuality, brokenness in the family, etc. Gossip is poison for any community.
3. Design a space with room for a young person’s unspoken expectations; for example, the need for friends, help finding a job, etc.
4. Remember that only in a “Safe Space” something lasting and great can grow: someone, for example, becomes more mature, encounters Jesus, and relies on him more and more.
5. Be sure to create a space where a young person can speak and not feel rejected, even non-verbally. Giving the cold shoulder to someone who has given the wrong answer or passing over them with silence can hurt them deeply.
6. Make sure that “gangs” – closed groups – don’t form. You will see old and new faces in each Study Group. Leaders need to make sure everyone is open to everyone. No one should experience exclusion in such a group.
7. Common ground created during a Study Group Session can be continued throughout the week via digital channels. (In India, a digital stewardship module has been developed to teach young people how to meet each other on WhatsApp and social media without becoming addicted to it.)
8. Remember that it is absolutely necessary to ensure pastoral care. Experience shows that changes, even miracles, happen in the combined work with the Bible and the catechism. There are spiritual attacks, and wounds of the soul break open; it becomes existential. You need a spiritual person who will also offer pastoral care to the leaders. Leaders also have weaknesses. A YOUCAT group is like a family. The bond and love is strong, but so are the conflicts. The leader’s vulnerability will encourage the youth to seek help in the community.
9. A “Safe Space” allows a young person to be a co-creator with God – enabling the young person to take on tasks for the group.
10. God’s “Safe Space” is prayer. Ask people you trust (perhaps a convent of contemplatives) to carry you in prayer and call the Holy Spirit down upon you.

Images of God



From: YOUCAT for Kids

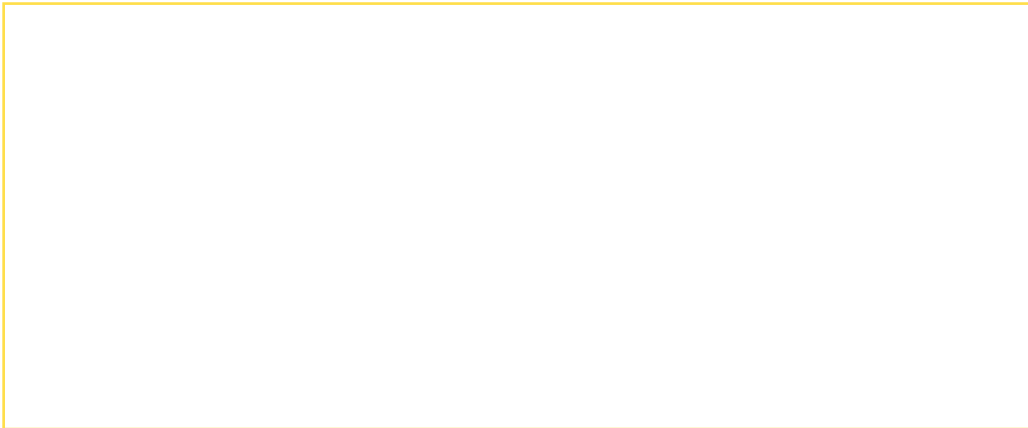
Images of Jesus



The profile of my target group

Fill out this **questionnaire**:

- ▶ Do an imagination exercise:
Picture some participants for five minutes.



- ▶ What do they look like?
How do they feel about you? How deeply are they already connected to God?



- ▶ What individual problems do you think your people come to you with in the course?
What do they suffer from? What are they dreaming of?



Cont. The profile of my target group

Fill out this **questionnaire**:

- ▶ What will be if they do not find community or get help to solve their problems?
How will they develop if they do not let God touch their hearts?

- ▶ What should I include in my program to pick them up in their specific situation and show them the way to life?

Terms from youth culture

Begriff	Bedeutung	Unlearning
FOMO	Fear of missing out.	The fear of missing out, not belonging, of being an outsider. Not being a full human being. Not being able to realize myself.
Gentrification	In cities, residential areas are bought up by investors and taken away from the poor.	The fear of losing one's home and livelihood. Being exposed to anonymous violence.
Sexting	It describes the sending and receiving of self-produced pornographic recordings ("pics" and "nudes") and messages.	The fear of missing out on the adventure of sexuality. For men: to feel dominant and strong. For women: to be seen, loved, and accepted.
Emotional chastity	The virtue of looking for real love... Not letting the fictional film inside the mind take over oneself.	The fear of facing reality, drowning in banality, and not being a "queen".
Love Bombing	When someone downright imposes his love on another person; greed is often hidden behind it.	On the one hand, the fear of being rejected if one does not respond to the advances – on the other hand, the fear of not being able to reach the goal of one's wishes in any other way.
Toxic Relations	Poisoned relationships in which love is "instrumentalized".	On the one hand, the fear of no longer being loved if you don't swallow the poison; on the other hand: the fear of only being able to ensure love with violence and tricks.
YOLO	You Only Live Once	The fear of being a philistine, of not having fun if you act adult, normal, or reasonable ... To miss out on something if you don't ignore dangers or moral concerns.
Body Shaming	Discrimination against a person because of his body.	The fear of losing dominance. The fear that one's insecurities will come out.
Sex Drive	Sexual drive	The fear of being at the mercy of one's urges.
Binge Watching	Mindless media consumption, often for days at a time	The fear of being alone with oneself, of having to face one's problems.
Sus	Someone is suspicious	Fear of things, situations, and people that do not fit into one's life reality.
Pick me	A behavior that is completely aligned with the opposite sex	The fear of not being seen and loved by the opposite sex.
Body Count	The number of sexual relationships that one has had	The fear of not being sexually successful.

Start a STUDY GROUP!

What is a STUDY GROUP?

A STUDY GROUP is a faith course with the YOUCAT. You invite your friends to join you on an adventure of faith. You meet at home. There are templates that are pretty simple to use. You get into deep conversations. You can bear witness. You will become an exciting community around Jesus.

Who can join a STUDY GROUP?

All who are interested in deepening the faith.

What template can you work with?

Here is how a template looks like:



It consists of the following elements:

- ▶ a topic, a question ...
- ▶ a prayer ...
- ▶ a word of the Scripture ...
- ▶ a YOUCAT question ...
- ▶ Questions to stimulate faith conversation ...
- ▶ a “challenge”

Can I create STUDY Group templates myself?

Of course, this is quite simple ... You take a YOUCAT question and follow the scheme.

What are the requirements for a STUDY GROUP leader?

MUST-HAVES

- ▶ You are a “missionary disciple”. You have the heart-felt wish to share faith with others.
- ▶ You have chosen Jesus and love His Church.
- ▶ Your knowledge is “alive”: You can give testimony of your faith, of your experience with Jesus.
- ▶ You are a “dialogical catechist” – one who listens, shares his faith, and takes others with him to God.

NO-GOES

- ▶ You are a know-it-all and moralizer.
- ▶ You hate conversations and have no ears.
- ▶ You have distanced yourself from the Church.
- ▶ You live the way it pleases you; You don’t care about the commandments of the Church.



Where can I find ready-made templates for a STUDY GROUP meeting?

Here you can find templates in the following languages: English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, German.



The secret of participation

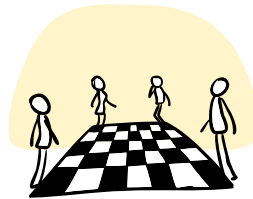
The secret to turning passive Christians into fiery followers of Christ and missionary disciples is **participation**. The Latin word means: To share in something, to be a participant.

How can a catechist have such an effect that uninvolved listeners become active missionary Christians? He should operate with three terms.



EMPOWERMENT

Have confidence in the participants' capabilities ... Get them out of an attitude of consuming ... Give them tasks ... Make them strong ... Explain to them that the Church is not a care facility ... Tell them that they "are" Church ...



DISCERNMENT

Only when you have given them "empowerment" do you recognize the strengths and weaknesses ... Serve them through discernment ... Teach them to acknowledge their charisms ... Use them specifically in the right place ... Everyone in the group has something that God gives them for all ...



VOCATION

Marvel at how a boring professional Church becomes a Church in which many vocations blossom and great wealth is created ...

“House of Faith” Game

A game with the group

Goal

- ▶ To learn about the dimensions of the Church:
 - ➔ MARTYRIA = the teaching, the testimony
 - ➔ DIAKONIA = the service to the poor
 - ➔ KOINONIA = the community in faith
 - ➔ LEITURGIA = the praise of God, the worship, the prayer
- ▶ To better understand the richness of the Church
- ▶ Practicing speaking about faith

Methodical Approach

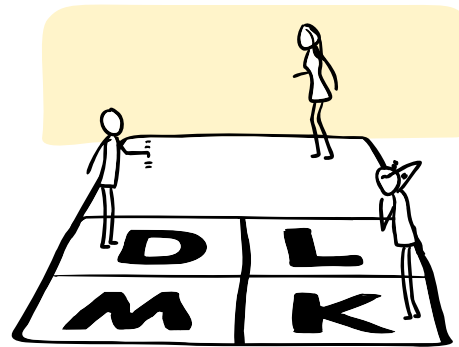
- ▶ The church is portrayed as a house that one explores in order to dwell in it and feel comfortable in it.
- ▶ God dwells in this house; we are invited to enter as His guests.
- ▶ There are four different approaches, which have something to do with individual preferences – one person is more interested in the teaching of the Church, another loves worship, and a third person is most interested in serving the poor.
- ▶ Everyone is aware of a piece of the riches of the Church, but everyone is also missing something.

Actors

- ▶ Four leaders (catechists) who know what MARTYRIA, DIAKONIA, KOINONIA, LEITURGIA is
- ▶ Another 8, 12, 16, 20 ... participants

Preparation

You mark five fields. One large one – that is the front garden (all participants should have space in it) – and four smaller ones (in each of which a quarter of the people have room). You mark the divisions with chalk on the asphalt, a stick in the sand, or tape in a hall! Watch out for large areas.



Time required

This is a game you can easily schedule for half a day but at least one evening.

Gameplay

All stand outside the marked areas at the beginning.

Game Master: This is a game in which you can discover what is involved in belonging to Christ. It's like when you enter a house. Go to this large area. In a sense, this is the front garden.

Sit down on the floor! Now listen to verses from a 3000-year-old song:

“As the deer pants for the water brooks,
so my soul pants for You, God.
My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come
And appear before God?”

Silence

Cont. “House of Faith” Game

Game Master: Now exchange ideas with your neighbor for a minute; the question is:

Why do you want to enter the House of God?

Game Master: Now imagine: The house has four rooms. We split into the four rooms soon. But first, I have to explain something to you:

- ▶ **Room 1** is called MARTYRIA. This is for intelligent people interested in the Church’s teachings. Who like to defend the faith. And love to convince others about God. This is important: A Christian who does not know his faith cannot protect or promote it. He will not go through fire for it, either.
- ▶ **Room 2** is called DIAKONIA. This is for people touched by Christ’s love for the poor. A Christian who does not find Christ in the need, poverty, and weakness of his neighbor does not find Him in the bread of the Eucharist.
- ▶ **Room 3** is called LEITURGIA. This is for people who love worship and Holy Mass, love to worship, or seek God in adoration. A Christian who does not pray is like a fish without water but telling about the water.
- ▶ **Room 4** is called KOINONIA. This is something for people who, above all, seek communion with God and others in the Church and want to give others comfort and acceptance. A Christian who seeks salvation only for himself and does not live from and for others is not a real Christian.

Have you already discovered your personal preference?

However, we will not divide you according to your preferences but simply randomly. Go into one of the squares so that there is an equal number of participants in each square.

- ▶ The catechist of MARTYRIA now has ten minutes to inspire his people that MARTYRIA is the most important thing in the Church. He equips his people with passages from the Bible, quotes of saints, and so on. The same happens in the other groups.
- ▶ The group has 15 minutes to develop argumentation strategies with each other to convince the other groups.
- ▶ Each group designates three speakers who are to recruit all the others to join their group: **“Come over to us ... what we do here is the most important thing ... and these are the strongest arguments there are.”**
- ▶ But the other three groups also have this chance: “Come over to us ... what we do here is the most important thing ... and these are the strongest arguments.”

Closing

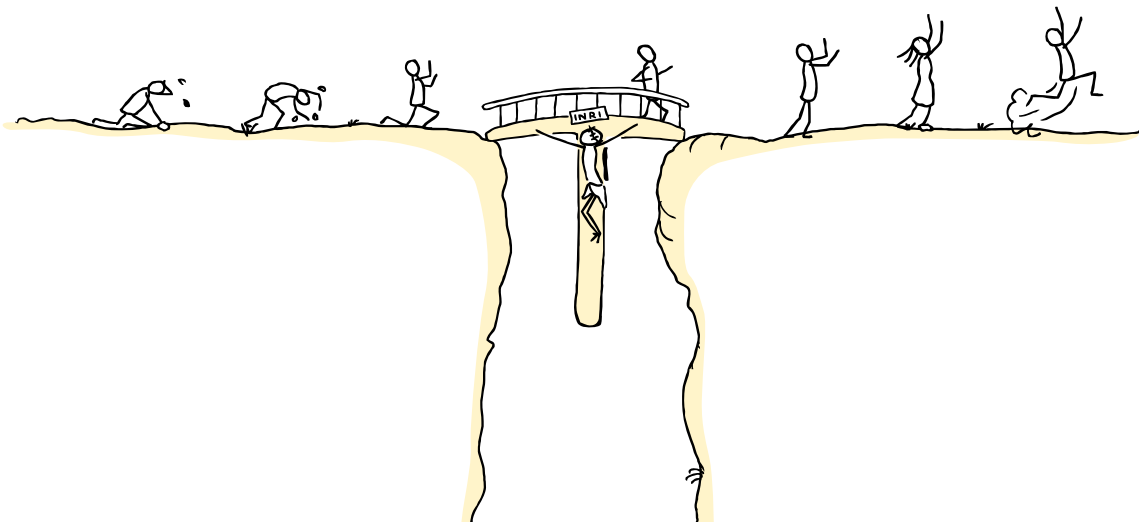
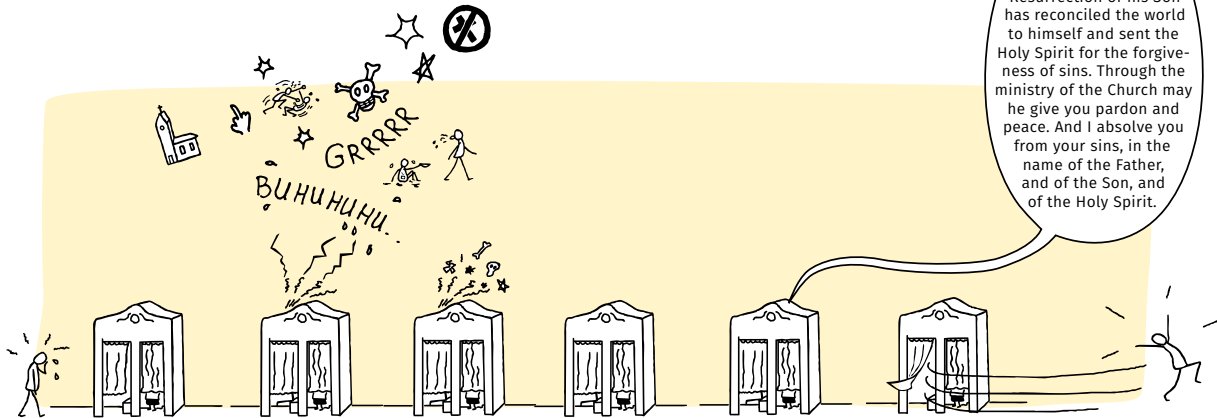
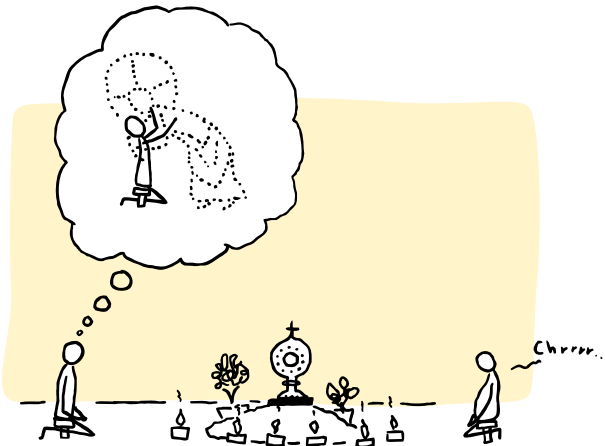
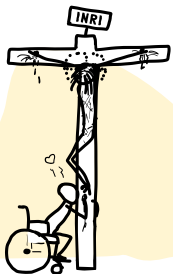
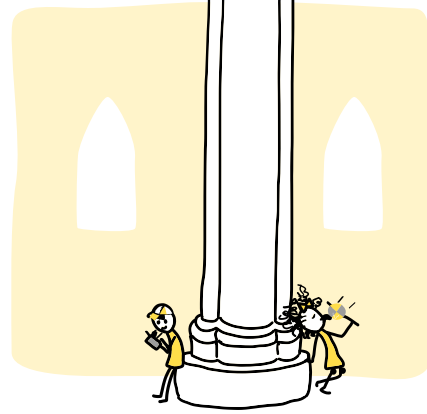
Ultimately, the **game master** says: **Now decide where you belong.**

- ▶ Maybe quite a lot of participants go to the KOINONIA quarter ... there it is crowded ... and nobody is in the LEITURGIA. Or everyone flocks to the MARTYRIA, and hardly anyone is interested in the DIAKONIA ...

The game leader now gives a **great catechesis:**

- ▶ There are so many **quarter Christians**
- ▶ Those who only want to talk about theories.
- ▶ Those who are interested only in the social.
- ▶ Those who just want to have fun.
- ▶ Those who only want to be pious and are not interested in anything else.
- ▶ **Catholic**, however, means “encompassing the whole” ... entering all the rooms of the house, exploring one by one, discovering its beauty, dwelling in it.
- ▶ **... and recognize Christ in all**
- ▶ Everyone may have his approaches to the house of God, his charisms, and his preferences.
- ▶ You don’t have to be perfect in all disciplines.
- ▶ How good that we are different. We must complement and support each other.
- ▶ **NO GO:** devalue other approaches!

Catechesis of the Stick Figures



The Tandem Principle

The Tandem Principle is one of the most important construction principle of discipleship. Disciples are called and sent by Jesus. Jesus calls the disciples one by one. However, he sends them in pairs

“Now after this the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.”

The remarkable thing about Luke 10:1 is the second clause: “... into which *He* Himself wanted to go”. This means:

- ▶ Mission is **preparation** for what Jesus Himself wants to do and can only do alone. This is the first major relief.
- ▶ The second relief is: From the very beginning, Jesus breaks the misery of being **alone** on mission. He makes it a companion’s mission to be accomplished in friendship. Mission, then, is a collaborative task, a tandem job.
- ▶ Two stands for **at least two**.
- ▶ The “other” can be, for example, the best friend; but it can also be someone only I know is burning for the same ideal, the same dream: Bringing Jesus to the people.
- ▶ One takes the initiative: “Shouldn’t we work together ...? Alone, I lack the strength, I lack the ideas, I lack the time!”
- ▶ If you have decided to do something beautiful for God and people in two or three, first go to prayer to gain assurance that what you are planning is pleasing to the Lord – and that you will be gifted with strength and gifts.
- ▶ **Two** read the Acts of the Apostles with each other and let themselves be inspired by the Holy Scripture and by the Spirit of God as to what they could do to bear witness to their faith.
- ▶ **Two** start a prayer group together to revive their parish or community.
- ▶ **Two** invite young people to go to a spiritual event with them.
- ▶ **Two** organize a “Nightfever” (<https://nightfever.org/>) or other form of worship.
- ▶ **Two** organize a YOUCAT Study Group or an Alpha Course.
- ▶ **Two** organize a “faith camp” with friends (50% vacation / 50% training in Bible and catechesis).
- ▶ **Two** make a video clip with Christian content.
- ▶ **Two** ...

In tandem, there are endless opportunities to do something for God and people. The important thing is that “mission” happens in community and leads to new community.



A story about Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross demonstrates **what can be accomplished in community for the Kingdom of God**. After her conversion in 1554, Teresa, not the youngest and ill, was full of zeal for action. Her (younger) spiritual companion John of the Cross, was deeply frightened by her incredible dynamism: “Teresa, remember, you are alone!” Teresa countered: “If you go with me, there will be two of us!” The history of the Church knows several examples where something started by a connection of two people, e.g. Benedict of Nursia and his sister Scholastica, Francis and Clara of Assisi or Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal. From Philip Neri, the amazing dictum is transmitted: “Give me ten selfless people, that is enough for me to convert the whole world with them.”