

Walking with the Excluded

WHO DO YOU WANT TO BE?

A VIDEO SERIES TO LIGHT YOUR PATH



Goal

- Students will watch a short video on the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preference “Walking with the Excluded” as the basis for their own reflection and sharing on who in our world tends to be marginalized and how we can act to draw them back into the community.
- At the close of the class, they will work collaboratively on identifying a good first step towards reaching out to the excluded in their experience.

Opening Activity: Visualization

First

- Have the students draw a large circle on a blank sheet of paper.
- Tell them to make sure they have enough room to write some notes on both the inside and the outside of the circle.
- Then have the students label the circle by writing “Our Community” just inside the upper arc of the circle (See Figure 1).

Figure 1



Second

- Ask the students to write the names of groups who are easily welcomed and included in the community on the inside of the circle.
- Challenge them to come up with as many different groups as they can.
- Remind them that for the purposes of this exercise they can define “Our Community” as narrowly or broadly as they would like - their school, their town, their country, the Church, the world, etc.

Third

- Next, have the students write up the names of groups who feel unwelcome or are actively excluded from the community.
- They should write these names anywhere outside the arc of the circle.

Fourth

- Finally, have the students pick one of their excluded groups and write a short 2-3 sentence reflection on how they know that group is often excluded from the community and how that might make members of that group feel.



Artwork by Ignasi Flores



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Prayer

St. Francis of Assisi's Prayer of Peace

Recite in unison; divide class in two and recite alternate lines; or have each student recite a line.

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
where there is hatred,
let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
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.*

Peer Sharing: Visualization Comparisons

Remind students to use the [Ignatian Conversations](#) model developed by De Smet Jesuit High School that was introduced in the "Searching for God" video (also attached below).

- Pair the students up with one or two partners.
- Have them compare their graphics and encourage them to add to their own circles any ideas from their peers that they did not originally think to include.
- Then have them talk about how it might feel, in a general way, to be excluded and what they understand about the experiences of some of the marginalized groups they have identified.

Video Introduction and Airing

[Before playing the "Walking with the Excluded" video \(linked here\)](#)

- Explain to the students that we have three fundamental relationships: with God; with Others; and with Creation.
- Remind them that Lent is an opportunity for introspection; an opportunity to take stock of our lives; to weigh who we are now against who God wants us to be in relation to God, to Others and to Creation.
- It is an opportunity to again ask, "How and where, in this time and place, can I provide the greatest service?"
- Remind them of the Universal Apostolic Preferences and that one, "Walking with the Excluded" focuses on our relationship with others. It calls us to be aware of the suffering in the world and more hospitable and open to those who suffer.

- Explain that the video they are about to watch is designed to connect Ignatius' original desire to help others with the efforts of another Jesuit saint named Peter Claver and with us today.
- As they watch, have them pay close attention to what Peter Claver did to welcome and care for people who were suffering as well as the advice being offered for us today to do likewise.
- Tell them a discussion and activity will follow and to keep in the back of their minds the excluded groups they identified at the beginning of class.
- **Have them consider, as a Lenten exercise, taking a concrete step in alliance with other and sharing that experience through photos or videos with students across the *Jesuit Global Network of Schools*. Please share your students' videos or photos at projects@educatemagis.org.**

Large Group Discussion: The Excluded Today

Open the class up to a whole-class discussion of the major themes of the video, the UAP, and their reactions to both.

Some questions that might help you structure that discussion would be:

- What did you notice most about Peter Claver's work with enslaved Africans?
- Peter Claver was drawn to help people most of his society had forgotten or discarded. Who in our world today do you think we forget, discard, exclude, or do violence to? How so?
- The video features images of many people who are excluded today based on economics, race, gender, and other markers. If we believe in the inherent dignity of all people, where does this exclusion come from?
- The video mentioned "first steps" we could take to help the excluded today. Looking over the excluded groups you identified, which of those first steps might be appropriate? How so?

Creation and Appropriation Exercise

Before starting the "First Steps" * exercise, remind students of the first steps of walking with the excluded mentioned in the video:

1. *Listening to the excluded*
2. *Speaking up for the excluded*
3. *Giving up some comfort*
4. *Amplifying marginalized voices*
5. *Showing love in actions*
6. *Protesting unjust structures*
7. *Praying for those who suffer*

It might be helpful to post these somewhere visible in the classroom or distribute these lists to each student.



Artwork by Ignasi Flores

- Tell them the goal of this activity is to work collaboratively to come up with specific, actionable steps they can reasonably be expected to take along these lines, even if those are small steps.
- Have the students partner with one or two peers.
- Have each dyad/triad generate as many possible “first steps” as they can for each of the seven recommendations from the video.
- Remind them that the goal is for their first steps to be actionable and feasible for people like themselves, so “becoming an elected political leader who changes policy to favor the excluded” might be a good fifteenth step, but they are only tasked with coming up with first steps.

**Adapted from [Syracuse University](#).*

Report Back

- If there is time, have each dyad/triad report back on the best “first step” they came up with, write it in big bold letters on a sheet of paper, and post it somewhere in classroom.
- Have the students share their “first step” with the class along with a short explanation of both how it might help the excluded and why it qualifies as actionable and feasible for members of the class.
- Where possible, try to actualize these first steps in the moment. For example, if a student recommends a particular way to post on social media around these issues, have the class make a post along those lines. Or if a student recommends a particular prayer, pause to offer one up.
- Close class with the thought that these “first steps” do not have to wait. They can be done right away.



Ignatian Conversations Framework

One of St. Ignatius Loyola's great spiritual insights, and therefore one of his gifts to our world was a way of engaging in conversation with another person. For St. Ignatius, the other person is a child of God and a person deserving respect and consideration no matter what opinion the person holds or the history of the relationship with this person. We call this Ignatian Conversation.

At the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius lays out the "Presupposition" for the entire retreat and for Ignatian Conversations. In it each person "presupposes" the good in the other and the "goodness" of the statement being made. When one believes the statement is not correct, with love one seeks to correct or work to understand the statement so that "it may be saved" or understood in a correct fashion.

We strive to engage in honest, brave and fruitful conversations, which have the following attributes:

Slow to speak. Allow everyone the chance to speak. Talk less and listen more.

Listening attentively. Listen actively with an ear to understanding others' views. Listen respectfully without interrupting

Seek the truth in what others are saying. Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.

Disagree humbly, respectfully and thoughtfully. Avoid blame and speculation. Avoid assumptions and generalizations.

Allow the time it needs. Seek opportunities to continue the dialogue. Follow up when necessary.

Adapted from Rockhurst University's "Ignatian Conversation" and University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching.

Additional Prelections, Discussions, and Projects

Suggested Prelection Reflection

- Remember a moment when you were the recipient of kindness. What were the circumstances and how did the kindness extended to you make a difference?
- Imagine you can "will the good" of others. That is, you can make possible that which another needs to live a full life. What are you specifically desiring for them, making happen for them?? List five things that you think constitute a full life.
- What aspects of life are open to you because of who you are, where you live, your family, your ethnicity, your socio-economic status, your gender, your sexual orientation? To what or to where do you belong but someone else does not?
- What aspects of life have been closed off to you because of who you are, where you live, your family, your ethnicity, your socio-economic status, your gender, your sexual orientation? To what or to where does someone else belong but you do not?
- Have you experienced being excluded? Have you ever excluded someone?

Initial Post-video Discussion Questions

- What is the common project to which we are being called?
- If we truly believe every person has inherent dignity, how do we explain the economic, racial, gender, social inequities that exist?
- We can see that disease, hatred, the effects of poverty transcend boundaries and borders, geography, and distance. Is there evidence that our love for our sisters and brothers does the same?
- Is there anyone who models this love for you?

Further Discussion Questions

First Steps in Walking with the Excluded

In advance of the discussion, share on your screen or make available copies of the first steps* in "Walking with the Excluded."

1. Listen closely listen carefully. Listen with an open mind to what those experiencing injustice are telling you. Listen for their suffering, listen for their need. Listen to their story. Do not presume you know their situation before you listen to what they have to say. Take the empathy God gifted you and listen.
2. Speak up in your own circles! Be the voice for the those silenced, mocked, dismissed, ridiculed, or denigrated in your own social circle. Take the voice God gifted you and speak up.
3. Get ready to be uncomfortable. The conversation about an injustice, the solution to an injustice may make you uncomfortable! It may cost you your certitude; your time; a piece of your privilege, you might have to pay more for a T-shirt or a latte. Have less, do more. Take the fortitude God gifted you and exercise it.
4. Amplify the voices of the oppressed. Find your platform, and from it speak truth to power. Take the courage God gifted you and raise your voice.
5. Act because it's the right thing to do. Don't act for show, for credit, for your college resume, to make yourself look good on social media, or for your friends. Act because it's the right thing to do. Ignatius wrote, love in shown more in deeds than in words. Sometimes you may not like the deed, but the doing of it is your love. Take the will, the energy and the courage God gifted you and act.
6. Show up in solidarity. Live and lead with empathy, witness, protest, liberate, heal, join those who are suffering in their resistance of unjust structures. As Pope Francis says we need to "find ways for those who are cast aside to act, so that they become agents of a new future." Take the empathy God gave you and embrace it.
7. Pray for hope, pray for love, pray for faith. Pray for a deepening of our compassion and an increase in our resolve. Pray for those who suffer, that they find justice. Pray for those who withhold justice, that their hearts will be changed. Take the faith that God gifted you and live it.

Discussion Questions

- Have you had the opportunity to take one of these steps? What was the experience like? Or could you have taken a step and did not? Why not?
- Considering the steps needed to take to Walk with the Excluded, does one present more of a challenge for you? Why?
- Return to your discussion of those excluded within your own community. Do these steps give you a way to accompany them? How so? How likely are you to do so?

Suggested Project

Using the rubric of Ignatian conversation, have the class identify someone/group in their society who is excluded presently. Devise a response that incorporates all these steps by identifying:

- To whom do we need to listen. How could we create the opportunity for real conversation?
- Are there those in our own social circle who speak without respect about these individuals or groups of people? How will we respond to them?
- What will it cost us re: socially, ideologically, materially, personally? How will we be made uncomfortable if change occurs?
- For whom do we become a voice and to whom do we speak? How will we do it? What platform will we create?
- Take a moment to reflect on our motives. Whose need are we serving?
- Make a plan that demonstrates our solidarity
- Write a prayer that expresses our hope for the excluded and our own resolve to care.

Decide whether you will as a class or individuals walk in some way with those you have identified as excluded.

First Steps in Walking with the Excluded - Second Set of Discussion Questions & Projects

Discussion Questions

- What realities and which people are invisible to those in the power centers in your community, your region, your nation?
- What groups of people or which individuals need to sit down to real dialogue? What issues or social realities do you think they need to discuss? What good can come from their open and real dialogue?
- Write a prayer that expresses our hope for the excluded and our own resolve to care.

Suggested Projects

- Identify an issue that is creating exclusivity in your community. Identify the key players in the context of that issue. Create a role play in which the parties sit down to listen and learn from the other. Create a rubric based on the practice of Ignatian conversation.
- Spend one week practicing the virtue of inclusivity with keen intentionality within your school or local community. Keep a journal of your experiences. Reflect on the circumstances in which you extended inclusion. How did your efforts affect the situation?

First Steps in Walking with the Excluded - Third Set of Discussion Questions & Projects

Discussion Questions

- What were/are those demands made by “people who are different” and why are they perceived to be so threatening that they lead to exclusion, the threat of violence, violence?
- How does the integration of difference ensure a more lasting peace?
- How can we integrate differences without eliminating what is unique?

Suggested Projects

- Create a digital polyhedron that represents the culture of inclusion and a digital polyhedron that represents a culture of exclusion.
- Describe through digital photo collage the richness of a diverse culture in your neighborhood, town, or city.
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- Spend one week practicing the virtue of inclusivity with keen intentionality within your school or local community. Keep a journal of your experiences. Reflect on the circumstances in which you extended inclusion. How did your efforts affect the situation?

First Steps in Walking with the Excluded - Fourth Set of Discussion Questions & Projects

Discussion Questions

- When I put up walls, I am left without a horizon. What and who am I not seeing?
- What gives someone license to build walls- physical, racial, economic, political, social walls?
- What motivates them?
- What makes them think it is the right thing to do?

Suggested Projects

- Take photos of some of the walls or signs that suggest “no admittance, not welcome” (physical, economic, racial, gender)- in the area in which you live. Have the class create a photo collage.
- Engage your own social media algorithm on a particular social platform. Who is included and who is excluded? What perspectives are given a voice, which are not? Who is presented positively, who is presented negatively? Compare yours with that of another student.

First Steps in Walking with the Excluded - Fifth Set of Discussion Questions & Projects

Discussion Questions

- Often, “the sight of a person who is suffering disturbs us.” Whose suffering do you find that particularly disturbs you?
- What do you tell yourself when you look away?
- If I put the face of Christ on “each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters” will I respond differently? Why would I or why wouldn't I?

Suggested Project

- Create a penitential rite aimed at the roots of an ongoing injustice in your community, society, nation, world. presented negatively? Compare yours with that of another student.