OBJECTIVES

- To help the teens connect the Beatitudes with the pursuit of happiness
- To have our students explore the meaning of the beatitudes in the larger context of Jesus’ teaching
- To continue to nurture the faith development of our teens and assist them in understanding the Beatitudes and how they relate to their life journey.

OVERVIEW

I. 4:00-5:15pm- Teen Mass
II. 5:10-5:20pm - Hospitality in the Narthex
III. 5:20-5:30 - Large Group/attendance in Church
    Short Video: What is Happiness? Learn How to Be Happy In Life
    www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIWQeMFncm8
    Speaker: Friar John Paul Cafiero
IV. 6:05 - 7:00pm Small Group Lesson Plan
    o The lesson’s activities include the 6 components that should be in every faith lesson:
        o Community Building
        o Scripture
        o Shared experiences by adults and teens
        o Catholic Theology and learning
        o I learned statements
        o Putting our faith in action or lived experience.

Community Building Activity: Happiness Exercise

Description: On the Teen Handout, there is a happiness quiz. Have the teens complete the quiz by writing a number from 1-10 (1 being very true, I identify with this a lot; 10 being not true, I don’t think that this is true at all). When they are done, explain that a lower score shows a happier person.

Happiness Scale:

- 10-25 - You live in a constant state of bliss. You have your life in order and sunbeams burst out of your smile. People are happier just by being in your glow and you spread happiness simply by walking into a room.
- 25-50 - You’re pretty content with your life. Sure, some things could be better, but who doesn’t feel that way sometimes? Maybe if you changed one or two ways of thinking you could be happy all the time.
- 50-75 - You have some pretty dark days, but are happy sometimes. You can’t help but think about the happier days of your childhood when life was free and easy for you. It’s time to start thinking about what you can do to clear away the clouds and be happy more often.
- 75-100 - Whoa there, grumpy! You are unhappy almost all the time. The sight of sunshine and rainbows sickens you. The world is a pretty dark place. Try to remember that there is some positivity in the world and it’s not all doom and gloom.
Discussion Questions: Is anyone perfectly happy? Is it possible to be perfectly happy? What ways can we live that will make us happier? How does God support us to be happy?

Connection to the lesson
- The Beatitudes are ways that Jesus has given us to be happy and live through him. Our attitude (be-attitude) colors so much of how we perceive the world—if we can see ourselves through a new lens, we can maybe be happier.

Scripture Activities
Break into smaller groups. Have each group read either Luke 6:20-26 or Matthew 5:1-13 (For this class please use the translation from The Message provided below)

Stop by 6:45 to cover the remaining items:
- **I Learned** Allow time to share what the teens have learned. There is always a spot on the handout for the teens to write this portion of the lesson. This can be done verbally as well. It is important for you to be able to assess if the teens in your group are meeting the objectives of the lessons. Peer Ministers can be utilized here to help you make sure teens are engaged and learning. Encourage students to take packets home and share with their parents or families
- **Social Action and Challenges for the week (Lived Experience)** Discuss ways to put the ideas from tonight into action
- **Closing Prayer & Dismissal:**
  1. Have students gather in a circle with a Bible
  2. Give each teen a prayer card and have them write their first name on the card. Collect the cards and put them in the center of the circle.
  3. As the Bible is passed from one person to another have each person share with the group one of the Beatitudes they want to work on in their own lives.
  4. At the end of the prayer invite each teen to take a prayer card from the center (not their own) and pray for that person this week.

BACKGROUND FOR CATECHIST
To get a better understanding of the Beatitudes

- **Watch the short video we will be using in Large Group** (see above for link)
- **Read one of the following articles:**
  - [THE BEATITUDES: PATHWAYS OF LIVING IN TRUE JOY AND PEACE](http://www.tractassociation.org/pamphlets/beatitudes-pathways-living-true-joy-peace/)
    This is an outstanding article well worth reading. It provides discussion questions for exploring each beatitude. You may find them helpful for discussion in your small group, as journaling prompts or for your own prayer and meditation.
  - Three Hard Beatitudes: Poor in spirit,... - [Fr. James Martin, SJ](http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-beatitudes-generosity-and-happiness.html) – this is supplemental article
WATCH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING VIDEOS:

- The Beatitudes: the Portrait of Happiness – Robert Barron
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQ1VCDFEkkk
- The Key To Joy – Robert Barron - www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4Bb4UJypi0
- Living the Beatitudes: Session 1 – Thomas Smith of Ascension Press
  http://thecatholicyearoffaith.com/living-the-beatitudes-session-one/
- The Ascension Press has nine other short videos on the Beatitudes in the series entitled “Living the Beatitudes: Pathways to the Kingdom” – all are available on Youtube.

Podcast

- The Beatitudes: A Spiritual Program – Robert Barron
  http://www.wordonfire.org/resources/homily/the-beatitudes-a-spiritual-program/658/

KEY POINTS TO BE MADE IN THE LESSON

1. **What are the Beatitudes?**
   - Beatitude - Latin for “an abundant happiness” indicating a certain inner contentedness or joy no matter what your life circumstances are.
   - An invitation to a way of living that brings true happiness and both inward and outward peace
   - A collection of spiritual teachings. Some scholars believe that the Beatitudes represent a summary of Jesus’ teachings that disciples could easily commit to memory (to heart).
   - Pathways to personal transformation – guidelines for how to be happy.

2. **The purpose of the Beatitudes is...**
   - To speak to the quest for happiness
   - To create in its hearers a new perspective about what it means to be happy, to be blessed, to be favored by God
   - Jesus is making a claim about who God is – God loves unconditionally
   - To lead us to a peace and joy to be experienced here and now
   - To provide concrete ways for practicing authentic Christian spirituality
   - To call us to true happiness and the deepest of joy as we find our true identity in our relationship with God and true peace both inwardly and outwardly
   - To set up standards or norms for being a disciple

Other points to highlight with your students

1. Happiness has become a lifetime goal for many
2. There is a spiritual component to happiness that is often overlooked by many people
3. Jesus is creating a new measure of love and acceptance. Throughout his life, Jesus tossed aside the norms of society that kept people in their places, and he claimed those who no one else would. This passage is a kind of ultimate summary of his ministry and a testament to God’s nature.
4. The goal of every individual Christian is transformation (conversion) - to become a new creation who thinks and lives the same way Jesus Christ did.
5. Jesus explained the spiritual traits of character that produce a state of joy that persists apart from and in spite of circumstances – they are the beatitudes

Small Group Sharing

There are two (2) versions of the Beatitudes, one in the gospel of Luke and one in Matthew. Most people know Matthew’s version of the Beatitudes. I am including both texts here. I have chosen to use a translation referred to as The Message (MSG), which is a contemporary teen friendly translation.
There are three major theories that Bible scholars have developed to account for the differences between Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount and Luke’s Sermon on the Plain:

1. Both Gospels give accounts of the same discourse. The general outline is the same in both versions.
2. Jesus taught many of the same ideas on multiple occasions. The Gospels reflect two different homilies spoken at different times during Jesus’ teaching ministry.
3. The Gospels present two homilies delivered in close succession: one on the summit of the mountain to the disciples and then a second homily on the plain to the multitude.

**COMPARING MATTHEW AND LUKE’S ACCOUNT OF THE BEATITUDES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>takes place on a mountain side</em></td>
<td><em>takes place on a plain after descending from a height</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This teaching is directed to Jesus’ disciples</td>
<td>This teaching to the crowds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spiritual message composed of 7 blessings and resulting in 7 promises</td>
<td>is addressing 4 social justice issues which are followed by 4 curses directed against those who perpetuate the injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written to those who understand the Jewish tradition – are familiar with Jewish law and the teaching of the prophets</td>
<td>Written to and for Gentile Christians (Greek speaking Christians who were never Jewish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew expands the Sermon on the Mount</td>
<td>Luke condenses the Sermon on the Mount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew follows the tradition taught by the Biblical Prophets</td>
<td>Luke offers a radical teaching – new to most of his audience (probably shocking)</td>
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*remember place is often used as a symbol in the scripture*

**Matthew 5:1-12**

**You're Blessed**

When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

“*You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.*

“*You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.*

“*You’re blessed when you’re content with just who you are—no more, no less. That’s the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought.*

“*You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God. He’s food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat.*

“*You’re blessed when you care. At the moment of being ‘care-full,’ you find yourselves cared for.*

“*You’re blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.*

“*You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.*

“*You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom.*

“Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.*
Luke 6:20-26

You're Blessed

Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their ailments. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him—so much energy surging from him, so many people healed! Then he spoke:

You’re blessed when you've lost it all.
God’s kingdom is there for the finding.
You’re blessed when you’re ravenously hungry.
Then you’re ready for the Messianic meal.
You’re blessed when the tears flow freely.
Joy comes with the morning.

“Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like!—for even though they don’t like it, I do . . . and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.

Give Away Your Life

But it’s trouble ahead if you think you have it made.
What you have is all you’ll ever get.

And it’s trouble ahead if you’re satisfied with yourself.
Your self will not satisfy you for long.
And it’s trouble ahead if you think life’s all fun and games.
There’s suffering to be met, and you’re going to meet it.

“There’s trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

Optional Activity – Explore some contemporary music around the Beatitudes

Below find links to 5 songs each with a slide show containing the lyrics of the song

- Treasures from Jesus – (Introduction)
- The Splendor of My King (The Poor in Spirit)
- My Heart Will Break No More (Those Who Mourn)
- Close to You (Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness)
- When Mercy Came (The Merciful)

Discussion Questions
1. What is the composer trying to communicate in this/these song(s)?
2. How might we consider the beatitudes ‘treasures from Jesus’?
3. What do you understand the phrase ‘the poor in Spirit’ to mean after listening to this song?
4. How does mourning lead to happiness?
5. How did your ideas of mercy, expressed in your poster, relate to the lyrics of the song When Mercy Came?
6. What songs come to mind for you at the end of this lesson on Beatitudes and why?
Small group exercises: This is a wonderful opportunity for your peers to share their experiences.

Relating the Beatitudes to teens’ lives:
  o Have the teens come back together in a circle. If they have read both readings have them choose one. They should have a pen and the reading in front of them.
  o Read the following, making sure to pause as they complete each task.
    ▪ Jesus gave us the Beatitudes as a way to be happy on Earth and to live by his teachings. Every person has their own struggles with this—and maybe some parts are harder than others.
    ▪ Draw a star next to the Beatitude that you think is most important. Take a moment to think about why this one is so important.
    ▪ Draw a heart next to the Beatitude that you think you do best right now.
    ▪ Choose one Beatitude and write down the person you think is a great example of this Beatitude. Who comes to mind? Why is that person an example?
    ▪ Circle the Beatitude that you think you have to work the hardest at right now. What can you do to achieve that ideal?

----- Please remember to dismiss class at 7:00PM only -----  
Do not dismiss students earlier.

*Please make sure students place their chairs on top of the tables/desks before they leave. Maintenance vacuums on Sunday evenings after we leave.*

Thank you!
Catechist Checklist – Please fill out and turn in at the end of the night

We covered (check the ones covered):

□ Community Builder  □ Scripture  □ Shared experience
□ Catholic Theology  □ I learned  □ Social Action
□ handed out and used lesson sheets

Name a success with my group’s faith formation:

Biggest challenge with my group this week:

Feedback on lesson plan and handouts:

• I liked ...

• I didn’t like...

• I would have done...

Name: ____________________________________________