

Gaudete et Exsultate: A Prayerful Guide for Parishes

Explanation

The purpose of this simple guide is to introduce parishioners to *Gaudete et Exsultate* in a prayerful way. Pope Francis writes in the Exhortation:

... So let me ask you: Are there moments when you place yourself quietly in the Lord's presence, when you calmly spend time with him, when you bask in his gaze? Do you let his fire inflame your heart? Unless you let him warm you more and more with his love and tenderness, you will not catch fire. How will you then be able to set the hearts of others on fire by your words and witness? (#151)

The six 90minute sessions will enable parishioners to read one chapter per session in a prayerful and guided manner. Sessions will begin with 15 minutes of *Lectio Divina* (using the Gospel for the day/the next day or Sunday, or a Scripture passage referred to in the *GE* chapter, or a passage from the *GE* chapter itself), followed by a brief YouTube overview of the relevant chapter. Participants will then spend 30 minutes reading the chapter and reflecting on it in the light of questions provided. There will then be a 30minute period of sharing of insights/discussion followed by a concluding prayer.

Suggestions for programme leader

- Choose the Scripture (or *GE*) passage for *Lectio Divina*
- Download suggested YouTube videos (they are very short)
- Make copies of the three reflection sheets for participants
- Other music/songs may suggest themselves

Participants

- Will each need a copy of *Gaudete et Exsultate*. Encourage them to download it from the Vatican website below (go to top righthand corner) and save it to their laptop, tablet or iPad and bring that with them. It's very simple!
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html

Session One: Introduction

- Welcome **10mins**
 - Housekeeping/Health and Safety
 - Introductions
- Prayer** **15mins**
- *Lectio Divina* (see sheet)
- Input** **30mins**
- Programme explanation
 - Issue and 'Something to Ponder' sheet to be used in following weeks
 - Allow time to read
 - Focusing questions for this session:
 - When you think of holiness what comes to mind?
 - Who models holiness for you?
 - What criteria do you use to decide who is holy?
 - Large group sharing/discussion
 - Watch the following three very short YouTube videos on *Gaudete et Exsultate*
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xW42YZ0pAEU>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s> (Casey)
[Watch only as far as 2:51]
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRweQno8PJA> (James Martin)
(Leader may want to replay them)
- Sharing/discussion** **30mins**
- Invite participants to share any insights/learnings
 - Song: Everything is Holy Now (Peter Mayer)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiypaURysz4>
- Concluding Prayer** **10mins**
- Invite participants offer spontaneous prayers stimulated by the session's content
 - Leader to use standard 'collect' formula to conclude/bring spontaneous prayers to an end:
 - You
 - Who
 - Do
 - ThroughFor example:
Good and gracious God/ gentle and loving God/ God of all mercy/ holy God

You hear all our prayers/ you know all that is in our hearts/you
are with us always/ you call us to holiness/ you provide us with
models of holiness

Listen to our needs today/ hear our spoken and unspoken
prayers /strengthen our desire to live holy lives

Through Christ our Lord Amen

Session Two: Chapter 1 THE CALL TO HOLINESS

Prayer	15mins
• <i>Lectio Divina</i> (see session 1)	
Focusing activity	5mins
• Invite participants to recall a word/phrase/learning from Session 1	
Input	5mins
Overview	
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s (Casey) [Watch from 2:51-3:38 only]	
Leader may wish to use something from the summaries websites (see below)	
Guided Reading	30 mins
• Invite participants to read and reflect on Chapter 1 using any of the questions from the 'Something to Ponder' sheet issued in Session 1	
Sharing/Discussion	30 mins
Invite participants to share/discuss anything they may from session's content	
Concluding prayer (see Session 1)	10 mins

Session Three: Chapter 2 TWO SUBTLE ENEMIES OF HOLINESS

Prayer	15mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Lectio Divina</i> (see session 1)	
Focusing activity	5mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite participants to recall a word/phrase/learning from Session 2	
Input	5mins
Overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s (Casey) [Watch from 3:38-5:12only]• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djfgjitNdP4 (Brain Johnstone on Gnosticism and Pelagianism)	
Leader may wish to use something from the summaries websites (see below)	
Guided Reading	30 mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite participants to read and reflect on Chapter 2 using any of the questions from the 'Something to Ponder' sheet issued in Session 1	
Sharing/Discussion	30 mins
Invite participants to share/discuss anything from session's content	
Concluding prayer (see Session 1)	10 mins

Session Four: Chapter 3 IN THE LIGHT OF THE MASTER

Prayer	15mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Lectio Divina</i> (see session 1)	
Focusing activity	5mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite participants to recall a word/phrase/learning from Session 3	
Input	5mins
Overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s (Casey) [Watch from 5:12-6:17 only]• Song: Beatitudes chant<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzSEfValeYI○ or Blest are They (David Hass)○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwSkmzw8dY8	
Leader may wish to use something from the summaries websites (see below)	
Guided Reading	30 mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite participants to read and reflect on Chapter 3 using any of the questions from the 'Something to Ponder' sheet issued in Session 1, or use the Works of Mercy sheet to consider: 'During the past month how/when have I...?'	
(Note the reference to the Works of Mercy in #107)	
Sharing/Discussion	30 mins
Invite participants to share/discuss anything from session's content	
Concluding prayer (see Session 1)	10 mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Song: Oh Mercy (Matt Maher)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tEgzJaudoc○ or Mercy Chant (Monica Brown)○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biVRJumoaUw	

Session 5: Chapter 4 SIGNS OF HOLINESS IN TODAY'S WORLD

Prayer **15mins**

- *Lectio Divina* (see session 1)

Focusing activity **5mins**

- Invite participants to recall a word/phrase/learning from Session 4

Input **5mins**

Overview

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s> (Casey) [Watch from 6:17-7:43 only]

Leader may wish to use something from the summaries websites (see below)

Guided Reading **30 mins**

- Invite participants to read and reflect on Chapter 4 using any of the questions from the 'Something to Ponder' sheet issued in Session 1, or use the 'Signs of Holiness' sheet to consider: 'During the past month how/when have I...?'

Sharing/Discussion **30 mins**

Invite participants to share/discuss anything from session's content

Concluding prayer (see Session 1) **10 mins**

Sing 'Rejoice in the Lord'

Session Six: Chapter 5 SPIRITUAL COMBAT, VIGILANCE AND DISCERNMENT

Prayer **15mins**

- *Lectio Divina* (see session 1)

Focusing activity **5mins**

- Invite participants to recall a word/phrase/learning from Session 5

Input **5mins**

Overview

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmBU5PxCsVo&t=28s> (Casey) [Watch from 7:43 until the end]
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIYjpWDVKbg> (Muldoon)

Leader may wish to use something from the summaries websites (see below)

Guided Reading **30 mins**

- Invite participants to read and reflect on Chapter 5 using any of the questions from the 'Something to Ponder' sheet issued in Session 1

Sharing/Discussion **30 mins**

Invite participants to share/discuss anything from session's content

Concluding prayer **10 mins**

- Invite someone to read aloud #176
- Pray Hail Mary together
- Song: Gentle Woman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RERoQ1biLdE>
Or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nizM7a9wll>
Or

The leader may find the following websites helpful:

Summaries of *Gaudete et Exsultate*

<https://www.kerknet.be/sites/default/files/18%2004%2009%20Gaudete%20et%20e%20x%20s%20u%20l%20t%20a%20t%20e%20s%20a%20m%20e%20n%20v%20a%20t%20t%20i%20n%20g%20p%20d%20f>

<https://thejesuitpost.org/2018/04/gaudete-et-exsultate-an-overview/>

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2018/04/09/gaudete-et-exsultate-key-quotes/>

As well as a helpful, brief summary describing the Exhortation as a symphony in three movements, Neil Darragh in 'Rejoice and be Excited' also notes what is absent in it:

<https://hail.to/tui-motu-interislands-magazine/publication/S5hzabk/article/bF7e7zy>

Individual chapter summaries

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/call-to-holiness-apostolic-exhortation-gaudete-et-exsultate/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-2-subtle-enemies-of-holiness/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-3-in-the-light-of-the-master/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-4-signs-of-holiness-in-todays-world/>

<http://www.stillromancatholicafteralltheseyears.com/gaudete-et-exsultate-chapter-5-spiritual-combat-vigilance-and-discernment/>

<https://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/articles.cfm?id=739> (Mirus)

Chpt 1 Reese

https://www.ncronline.org/news/spirituality/signs-times/pope-francis-spiritual-guide?utm_source=Copy+of+April+26+ +Young+Voices&utm_campaign=cc&utm_medium=email

Chpt 2 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-warns-two-paths-holiness>

Chpt 3 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/francis-does-not-see-holiness-simple-prospect>

Chpt 4 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-five-loves-combat-ills-todays-culture>

Chpt 5 Reese

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/signs-times/pope-francis-teaches-discernment-coping-spiritual-battles>