

PERFECT PORTRAITS

YEAR 1, 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Gather large sheets of paper and markers of any size and color. Have the group break up into teams of two and then have each pair take only one marker and one piece of paper. Ask the teams to turn their paper portrait style (longer sides, shorter top and bottom) and draw a large oval in the middle of the paper with a line across the bottom of the paper. (Showing an example helps).

Tell the teams that they must keep silence throughout the whole activity; in fact, tell the teams that there will be NO communicate at all with each other, whether that be through a laugh, a smile, a frown, a gesture or any other form of communicating. NO communicating allowed. Then instruct the teams to work together to draw a face with the oval. Explain that there are no rules except that they have to take turns and each person can only make one mark per turn. After a mark has been made that person must put the marker down on the paper and then their partner can pick up the marker and make one mark and then put the marker down on the paper to continue repeating the process until the face is completed. Once either partner has made what they think should be the last mark for the portrait they can place the marker on the floor instead of the paper. Again, NO communicating! Instruct the teams to keep silence, and wait for further instructions. After everyone's marker is on the floor, instruct the partners to now come up with a name or a title for their portrait. Take turns writing the title on the bottom line by writing one letter per turn in the same process.

Once every team has completed their titles have an "art show". Ask each team to present their portrait and then ask the participants what they thought about the experience. Point out that this was obviously not an ideal situation in which to work. Ask, "How many of you would have rather just drawn a face on their own?" Explain that there will be many times in life when we would rather get things done "our way" and get things done "right" but God thinks differently. You cannot be self-sufficient and love at the same time. You cannot do good work and do it alone. (Evil is the withdrawal from God, the desire of self-sufficiency.) In fact, God, the omnipotent one, decided to leave room for us, the sinful human failures, to participate in His redemptive work for others. Over and over again, in our salvation history, God prefers unity rather than ideals. Because evil is doing it on your own and removing yourself from the family, the Fatherhood of God. Rather than getting the work done perfectly, God asks us to get our love perfect. We have to remind ourselves that, when we are gathered in His name (God is Love), we invite Him to fully participate in our work and make lasting, omnipotent marks that always complete the work perfectly. Patience isn't about waiting for something painful to pass over and be done. Patience is about deciding to love so much so that you want to move through the pain for the sake of another.