

## CAUGHT IN THE ACT

### YEAR 1, 31st Sunday of Ordinary Time

Explain that the Devil tries to bury every secret deeper and inflate every ego larger to justify any and all sin. God is Love and so sin means that we are outright refusing love and separating ourselves from God. Explain that you are going to put the group to the task of exposing evil's presence in the world by allowing them to catch evil "in the act" of separating us from Love.

Divide the group into two teams. Present each team with a large sheet of paper or space on a whiteboard and instruct each team to write their assigned venial sin category at the top. Assign "Abusive Language" to the first team and "Hatred/Wishing Evil on Others" to the second team. For the second team, emphasize that their category is not about "doing" the evil acts but rather "inviting and wanting" evil to enter into other's lives. On your mark, give the teams one minute to write out, in bullet point form, all the different ways they can commit those sins. After the minute is over, have the teams sit back and ruminate on both categories together.

*Reflection:* Ask the group as a whole to silently notice the listed sins to which they have consented to in the past (emphasize silence). Ask them to examine their own denial, running, fighting or hiding from those who accuse them of doing these wrongs, especially God our Father. Then ask the group to briefly share, out loud with one another, their feelings about these situations. (Emphasize that they are instructed to share their feelings and not their sins.) *The total reflection time should not exceed 5 minutes.*

After the reflection, briefly explain to the group that we have to give all our thanks to God who accuses us of putting ourselves and others in danger. (Through our conscience, etc...) Unlike the Accuser's\* accusations which wills to condemn us, God wills to save us from sin and glorify us in absolute truth and love. Explain that when we examine our sins we aren't beating ourselves up and when we go to confession, neither is the priest or God; rather, we are resolutely trying to forget our selfishness and learn to love. Purifying hurts but it always stitches us up and makes us whole again. After this explanation is made, have each team swap categories. Then, on your mark, give the teams two minutes to come up with at least one "counter-action" for each listed bullet point. Explain that a "counter-action" should be something either like penance which makes up for the sin already done or a good work that directly opposes the temptation for that sin. After the two minutes are over, gather everyone back together and with the remaining time, ask the group to briefly share, out loud, what they think about the responses made against the evils (i.e. Are they effective. Why or why not? Do they make you hopeful?) Wrap up the discussion by saying that hatred and evil cannot stand to encounter supreme and perfect love. The brightness of love's fire torments all falsehood and those attached to it. That's why we, as Catholics, choose to stay close to all acts of love and the Church has no tolerance for selfishness but shares every ounce of forgiveness which is an act of love in itself.

\*Revelations 12:10, Psalm 109:6, Job 1-2, Zechariah 3:1-2