



40 Ideas for 40 Days

from Joe Paprocki

The Seven Last Words of Christ

- Explain that, before dying, many people speak final words that express their feelings and thoughts at that moment.
- Invite the young people to identify the speakers of these famous last words (fictional and non-fictional):
 - “Et tu, Brute?” (Julius Caesar)
 - “I have been and always will be your friend. Live long. And prosper.” (Mr. Spock, *The Wrath of Khan*)
 - “Rosebud” (Charles Foster Kane, *Citizen Kane*)
 - “If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you could possibly imagine.” (Obi-Wan-Kenobi, *Star Wars*)
 - “I’m melting!” (Wicked Witch of the West, *Wizard of Oz*)
 - “Are you guys ready? Let’s roll.” (Todd Beamer, passenger aboard United Flight 93, September 11, 2001)
 - “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” (Nathan Hale, 1776)



The Seven Last Words of Christ

- Explain that as Jesus was dying on the cross, he said some very important words.
- Provide Bibles for each of the young people and tell them to search for the following passages and to write down the words that Jesus spoke:
 - Luke 23:34 (Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.)
 - Luke 23:43 (Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.)
 - John 19:26-27 (Woman [Mary], behold your son. [to the disciple] Behold your mother.)
 - Matthew 27:46 and/or Mark 15:34 (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)
 - John 19:28 (I thirst.)
 - John 19:30 (It is finished.)
 - Luke 23:46 (Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit.)
- When everyone is finished, ask, “If you had never heard of or met Jesus before, and just happened to be passing by as he was dying on the cross, what kind of a person would you think he was based on his last words? What was most important to him?”
- Explain that the Seven Last Words of Christ serve as an excellent Lenten meditation, especially during Holy Week.
- Point out that a famous piece of music written by Franz Josef Hayden is named after the Seven Last Words of Christ. If possible, play a selection on CD.
- Invite the young people to memorize (take to heart) the seven last words of Christ. See if any volunteers can recall them without looking at their written work.