

“PILGRIMS OF HOPE”

Program of Spiritual Formation
of Ukrainian Youth for the Jubilee Year



4. THE GUIDE



Meeting 5
May 2025

5. Discovery

Holy Doors of Faith



3.1 Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
O Heavenly King. The Lord's Prayer. Hail Mary.



3.2 Patron Saint

Saint John Bosco

Saint John Bosco was born in Italy in 1815 into a poor peasant family. From childhood he had a deep curiosity about everything spiritual and at the same time a sensitivity to the needs of others. His first great discovery came in a dream he had at the age of 9: boys who were fighting among themselves were transformed into lambs when he began to act not with force but with gentleness. This dream became a prophecy for his whole life: Bosco understood that his vocation was to help young people discover the love of God through trust, friendship and science.

In the difficult circumstances of post-war Italy, where thousands of young people were left homeless, without education and without a future, Saint Don Bosco became a guide for them, sitting next to them, listening, understanding and showing them the way. His missionary pedagogy was not based on fear or authoritarianism, but on love, joy and personal presence. He discovered that the real change in a young person's heart comes not when they are taught, but when they are accompanied. He was not afraid to be around even the most difficult teenagers – for him, everyone was a potential saint.



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3.2 Patron Saint

Saint John Bosco

Saint Don Bosco believed that learning, craft, creativity and work were paths to discovering Christ in everyday life. In his oratories (schools and youth centres), he created spaces where young people could not only acquire knowledge but also find meaning in life, community, support and faith. It was through this “ordinary” environment - through laughter, sports, workshops, prayer - that he helped them discover something extraordinary: that they were infinitely loved by God, and he also helped them discover their vocation.

The life of Saint Don Bosco is a story of faith brought to life through presence. He helped young people to see that God speaks to them through their challenges, abilities, difficulties and hopes. His life is an example of how discovering God begins with the simple: being there, listening and loving.



3.3 God's Word

Acts of the Apostles (8: 26-31, 35-39)

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian[a] eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” [a] And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.



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3.3 God's Word

Reflections:

In this passage from the Acts of the Apostles, we see how God sends Philip into the depths of the desert to have an encounter. The protagonist of this story is an Ethiopian nobleman who has made a long journey to Jerusalem to worship God. Now he turns back and reads one of the Old Testament texts on the way. He already believes in God, he seeks Him, but despite his diligence, he cannot understand the meaning of what he has read on his own. He confesses to Philip that he needs someone to explain the Scriptures to him. How many young people today, like this Ethiopian, are in the midst of the Christian faith, attend meetings, listen to the Word of God, but do not understand what it means for them personally? They sincerely seek God, but without a guide it is difficult for them to truly discover Him for themselves.

The conversation with Philip changes everything: through personal dialogue, through a shared journey, the Word ceases to be just a text - it comes to life, it becomes an experience. It is then that the Ethiopian decides to be baptized. This reminds us that for spiritual growth, it is not enough to just read the Holy Scriptures or have knowledge of the faith - real change occurs through personal relationships, through encounters with those who help us to know God in our daily lives.

We will be able to see our lives in a new way in the light of the Word of God if we learn to share our faith, if we allow others to accompany us on this journey. The discovery of Christ often happens through encounters with other people - as in the case of Philip, who simply walks alongside, listens and shares his experience of God. The Word of God questions our lives, and life, in turn, questions the Word of God. It is important to have someone to help us in this search, someone who will become a spiritual guide. Because through others we discover the living Jesus.



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3.4 Subject block

Discovery is a burning curiosity that pushes you to explore new horizons. It is a desire for something new, going beyond the usual not to deny it, but to complement it with an unexpected discovery. It is the beauty that makes a child wonder at the world, an opportunity to be ignited by something unexpected.

Discovery is the meeting of the mind and the heart; these are those moments in life that open up new possibilities, help find answers, recognize a calling. No true discovery is accidental - it matures through learning, searching, developing creative thinking, the ability to wonder and see the presence of God both outside and inside oneself.

Discovery is not only an act of the mind, but above all an encounter, listening, sharing a faith that changes life.



3.5 Personal reflections

- What or who ignited your heart? What made you burn with inspiration?
- Do you think that learning and work are good tools for making deeper discoveries?
- Are you curious? Do you like to “explore” what you don’t know yet? Or maybe laziness makes you passive, forcing you to stay only in what is already obvious and accessible?
- “Every discovery is prepared through learning, searching, developing creativity, and the ability to wonder”: do you like to “study” (in the oldest sense of the word - that is, “love”!) every new challenge that comes your way?



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3.6 Work in groups



“Chariot of Discovery”

Duration: ~ 30 minutes

Format: work in small groups (4-6 people)

Purpose: to live an experience of discovery through accompaniment, search and personal participation; to better understand oneself, others and God who acts on the journey.

1. Beginning: The Chariot Sets Off (5 min)

The animator says: A passage from the Acts of the Apostles tells how God sends Philip into the desert to accompany the Ethiopian in his search. And Saint John Bosco made his whole life a journey alongside young people. Today we too set off on a journey. And this chariot is your group. Some of you will become “Philip”, some will become “the Ethiopian”, and all together will be a team that discovers God, yourself and others.

2. Role-playing part: Journey of questions (10 min)

Task: Each group draws ****roles**** from a bag (can be on pieces of paper or words):

- ***Philip*** - listens, accompanies, shares experiences
- ***Ethiopian*** - asks questions, searches, does not understand, but wants to know
- ***Treasurer*** - records valuable thoughts and discoveries of the group
- ***Holy Spirit*** - gently pushes to deeper topics or quotes Scripture
- ***Observer of the road*** - follows time and dynamics, can ask additional questions

Each group receives a sheet with questions:

- What or who in your life has ignited you? (What inspired you as a child or now? Who was your example, whose fire was passed on to you?)



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3.6 Work in groups

- Do you believe that studying or working can be a way to meet God? (Have you had moments when through studying, working or a project you discovered something deeper about yourself or your faith?)
- Do you consider yourself a curious person? (Are you interested in exploring new things, discovering things you don't know yet? What helps or hinders you in this?)
- Have you ever had a moment when you discovered something about God through an ordinary situation? (Maybe through a random conversation, a walk, a difficulty, an event?)
- What new challenge is there in your life right now? (And can you look at it not as an obstacle, but as a chance for discovery?)

Philip asks these questions to the Ethiopian. Others can join in, but the role-playing interaction should be lively, with improvisation, like a dialogue, not an interview.

3. Creative task: Discovery Box (10 min)

Task: Each group receives a sheet of paper or Whatman paper and colored pens/stickers.

Create a "Discovery Box" - write 3 things on a piece of paper:

1. Your group's greatest discovery about God that came out of the conversation
2. What helps a person to be open?
3. What can we as young people do to be Philip for others?

This can be done as a mini-poster or a symbolic "box" with key words, names, pictures.

4. Sharing (5 min)

Each group briefly (1 min) presents its discovery.



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3.6 Work in groups

The facilitator can summarize: “We are all on a journey. And on our journey there are always people whom God sends us. Sometimes we are Ethiopians who are looking for meaning. And sometimes we are Philip who have experiences to share. Saint John Bosco learned to be Philip for entire generations. Now it is your turn.”

Adaptation options:

- Older young people: discussion about vocation and the example of Don Bosco.
- For the less active: discussion with moderated questions.
- For open space: activity in the form of stations with different tasks.



3.7 Testimony

#pilgrimsofhope
#jubileeofyouth
#thejubileeyear2025

We encourage young people to post the hashtags during the month:
#pilgrimsofhope #jubileeofyouth #jubileeyear2025

"Search my heart, O Lord..." (Psalm 139) - Practice of inner discovery.

In Psalm 139, the psalmist opens his whole heart to God: "You know me... You saw me from my mother's womb..." This is a prayer of trust, search and openness. This psalm invites us not to be afraid to explore ourselves, to discover new things in ourselves, in others and in God. That is why we offer you a small spiritual journey that will help you better recognize how God leads you through discovery.



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3.7 Testimony

#pilgrimsofhope
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Task:

1. Pray Psalm 139.

2. Recall a moment in your life when you discovered something real: about yourself, about God, about others. It could be a conversation, a journey, an internal struggle, an unexpected word or an encounter.

Describe it (on a piece of paper or in a notebook):

- What did you discover?
- How did it affect you?
- What changed in you or your heart?

Remember a person who was a “discovery hero” for you – someone who taught you to see deeper, not to stop at the superficial, to seek the truth. It could be a saint, a teacher, a friend, even a child.

Write:

- What did this person discover?
- What inspires you in their journey?
- What did you learn from them?

Then say a simple prayer: “God, help me to see. To discover. To know. Search my heart and lead me.” If you want, compose a short word of gratitude or “your psalm”–simple words of the heart with which you respond to God’s presence in your life.



1.8 Final prayer

Completion of spiritual work, prayer of choice:

Jesus Prayer / Rosary / Theseus / Prayer in Silence.



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Books:

Annex:

1. "City of Hope and Hopelessness" - Marta Hontaryk

This is a modern story in which the characters discover the true face of the city, themselves and each other. In conditions of trials, light appears - as a symbol of hope, breaking through even where it seemed there was none. It is about the choice to see more than just the external.

2. "On the Vocation of the Human being" - Bishop Benedict (Aleksiichuk)

This book is an invitation to a deep self-discovery in the light of God's calling. Through reflection and testimony, it helps to better understand one's path, respond to life's challenges, and hear God's voice in the silence of the heart.

3. "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" - Roald Dahl

A fun and at the same time instructive story about a boy who, having entered a magical factory, discovers not only miracles, but also important truths: kindness is more valuable than wealth, and humility and gratitude are the true gold of the heart.

4. "Fahrenheit 451" - Ray Bradbury

A dystopia about a world where thinking, dreaming and reading are forbidden. The main character discovers that freedom begins with words, knowledge and inner truth. This book is about the struggle not to lose yourself.

5. "Jane Eyre" - Charlotte Bronte

The story of a strong girl who discovers her own dignity, independence and love. She is not afraid to seek the truth even when it hurts. This is a book about the path of inner growth, self-knowledge and loyalty to herself.



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Movies:

Annex:

1. "Don Bosco" (2004)

This film tells the true story of Saint John Bosco, a priest who discovered in young people not a problem, but potential. Through difficulties, rejection and misunderstanding, he discovers his mission - to be close to young people, to love them and help them know God. This is a film about the courage to listen to God's call, about the discovery of a heart that is capable of transforming others with meekness, joy and faith.

2. "The Pursuit of Happyness" (2006)

The story of a man who, despite poverty, despair and homelessness, does not stop in his search for a decent life for himself and his son. This film is about discovering inner strength, perseverance, faith in the best and that true happiness is always connected with love and dignity.

3. "1+1" (Intouchables, 2011)

An unexpected friendship between a paralyzed aristocrat and a boy from a poor neighborhood opens up a new perspective on life for both of them. They learn to see value in different things, to laugh through pain and to trust. This is a film about discovering the joy that comes from true human warmth.

4. "To the Stars" (Ad Astra, 2019)

The hero goes into space in search of his father, but the real journey becomes the discovery of himself - his fears, emotions, need for love. In the silence of the Universe, he learns to accept human weakness and the value of relationships. This is a story about finding depth in the midst of emptiness.

