



the  
Power  
of the Cross

Applying the Passion of  
Christ to Your Life

*Study Guide*

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## Prayer to Say Before Each Session

*Lord, all that I have and possess you have given me. I give all of it back to you, to use according to your will. Take my freedom, my past, my perceptions, my desires; give me your love and grace in exchange. With these I am truly rich and possess all that I need. Amen.*

*St. Ignatius of Loyola*

## *Questions for Group Discussions*

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### **The Cross of Christ Teaches Us ... (Week One)**

#### Day 1. Our Mission

What temptations do I find hardest to resist? How might this reveal God's intended purpose for me?

Reflecting on the temptations of Christ, can I find other ways that his true mission was hidden in the lies of Satan?

Have I had an experience where I was prevented from committing an evil act because of some outside interruption to my plans?

#### Day 2. To Live the Gospel

Where have I encountered Christ "in the least of my brethren"?

What steps can I take in order to notice Christ more in those the world considers the "least"?

Are there people in my own family whom I neglect, who fit into the categories of Matthew 25?

#### Day 3. How to Pray

How can my prayer better reflect what is going on in my life at the present moment?

When has my prayer been most heartfelt?

Are there times when my prayer has been one of desperation?

#### Day 4. About Repentance

Where do I need to repent most in my life?

Have I experienced a radical Christian conversion in my life?

Have I personally witnessed a remarkable story of faith?

Day 5. How to Trust and Give Thanks

What do I need from God to follow Jesus more closely?  
Are there times I have experienced remarkable answers to prayers I have  
prayed to God?  
Do I trust that God will give me the things I need?

Day 6. Reconciliation

Is there anyone I do not love? In what way can I allow the love of Christ  
to control me?  
How does forgiving someone free me from bondage?  
Who are those who are most unloved in the world today?

Day 7. How to Love

Do I allow God to love through me?  
What keeps me from loving everyone on the face of the earth?  
What are some ways that we can die to ourselves and live for others?

**The Cross of Christ Unites ...** (*Week Two*)

Day 8. The Temporal and Eternal

How does the "light" of Christ shine into the darkness of our world?  
How can living for Christ bring light to those who live in darkness?  
Name some areas of darkness in the world that have yet to be touched  
by the light of Christ.

Day 9. Those Divided by Sin

Whom do I treat as an outsider in God's kingdom?  
Who are the people that I feel most separated from, and how can I  
reach out to them with the mercy of God?  
How does the cross of Christ bring about the unity lost by original sin?

Day 10. In Humility

In what areas of my life do I have the most trouble with pride?  
How does humility help the body of Christ to function together as one?  
When is humility not a virtue?

Day 11. In Liberty

What continues to enslave me?  
How free am I really?  
What “gods” or “masters” am I serving throughout the day?

Day 12. Those Who Suffer for Justice

What does God ask me to do for those who suffer?  
Look at the life of someone who has lost his or her life trying to help another. What can I learn from that person’s life?  
What can I do to relieve the suffering of others?

Day 13. Us in the Work We Have to Do

How can dying to myself help me to know God’s purpose?  
Can I think of people who seem to be perfectly placed where God wants them to be?  
What is the role of friends and family in helping us to know what God’s will is for us? How does the story of Joseph in Genesis bring this home?

Day 14. God’s Mercy and Love

When have I judged someone wrongly?  
How does judging others make me feel?  
What would it be like not to pass judgment on myself?

**The Cross of Christ Transforms ...** (*Week Three*)

Day 15. How We Worship

What do I do with the life God has “breathed” into me?  
Do I worship God “in spirit and truth”?  
What do I need to surrender to God?

Day 16. How We See Jesus

Am I overly familiar with Christ?  
Does making Jesus “our friend” make him too small?  
Do we see Jesus as the all-powerful God, able to work powerfully through our weakness?

Day 17. How We Forgive

Do I still harbor past sins for which I have not accepted God’s forgiveness?  
What do Catholics mean when they speak of Purgatory? (See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1030–32)  
How do indulgence practices speed up the action of God’s grace in a person’s life? (See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1470–79)

Day 18. Law and Love

How much do I love God?  
How do I view God the Father’s role in the crucifixion of Jesus?  
Who do I need to show charity (love) to the most?

Day 19. Our Lives

Do I trust in God?  
How much is my faith affected by the empty promises of advertisements?  
Can I share an example of God’s faithfulness in my life?

Day 20. Our Priorities

How does the cross fit into my stance toward God?  
Where does sacrificial love fit into my life?  
Is there a benefit to me in loving sacrificially?

Day 21. How We See Ourselves

From what do I need Jesus to save me?  
What do I mean when I say, “Lord, have mercy”?  
How does being “in Christ” manifest itself in my life?

## **The Cross of Christ Illumines ... (Week Four)**

### Day 22. Blindness

What would it be like to see everything in God's light?

What does the account of those whose physical blindness is cured teach us about the spiritual path?

Is there "darkness" that I prefer to the light of Christ?

### Day 23. Lag Time

Do I trust that God answers prayer?

How do I handle periods of waiting on God's response to my prayers?

How are God's ways different from my ways of doing things?

### Day 24. Weakness

Do I embrace my weakness?

How do I view weakness in myself, as a blessing or a curse?

How does the world view weakness?

### Day 25. Death

Who can save me from death?

How do nonbelievers in Christ face death?

How do I remember those who have died?

### Day 26. Our Choices

Whom am I trying to please with the actions of my life?

How do I see the City of God and the City of Man present in the world today?

How would I describe my lifelong pilgrimage toward God?

### Day 27. The Truth

From whom did I learn what I know about Jesus now?

How can we know Jesus, and as a result, know God better?

What parts of the movie *The Passion of the Christ* are from Scripture?

Where is the rest from?

Day 28. The Way to True Unity

Am I focused on unity or division within the Body of Christ?  
What can I do to bring about unity with other followers of Christ?  
Why is division wrong?

**The Cross of Christ Restores ...** (*Week Five*)

Day 29. Life

What still binds me?  
What can I learn from the different ways Jesus responds to Martha and Mary?  
How does the loosing and binding power that Jesus gives to his Apostles continue to be exercised by the Church today?

Day 30. Forgiveness

Do I believe in the power of Jesus to forgive?  
How might the movement of Jesus — bending to the ground and then rising to speak to the crowd — symbolize his cross and resurrection?  
How is sin destructive?

Day 31. The Image of God

What can make me more like Christ in his humility?  
Do I listen more to the message of my culture or of the gospel?  
How would looking at a serpent on a pole heal someone from a poisonous snake bite?

Day 32. Our Freedom

Are there areas of my life where I am still enslaved?  
What is it that makes me feel incomplete?  
What concrete steps do I need to take to change my behavior?

Day 33. Obedience

Am I obedient to the commands of Jesus?  
What does it mean to be obedient to God?  
What keeps me from being obedient?

Day 34. The Dignity of Work

Am I doing what God wants me to do?  
Do I feel God is calling me to do something special in my life?  
How can I help others to see God's purpose for them?

Day 35. Justice

Do I see myself as a child of God?  
What is my relationship with Mary, the Mother of Jesus?  
How does my status as a child of God affect my relationship with other people?

**Taking Up Our Cross ... (Week Six)**

Day 36. In Abandonment

Do I believe in God's providential care?  
How does God use the evil that people do to bring about good?  
How does believing in God's providence help me to let go of judgments about the present moment?

Day 37. In Reverence

Do I reverence God?  
What can I do to increase my reverence toward God?  
How reverent are the people in my church?

Day 38. To Follow the Lord

How often do I trust my own instincts, and how often do I entrust myself to Jesus?  
How are God's ways different than my ways?  
How can recognizing my sinfulness and admitting it help me to be more open to Christ?

Day 39. Be Prepared

How well do I prepare for the Eucharist I receive at Mass?  
How can I learn more about the Mass?  
Am I prepared to welcome Christ?

Day 40. In Imitation of Christ

Am I willing to do small things for Christ?  
Who is the holiest person I have ever known?  
What did this person do that exhibited his or her sanctity?

Day 41. To Stay with Jesus

Do I feel “lucky” to carry the cross that God has given me?  
Have I ever been called upon to be a modern Simon of Cyrene — to  
help another carry his or her cross?  
How can you spread the message of the power of Christ’s cross?

Day 42. Be Not Afraid

Is life a series of “gifts” from God or tragedies?  
How have I experienced the power of the cross in my life?  
How do the eyes of faith help me to see beyond what others see?

**The Power of the Cross** ( *Lenten Preliminary Days* )

Ash Wednesday: Eternal Life or Death?  
Am I living my life in fear of death or in anticipation of eternal life in  
Christ?  
How would I react if I saw two monks pull into my driveway today  
bringing the coffin that would one day contain my dead body?  
Am I motivated by a fear of death or by a love of eternal life?

Thursday after Ash Wednesday: Jesus’ Invitation  
Do I fear the cross of Christ or do I embrace it?  
How do you view the Passion of Jesus? Do I see the willing suffering of  
the Son of God as a sign of God’s love for me?  
Is the crucifix displayed prominently in my place of worship? In my  
home? Where I work?

Friday after Ash Wednesday: How Much We Need Jesus  
How great do I feel the need for Christ in my life?  
What purpose does the spiritual practice of fasting serve in my  
Christian life?

At what other times, besides the hour fast before the reception of Holy Communion, does the Church ask her members to fast?

Saturday after Ash Wednesday: A Matter of Life and Death

How does viewing Jesus as my savior from death help me to face head-on the deaths of loved ones and even my own death?

What are the results of original sin in the lives of fallen humanity? (See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 400)

How do we bury our dead?

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