

Mystic



✔ Prepare in Advance

- Cut out a wide assortment of articles, editorials, advertisements, and pictures of people from newspapers or magazines that provide a representation of American culture, role models, and opinions, and place them in the middle of the group's meeting place.
- Add various items that represent the "latest" fads and cultural practices – clothing, shoes, make-up, a Christmas ornament, gadgets, etc. Be creative.
- Download the link to the Letter to Diognetus.
- Have the *Bible Background Video* ready to view.

✔ You Became Imitators of Us and of the Lord

View the *Bible Background Video*.

Read Acts 17:1-10 and 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 aloud, slowly two times.

- For the first reading, invite people to place themselves in the story in some way and imagine the scenes that are being described. What do they see? Hear? Smell? Feel?
- For the second reading, invite people to focus on the people that formed the church at Thessalonica and to imagine they are a part of that community. What is it like to be part of this group? What are the challenges? The joys? The fears? The decisions?

✔ Share

Invite people to share their reflections on the scripture passages.

- What aspects of the Thessalonica church do you admire and respect?
- Are there any aspects that you would like to integrate into your church or your own life? Which ones?
- Draw people's attention to the focal point in the middle of the group. Is there anything presented there that calls your attention to what some of the influences are in your life? (Encourage the group to be as honest as possible in their reflection and discussion. The point of these questions is to provide a space for awareness, not judgment.)

✔ Silent Reflection

- What things, people, and ideals do you model your living on?
- What influences would you like to lessen or deepen in your life?

✔ Imagine

Read the following letter to Diognetus which was written about Christians in 200 AD.

Invite people to imagine and "create" a collective description of a contemporary church in the United States that would be so shaped by Christ that it is seen as counter cultural. Have them share sentences that can be written on a poster board.

✔ Prayer

Invite people to pray sentence prayers as a candle is passed around the circle.

By Joy Yee

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