



Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion

GUIDE FOR YOUTH MINISTERS

Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion, written by Jeffry Odell Korgen and illustrated by Christopher Cardinale, is a graphic biography that introduces readers to the amazing life of Dorothy Day, reviews her impact on the Church and peace and justice movements, and provides an informative understanding of the process of canonization.

With the cause of canonization for Dorothy Day underway, now is a perfect time to introduce youth to the inspiring life and witness of Day.



Prepare

Before your youth night, distribute copies of *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* to youth. A graphic biography, this is not your normal homework assignment! Captivating dialogue and engaging illustrations help tell the story of Dorothy Day's life in a way youth won't be able to put down.

If resources allow, decorate your gathering space with images of art from the Catholic Worker movement. Go online and find art by Catholic Worker artists Ade Bethune and Fritz Eichenberg. You can find more Catholic Worker artwork from [The Illuminator](#) and its artist authors, whose art is both beautiful and affordable. If you Google "Catholic Worker Art," you will find more.



Gather

As you welcome youth, encourage them to observe the decorated walls. If you offer refreshments during your youth night, go simple and explain the reason: As a young reporter, Dorothy lived on twenty-five cents a day. She accompanied working-class families and called attention to their lives and poverty. Catholic Workers—in their houses of hospitality and on their farms—lived in voluntary poverty. As a sacrifice in the spirit of Dorothy Day, if you normally order pizza, invite youth to partake in simple sandwiches or soup instead. Talk about simplicity as a spiritual gift that can help us be in solidarity with people in poverty.



Proclaim

Begin in prayer, then proclaim the Gospel, focusing on the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12) or the Judgment of the Nations (Matt. 25:31-46)—passages that were important to, and often referenced by, Dorothy Day. If a Catholic Worker community exists in your area, you could invite a guest speaker to share this reflection. Include elements such as: Who was Dorothy Day? How did she live out the Gospel call? How was she prophetic in her time? How was her work rooted in prayer and the sacraments? What difficult decisions and/or criticisms did she face during her life? How did Dorothy's faith help her to be prophetic? How is her work—and that of the Catholic Worker movement—a reflection of our Catholic social teaching?



Break

During this time, youth will “break open” what they have heard. Invite youth to take ten minutes to walk quietly around the room while meditative music is playing, so that they may prayerfully reflect on the artwork. (This activity will help youth to engage and reflect, even those youth who did not have a chance to read the graphic biography in advance.)

Then wrap-up this individual reflection time and invite youth to connect with a partner or in small groups to respond to questions such as: What did you learn about Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement? What connections do you see between their work and the Gospel passage (Matt. 5:1-12 or Matt. 25:31-46)? What moves or inspires you about the work and witness of Dorothy Day?



Send

Offer ideas for ways that youth can individually and collectively imitate the example of Dorothy Day. For example:

- **Arrange a service project**, with opportunities for theological reflection. Use this [Guide for Service Projects and Service Learning](#) with ideas for reflection aided by *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion*.
- **Engage with the Catholic Worker community**. If there is a local Catholic Worker community, ask beforehand about opportunities to join with the Catholic Worker community in their work and witness.
- You can also brainstorm additional ideas for youth to respond to what they have learned.

Finally, end with this closing prayer from the [Dorothy Day Guild](#).

“God our Father, Your servant Dorothy Day exemplified the Catholic faith by her life of prayer, voluntary poverty, works of mercy, and witness to the justice and peace of the Gospel of Jesus.

May her life inspire your people to turn to Christ as their Savior, to see His face in the world’s poor, and to raise their voices for the justice of God’s kingdom.

I pray that her holiness may be recognized by your Church and that you grant the following favor that I humbly ask through her intercession:

(here mention your request)

I ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**”