

Chapter 13
Core Concept #3
Media Messages Use a Creative Language
with Its Own Rules

Touch the Sound
Grades 1–12

Objective: To experience the intrinsic ability of sound to tell a story and provoke emotional responses. This exercise will make believers of your students.

Don't waste any words trying to convince your students that sounds are powerful messengers that speak directly to our emotions. Show the first ten minutes of *Touch the Sound*. It is an extraordinary film about Dame Evelyn Glennie, the world's first solo percussionist who is also hearing impaired. See her website: <http://www.evelyn.co.uk>.

Note: Play only the sounds. No images.

1. Ask your students to listen to the sounds and visualize what is making the sounds. Older students can keep a running list in their journals of what they hear.
2. At the end of the audio clip, have students read out their lists. Note how students heard the sounds differently.
3. Play the film with the images and the sounds. Talk about the experience. Tell them about the heroine.

A World of Special Effects *Grades 1–12*

Objective: To give students an experience of how special effects in nature help to tell the story of God’s creation.

Nature Walk: Plan an outing to a local park preferably where there is a fair amount of natural diversity—woods, a lake or river, some small wildlife. The idea is to have students notice that special effects are not just constructed on a movie set. Our imagination is being stimulated all the time by sights and sounds that are integral to how we understand and tell our story as creatures in a divinely created cosmos. This exercise calls for *silence* and for *attentiveness*—two universally recognized but rarely practiced spiritual disciplines that release us from the particulars of our own lives into a sense of a deeper shared reality.

1. Ask students to look and listen to the natural sights and sounds of the world around them. Let them wander on their own—staying close to the group but without distraction from other students—for ten minutes.
2. Call them into a group. What did they hear? What did they see? Did anyone see something amazing? How did they feel when they were walking alone in nature?
3. What stories does nature tell us about the creatures that live here? Do we learn anything about ourselves? About God? What stories about life and death does nature tell?

Option: You can also have students bring cameras and spend the quiet time capturing the beauty around them in still photos. The students can then create a short video presentation of their photos at <http://animoto.com>.

A Gospel of Special Affects *Grades 3–12*

Objective: To experience how special effects in the New Testament affect our connection to the person of Jesus today.

Read some of the New Testament stories mentioned in the section “Magic or Mystery” (see page 101 in *Catechesis in a Multimedia World*). Ask students to identify the special effects in the stories. What do these special effects emphasize about Jesus and his mission? How do they affect the way you feel about Jesus? Are they different from special effects in the movies?

Blogging Sacramental Moments

This is a great collaborative activity to do during Advent or Lent. Talk about the human story behind each of the sacraments (e.g., baptism and birth; Eucharist and community; reconciliation and forgiveness). Although the sacraments make us aware of these stories in a special way, we actually experience birth, community, and forgiveness in our daily lives. These are sacramental moments.

1. Go to <http://www.blogger.com> to create a blog.
2. Invite students to the blog by having them sign on with their e-mail address. (For this blog site, they will need to set up a “g-mail” address.)
3. Pose this challenge on the blog: For the next week, students are asked to notice how many times in the course of a day they experience a “sacramental moment.”
4. Students will respond on the blog during the week. Consider this to be an online conversation.
5. Watch where the conversation goes with each entry. It is organic, taking on a life and energy of its own. You might want to assign different students to facilitate a discussion forum on the blog entries each day.

Note: As with Facebook and YouTube, you will have to be very clear at the outset about what constitutes appropriate content on the blog. Again, it is a good idea to put something to that effect in writing and have all students sign off on their agreement of the terms.