

DAY ONE

1. Share something from your lesson last week that has stayed with you and given you new insight.

Read Revelation 6:1-2

2a. This week's lesson begins with the opening of the scroll's seven seals. This was a drawn out process, and each time, a vision or revelation was set in motion. Who did John watch break open the first seal, and what did he hear in verse 1?

b. Have you ever been summoned to "come forward?" Explain the circumstances and your emotion at that moment.

NOTE: Each time one of the living creatures speaks, John, who remains at the heavenly throne, will be shown visions taking place on earth.

3. Often, personal legal documents are sealed from the public for protection or privacy. Have you ever possessed something that was sealed in this manner? Can you share some details with your group?

4a. What did John do after hearing the command to come forward and what did he see (first sentence of verse 2)?

b. According to the second sentence of verse 2, what was the rider given and what did he do?

NOTE: The vision of the horse and rider is drawn from Zechariah 1:8-10; 6:1-8 where different colored horses pulled chariots that patrolled the earth following the Babylonian exile in 586 BC. Unlike Zechariah, whose vision announced an end to the punishment of Israel, Revelation marks a time of new divine judgment. *Ignatius*

5a. In the Old Testament, the bow was a sign of military power. Look up one of the following scripture verses and record a phrase that illustrates this.

Psalm 46:9-10

Jeremiah 51:56

Hosea 1:5

b. Explain what either the image of the white horse or crown means to you?

NOTE: The Parthians were horse-riding warriors who used bows and were greatly feared for their deadly shooting accuracy. They defeated the Romans in 55 BC and AD 62. This would be a disturbing symbol to a reader of that time.

6. CONNECTION: The first of the seven seals was broken open by the Lamb of God, indicating that God's plan would be revealed through the Risen Christ. The scroll with seven seals portrays God's authority over the future of mankind. Through our study of scripture we learn of God's plan as it reaches us in our own moment in history. It is important to make scripture relevant in our own lives. Give an example from your life of how the study of scripture has helped you. Share some thoughts with your group.

Think of your gift, that by the grace of God you are centered today between history and the mystery of the future. Let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY TWO

Read Revelation 6:3-4

7. We begin today with the Lamb opening the second seal. Who did John hear and what command was given in verse 3?

8a. Record the description of John's vision from the first sentence of verse 4.

b. What might the horse's color symbolize?

9. Complete below from the remainder of verse 4 what was given to the rider and why.

Its rider was given

to take peace

so that people would

And he was given

10. What do you think it means that these things were “given” to the rider?

11. Jesus warned of eschatological woes leading up to end times. Read [Luke 21:9-11](#) and record one or two phrases that illustrate this.

12. CONNECTION: While opening the seal, we read that the rider was given power to take peace away from the earth and also given a huge sword. Many people struggle with the idea of a loving God giving the power and instruments of war that remove peace. While it is true that God allows these things through decisions made of free will, we are still called by him to be peacemakers. What have you done recently, as God’s instrument of peace, to make your world, community, church or home a peace-filled place?

Call to mind the beautiful hymn, *Let There Be Peace on Earth*, and think of the eternal peace offered by God and the role you are given to uphold it. Let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY THREE

Read Revelation 6:5-6

13. Today we begin as the Lamb opened the third seal and the third living creature cried out, “Come forward.” What did John do and see in verse 5?

14. John heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the creatures. Complete what the voice said in verse 6.

A ration of wheat

and three rations of barley

But do not damage

NOTE: A typical day's pay for a laborer was a denarius. A ration (quart) of wheat was what an adult would consume in a day. The prices were highly inflated forcing the impoverished worker to choose inferior barley to feed his family.

15. The scale or balance is an age-old symbol of justice. Read one of the following scripture references and record a phrase that speaks to you about justice.

Deuteronomy 16:20

Proverbs 21:15

Micah 6:8

Matthew 7:12

16. The lack of grain represented famine conditions, often a side effect of war. Why do you think the oil and wine were to be protected from damage?

17. CONNECTION: In today's lesson, we are confronted with the inequality that existed when people of little means struggled to feed their families due to inflated prices of wheat and low wages. It is hard to believe that this problem also exists throughout our present world of abundance. The truth is there are starving people, many of them children, across the globe. How have you been called to serve the underserved? How is caring for God's people an important part of your faith? Share some thoughts with your group.

Read and record 1 John 3:17 and in your prayer today remember that working for justice is pleasing to God.

DAY FOUR

Read Revelation 6:7-8

18a. When the fourth seal was broken, the fourth horse and rider were summoned to come forward (verse 7). Describe the horse and the name of its rider from the beginning of verse 8.

b. Who accompanied the rider and over what were they given authority in the first part of the third sentence of verse 8?

19a. What did this authority allow them to do according to the remainder of verse 8?

b. Can you think of any reason why the rider of the fourth horse was accompanied by Hades? Who do you understand Hades to be?

20a. With authority over a quarter of the earth, the horseman would affect a minority of its inhabitants. Look up Ezekiel 14:22-23 and record a phrase that describes what might happen to the remaining people.

b. What effect do you think the image of the four horsemen and the disasters they bring had on the early Christians who first heard these words? What effect does this powerful image continue to have on us today?

NOTE: The four horsemen are best understood as representing the disasters that occur throughout history as a result of human sinfulness. The gospels speak of evils that will intensify before the second coming of Jesus. (Matthew 24:6-8; Mark 13:7-8; Luke 21:9-11) *Williamson*

21. Can you think of a recent event that was similar to one of the calamities brought by the four horsemen as seen in John's visions? Share some details with your group.

22. Times of trial in John's time and our own present many opportunities to help one another. Read one of the following verses and record some words of encouragement.

Deuteronomy 31:6

Hebrews 12:11

1 Peter 3:15

23. CONNECTION: Today Jesus, the Lamb, broke open the fourth seal and revealed to John that a quarter of the earth would be killed. Although these were difficult words to hear, the early Christians were familiar with suffering and death. There is grace and courage in facing suffering with great faith and confidence in Jesus. Our greatest weapon against fear of things to come is to be prepared, to evaluate our relationship with God, our family, friends and neighbors, and make amends where needed. What is one thing you would need to do to fortify yourself and be truly ready to meet God?

Read and record John 16:33 and as you pray think of the wonderful plans God has in store for you.

DAY FIVE

Read Revelation 6:9-11

24a. The Lamb opened the fifth seal revealing to John an altar in heaven under which were the souls of those who had been slaughtered. Record the reason for their martyrdom in verse 9?

b. In many of our churches today, Mass is celebrated on altars that contain relics of the saints and martyrs. How is this similar to the altar in heaven and what does this symbolize to you?

25. Can you share a story of a modern day person whose life was taken because of religious beliefs?

26a. The souls cried out in a loud voice to the holy and true master. What did they ask according to verse 10?

NOTE: The phrase “inhabitants of the earth” has a negative connotation and is written ten times in Revelation. It is a technical term for what is not of God, similar to the use of “the world” in the Gospel and Letters of John. *Williamson*

b. Look up one of the following scripture verses and record a message of hope for those who wait.

Psalm 27:14

Habakkuk 2:3

2 Peter 3:9

27a. What do you think the martyrs in heaven were praying for (verse 10)?

b. How would Jesus teach them to pray?

28a. What was given to each of the souls and what might this symbolize (first part of verse 11)?

b. Complete below the reason the souls were asked to be patient a little while longer in the remainder of verse 11?

until the number

of their fellow

who were going

29. Read Luke 18:7-8. How do these verses help your understanding of God's call for patience?

30. CONNECTION: The souls of the martyred in heaven cried out, "How long will it be?" Their plea was to seek justice for those who had persecuted them. God's response reminded them of their victory and called for their patience. Patience is a gift from God, a useful tool for our waiting. When waiting becomes a trial of its own making, patience can help bring us to accept God's will and become hopeful. Has there been a time recently when you have asked, "how long"? Perhaps it was due to an injustice, a time of sickness, a job search or a difficult relationship. Were you able to accept God's gift of patience?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9 and write a prayer today asking the Holy Spirit to fortify your patience.

DAY SIX

Read Revelation 6:12-17

31. The opening of the sixth seal revealed catastrophic events. Briefly describe the earthly and cosmic changes according to verse 12.

32. From verses 13 and 14, complete below the additional cosmic and earthly disasters:

The stars in the sky

like unripe figs shaken loose

Then the sky was divided

and every mountain and island

33. John revealed images familiar to those who knew the Old Testament. Choose one of the following scripture passages and record a phrase or two with similar images.

Isaiah 13:10

Ezekiel 32:7-8

Joel 3:3-4

34. Name those who hid themselves in caves and among mountain crags according to verse 15.

35a. To whom did all the people cry out and what did they ask (verse 16)?

b. Record the reason for their pleas (verse 17).

36. John saw the people trying to find a place to hide, much like Adam and Eve when they attempted to hide in the Garden of Eden. Does this similarity give you any new insights into the people's behavior?

37. CONNECTION: The opening of the sixth seal revealed cosmic and earthly disturbances affecting all classes of people. They cried out to the mountains and rocks for protection, rather than turning to God, the only one who could save them. How often we forget to seek God in our tumultuous moments, relying on ourselves to build our hopes and dreams and fix our brokenness. Can you think of a time when you were so wrapped up in your own troubles, or even in a time of abundance and joy, that you forgot to seek God's help or simply thank him? Looking back can you see the situation reveal itself in a different way?

Think about God's presence that dwells in us at all times, in our blessings and in every painful circumstance.

Read pages 35-38 in the *New Collegeville Commentary, The Book of Revelation* by Catherine A. Cory, Ph.D. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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