

FATHER KAPAUN

+

PILGRIMAGE SERIES



LEADER GUIDE

Presented by



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As part of the Father Kapaun Guild, Kapaun's Men is dedicated to spreading devotion to Servant of God Emil Kapaun and inspiring others to imitate his example in their own lives. For more information on Father Kapaun and his cause for Beatification and Canonization, visit the Father Kapaun Guild's website, www.FatherKapaun.org. If you have questions or would like assistance with this series, please contact us at the information at the bottom of this page.

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Much gratitude goes to Father Eric Weldon for his dedication to Father Kapaun's story and inviting so many people to enter more fully into their own pilgrimages to heaven. We appreciate your priestly ministry and helping lead the Pilgrimage every year. Thanks also to JP and Audrea Brunke for their hard work coordinating the Pilgrimage, as well as for all the volunteers who help us along the journey. We appreciate your support and dedication, and we couldn't walk without you!

Finally, a debt of gratitude is owed to the Bob Casper family, the Mark Dellasega family, and all our other benefactors. We appreciate your generosity and dedication to the work of this ministry. This series wouldn't have been possible without your support.

The Father Kapaun Pilgrimage takes place each year the first weekend of June. Pilgrims begin in Wichita, Kansas and walk 60 miles to Father Kapaun's hometown of Pilsen for the Father Kapaun Day Mass and Celebration. For more information go to www.KapaunsMen.com/pilgrimage. We would love to have you join us!

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FATHER KAPAUN PILGRIMAGE SERIES

Welcome to the Pilgrimage Series! A quick note about a change in approach to this series. Many people have asked us why our previous series were branded for men, and our answer has been that as men we often need a good resource to inspire us to gather, dive deeper into the faith, and to support one another. However, it is certainly true that Father Kapaun's life speaks to both men and women equally. It's equally true that the content of our previous series is not only pertinent to men, but to women as well. That's why with this series we wanted to do something that could fit into existing Kapaun's Men groups, but also be more easily approached by women's or coed groups. We are inspired by the way the Holy Spirit uses Father Kapaun's life to encourage people all over the world to holiness, and we want to share that with you.

The goal of this series is to unite people in prayer, formation and discussion in order to foster a spirit of accompaniment and to help us courageously respond to God's universal call to holiness, becoming better spouses, parents, leaders and friends.

This series can be used on its own, but makes most sense with some background on Father Kapaun, such as the Kapaun's Men Virtue Series, which explores the heroic life and virtues of Servant of God Emil Kapaun, Catholic priest and Army chaplain who died in a Korean Prisoner of War camp. If used independently, we recommend that any newcomers watch "The Story of Father Kapaun", the first video from the Virtue Series, which is available on Formed, in order to get the appropriate background on his life.

WHY A SERIES ON PILGRIMAGE?

"How many times does not Holy Mother Church tell us that our life on this earth is a journey? This earth is not our lasting home. God created us for a higher, a much more perfect home, our home in heaven with the joy of God."

- Servant of God Emil Kapaun

At Mass, everytime the priest prays the third Eucharistic Prayer he offers the Sacrifice for the peace and salvation of all the world, and asks God to "confirm in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth". The Church's document *Pilgrimage in the Great Jubilee* reminds us that "Jesus Christ enters the scene of history as 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' and since the very beginning, he includes himself in the journey of humankind and of his people.... Our pilgrimage, therefore, has a transcendent end, knowing that we are aliens or foreign visitors' here on earth, but are destined to be 'citizens like all the saints,' and part of God's household."

With the pace of our daily lives it is easy to forget that this earth is not our lasting home. That's why pilgrimages have been an important part of the faithful's devotion for the entire life of the church. On a pilgrimage we are reminded of what is most important and what helps us be intentional on our journey to heaven.



Following this rich history, each year at the beginning of summer hundreds of pilgrims walk 60 miles in the heartland of Kansas to the hometown of Servant of God Emil Kapaun. The pilgrimage was pioneered by a priest of the Diocese of Wichita, Father Eric Weldon, as a way honor Kapaun, a heroic Catholic priest and Army chaplain who is on the path to sainthood, but also to help men and women, young and old alike, discover the true meaning of their own unique paths to sainthood.

The Father Kapaun Pilgrimage has played a large role in shaping the direction of Kapaun's Men, and we wanted to share it with the world. That's why we invited national speaker and longtime Kapaun's Men emcee Joe Farris to join us this past year for the walk. In this series he will introduce you to many of the pilgrims and help us gain insights from the men and women on the walk.

The Pilgrimage Series works well made up of eight sessions.

1. On Pilgrimage: Walking with Father Kapaun (*Video Length: 31 minutes*)
2. Invitation (*Video Length: 12 minutes*)
3. Simplicity (*Video Length: 12 minutes*)
4. Accompaniment (*Video Length: 13 minutes*)
5. Receiving (*Video Length: 11 minutes*)
6. Fortitude (*Video Length: 10 minutes*)
7. Openness to God (*Video Length: 12 minutes*)
8. Go Forth (*Video Length: 12 minutes*)

The participant study guide provides discussion questions that help facilitate a conversation following the video, and weekly challenges will help each session's lesson take root in your life throughout the week. The challenges for this series all involve walking. We realize that this may not be possible for all people, but we highly recommend keeping the challenges intact. You will find that there is often something about walking that reorients us toward the Gospel and opens us up to listen to the Lord in a profound way. Persons who cannot meet the challenges may substitute on an individual basis as they deem necessary.

We are excited to share this series with you and hope you find the stories of the men and women in it to be an aid on your journey to heaven. Know that you are in our prayers, and feel free to contact us using the information on the copyright page if you need any assistance or are interested in joining us on the annual pilgrimage. Happy journeys!

HOSTING A PILGRIMAGE SERIES SESSION

Meetings are designed to last an hour. We recommend being punctual in beginning and ending on time so that your “pilgrims” can keep their other commitments to family and work. Study Guides are provided to help assist you in facilitating each session. Here is a step-by-step walkthrough of a session.

Note: There is no special leader information for each particular session- the video and participant study guides provide all the info you need to present to participants.

- 1. Welcome:** Try to arrive early to welcome the “pilgrims” as they arrive. Begin your meeting promptly by asking them to find a seat. During your first session you will want to give a quick overview of the series and any other logistical details they might need to know.
- 2. Prayer:** At the beginning of each session you will find the Chaplain Kapaun prayer as well as a Scripture passage based on the session’s theme. Lead the group in praying these two prayers.
- 3. Father Kapaun’s Wisdom:** Read the “Father Kapaun’s Wisdom” section to the group. These short excerpts are taken from Father Kapaun’s homilies or letters and are intended to give a little more insight into the session’s theme.
- 4. Video:** We recommend previewing the video before your session so you can give a brief introduction to it. You can focus on what stood out to you, why you think it will be impactful, or even share if it was especially meaningful to you in some way. Keep it short (anywhere from 30 seconds to 3 minutes) to allow time for discussion afterwards. Encourage participants to take notes in the space provided about what strikes them in the video.
- 5. Discussion:** After the video, direct your “pilgrims” to the Discussion Questions in the Study Guide. These will help participants apply the theme to their own lives and will foster a spirit of accompaniment among the group. See the next page for further advice on facilitating discussion.
- 6. Weekly Challenge:** When there is about 5 minutes remaining in the session, call the group to attention and remind them of the weekly challenge. The challenge is intended to be fairly simple but also challenging enough to help you cultivate the particular session’s theme as the week goes on. The challenges will take some time, but help bring about lasting change.
- 7. Petitions and Closing Prayer:** If you wish, you may open the floor to particular prayer intentions for the group to pray for. Finally, it is our tradition to end with 3 Hail Mary’s, as the first video series describes.

TIPS ON LEADING A SMALL GROUP

The small group discussions are where we take the lessons learned during the video and directly apply them to our own lives. Hearing from and accompanying others in the group will lead to new insights and practical ways to incorporate the pilgrim spirit into our daily lives. Here are some tips to help you facilitate the groups:

- **Group Size:** Discussion groups of about 5-7 seem to work the best. If you have a large group, we recommend breaking into smaller groups. You may decide whether to keep the groups the same throughout the series or to allow them to mix things up.
- **Set the Tone:** Invite your pilgrims to really participate in the discussions, both by sharing and listening. The discussion is not meant to be a lecture by any one person, but a means of learning from one another and growing in virtue alongside our neighbor. Treat each other with support and encouragement as Father Kapaun did.
- **Take Notes:** Likewise, encourage pilgrims to take notes during the video: What speaks to you? What ties into your experience? Where is an area you feel like you need to grow? The goal is to learn from and grow with Father Kapaun and other pilgrims on this journey. If something is powerful to you, it can be a great discussion topic for the group.
- **Discussion Questions:** The questions listed in the Study Guide are meant to help facilitate the conversation. If the discussion starts to stall or get stale around one question, move onto the next one. The group does not have to take the questions in order or even answer them all. Likewise, something else from the video may have struck you enough that it provides a good discussion topic.
- **On-topic:** It's a natural tendency for group discussions to occasionally get sidetracked. While good things may come from this, do your best to gently steer the conversation back to the topic at hand.
- **Be Real and Be Supportive:** Real discussion with others can be challenging, as it is often easier to talk about sports, the weather, or work. However, we encourage you to be bold and to go deep, as this is what can really transform your life. Remember, each person attending wants to get to heaven, and we need others to help us get there. Be supportive and affirming of your fellow pilgrims, seeking to be a voice of encouragement as Father Kapaun was.

PROMOTING THE PILGRIMAGE SERIES

Finally, here are a few tips to assist you in promoting the Father Kapaun Pilgrimage Series:

- **Personal Invitations:** Things like bulletin announcements or social media posts (see examples on the next page) are good and necessary, but by far the most effective way we have found to get people to a new group is by personal invitation— what we like to call hand-to-hand combat. Emails work okay, but taking a couple minutes to make a phone call or talking in person is very powerful. We respond best to a personal invitation!
- **Pastor's Help:** Likewise, people tend to respond well when your pastor is excited about something. Pastors have a lot on their plates and may not feel like they are free to promote one program over another, but if they are willing to encourage people to participate either publicly from the pulpit or on an individual basis, it will be a great aid to getting more participants.
- **Father Kapaun or Faith Group?** This is the chicken or the egg question: do you promote Father Kapaun's story and example to get people to attend, or do you try to build up the men's group (or faith formation group) concept? Depending on how well Father Kapaun is known in your area, you may need to focus first on the importance and effect that journeying as group can bring about, and then mix in a bit of Father Kapaun. However you promote it, your excitement will be the key influencer!
- **What's in the name?** Those of us who are familiar with Kapaun tend to call him "Father Kapaun", but this probably isn't the best strategy for promoting the series to people who aren't familiar with him. "Servant of God Emil Kapaun" might work better. Likewise, there are two ways which his name is usually pronounced: "kuh-PAWN" and "KAY-pun". Long story short, either way he knows who you are talking about!
- **Share some info or a video:** As a way to help introduce people to Father Kapaun, you could share a short video of Father Kapaun found online, the trailer for the Pilgrimage Series, or use the "Share Topic" option on Formed, which allows you to create your own 3-minute or less clip to share.
- **Promotional Material:** Check out the Leader Resources site on Formed at <https://leaders.formed.org/> for flyers and posters, video trailers and other images to use in promoting the Pilgrimage Series.

Once again, if you have any questions or desire some guidance in leading your group, feel free to reach out to us at the contact information on the copyright page. We hope that you benefit from the example and intercession of Father Kapaun as you continue your pilgrimage to heaven!

BULLETIN OR SOCIAL MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

Father Kapaun Pilgrimage Series

"Our life on earth is a journey. God created us for a higher, a much more perfect home, our home in heaven with the joy of God." - Servant of God Emil Kapaun

Each year around the world thousands of people embark on pilgrimages to remind themselves of the deeper meaning of their lives. But you don't have to travel far away to discover the spiritual lessons gained on pilgrimage. Join us for an immersive 8-week video series as we walk with Servant of God Emil Kapaun, a heroic Catholic priest and Army chaplain, toward our ultimate destination: heaven.

Include meeting time, location and contact information.

See other posters and social media posts at: <https://leaders.formed.org/>