

DISCOVERY:

**Helping Students Discover their Life Purpose through Experiential Learning
Loyola College in Maryland**

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&

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**Students in Transition Conference 2007
Cincinnati, Ohio**

Three Key Questions

The Three Key Questions were borrowed from Boston College's Halftime program. Below are the reflections on the CD presentation by Michael Himes, professor of theology at Boston College.

1. What gives you joy?

Who are you? What are you passionate about? What excites you? To answer these questions, it might help to ask yourself what have been the "defining moments" in your life, the turning points that shaped who you are or the moments when you made decisions that, consciously or not, have made you the person you are today? Do these point to what gives you joy?

Note that we are talking about joy, not happiness. Feeling happy often depends on external things, your physical well being, the weather, whether you had a good night's sleep or a good meal. Joy comes from within and has to do with a deep and abiding sense of the rightness, the goodness, the fruitfulness of what you do with your life. It results from the harmony between your ambitions and your achievements. It is a gift that comes from acceptance and patience, from being at peace with the reality that surrounds you, even when that reality calls for change or when it challenges you.

And we are not talking about satisfaction. To be satisfied means to be full, to want nothing more. Joy comes from a quest that challenges you to grow, to learn more, to become more, to give more. Maybe you are good at several things. Which choices will not only use your talents but also stretch them?

No one can answer these questions but you. You can get advice from others, learn a lot from them, but ultimately only you can say what really gives you joy.

2. Are you good at these things?

Do you have the talents to pursue the things that you are passionate about? Maybe it's clear to you that you do. But maybe you don't even recognize the talents that you have. Or maybe you do know some of the things you are good at but you don't think they're important. You don't see them as real strengths.

Unlike the question about what gives you joy, this question can't be answered by you alone. Your talents and skills have been nourished by significant people in your life and by communities you have belonged to, both before you came to BC and since. These relationships constitute a dialogue, a conversation about yourself with people who value you enough to challenge and support you. We seem to need these people and these communities to point out our talents to us, to give us a chance to try out our skills, and to confirm them as strengths when we succeed and even to tell us that we don't have certain talents when we fail.

So one way of answering this question is to ask yourself: Who have been the key people in your life—the relatives, teachers, coaches and mentors who have helped you know who you are and what you can do? Who have been your models? For whom are you grateful when you look at your life? What have you learned from them about yourself and about the talents that are special to you? If someone asked them to describe your strengths and weaknesses, what specific ones do you think they would mention?

3. Does anybody need you to do these things?

The novelist and theologian Frederick Buechner describes vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” We don’t live for ourselves alone. We don’t invent really big questions and worthy dreams by ourselves; the communities we belong to offer them to us. Only in relationships—and especially when we give ourselves in love to other people, to communities, and to significant ideals—do we really discover the full meaning of our lives. Because you have been shaped by your relationships and by the communities that mark your personal history—your family, your school friends, the people you have met in service programs—you have become part of an ever wider circle of belonging.

To belong is also to take responsibility for and to contribute to the group that has nurtured your ability to donate yourself, your talents, and your time to help other men and women. This can mean sacrifice, putting aside your immediate convenience or interests to be there for someone who needs you. True, you have an obligation to keep your self-donation truly free, something that you choose to give and not something others impose on you by coercion or guilt. But finding your true self in this life means matching your gifts with the world’s needs.

So a crucial third task is to define the horizons that give meaning to your life. Who are the people, what are the ideals, where are the needs that invite you to give yourself to them? Have you begun to identify these in your own life? Do they begin to suggest directions for your future?

Please take a few minutes and reflect on these questions – What gives you joy? What are you good at? Does anybody need you to do these things? Also, why is it important for sophomores to reflect on these questions?

DISCOVERY

Class of 2009 ~ Info Sheet

In conjunction with CrossRoads: Sophomore Initiative, The Department of Recreational Sports: Outdoor Adventure Experience (OAE) presents Discovery, a week long excursion including kayaking, camping, and other adventure activities. The Discovery program will challenge sophomores to seek their personal direction through experiential learning, adventure programming, and reflection.

When: May 12-21, 2007

Where: Cape Lookout, National Seashore, Outer Banks, NC

Who: 10-12 sophomores

Cost: \$25.00 (Fees will be collected after students are accepted into the program)

Why: To discover your personal direction.

DISCOVERY TIMELINE

Information Session – February 9, 2007, 4PM @ Sophomore Initiatives, Seton 08A

All student interested in participating in the program must attend the information session or meet with Geoff Norbert or Michelle Cheatem.

Applications Due – February 16, 2007

Applications must be submitted to Michelle Cheatem, Sophomore Initiatives, Seton 08A.

Decisions Out – March 2, 2007

Unfortunately, space is limited for this particular excursion. Students will be notified via e-mail regarding the status of their application.

First Pre-trip Meeting – March 30, 2007, 4-6 PM @ FAC, Outdoor Center

Students participating in Discovery must attend all scheduled group meetings.

Second Pre-trip Meeting – April 13, 2007, 4-6PM @ FAC, Pool

Third Pre-trip Meeting – April 22, 2007, Block out the day (exact time TBA)

Fourth Pre-trip Meeting – May 12, 2007, Block out the day (exact time TBA)

Fifth Pre-trip Meeting – May 13, 2007, Block out the day (exact time TBA)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT

Michelle Cheatem, Director of Sophomore Initiatives - mlcheatem@loyola.edu or 410.617.5696

Geoff Norbert, Assistant Director of Recreational Sports - gnorbert@loyola.edu or 410.617.2270

DISCOVERY

Class of 2009 ~ Application

Name _____ Loyola ID# _____

Campus Address (residence hall/room) _____ MS# _____

Cell# _____ E-mail _____ T-shirt size _____

Major _____ Minor _____

Please answer the following questions. Answers may be written on a separate piece of paper.
Applications must be submitted to Michelle Cheatem (Seton 08A) by February 16, 2007.

Why are you interested in participating in the Discovery program?

What has gone well for you this year?

What challenges have you been faced with during your sophomore year?

What do you hope to gain from participating in the program?

Discovery Curriculum

Pre-Trip	Lesson 1/Information	Lesson 2/Information	Lesson 3/Information
Mar. 30	Trip Information	Packing List	Medical Forms & Waivers
Apr. 20	Intro to Sea Kayaks	Wet Exit	---
May 9	Paddle School – Kayaking Skills	Kayaking Strokes	Proper Dress
May 11	Duffle Shuffle	How to Pack Boat	---
May 13	Expectations	Full Value Contract	Set Tone
Discovery 2007	AM	Afternoon	PM
May 14	Depart LC at 7AM Travel Day	Travel Day	Arrive at Harkers Island at approximately 5PM Camp Set Up Why are you here? Daily Debrief
May 15	Tear Down Camp Reflection Question – What makes your light shine? How to pack kayaks	Paddle to Codd's Creek	Reflection Daily Debrief
May 16	Tear Down Camp Reflection Question – When does your light shine the brightest?	Paddle to Cape Lookout	Reflection Daily Debrief
May 17	Group stays at Cape Lookout Day of Reflection	Day of Reflection Get Supplies	Daily Debrief
May 18	Tear Down Camp Reflection Question – Where is your light needed?	Paddle to Shackleford (Horse Pen)	Reflection Daily Debrief
May 19	Tear Down Camp Paddle Shackleford Horse Pen to Whale Creek	Next Steps Wrap up/Reflection	Reflection Daily Debrief
May 20	Paddle to Harkers Island Bridge	Clean kayaks Travel to Beaufort, NC Inlet Inn 601 Front Street Beaufort, NC 28516 800-554-5466 252-728-3600	Graduation Ceremony
May 21	Travel Day back to LC	Travel Day	Return to LC Clean Gear

Discovery Participant Evaluation
May 2007

- I. **Demographic Information:**
 - a. I am: male female
 - b. **Major:**

- II. **Joy and Happiness (What makes your light shine?)**
 - a. What did you learn about joy and happiness?

 - b. Give an example of something that gives you joy and why.

- III. **Gifts and Talents (When does your light shine the brightest?)**
 - a. Identify what you believe to be some of your gifts and talents.

 - b. In what ways are your gifts and talents needed in the community? (Where is your light needed?)

- IV. **Three Ways of Being**
 - a. What does it mean to be attentive?

 - b. What does it mean to be reflective?

 - c. What does it mean to be loving?

d. List steps in a decision making process.

e. What are ways you can incorporate quiet time into your life?

V. **Vocation**

a. In what ways has Discovery, given you an understanding of vocation?

VI. **Relationships (please circle one and explain)**

a. As a result of your time on Discovery, did you...

1. either deepen an existing relationship with another student
2. form the basis for the beginning of a relationship or friendship

Briefly explain

b. As a result of your time on Discovery, did you...

1. either deepen an existing relationship with an administrator/faculty member
2. form the basis for the beginning of a relationship or friendship

Briefly explain

VII. **The small-group discussions...**

a. **were thought provoking.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

b. **challenged me to think more deeply about the 3 Key Questions and the 3 Ways of Being.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

c. **provided insight about various issues relevant to the sophomore year.**

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

- d. **provided me with clarity about my vocational discernment journey.**
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

VIII. The Solo activity...

- a. **provided me with an opportunity for deep reflection.**
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- b. **challenged me to think about my personal direction in life.**
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- c. **helped me begin to map out my next steps.**
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
- d. **encouraged me to find a way to incorporate quiet time into my daily life.**
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

The Solo activity....

- IX. **There was a good balance between group discussions, personal quiet time, kayaking, social time, and other outdoor activities.**
Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

Please answer the following questions. Your input is very valuable and will help us improve Discovery for the next class.

- X. **What did you learn about yourself on Discovery?**

- XI. **What issues or concerns were unresolved?**

XII. Suggestions or changes needed to improve Discovery?

XIII. Additional Comments:

DISCOVERY
Follow-Up Reflection Questions
Class of 2008

How has your understanding of what brings you joy evolved since Discovery?

In ways have you gained a better understanding of your gifts and talents?

In what ways can you utilize your passions, gifts, and talents to meet the needs of our communities?

How has your experience on Discovery impacted your decisions regarding your future?

Additional Comments:

DISCOVERY
Follow-Up Reflection Questions
Class of 2009

What information or skills did you learn on Discovery that you have used in the past few months?

How has your experience on Discovery impacted your decision making process?

What did you learn about yourself on Discovery?

What issues, concerns, or questions still remain?

Additional Comments:

Students' Comments about Discovery

Loyola College in Maryland

May 2006 Assessment – Class of 2008

“Striving to reach the lighthouse was a wonderful activity. It developed teamwork and the skills we learned definitely coincided with the metaphor of life, and helped us to think about our personal goals or lighthouses. The lighthouse activities worked really well especially when we worked so hard to paddle to the lighthouse it definitely mirrored the metaphor of the lighthouse as a beacon of light in a dark place.”

Solo “was very difficult for me to do. But in doing it I was able to really look inward to myself and really ask myself where I wanted to go and where had I been.”

“We are usually so distracted so much by school, music, people, and everything that we rarely get to reflect or be alone. Actually voiding out all the distractions cleared my head, and allowed for real personal time. I came up with a lot of decisions and goals during my solo.”

“I really liked this because it seemed like the perfect place and time in my life to reflect. It’s hard to find time to reflect at home and when I do find time I can never find a quiet place, so solo was excellent.”

“This is a wonderful way to reconnect with myself, to remove all distractions and take time to look back on my year, look to the future and spend time in nature listening to the real world around me.”

“I learned that my mind is stronger than my body during the channel cross and the last crossing. My body was exhausted but my mind kept me going. I also learned that I shouldn’t make judgments about others because most of my classmates were way off.”

“I learned I can connect with a lot of different people outside of my usual group at Loyola.”

“I am convinced I can easily apply what I have learned on the kayaks and in the field to my regular life, remembering to be still, make connections, and work hard in innumerable ways.”

“I will look at my challenges with less fear and with the knowledge that I have the power to overcome them.”

“I think that I will start taking more chances and take advantage of more opportunities.”

“I think I will learn to better appreciate the simple luxuries in life as oppose to a lot of thing superficial ones like hair and clothes.”

“I think the kayaking aspect and the solo time were especially helpful. The kayaking taught me about boundaries, I’m more powerful than I thought. The solo time just gave me the quiet time that I really think I needed. It also gave me the opportunity to think about issues I would have easily avoided in the past, for example, my job and my future.”

May 2007 Assessment – Class of 2009

“I became closer to my existing friends on a different level and also met at least two new people who I feel I will continue to have a close relationship with. My relationships were probably one of the best parts of the trip.”

“Solo was very challenging because I was never so completely cut off from everything ever in my life. I enjoyed the quiet time to myself because it let me think about my life and encouraged me to be reflective.”

“I learned that where I am is a good place, even if I don’t know exactly where I’m going I know I’m going in the right direction. I think the recent change of my major was a good decision.”

“Overall, Discovery for me was a great experience. I would recommend this program to any sophomore who is looking to meet new people and who also likes doing outdoor activities and trying new things.”

“I’m so glad I took advantage of this opportunity. I feel like this trip is the perfect way to end sophomore year. It provided time to really process everything that occurred this year and every decision that was made. I think if I went straight home and hopped into my life there I wouldn’t have had the time to reflect on the past year and make sense of it all. I developed an interest in sea kayaking over the week. I deepened relationships and started new ones which I’m excited to further deepen in September. It’s perfect timing too since many of our friends will be abroad.”

“Although I felt restricted at some points, overall Discovery was a very positive experience for me. I was taken so far out of my comfort zone which helped me learn a lot about myself, my peers, and being outdoors. I would definitely do it again and encourage the next class to take advantage of this experience.”

October 2007 Follow-Up Reflection – Class of 2009

“Discovery has taught me a little more about the process of making an important decision. Through our reflection time I’ve learned that it’s important to reflect on the decision before the decision is made. I should look at the situation as a whole, while the decision is being made. I should reflect and evaluate the situation to see if it’s something that I’m happy with. After the decision is made I should reflect back upon it in retrospect. Also, I’ve realized the difference between joy and happiness and I try to think about whether or not the decision I am making will bring me either of those and in which way.”

“One skill that I have used that I learned on Discovery is the ability to take more personal care time and disconnect from my everyday activities. In addition, I try to make use of journaling as much as possible because I find this relaxes me. I also realized that Discovery was a great way to break out of your “social circle” and meet new friends. In this respect it was a learning process to find out there are others on campus who share the same concerns about sophomore year going forward.”

“Discovery really stressed the notion of reflection before acting and reflection on one’s prior actions. The idea behind reflection is to hopefully learn from one’s prior choices and improve on them in the future. I have found my decision-making process to be very much improved since Discovery because I am able to reflect before I act.”

“One thing I specifically learned about myself was how much I don’t allow myself to take a mental and physical break during the school. I found out I really wasn’t allowing myself enough personal care time which was causing me to be more stressed out about my schoolwork. I also

learned that my diet needed improving since I ate very healthy on Discovery and since then cut out large amounts of junk food from my diet.”

“My decisions are still not as fast, and I do still weigh all of my options, but I am a little less apprehensive about them. I learned that it is certainly ok to ask for help and is not seen as a weakness when there is a valid reason for help, which is a practice that I am currently trying to undertake.”

“I am still concerned about where it is that I am actually going in life, but I am less worried about it. I know that as long as I try my best then things will eventually fall into place and work out how they are supposed to. Though it is still a bit nerve reckoning to not really know where one's life is headed.”

“One concern I have right now is that I’m allowing myself to become too overextended and not having enough time to spend as the quality RA I want to be on my floor.”

October 2007 Follow-Up Reflection – Class of 2008

“I understand that I have a love of working with people. There are multiple outlets that I can utilize this gift in my life. I am currently applying to programs like the PLACE Corps where I could be teaching for two years in LA, the Thailand teaching program, and JVC. I believe right out of college I am interested in applying my skills in one of these service settings, but I am keeping an open mind as I continue my senior year.”

“On Discovery I began the period of my college career where I began to become a grown up. I did not become old and boring, but I really began to understand to embrace those things I love and to teach them to others and there in lie my gifts and talents.”

“It taught me to chill and take a breath once in a while which has deeply impacted the way I approach my decisions about the future and where life will take me.”

“Discovery helped me to realize that superficial things like looks and material objects don't bring people happiness. If you strip away all of the junk that surrounds us and put people out in nature with one another, they are forced to interact on a direct personal level and appreciate all of the beauty around them. Discovery was about real human interaction, caring, and working as a team. It also gave me time to reflect and think about my life without a ton of distraction from media, school work, computers and everything else that gets in the way of deep contemplation. More often now, when it is a beautiful day, I take a step back and take the time to just sit quietly outside and think. It is a form of meditation for me and Discovery helped me to remember how important it is to do and how it keeps me focused and clear about what I want out of life. Discovery affirmed the idea that life is about the basics, about love and appreciation for what is around you.

“The challenges faced on Discovery can be used very well as metaphors for life. Each person contributed something unique in order to overcome them. The same works in society. I have my own gifts to contribute to the world and Discovery helped remind me of that. Joe was always there helping people and showing them the way. Others made people laugh to keep us going when things were tough. I was the happy one, even when things got tough. I think it is easy for me to smile and look on the bright side. I can use the skills of cheerfulness and accepting nature that helped us on our trip across the stormy islands to help people in life around me. When the storms of life pass, I won't be afraid.”

“Discovery comes at a great time in your college career, because as a sophomore you are still not too sure of what you want to do. But you are forced to declare a major and start getting serious about things. It is hard to really know what you want when you have no time to actually think about it. If you are constantly occupied by school, friends, and everything that comes into play in the seemingly never stopping life of a college kid, you can lose sight of the future and what you want for it. Discovery provides you with that time to really reflect on where you are, where you want to be, and how you might go about getting there. It gives you time to think about what matters most and it calms your mind in preparation for going out there and actualizing those goals and values. Although I don't know exactly where I will be in ten years, after Discovery I was more sure of the things I love and care about, and sure that they would be priorities in my world, no matter what path I end up on. Just like nature, life is unpredictable and I don't know what will happen, but I am sure that I will keep pushing through until I cross the channel safely.”