SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
At the end of the session, the participants will be able to:
1. Understand Pope Francis' message for all the Catholic faithful this Lent
2. Learn practical ways on how to respond to Pope Francis' Lenten message.
3. Apply this message in their daily personal lives.

METHODOLOGY
Talk proper (with reflection)  45 minutes

SPEAKERS PROFILE
A CFC SFL Household Servant or Couple Servant living out the ideals of the talk

EXPANDED OUTLINE

I. Introduction

It is often said that the opposite of love is not really hate, but indifference towards others. Indifference is defined as a 'lack of concern, or sympathy' towards other people and is considered as a sin of omission.

In his Lenten message to the Catholic faithful, Pope Francis reminded us to "(During Lent, let us) find concrete ways to overcome our indifference." He said that "Indifference to our neighbor and to God also represents a real temptation for us Christians." Pope Francis said that "There's the risk of passively accepting certain behaviors and to not be astonished by the sad situations around us," he said. "We get used to violence, as if it were everyday news taken for granted; we get used to our brothers and sisters who sleep on the streets, who don't have a roof over their heads. We get used to refugees seeking freedom and dignity who aren't welcomed as they should be."

He emphasized the need for all Catholics to reach out to those in the peripheries, and to not become self-centered. We can overcome indifference, he added, by using Lent as an opportunity to form our hearts.

II. Struggling with Indifference

1. Indifference in our relationship with God
God is faithful and provident. He has blessed us abundantly in our lives and is continuing to do so. God is our great promise keeper. He has always been good to us. However, there are times that we fail to recognize this.

We are indifferent to God when we feel we no longer need to connect with Him in prayer. In addition, we are being indifferent to God when we wallow in our sins and do not feel the need to repent and go to confession.

2. Indifference in ourselves

We are made in God's image and likeness. We are all marked for greatness. God wants us to experience life to the full. However, there are times that we fail to remember this.

We are indifferent with ourselves when there is callousness already in our hearts if we no longer bother to find ways to overcome the bad and immoral situations in our lives. When we choose to stay as we are even though God is clearly asking us to improve ourselves and when we choose to wallow in our vices even though God is clearly asking us to give those up, we are being indifferent.

3. Indifference with others

We are called to love our brethren and neighbors. This includes those who are materially and spiritually poor. Jesus Christ's mission here on Earth was to bring Glad tidings to them. We must all be sensitive to all their needs. However, there are times that we choose to ignore this.

We are indifferent to others when we ignore the beggars in the street or when we do not do any charitable act for the poor. When we do not feed the hungry or clothe the naked etc. We are being indifferent materially when we have a brother or sister who needs material or financial help but we fail to help, or when we merely offer prayers, even though we have the means to do so. We are being indifferent emotionally when we have a brother or sister who is undergoing great difficulties and trials in life and we do not offer our time to be with them.

III. 3 Practical Ways on How to Overcome Indifference

1. Connect

Connecting with God is praying to Him. To overcome indifference in our relationship with God, we must connect with Him. Pope Francis said, “We become more like Christ, by hearing the Word of God, receiving the sacraments, letting ourselves be touched by the love of the Father and by uniting with others in prayer.”
In addition, he said that the world today is indifferent because people also get too used to living in a culture or society that pretends it can do without God, and where parents, grandparents and adults no longer teach children how to pray.

Pope Francis reminds us that “during this Lent, then, brothers and sisters, let us all ask the Lord: ‘Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum’: Make our hearts like yours (Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus). In this way we will receive a heart which is firm and merciful, attentive and generous, a heart which is not closed, indifferent or prey to the globalization of indifference.”

To overcome indifference in ourselves, we must pray for ourselves, that God may give us a generous merciful and heart others, and for others, especially those who are in need of our prayers. Even if we do not feel like praying, we must continue to pray, as there's always somebody who need our prayers.

2. Change

Changing our lives mean improving ourselves. To overcome indifference in ourselves, we must change for the better. Pope Francis said that “Lent is a time for "a turnaround," to convert and change for the better.” Furthermore, he stated that "Lent is a time to reflect on and be awed by what Christ did for our salvation and to prepare "our mind and our heart for an attitude of gratitude toward God, for all he has given us," because "when we see this love that God has for us, we feel the urge to get closer to him and this is conversion."

In another message he said that “Lent is a ‘powerful’ season, a turning point that can foster change and conversion in each of us. We all need to improve, to change for the better. Lent helps us and thus we leave behind old habits and the lazy addiction to the evil that deceives and ensnares us.”

To overcome indifference, we must change and reform our lives for the better. This means that we should give up all our vices, such as smoking and drunkenness, as well as our bad habits, like impatience and being judgmental. Everyone is called to change and every day, God gives us an opportunity to do so. God does not tire in waiting for us to change.

3. Commune

Communing with others means sharing our blessings with them. To overcome indifference with others, we must commune with them. Pope Francis said, in one of his homilies, that “Almsgiving helps us to experience giving freely, which leads to freedom from the obsession of possessing, from the fear of losing what we have, from the sadness
of one who does not wish to share his wealth with others.” And in another message he stated that “In the poor and outcast we see Christ's face; by loving and helping the poor, we love and serve Christ.”

To overcome indifference in ourselves, we must share our material and financial blessings to others. This would help us to liberate ourselves from the urge to possess things, which in the first place are not our own but God’s. Everybody has the ability to share; nobody is too poor for him not to be able to share something of worth.

IV. Conclusion

It is crucial for the Catholic faithful to overcome our indifference, which Pope Francis depicts as "this addiction to un-Christian and easy-way-out behaviors that drug our hearts". Lent is the best time to do so as it is “a time to shed lazy, un-Christian habits and snap out of one's apathy toward people harmed by violence, poverty and not having God in their lives." We can begin to this by praying for ourselves and for others, sharing to others what we have received, and changing our lives for the better.