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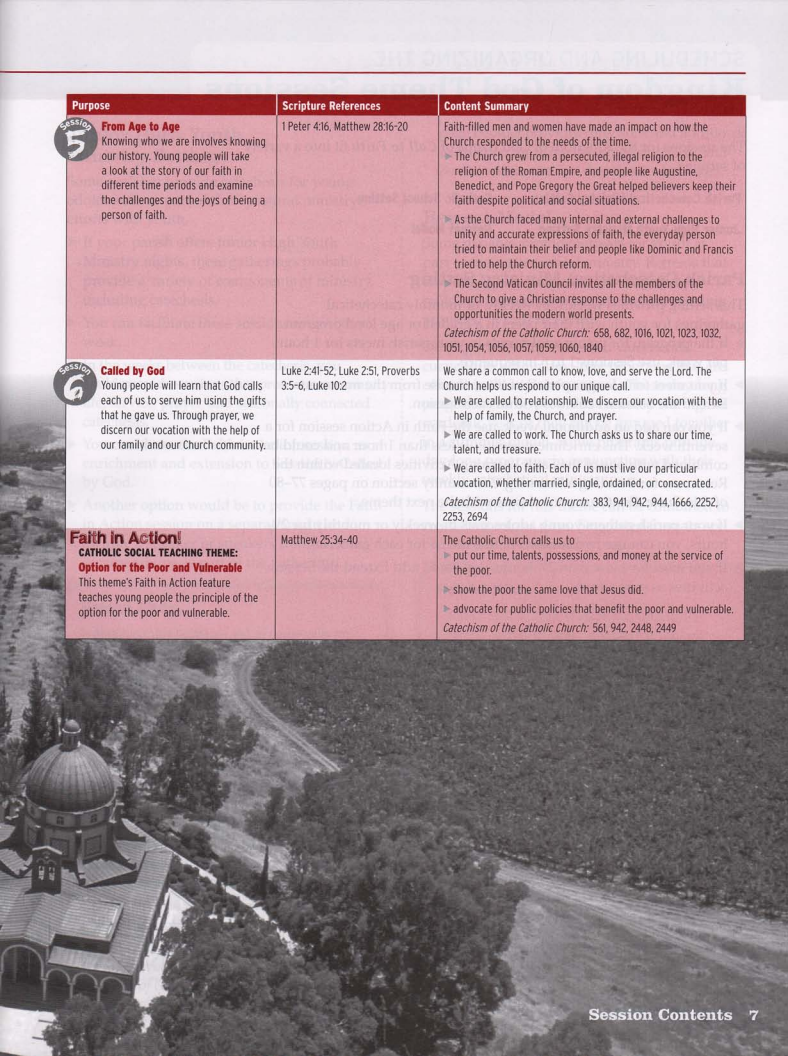
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Kingdom of God Session Contents

Purpose	Scripture References	Content Summary
Session 1 Act with Justice The kingdom of God is a kingdom of peace, justice, and love. Young people will learn that being followers of Christ requires us to share the Good News with others and to work toward ending hunger, poverty, and everything that denies the dignity of the human person.	Matthew 7:12, Luke 4:14-22, Mark 1:15, Luke 15:1-2, Matthew 13:31-32, Luke 18:18-30, Matthew 5:3, Exodus 20:17, Matthew 25:35, 40	Jesus made justice a priority. It was the heart of his message of the kingdom toward which we all work. ► Jesus welcomes all people to God's kingdom of love, peace, and justice. As his followers, we have to show others that we are called to end hunger, poverty, and injustice. ► God's kingdom is present but not yet complete; we prepare for and work toward the kingdom through prayer, sharing Jesus' Good News, just action, and advocacy for those in need. ► We need to rely on God, trust in his care, and have the right attitude toward money and things; doing so helps us concentrate on what's important and work for the rights of others. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church: 229, 542, 550, 1948, 2552-2554, 2556, 2714, 2776, 2800, 2857</i>
Session 2 Our Reason for Hope The Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us hope that this life is preparing us for something greater. We prepare not just by what we believe, but by how we live.	John 11:1-44, Colossians 1:18, Romans 8:11, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:1, Luke 16:19-31, Luke 23:42-43, Matthew 25:31-46	By his death and Resurrection, Jesus makes it possible for believers to have eternal life—life with God forever. ► Christian hope is based upon putting our trust in God and the hope that we will rise one day as Jesus did. ► We will be judged at our death based upon the ways we have accepted and acted on God's grace in our lives; God desires all of us to make the right choices in life so we can be with him forever in the happiness of heaven. ► Jesus will come at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, and the kingdom of God will be complete and full in its glory. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church: 658, 682, 1016, 1021, 1023, 1032, 1051, 1054, 1056, 1057, 1059, 1060, 1840</i>
Session 3 The Communion of Saints Three important avenues that lead to God include the communion of saints, sacramentals, and sacred art. Young people will explore the ways that these aspects of our Catholic belief and practice can help them grow in love and respond to God's grace.	Acts 2:42, Acts 2:42-47, Exodus 20:2-5	Catholics are connected with each other across time through prayer, practices, and sacred objects and images. ► The communion of saints links people striving to do good on earth with souls being purified in purgatory and the saints in heaven. ► Sacramentals are holy objects, prayers and practices that help us respond to God's grace and bring us closer to him. ► Religious art, especially icons, helps us to honor the saints and glorify God. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church: 383, 941, 942, 944, 1666, 2252, 2253, 2694</i>
Session 4 Saints, Examples for Living The Catholic Church recognizes Church members who have lived lives of holiness and virtue by celebrating their lives and declaring them saints. Young people will learn what holiness means and take a look at Mary and why her "yes" to God gives her a special place of honor.	Luke 1:26-38, Luke 1:42, John 19:26-27, Luke 1:39-45, John 15:13, John 15:12-13	The Church honors Mary and all the saints with special feasts and devotions. ► Mary has a special role in God's plan, and by saying "yes" to God, she became the mother of his Son and of all those who believe in him. We believe she was born free of sin, remained free of sin, and was taken into heaven body and soul. ► The Church honors Mary as the greatest of saints and honors her with many feast days and devotions. Mary continues to be present among us, praying for us and asking God to work miracles through her intercession. ► All of us are called to be saints, holy men and women who accept God's friendship and live lives of service to others. The Church declares some people canonized saints for their lives of heroic virtue and holiness. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church: 229, 542, 550, 1948, 2552-2554, 2556, 2714, 2776, 2800, 2857</i>



Purpose	Scripture References	Content Summary
Session 5 From Age to Age Knowing who we are involves knowing our history. Young people will take a look at the story of our faith in different time periods and examine the challenges and the joys of being a person of faith.	1 Peter 4:16, Matthew 28:16-20	Faith-filled men and women have made an impact on how the Church responded to the needs of the time. ► The Church grew from a persecuted, illegal religion to the religion of the Roman Empire, and people like Augustine, Benedict, and Pope Gregory the Great helped believers keep their faith despite political and social situations. ► As the Church faced many internal and external challenges to unity and accurate expressions of faith, the everyday person tried to maintain their belief and people like Dominic and Francis tried to help the Church reform. ► The Second Vatican Council invites all the members of the Church to give a Christian response to the challenges and opportunities the modern world presents. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church:</i> 658, 682, 1016, 1021, 1023, 1032, 1051, 1054, 1056, 1057, 1059, 1060, 1840
Session 6 Called by God Young people will learn that God calls each of us to serve him using the gifts that he gave us. Through prayer, we discern our vocation with the help of our family and our Church community.	Luke 2:41-52, Luke 2:51, Proverbs 3:5-6, Luke 10:2	We share a common call to know, love, and serve the Lord. The Church helps us respond to our unique call. ► We are called to relationship. We discern our vocation with the help of family, the Church, and prayer. ► We are called to work. The Church asks us to share our time, talent, and treasure. ► We are called to faith. Each of us must live our particular vocation, whether married, single, ordained, or consecrated. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church:</i> 383, 941, 942, 944, 1666, 2252, 2253, 2694
Faith in Action! CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING THEME: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable This theme's Faith in Action feature teaches young people the principle of the option for the poor and vulnerable.	Matthew 25:34-40	The Catholic Church calls us to ► put our time, talents, possessions, and money at the service of the poor. ► show the poor the same love that Jesus did. ► advocate for public policies that benefit the poor and vulnerable. <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church:</i> 561, 942, 2448, 2449

OUR Reason for Hope

Session Background

Purpose

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us hope that this life is preparing us for something greater. We prepare not just by what we believe, but by how we live.

Objectives

Learners will

- ▶ explore the virtue of hope and how it relates to our outlook on death.
- ▶ understand what the Church teaches about heaven, hell, and purgatory.
- ▶ explore the meaning of Jesus' second coming and the last judgment.

Church Documents

For more background on session content, refer to *Catechism* paragraphs 658, 682, 1016, 1021, 1023, 1032, 1051, 1054, 1056, 1057, 1059, 1060, and 1840.

Those who accept the responsibility of catechetical ministry have a major role in communicating, clearly and unambiguously, the centrality of Jesus Christ in salvation history and the importance of placing faith in him as the one true source of salvation.

—See *National Directory for Catechesis*, 25

Catechist Formation

We may prefer not to think of Jesus as a judge. It doesn't seem to fit the image that many of us have of him—mild, gentle, merciful. But it is important to remember that Jesus was passionate about justice, and when that passion was aroused, he was more than capable of expressing righteous anger.

In the parable of the last judgment in Matthew 25, Jesus equates how we treat others with how we treat him. This story teaches a profound truth about salvation, that our task as disciples is not only to be Christ for others, but also to see Christ in others. This is a truth that the Church has embraced for its entire 2,000-year history.

2 How is the desire for justice reflected in your life and ministry?



Catechist Prayer

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you have guided me to be a catechist, and I thank you. May all I do reflect your glory, and may my strongest desire be to serve you in this life by serving my sisters and brothers. In this way, I know that I will live with you forever. Amen.

Young Adolescents Learning Faith

- ▶ Young adolescents are beginning to ask questions about life and death; some may have experienced the death of a loved one. Young people need an opportunity to reflect on these experiences in light of their own faith.
- ▶ Young adolescents are beginning to make moral decisions based on guides outside of themselves. Good guides typically include parents, family members, Church teaching, teachers, and wise friends. We have an opportunity to help them discover Christian values that will help them to make sound moral decisions.

Preparing for the Session



For a session planning sheet, visit

www.osvcurriculum.com.

Session at a Glance

WHAT'S the ISSUE?

10 minutes

PRAY the opening prayer.

READ the story about James, **PAGES 12–13**.

REFLECT and discuss the story.

SHARE a personal experience of loss.

WHAT does FAITH SAY?

40 minutes

READ the **CONNECT** feature on **PAGE 14**.

REFLECT on fears of death.

READ **JESUS GIVES US HOPE** and **IS THERE HOPE FOR US?** on **PAGES 14–15**.

REFLECT on Christian hope and the Resurrection.

EXTEND THE SESSION with personal reflection on hope, add 10 minutes.

PRESENT **LIFE AFTER DEATH**, **PAGES 16–17**.

EXTEND THE SESSION by writing your own eulogy using **Resource 2**, add 15 minutes.

READ **WHO WILL INHERIT THE KINGDOM** and **THE WORKS OF MERCY** on **PAGES 18–19**.

FACILITATE ACTIVITY about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

PRESENT summary of key ideas using **CATHOLICS BELIEVE**, **PAGE 19**.

WHAT NOW?

10 minutes

READ the **LIVE OUR FAITH**, **PAGE 20**.

FACILITATE ACTIVITY using the **WHAT ABOUT IT?** activity.

EXTEND THE SESSION with the **PEOPLE OF FAITH** feature, add 10 minutes.

PRAY the closing prayer.

Getting Ready

- ▶ Read **Session 2** in the *Kingdom of God Faith Booklet*.
- ▶ Prepare a prayer space with a small table, simple cloth, a Bible, candle, and a cross. Be sure to have matches for the candle.
- ▶ Post a sheet of newsprint on the wall. Write *Feelings about Death* across the top.
- ▶ Identify participants to help with prayer and to read aloud portions of the text.

Supplies Needed

- *Kingdom of God Faith Booklets*—one per participant
- newsprint
- markers
- tape
- 8½ x 11 white paper
- *Call to Faith Grade 7 & 8 Music CDs*

Personal Sharing Preparation

Prepare for personal sharing and faith sharing.

- ▶ In *What's the Issue?*, you will share how a personal experience of death has had an effect on your faith. This story may be very personal; you may want to write it out in advance. When sharing your story, focus on how the loss helped you grow in your understanding of and faith in the Resurrection and how it gave you hope. 3 minutes
- ▶ In *What Does Faith Say?*, you will present brief ideas about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Be prepared to provide one or two personal ideas about these actions. 2 minutes

Facilitating the Session

WHAT'S the ISSUE?

10 minutes

GO online Visit www.osvcurriculum.com. Look under Reproducible Resources for a printable version of this prayer.



FYI Be attentive to the body language of the learners. This discussion could be uncomfortable or even painful for some adolescents. If the discussion seems to get too heavy, ask the questions differently. Ask: *What are some of the thoughts and feelings people have when they know someone who died? What are some of the thoughts and feelings that people have about death?*



PRAY Greet the young people as they arrive for the session.

- Ask for the group's attention, and begin the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.
- Light the candle. Have one participant read the Scripture passage, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14. A second young person will read the prayer.

Jesus, by your death and Resurrection you transformed death into a new life for us. Help us have the hope that comes with Resurrection and the grace to live life as you taught us to. Amen.

READ Invite volunteers to read the story on **PAGES 12–13** aloud.

REFLECT As a large group, talk about the story using the following **WHAT ABOUT IT?** and **WHAT ABOUT YOU?** questions to facilitate discussion:

What were some of the feelings James was having about Uncle Jim's death?

Do you know anyone who has died?

What were some of the feelings you had about the experience?

Write the feelings that surface from the discussion on the sheet of newspaper posted on the wall.

SHARE To close the discussion, share a personal story about someone in your life who died and some of the thoughts and feelings you had about it. Be sure to highlight any notions already mentioned and add any thoughts and feelings that you had that were not on the sheet of newspaper.

- Focus on how the loss helped you grow in your understanding of and faith in the Resurrection and how it gave you hope.

WHAT does FAITH SAY?



40 minutes

READ Invite a volunteer to read the **CONNECT** feature on **PAGE 14**.

REFLECT Divide the group into pairs and have them answer the following questions:

What thoughts and feelings from the sheet of newspaper have you had about death?

What scares you the most about death?

READ Invite volunteers to read **JESUS GIVES US HOPE** and the first two paragraphs of **IS THERE HOPE FOR US?** on **PAGES 14-15**.

REFLECT As a large group, talk about what was just read.

Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion.

How does the Resurrection give you hope?

Christian hope helps us place the right emphasis on the things that really matter. What are the things that really matter to you?

Close the discussion by giving a brief explanation of Christian hope. Include the following points:

Hope is not just a feeling that we have. Sometimes we feel hopeful, but sometimes we do not. Having Christian hope is a virtue; it gives us the confidence that God will give us grace to help us through difficult times and promises eternal happiness for a well-lived life. Even when we are not sure, even when we have feelings like the ones that we have shared so far, we still have the confidence to believe.

Hope in the Resurrection also allows us to focus on the things that are really important. We know that there is more to life than just what we can get in this world. That belief frees us to live a life that sees people and relationships as important. It gives us the courage to love God and love others, especially the poor and neglected.



PAGE 15

LIFE AFTER DEATH

[illegible]

PAGE 16

[illegible]

PAGE 17

FYI Distribute Resource 2:

Remembering if you are doing the Extend the Session activity.

[illegible]

GUIDE PAGE 69

FYI Some participants may struggle with this activity. Circulate among the young people during their reflection, and provide assistance as needed. Reassure the participants that two or three simple ideas is a good start on this kind of reflection.

EXTEND THE SESSION 10 minutes

FAITH WALK—Reflecting on Hope

In this activity, young people will reflect on the meaning of hope in their lives.

- ▶ Give them an opportunity to spend some quiet time reading the **FAITH WALK** feature on **PAGE 15** and then writing down their answers to the questions.
- ▶ Provide a few minutes for participants to share some of their responses in small groups of three.
- ▶ Ask for volunteers to share responses with the large group.

PRESENT Summarize the content on **PAGES 16–17** of particular judgment and purgatory using these or your own words:

Our Catholic faith teaches us that heaven is eternal life in communion with God and all the blessed forever. It is the state, or experience, of being happy with God forever. Hell is a state of being separated forever from God and the blessed.

If we have remained in God's friendship, but are in need of cleansing for non-forgiven venial sins or for the temporal punishment for sins already forgiven, we will enter a state called purgatory. Purgatory is a final purging or cleansing of our sinfulness and imperfection, so that we can enter into full union with God in heaven.

When we die, we will be judged according to how we have lived our lives. At the moment of death, each person's soul is rewarded with the blessings of heaven, purified in purgatory, or condemned to hell. This is called the particular judgment.

EXTEND THE SESSION 15 minutes

FAITH WALK—Write Your Own Eulogy

This activity is an opportunity for learners to reflect on how they would like to be remembered when they die. This exercise provides valuable insight into how to live our lives today.

- ▶ Invite someone to read the **FAITH WALK** feature on **PAGE 17**.
- ▶ Review the ideas on **Resource 2** and allow some time for learners to reflect and write their own eulogy.
- ▶ If time permits, have a few learners share their eulogies with the large group. Close this session with these ideas:
- ▶ *These eulogies help us remember what is important to us. They tell us the values that we want to be remembered for. Put this eulogy someplace safe, someplace important to you, and pull it out every once in a while and read it. Ask yourself, are you living in a way that people will say these things about you? Spend some time in prayer with God asking for whatever you need to be the person described in your eulogy.*

READ invite a young person to read the three paragraphs on **PAGES 18-19** under **WHO WILL INHERIT THE KINGDOM?**

FACILITATE ACTIVITY **Works of Mercy** 15 minutes

In this activity, small groups will think of ways to live the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

- ▶ Divide the participants into small groups of four to five. Distribute markers and newsprint to each group.
- ▶ Refer to the chart in **CONNECT YOUR FAITH** on **PAGE 19**. Give a brief explanation of each of the works of mercy. Provide one or two personal examples. Assign half of the small groups to the corporal works of mercy and the other half to the spiritual works of mercy. Ask each group to brainstorm as many ways as they can think of for how they can perform each of the works of mercy, and write them on the sheet of newsprint. When the groups have finished, post the newsprint on the walls.
- ▶ Allow a few minutes of individual time for learners to choose ideas and complete the Something I'll Try column in the chart.

PRESENT Highlight the key ideas of this session.

- ▶ Summarize or read aloud **CATHOLICS BELIEVE** on **PAGE 19**.



PAGE 18

PAGE 19

WHAT NOW?



10 minutes



PAGE 20

PAGE 21

READ Read the ideas under the **LIVE OUR FAITH** aloud.

- ▶ Invite youth to choose one way to live their faith this week.
- ▶ Encourage participants to use the suggestions on **PAGE 20** for sharing **FAITH AT HOME**.

FACILITATE ACTIVITY Ask participants to complete the **WHAT ABOUT IT?** activity individually. Distribute a blank sheet of paper for the activity. Allow 4–5 minutes.

EXTEND THE SESSION 10 minutes

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Invite volunteers to read aloud the story of Saint Peter Claver.

- ▶ Ask learners to write down all of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy they hear in the story.
- ▶ Close by saying that Saint Peter Claver saw much pain, suffering, and misery. His belief in the Resurrection and his hope in eternal life allowed him to serve people the way he did, not just waiting for an end to suffering, but working for an end to suffering.

EXTEND THE SESSION

FAITH WALK—Write Your Own Eulogy

This activity is an opportunity for learners to reflect on how they would like to be remembered when they die. This exercise provides valuable insight into how to live our lives today.

- ▶ Invite participants to read the **FAITH WALK** feature on **PAGE 17**.
- ▶ Review the ideas on Resource 2 and allow some time for learners to reflect and write their own eulogies.
- ▶ If time permits, have a few learners share their eulogies with the large group. Close this session with these ideas:
- ▶ These eulogies help us remember what is important to us. They tell us the values that we want to be remembered for. Put this eulogy somewhere safe, somewhere important to you, and read it out every once in a while and read it. Ask yourself, are you living in a way that people will say these things about you? Spend some time in prayer with God asking for whatever you need to be the person described in your eulogy.



Invite everyone to get in a circle and then light the candle.

Gathering

- All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- Leader: God of faith, hope, and love, you invite us to a life that says that people are more important than material things and that love is the most important thing. Be with us as we grow in our understanding of your ways.

Reading

Read Acts 24:15–16.

Response

Allow for a few moments of silence, and then invite everyone to share one word that gives them hope. When all have finished, lead the group in this prayer:

- Leader: Our response is: We thank you, Lord.
- All: We thank you, Lord.
- Leader: Loving God, we thank you for the gift of hope.
- All: We thank you, Lord.
- Leader: We thank you Lord for everything that gives us hope.
- All: We thank you, Lord.
- Leader: We thank you for your creation and all of the people who are signs of your hope.
- All: We thank you, Lord.

Going Forth

In hope and confidence of your love, we pray together the prayer that your Son taught us.

Join hands and pray the Lord's Prayer. End by playing or singing one of the suggested songs.



Visit www.osvcurriculum.com.
Look under Reproducible Resources
for a printable version of this prayer.

FYI If you don't have time for the prayer service, you may choose to pray together the prayer on **PAGE 20** of the *Faith Booklet*.

Suggested Songs

"I Am the Resurrection,"
David Haas, © 1988, GIA
Publications, Inc., *Call to
Faith Grade 7 & 8 Music CD2*,
track 8

"At the Name of Jesus,"
Christopher Walker, © 1995,
1999, Oregon Catholic Press