

CONTENTS

Introduction	v
Part 1: What We Believe—Embracing and Living the Truth	1
Why We Are Able to Believe	3
Topic 1: Existence	3
Man Is Receptive to God	5
Topic 2: Cravings, Desires, and Lattes	5
God Approaches Us Men	7
Topic 3: The “Big Reveal”	7
Man Responds to God	9
Topic 4: Believing	9
The Christian Profession of Faith	11
Topic 5: Standing for Something	11
I Believe in God the Father	13
Topic 6: The Greatest Mystery	13
I Believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God	15
Topic 7: Disaster	15
Topic 8: One of Us	17
I Believe in ... the Holy Spirit	19
Topic 9: Team Spirit	19
I Believe in ... the Holy Catholic Church	21
Topic 10: Team Players	21
Topic 11: What Else Is There?	23
Topic 12: And Then There Were Four... ..	25
Part 2: How We Celebrate the Christian Mysteries—Discovering the Sacred	27
God Acts in Our Regard by Means of Sacred Signs	29
Topic 1: STOP!	29
God and the Sacred Liturgy	31
Topic 2: The Family Feast	31
How We Celebrate the Mysteries of Christ	33
Topic 3: Date Time	33
Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism and Confirmation	35
Topic 4: New in Town?	35
A Sacrament of Initiation—The Eucharist	37
Topic 5: Some Food for Thought about Food for Life	37

The Sacraments of Healing—Penance/Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick.	39
Topic 6: Heal the Sin-Sick Soul	39
The Sacraments of Communion and Mission—Holy Orders and Marriage.	41
Topic 7: No More Me, Myself, and I	41
Topic 8: You Were Made for Me; I Was Made for You	43
Other Liturgical Celebrations.	45
Topic 9: Accessorize	45
Part 3: How We Are to Have Life in Christ—Living Life to the Fullest.	47
Why We Are Put on Earth, What We Are Supposed to Do, and How God's Holy Spirit Helps Us to Do It.	49
Topic 1: Everybody's Fancy	49
The Dignity of the Human Person	51
Topic 2: Virtue Is Its Own Reward	51
Human Community	53
Topic 3: The Lonesome End	53
The Church	55
Topic 4: You Can't Give What You Don't Have	55
You Shall Love the Lord Your God	57
Topic 5: Give Your All	57
You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself.	59
Topic 6: He Ain't Heavy; He's My Brother	59
Topic 7: Operate according to the Manual	61
Topic 8: Truth? What Is That?	63
Part 4: How We Should Pray—Entering the Great Dialogue.	65
How to Pray: The Gift of God's Presence	67
Topic 1: Noise and Silence	67
Topic 2: YES!	69
The Sources of Prayer.	71
Topic 3: Unremembered	71
The Way of Prayer.	73
Topic 4: Vital Stats	73
The Lord's Prayer: The Our Father.	75
Topic 5: Children, Love Your Father	75
Topic 6: I Need	77

Man Is Receptive to God

awk-
ward

Topic 2: Cravings, Desires, and Lattes

Behind YOUCAT

Do you ever get a craving for something? A pizza, a burger, or ice cream? Maybe a latte? Cravings or desires for food and drink are part of human life. We also have desires for other things—for example, for wealth, health, love, friendship, knowledge, and meaningful work. Most people would say they need such things to live well on earth—to be happy.

Of course people can also crave the wrong things—things harmful to them or too much of a good thing, which can wind up hurting them. What's more, even when people have what they need to be happy in this life, they find themselves unsatisfied on a deeper level. They want something more—a permanent, enduring happiness, and a relationship with someone who can make sense of everything and bring complete happiness.

Read YOUCAT

Read nos. 3, 281, and 285.

What Does YOUCAT Say?

1. What did St. Augustine say about our hearts?
2. Explain how fulfillment of desires in this life compares with that of the next life.
3. According to no. 285, what do we need in order to obtain the complete fulfillment of eternal happiness?

YOU Reflect

We all have longings. We were created with them. As a result of human sin, though, sometimes our longings mislead us. They can become disordered desires—desires for things that really harm us or desires for too much of something otherwise good for us. Desires may even conflict with each other, leaving us confused. Only through God can we completely sort out our longings and attain complete fulfillment. The Second Vatican Council said, “Man plunges into the depths of reality whenever he enters into his own heart; God, who probes the heart, awaits him there; there he discerns his proper destiny beneath the eyes of God” (*The Church in the Modern World*, no. 14). God awaits us in the depths of our hearts to help sort out our desires in order to fulfill our true purpose.

1. What is it that you are really looking for in the deepest desires of your heart?
2. How can you talk with God about your deepest longings?

What Does the Bible Say?

1. Read Galatians 5:16–24. When St. Paul refers to “the flesh” here, he doesn’t mean simply “the human body”; he means the part of fallen human nature that allows the lower impulses of our bodily nature to dominate our good sense and to lead us into choosing bad things. What are the “works of the flesh” that St. Paul lists in Galatians 5:19–21?
2. What is the “fruit of the Spirit” he refers to in Galatians 5:22–23?
3. What does Psalm 37:4 say about the desires of our hearts?

YOU Chat

1. What is the most difficult thing about understanding cravings, desires, and longings?
2. Is there anything especially difficult for young people today when it comes to dealing with desires?
3. Is there comfort in knowing that there is an answer to satisfying your deepest longings? Explain.

YOU Challenge

Thank: Treat yourself to your favorite food or drink this week. Thank God for it and let it remind you of how God ultimately satisfies the human heart.

Ask: Write a letter to God about the deepest desires of your heart and ask him to fulfill those desires according to his wise plan for your life.

Seek: Give up a bad habit that only temporarily fulfills a desire. Seek God’s help in overcoming the bad habit by replacing it with a good one.

God Approaches Us Men

Topic 3: The "Big Reveal"

Behind YOUCAT

You've probably watched a TV show in which there's a mysterious character whose identity the audience is longing to know. You may think you've got things figured out, but you're not certain. Finally, there's the all-important episode in which the truth is unveiled. Sometimes this unveiling is called "the big reveal." The story now makes more sense. You see the characters and their story in a whole new light, all because the mysterious character's identity has been revealed.

In some ways, God is like the mysterious character in a TV show. Throughout history people have had various ideas about him. Often sin has gotten in the way, and people have wound up making God out to be what they want him to be rather than coming to know him as he is. For this and other reasons, God chose to reveal certain things about himself. He did this gradually, until at last "the big reveal" came: Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, we come to know who God really is.

Read YOUCAT

Read nos. 5, 7, and 9–10.

What Does YOUCAT Say?

1. According to no. 5, what are reasons some people deny God exists?
2. Why did God reveal himself rather than leaving us to figure out on our own that he exists?

continued on next page

YOU Reflect

The word "reveal" is related to the word "revelation." God reveals himself to us—tells us about himself—in divine *revelation*. His fullest revelation is Jesus Christ, who is God and man, divine and human. When God reveals himself to us, he tells us about himself but also about ourselves—where we came from, what God desires for us, and what we can become. He told us as much about himself as we can receive when he came as one of us—Jesus.

1. Think about the word "God". What images come to mind? Then think about Jesus. Does thinking about Jesus change how you think about God? Why or why not?
2. What are ways that God has manifested himself in your life?
3. What difference does God's revelation in Jesus Christ make to your life—to the way you see the world, the choices you make, and what you hope for?

What Does YOUCAT Say? *continued*

3. How did God accomplish his definitive revelation, according to no. 7? Why did he do it (no. 9)?
4. How are private revelations different from the revelation of Jesus Christ (no. 10)?

What Does the Bible Say?

1. Read John 1:1–18. According to John 1:18, how do we come to know God the Father?
2. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9)?

YOU Chat

1. How did God reveal himself to man?
2. What are ways God continues to make his presence known to us today?
3. How does the Church reveal God’s presence to us?
4. How does God speak to us in Sacred Scripture?

YOU Challenge

Pray: Find time to go to Mass one additional day this week besides Sunday, as a way of saying Yes to God’s revelation of himself in Jesus Christ.

Learn: Read John 17:1–26. Think about how Jesus’ words there reflect his being the fullest revelation of God.

Decide: Think about what God’s plan is for your life and decide that you want to do whatever God wants you to do.

Man Responds to God

Topic 4: Believing

Behind YOUCAT

Some people think having religious faith means believing things you know aren't true. But that's nonsense. If you believe in your friends—that you have faith in them—doesn't it mean you're confident in them, that you trust them? And isn't that trust a kind of *knowing* the truth about them, based on your experience and relationship with them? That's not believing something you know isn't true. If a friend tells you something about himself you couldn't have discovered on your own, and your friend is reliable and trustworthy, then you truly *know* something about him, even though you have to take his word for it. Christian faith is like that, too. It's a kind of *knowing* and a kind of *trusting* in God when it comes to his telling us about himself and about ourselves. Because this kind of believing is based on reasonable trust, it's not "blind faith", and it's certainly not believing something we know isn't true.

Read YOUCAT

Read nos. 20–22.

What Does YOUCAT Say?

1. According to no. 20, how should we respond to God?
2. What kind of heart does a person need in order to believe?
3. Explain the two meanings of "believe" given in the parachutist example of no. 21.

YOU Reflect

Faith is a *supernatural gift* of God. It's beyond our natural abilities. We can believe because God's Spirit enables us to do so. Faith also mysteriously involves our choice to respond to God and his revelation (his Word). When we believe, we say Yes to God. In this way, faith is a kind of giving ourselves back to God, in response to his gift of creating us and giving himself to us in revelation.

1. If faith is a divine gift, does this mean that those who don't believe have not been offered the gift? Why or why not?
2. In what way is believing in someone a kind of giving yourself to that person? How is believing what God has revealed a kind of giving oneself to him?

What Does the Bible Say?

1. According to Hebrews 11:1, what is faith?
2. What does St. Paul say in 2 Corinthians 5:7? What do you think he means?
3. How does John 3:16 link believing and Jesus?

YOU Chat

1. Which of the seven characteristics of faith in no. 21 do you find most difficult to understand?
2. Faith in our friends isn't absolute; we recognize they're not perfect and they can sometimes let us down. How is faith in God different from faith in our friends? Why?
3. Have you ever doubted your friends or have been tempted by circumstances to doubt them, only to discover you misunderstood the situation? How might this kind of experience apply to faith in God and the challenges of life?
4. Why do you think no. 21 describes faith as "knowledge" as well as "trust"?

YOU Challenge

Think and Pray: This week think about one part of the Catholic faith you find most difficult to accept. Ask God to help you understand and believe more deeply.

Learn: Ask a parent, priest, teacher, or other knowledgeable Catholic to help you understand the part of the Catholic faith you find most difficult to accept. Look up the YOUCAT references to the topic and read them. Be patient in discovering answers to your questions.

Man Responds to God



The Christian Profession of Faith

Topic 5: Standing for Something

Behind YOUCAT

"Those who stand for nothing", it has been said, "will fall for anything." Taking a stand for what we believe—for our creed—is important. Someone's "creed" is the summary of his basic beliefs. One way we Catholics stand for our faith is by making the Profession of Faith. We do this by reciting the Creed at Sunday Mass, and we literally "take a stand" as we stand to recite it. The Creed is something we profess as a group, but it should also be something each of us as individual persons stands by. This is why although *we together* believe the Creed at Mass we each say, "I believe".

Read YOUCAT

Read nos. 24–29.

What Does YOUCAT Say?

1. What are some reasons why the Church has summarized key beliefs in the form of creeds?
2. What are the two main creeds of the Church?
3. Identify the core Christian belief about which the creeds elaborate.

What Does the Bible Say?

1. What does Matthew 10:32–33 say about professing our faith in Jesus Christ?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 and 1 Timothy 3:16. How do these passages of Scripture resemble or include early creeds?

YOU Reflect

The Creed is more than a summary of Christian beliefs. When we recite it at Mass, the Creed is a prayer. We've just finished hearing the Word of God proclaimed in Scripture and explained in the homily. Now it's our turn to speak to God. The Profession of Faith is an opportunity to confess our faith before God and other people in the Church. It's also a chance to remind ourselves of who we are, what we believe, and why we're at Mass.

1. How might the act of reciting the Creed at Mass be different if all people in the congregation realized they were professing their faith before God himself?
2. Do you ever find your mind wandering while reciting the Creed at Mass? What might you do to overcome that problem?
3. How does the fact that reciting the Creed is both a prayer to God and a statement of our key beliefs show that faith in God is both a kind of trust and a form of knowing?
4. How can clarity about what one believes help a person avoid being misled?