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Formation Session Two

Assembly-Line Construction: Human Desire, Revelation, and Faith

(pp. 11–16)

Focus

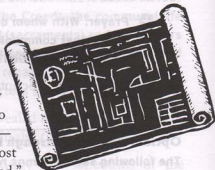
We believe in *revelation*, meaning that God has taken the first step in this relationship and our role is to be aware and responsive.

Learning Outcome

As a result of this session, participants will be able to describe *revelation* as the act of God revealing himself to us in order to enter into relationship with us.

Plan

1. Invite the participants to think about how they will complete the following statement: “Most people don’t know that I . . .” Assure them that they do not have to reveal anything dramatic—it could be something as simple as “Most people don’t know that I’m colorblind,” or “Most people don’t know that I have ten brothers and sisters.”
2. When people are ready, ask a few volunteers to reveal something about themselves by completing the sentence. When they are done, thank them for their willingness to share.
3. Say: It’s always interesting to learn new things about people. We can only get to know people, however, if they choose to reveal themselves



to us. Luckily, God is not shy about revealing himself to us! That's what we mean when we talk about revelation—it is the act of God revealing himself to us so as to enter into a deeper relationship with us. We summarize this revelation in our Creed, which is the first pillar of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In our acronym H.E.L.P., the *H* stands for “Holding on to our faith.”

4. Point out that the *Catholic Catechism for Adults* tells us that *revelation* is “the self-disclosure of the living God.” (*USCC for Adults*, p. 13) Invite the participants to engage in some self-disclosure. Arrange them in pairs or groups of three and have them share a thumbnail summary of who they are. If the participants do not know each other well, encourage them to share basic information, such as where they grew up, where they went to school, what their career is, and so on. If they know each other well, encourage them to complete the sentence “Most people don’t know that I . . .,” as a way of disclosing something about themselves.

5. When this activity is finished, invite volunteers to describe what another person disclosed to them. Then say: **Let’s take a look at some examples in the Bible of when God took the initiative to reveal himself to his people.** Have volunteers read some or all of the Scripture examples listed on page 14 of *A Well-Built Faith* (God Started It—And They Responded). Then invite participants to comment on them and to share which, if any, resonated with them and why.

➤ **Genesis 12:1-9 (the call of Abram)**

➤ **Exodus 3:1-14 (the call of Moses)**

➤ **Isaiah 6:1-10 (the call of Isaiah)**

➤ **Jeremiah 1:4-10 (the call of Jeremiah)**

➤ **Matthew 5:18-22 (the call of the first disciples)**

➤ **Luke 1:26-38 (the call of Mary)**

➤ **Acts of the Apostles 9:1-9 (the call of Paul)**

6. Write on the board or flip chart the name *Copernicus*. Ask if anyone can explain why Copernicus is famous. (Copernicus was the Polish astronomer and mathematician who proposed that the earth revolved around the sun and not the other way around). Say: **In terms of our relationship**

- with God, some of us may need to undergo what we call a “Copernican revolution”—meaning that we need to recognize that our lives revolve around God and not the other way around. When we recognize that it’s not all about us, we begin to develop a spirit of *humility*.
7. Use the notes from pages 15–16 of *A Well-Built Faith* to describe the nature of *humility*. Invite volunteers to read aloud from pages 15–16 the examples of humility expressed by several well-known saints.
 8. Have a volunteer read aloud the So What? feature on page 16 of *A Well-Built Faith*. Invite participants to comment, ask questions, or share their own insights with the large group.
 9. **Discussion**—discuss the following questions either as a large group or in small groups.
 - ⊕ How easy or hard is it for you to reveal yourself to others? How does it make you feel to know that God eagerly reveals himself to us?
 - ⊕ Why is it impossible to be spiritually proactive?
 - ⊕ In what ways did the following people strive to be spiritually proactive? Adam and Eve, the people who built the Tower of Babel, Judas. How did things turn out for them?
 - ⊕ Has there been a time in your life when you were able to say, “thy will be done” to God?
 10. Summarize by saying, Workers on an assembly line are always working with what someone else before them has passed along to them. The same is true in our faith lives. God has begun the process and now invites us to share and participate in his creation.
 11. Conclude with the Scripture and Prayer found on page 16 of *A Well-Built Faith*.

Option: Teaching through Hymns

The following sacred hymns reinforce the focus of this session.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ⊕ How Great Thou Art | ⊕ Your Word is My Light |
| ⊕ Morning Has Broken | ⊕ All Creatures of Our God and King |

Formation Session Three

Who's the Boss?: Scripture and Tradition

(pp. 17–24)

Focus

When we seek guidance from God's Word, we can turn to Sacred Scripture and Church Tradition.

Learning Outcome

As a result of this session, participants will be able to identify Scripture and Tradition as one single deposit of God's revelation.

Plan

1. Ask whether anyone has an I.D. other than a driver's license that proves they have some authority or credentials. Invite volunteers to share. Then brainstorm as a group a list of people whose credentials we might question before entrusting them with an important task, such as doctors, lawyers, airline pilots, gas company inspectors, police officers, and so on.
2. Say: If someone claims to have authority to perform a very important task, we want to know that we can trust that individual. If someone pounds on your door and says, "Open up! Police!" you certainly want to verify that they have a badge before you let them in. Authority and trust go hand in hand.
3. Explain that the question of authority is very crucial when it comes to spiritual matters. Say: We want and need to know that we can trust those who speak to us about how we are to live our lives in



relationship with God and one another. Let's take a closer look at this issue of authority and trust in terms of our Catholic faith.

4. Ask the participants to think of a person that they trust implicitly. Invite the participants to share their examples in pairs. Then invite volunteers to read aloud the following brief Scripture passages (NAB) that speak of trust:

⊕ Psalm 9:11

⊕ Psalm 22:5-6

⊕ Psalm 25:2

⊕ Psalm 37:3

⊕ Psalm 56:4-5

⊕ Psalm 62:8-9

5. Say: We place our trust in God because God has full authority—God is, after all, the author of life! God, in turn, has given full authority to his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus himself said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18, RSV). Jesus, in turn, gave full authority to Peter and the Apostles when he told Peter that he would build his church upon him and gave him the keys to the kingdom. (Matthew 16:18-19). This means that we are called to place our trust in Church leadership, which speaks and acts with the authority that comes from God through Jesus Christ and the Apostles.
6. Use the notes on page 18 of *A Well-Built Faith* to explain how Catholics and Protestants differ when it comes to the question of authority (for Protestants, Scripture alone; for Catholics, Scripture and Tradition).
7. Use the notes on pages 18–20 to introduce the terms *Tradition* and *Magisterium*.
8. Use the notes on pages 19–22 to go over some basic information on Scripture.
 - ⊕ Number of books in the Bible (Protestant/Catholic versions)
 - ⊕ Old Testament
 - ⊕ New Testament
 - ⊕ Catholic interpretation of Scripture
9. Use the notes on page 23 to show how Catholics rely on both Scripture and Tradition to help in decision-making. Say: We face many challenges today that the Bible did not explicitly speak to. For example, if we are looking for guidance in the area of medical ethics and genetic

engineering, we are exploring a challenge that did not exist in biblical times. To rely on Scripture alone to guide us in such an area severely limits us. The Magisterium, which is part of the Church's Tradition, can provide us with the guidance we need to make informed decisions that are grounded in God's revealed Word.

10. Have a volunteer read aloud the So What? feature on page 23 of *A Well-Built Faith*. Invite participants to comment, ask questions, or share their own insights with the large group.

11. **Discussion**—Discuss the following questions either as a large group or in small groups.

- + What is your understanding of Church *Tradition*, as opposed to Church *traditions*?
- + What advantage does having a Magisterium—an official teaching office—give to the Catholic Church?
- + If the Bible is not an “answer book” to all of life's challenges, just what is it? What is the purpose of the Bible?
- + What is your personal experience with Scripture? How familiar are you with the Bible? What is your biggest obstacle when it comes to deepening your familiarity with the Bible?
- + What does it mean to you to say that everything in the Bible is true but not necessarily fact?

12. Conclude with the Scripture and Prayer on page 24 of *A Well-Built Faith*.

Option: Teaching through Hymns

The following sacred hymns reinforce the focus of this session.

- + Sow the Word
- + Your Word Is My Light
- + The Church's One Foundation
- + We Walk By Faith

Formation Session Four

Using Brand-Name Equipment: The Trinity

(pp. 25–30)

Focus

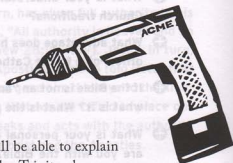
Our belief in the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has profound implications for our daily living.

Learning Outcome

As a result of this session, participants will be able to explain how our knowledge and experience of the Trinity shapes our lives and our relationships.

Plan

1. Arrange the participants in small groups and invite them to share with one another to whom in their families they bear a resemblance, either physically or through some personality trait. Invite them to share the same thing about children that they may have.
2. Then invite volunteers to share with the large group their descriptions of family resemblances.
3. Say: It's not unusual for us to identify someone as a member of a certain family because of the resemblance they share with their parents and/or siblings. As baptized Catholics, we are members of God's family. We are made in the image and likeness of God. The question for us today is, "do we bear a family resemblance to our Creator?" Of course, we are not talking about a physical resemblance, because God is invisible. However, if we are indeed to bear a resemblance to God, it



is important for us to know something about him! As Christians, the single most important thing that we know about God is that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Trinity. Today, we'll take a closer look at just what this means.

4. Write the word *mystery* on the board. As a large group, brainstorm a list of mystery movies, mystery TV shows, and mystery novels. Then say: Our contemporary understanding of a mystery is very different than the biblical understanding of mystery. Today, we think of a mystery as something to solve. In the Bible, a mystery is not something to be solved, but something to enter into. We may not fully understand a mystery, but we can know a mystery.
5. Use the notes on pages 26–27 of *A Well-Built Faith* to describe the Trinity as a community of love—a loving relationship.
6. Use the notes on pages 28–29 to describe the implications that our understanding and experience of the Trinity have on our daily living.
7. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the list on page 30 of *A Well-Built Faith* (Self-Giving Love) that describes moments in life that are profoundly Trinitarian because they are examples of self-giving love. As a group, brainstorm more examples from the lives of participants, including actions of others who have shown them self-giving love.
8. Have a volunteer read aloud the So What? feature on pages 29–30 of *A Well-Built Faith*. Invite participants to comment, ask questions, or share their own insights with the large group.
9. **Discussion**—Discuss the following questions either as a large group or in small groups.
 - How would you describe the concept of the Trinity to a non-Christian? To a Christian child?
 - What does it mean for us to bear a family resemblance to our God?
 - What does it mean that Catholics do not believe in a supreme being?

- + What would you say to someone who claims that they can be spiritual but not religious (meaning that they feel they do not need to belong to a worshipping congregation)?
- + What does it mean to live as a people “in communion with” one another?
- + Explain the following statement: “Our belief in the Trinity is not an intellectual exercise—it is a relationship.”

10. Conclude with the Scripture and Prayer on page 30 of *A Well-Built Faith*.

Option: Teaching through Hymns

The following sacred hymns reinforce the focus of this session.

- + Holy God, We Praise Thy Name
- + O God, Almighty Father
- + All Hail, Adored Trinity
- + All Creatures of Our God and King
- + Jesus, the Lord
- + To Jesus Christ Our Sovereign King
- + Come Holy Ghost
- + Veni Sancti Spiritus
- + O Holy Spirit by Whose Breath