
PRESENTER'S GUIDE

Faith and Revelation

Knowing God Through Sacred Scripture



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Madonna of Humility by Sano di Pietro

FAITH AND REVELATION Knowing God Through Sacred Scripture

PRESENTER'S GUIDE

How to Use This Presenter's Guide

Guidelines

Read these guidelines before you start to plan what you will do in each session:

Congratulations! You have been entrusted to help others grow in their love of God by growing in their knowledge of the Catholic faith. Whether the participants in your sessions will be high-school students attending religious education classes, adults who want to learn more, or inquiring non-Catholics who want to learn about the faith, we have made this *Presenter's Guide* to help every participant better comprehend the material in the book.

We have also designed the *Presenter's Guide* to aid you in your presentation, covering one chapter per session. We encourage you to tailor the activities and questions to your participants, taking into account their knowledge level, what they hope to get out of these sessions, and the amount of time you have to meet. For example, you might choose to forego the Opening Activity altogether if your participants have not yet read the material, or you might choose to omit some of the Focus Questions if you are pressed for time.

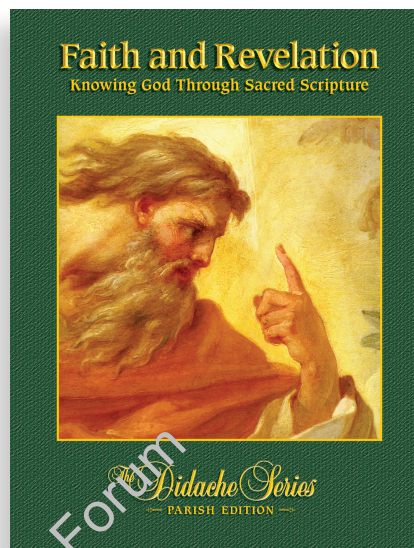
As the presenter, your tendency might be to schedule more activities and questions than can be completed in the amount of time that a session lasts. **Start out with less**, and have a few questions or activities in mind if there is time at the end of a session. You should have no problem, for example, introducing a discussion topic from an earlier section after having presented the whole chapter.

It is a good idea to open and close each session with a prayer. You might choose to use the same prayer to open and close each session, especially a popular prayer such as the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Hail Mary*, or the *Glory Be*. If you prefer, each session has a suggested Opening Prayer that is related to the chapter.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Overview of Chapter 1

Be sure that you and each of the participants have a copy of this book:

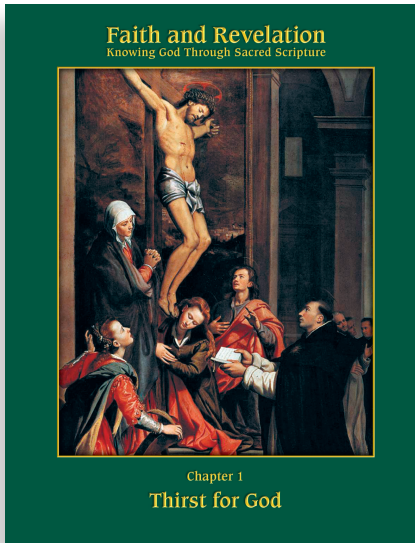


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Available from MTF at www.theologicalforum.org

At the time of registration, give each participant a summary of Chapter 1 and have him or her read Chapter 1 before the first session.

You might want your registrar to reproduce and distribute page 50 in this guide to the participants before the first session.



Chapter 1: THIRST FOR GOD

Key Ideas

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- Humans are rational beings, comprised of body and soul, who are designed for happiness.
- God has designed us so that we want and enjoy the things we need.
- God has given us a thirst for him that can never be fully satisfied in this life.
- God reveals himself to us through reason and Divine Revelation.

Vocabulary List

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- **Corporeal being**—A creature endowed with a physical body. (p. 3)
- **Free will**—This gift from God includes the power of directing one's own actions without constraint. This makes possible the choice to love God. (p. 3)
- **Reason**—Reason is the power to make inferences, judgments, and conclusions from facts or premises. (p. 3)
- **Soul**—The “spiritual principle” of the body; the innermost aspect of a person by which he or she is most especially in God's image. (p. 3)
- **Spiritual being**—A creature endowed with an immortal soul. (p. 3)

- **Philosophy**—Derived from Greek meaning literally “love of knowledge,” philosophy is the pursuit of truth and understanding through the application of human reason. (p. 4)
- **End**—The primary goal of the intention and the purpose pursued in an action. (p. 4)
- **Agnosticism**—A belief that the existence of God cannot be known or proven. (p. 8)
- **Atheism**—The denial of the existence of God. (p. 8)
- **Religious being**—A being created by God in order to live in communion with God. Every human person, by nature and vocation, is a religious being and will not live a true human life if he or she does not choose freely to live in this bond with God. Because every human person has been created to live in communion with God, his or her ultimate happiness can only be found in God. (p. 8)
- **Natural revelation**—What God communicates to us about himself simply through the existence of creation. When God creates us, he writes knowledge of himself on our hearts, and through that mark we can learn something about God. (p. 9)
- **Divine Revelation**—God's communication of himself by which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan: a gift of God's self-communication that is realized by deeds and words through time, the fullness of which was the sending of his Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. (p. 9)

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following or incorporate the Scripture passage that is referenced in the Opening Activity (Wis 13:1-9; see below):

O God our Father, in Jesus you call all Christians to be signs of living faith.

By the light of the Holy Spirit, Lead me to be thankful for the gift of faith, and by that gift may I grow in my relationship with Jesus, your Son, and be a confident witness to Christian hope and joy to all that I meet.

Let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from *A Family Prayer for the Year of Faith* (www.usccb.org) and from St. Augustine, *Conf.* 10, 20: PL 32, 791

Overview of the Chapter

If you did not have the registrar distribute the summary to the participants, read the summary (p.50 in this guide) to them.

Opening Activity

Have the participants complete the Opening Activity (p.2).

Key Ideas

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p.2).

WHO AM I?

(pp.2-3)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 3.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. What is a definition of a human person? A human person is a rational being, comprising body and soul, who is designed for happiness.
2. What does it mean to be a corporeal being? What does it mean to be a spiritual being? A being is corporeal in that it has a body. A being is spiritual in that it has an immortal soul.
3. What does it mean to say that we are rational beings? It means that we have the faculty of reason, i.e., the ability to think and form abstract ideas beyond what we perceive through our physical senses.
4. What does it mean to say that we are dependent and interdependent beings? It means that we depend upon other persons for our development and well-being, and they likewise depend upon us.
5. What does it mean to say that we are designed for happiness? It means we are created with a natural desire for happiness, and our rational free will is oriented toward seeking happiness.

6. What is free will? It is our real but limited freedom to make choices and pursue courses of action that we believe will make us happy.

WHERE IS HAPPINESS TO BE FOUND?

(pp. 4-5)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 4.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

7. What are the major means by which human beings typically pursue happiness? People pursue happiness through wealth, honors, fame or glory, power, health and physical fitness, physical pleasure, intellectual pursuits, moral pursuits, friendship, and the vision of God.
8. Explain: Our fundamental human needs and desires are oriented toward something that is good, but the specific ways in which we seek to fulfill these desires might not always be good for us. We do not always recognize the true object of our desires. Sometimes, this failure leads us to seek to satisfy these desires in ways that harm us such as looking for love through illicit relationships or alleviating hunger through excessive self-indulgence.
9. How do need, desire, and pleasure work together for our benefit? Give an example. For every true human need, there exists a desire to attain it and a pleasure in reaching it. Desire and pleasure work together so we will seek what is good for us. For example, the need for nutrition is experienced as a desire for food (hunger), and we derive pleasure from satisfying that desire (eating); this makes us want to repeat the experience.
10. Illustrate the following statement with an example: We do not necessarily call to mind the true end of our desires when we act upon them, but to do so can help us use our reason in order to make good choices. Using the example of eating, we usually eat because we feel hunger and want

to satisfy that desire, not necessarily because we know we need certain nutrients in order to survive. However, we cannot eat anything and everything we want, or we risk doing harm to our health. As rational beings, we need to evaluate our options and make good choices. So we do best to select foods that satisfy not only hunger but also nutritional needs.

OUR NATURAL DESIRE FOR GOD

(pp. 5-9)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 8.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

11. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, why is it that nothing on earth can ever completely satisfy a human being? Our ultimate desire is for God alone. We can take pleasure and a measure of happiness in many things; nonetheless, nothing but God will ever totally and permanently fulfill us in such a way that we no longer desire anything else.

12. “The human heart desires to know what is true, good, and beautiful.” What does this mean? Our natural human quest for truth, goodness, and beauty is in reality a sign of our desire for God, who is perfect truth, perfect goodness, and perfect beauty.

13. Describe two ways in which we are made in the image and likeness of God. One way is that we have reason and free will. The other is that we have the power to love and are called to live in a loving communion with God and other persons.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 8).

GOD'S SUPERNATURAL DESIRE FOR US; WHAT'S NEXT?

(p. 9)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 9.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

14. How is man naturally religious? We are created by God, and we naturally seek and desire God. Our relationship with God is part of our human identity—so much so that, if we do not choose freely to live in this relationship, we are not living a truly human life. If we seek true happiness, then we must seek God.

15. What are the two ways we can know God? We can know God through human reason and through Divine Revelation, by which we can come to have faith.

16. What is the climax of God's self-revelation? The Person of Jesus Christ is the fullness of Revelation.

17. According to *Dei Verbum*, 2, what is the character of the full and permanent fulfillment that God wishes to give us? It is to “become sharers in the divine nature.”



The Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas by Gozzoli.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Have the participants complete the Closure or Alternative Assessment (p. 10).

Ask the participants to answer the Discussion Questions (p. 10; answers below). These can be given as a quiz or used to lead a class discussion.

Discussion Questions (p. 10)

- 1. What is a good definition of a human person?**
A human person is a rational being, comprising body and soul, who is designed for happiness.
- 2. What does it mean to be a corporeal being? What does it mean to be a spiritual being?**
A being is corporeal in that it has a body. A being is spiritual in that it has an immortal soul.
- 3. What is reason? What is free will?**
Reason is the power to make inferences, judgments, and conclusions from facts or premises. Free will is our real but limited freedom to make choices and pursue courses of action that we believe will make us happy.
- 4. How do need, desire, and pleasure work together for our good? Give an example.**
For every true human need, there exists a desire to attain it and a pleasure in reaching it. Desire and pleasure work together so we will seek what is good for us. For example, the need for nutrition is experienced as a desire for food (hunger), and we derive pleasure from satisfying that desire (eating); this makes us want to repeat the experience.
- 5. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, why is it that nothing on earth can ever completely satisfy a human being?**
Our ultimate desire is for God alone. We can take pleasure and a measure of happiness in many things, but nothing but God will ever completely and permanently fulfill us in such a way that we no longer desire anything else.
- 6. We are made in the image and likeness of God. What does this mean? Describe two meanings of this statement.**
One is that we have reason and free will. The other is that we have the power to love and are called to live in a loving communion with God and other persons.
- 7. What are the two ways by which we can know God?**
We can know God through human reason and through Divine Revelation, by which we can come to have faith.
- 8. What is the climax of Divine Revelation?**
The Person of Jesus Christ is the fullness of Revelation.

Overview of the Next Chapter

Read this summary to the participants:

The next chapter explains that everyone is capable of discerning certain truths about God and his moral law because it is written on our hearts by God. It explains how reason can prove that God exists and how faith takes up where reason leaves off. The chapter also demonstrates the difference between natural faith and supernatural faith.

Key Ideas of the Next Chapter

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p. 12). These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- Natural revelation is what we can know through the natural light of reason about God and how he wants us to live.
- Through reason, we can know that God exists; we can know many of his attributes; and we can know the moral law by which he wants us to live.
- Because of our limitations, faith supplements our natural knowledge of God and how we should live.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION

Read the Next Chapter

Have the participants read Chapter 2 before the next session.

Closing Prayer

End the session with a closing prayer.

Examples include the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Hail Mary*, or the *Glory Be*.

NOTES



Chapter 2: NATURAL REVELATION

Vocabulary List

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- **“Five Ways”**—St. Thomas Aquinas’s five proposals for how the existence of God can be known through reason. These include the argument from motion, the argument from causes, the argument from possibility and necessity, the argument from degrees of perfection, and the argument from governance. (p. 13)
- **Principle of causality**—The process of knowing God’s existence through the realization that all creation must originate from a First Cause. Also, in a more general way, the philosophical truth that all things must have a sufficient cause. (p. 14)
- **Natural revelation**—What God communicates to us about himself simply through the existence of creation. When God creates, he imprints a mark, and through that mark we can learn something about God. (p. 16)
- **Natural law**—The ethical knowledge we can acquire through the application of human reason to probe the truth that is “written on the human heart,” as distinct from the moral teaching derived from Scripture and Tradition. Natural law is the rational participation of man in the plan of God as well as the objective order established by God that determines the requirements for people to thrive and reach fulfillment. (p. 17)

- **Natural religion**—As opposed to religion informed by Divine Revelation, natural religion is based upon reason and ordinary experience rather than upon Divine Revelation. It is the product of the ethical and divine understanding available to human reason. Natural religion shows us that to be human is to be religious. Every ancient society was religious, as are the societies of our day, both tending to the worship of false gods in misguided quests for the divine. (p. 18)

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following:

*Grant me, O Lord my God,
a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
conduct pleasing to you,
faithful perseverance in waiting for you,
and a hope of finally embracing you. Amen.*

(St. Thomas Aquinas)

Opening Activity

Have the participants complete the Opening Activity (p. 12).

KNOWING GOD THROUGH REASON

(pp. 12-13)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. In his Letter to the Romans, what are three things St. Paul says everyone should know from reason alone? *Everyone should know that God exists, that he is Almighty, and that there is a moral law governing human nature that we ought to obey.*