

saint mary's press

A large, stylized graphic of a flame or fire on the left side of the cover. It features several thick, curved, overlapping bands of color: yellow at the top, transitioning through orange and red, and ending in blue and green at the bottom. The bands have a hand-drawn, textured appearance.

Live

It!

Change
the World
with
Everyday
Faith

Catechist Guide

Catechist Guide

Live It!

Change the World
with Everyday Faith

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The content in this resource was acquired, developed, and reviewed by the content engagement team at Saint Mary's Press. Content design and manufacturing were coordinated by the passionate team of creatives at Saint Mary's Press.

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Live It!

Change the World with Everyday Faith

Saint Mary's Press is excited to partner with you in your ministry of passing on the faith to young people. In this journey of Confirmation preparation with the young people of your community, your role is essential in helping them embrace their faith. We are blessed to be able to walk with you.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle taught his brothers to "be convinced that the main conversion is that of the heart, and without it the conversion of the mind is quite sterile." Centuries later, *The National Directory for Catechesis* reminds us that catechesis is not simply about education but must focus on "the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples." As a Lasallian ministry, we embrace this vision and provide materials that not only are strong in content but also lead to a conversion of the heart. Together we can all be drawn to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church.

Embracing this vision that catechesis must begin and end with evangelization, *Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith* has been designed to keep the needs of youth and those who work with them in mind. Everything you need to lead a dynamic and engaging program for young people is in your hands. The program uses this catechist guide and two student resources, *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, third edition, and *The Catholic Youth Bible*®, fourth edition, to present Scripture and core beliefs of the Catholic faith in ways that are youth friendly and easy to understand. The step-by-step instructions for each session will meet the needs of any program.

Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith will allow you to bring the Catholic faith to life and empower youth to explore their own faith, as you continue the journey of discipleship together. We are grateful that you have accepted the call to accompany your young people on this journey, and we pray that this program may bring a deeper awareness of the love of God to all.

With our prayers and best wishes,

The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press

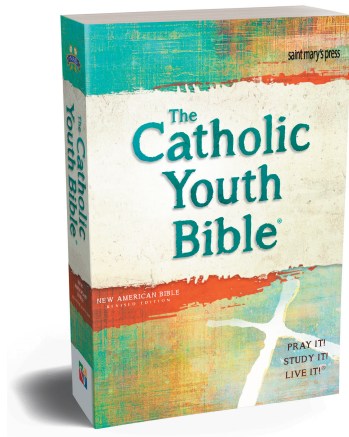
Remember your leaders who spoke the
word of God to you. Consider the outcome of
their way of life and imitate their faith.

(Hebrews 13:7)

Program Overview

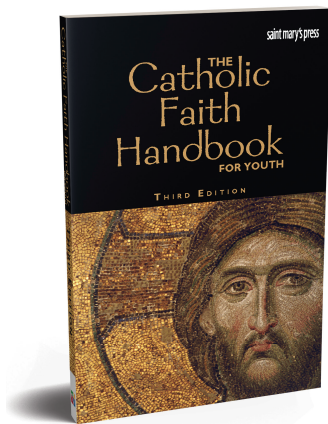
Program Resources

Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith utilizes two substantial and life-changing resources:



*The Catholic Youth Bible,
Fourth Edition*

The Catholic Youth Bible (CYB), fourth edition, builds on the best of the previous editions, providing a resource that will engage both the minds and hearts of young people. A central characteristic of this new edition is the ability to personalize it, which invites the youth to physically interact with the Bible. They can write, draw, color, reflect, highlight, journal, question, add photos, post sticky notes, or add anything else that speaks to them, allowing Scripture to become a more personal part of their life and empowering them to embrace their faith.

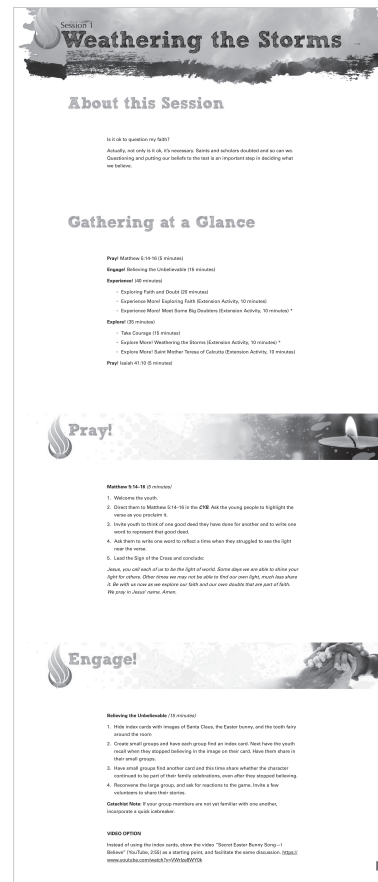
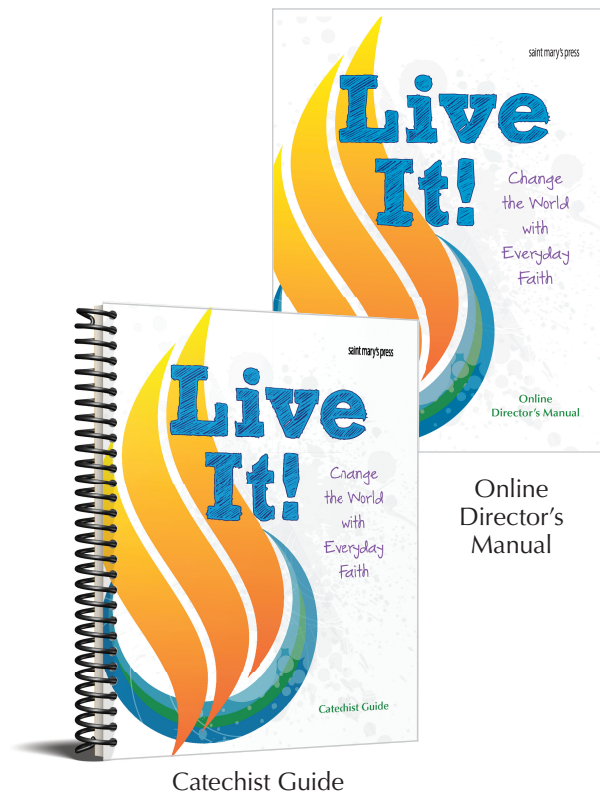


*The Catholic Faith
Handbook for Youth,
Third Edition*

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth (CFH), third edition, is an understandable and down-to-earth guide to all things Catholic. It was written for young people at all stages of their faith journey. Whether the young people are brushing up on specific Catholic terms and concepts or learning them for the first time, the **CFH** is the perfect resource to help them understand the Catholic faith and how living out their faith can change the world.

Key Components

The program consists of three different components that are comprehensive and easy to use:



Online Resources (SWAY)
(found at www.smp.org/liveit_online)

Online Director's Manual provides an overview of the program and offers various time lines and options for implementing the program.

Catechist Guide offers step-by-step directions for implementing twenty-five sessions and a 3-hour retreat.

Online Resources supply a digital presentation of the material found in the Catechist Guide for each session. Presentations are in a format called Sway (Microsoft) and can be accessed on any digital device that has internet access. You do not need to purchase any additional software. These digital presentations walk you through the session activities and include links to recommended digital resources, helping you lead the sessions with ease.

With these tools in hand, you will truly challenge your young people to change the world with their faith. As the youth move from this program to Confirmation preparation, they will be ready to fully embrace the sacrament.

Units

Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith consists of five units:

Unit 1

TRUST!

Exploring the Challenge

Unit 1: Trust! Exploring the Challenge looks at Jesus, God's mercy, and the challenge of living the good and holy life Jesus calls us to. It shows the young people that even though hard times come along, God always loves us. The difficult times are the times we can most rely on the saving love that God has shown us in Jesus.

Unit 2

LOVE!

Experiencing the Gift

Unit 2: Love! Experiencing the Gift begins with encountering love in the person of Jesus, in the love of the Father, and in the Eucharist. The unit concludes with our response to love—how we honor God and how we pray to God.

Unit 3

GIVE!

Making a Difference

Unit 3: Give! Making a Difference invites the young people to move beyond spectator Catholicism and into an active, living faith. It calls them out of their comfort zone to follow the example of Jesus, moving into a life of connection, community, and generosity.

Unit 4

SERVE!

Being for Others

Unit 4: Serve! Being for Others challenges the young people to love like God does, by standing with the outcast and the marginalized. The unit encourages them to seek strength for social justice in prayer and community.

Unit 5

FOLLOW!

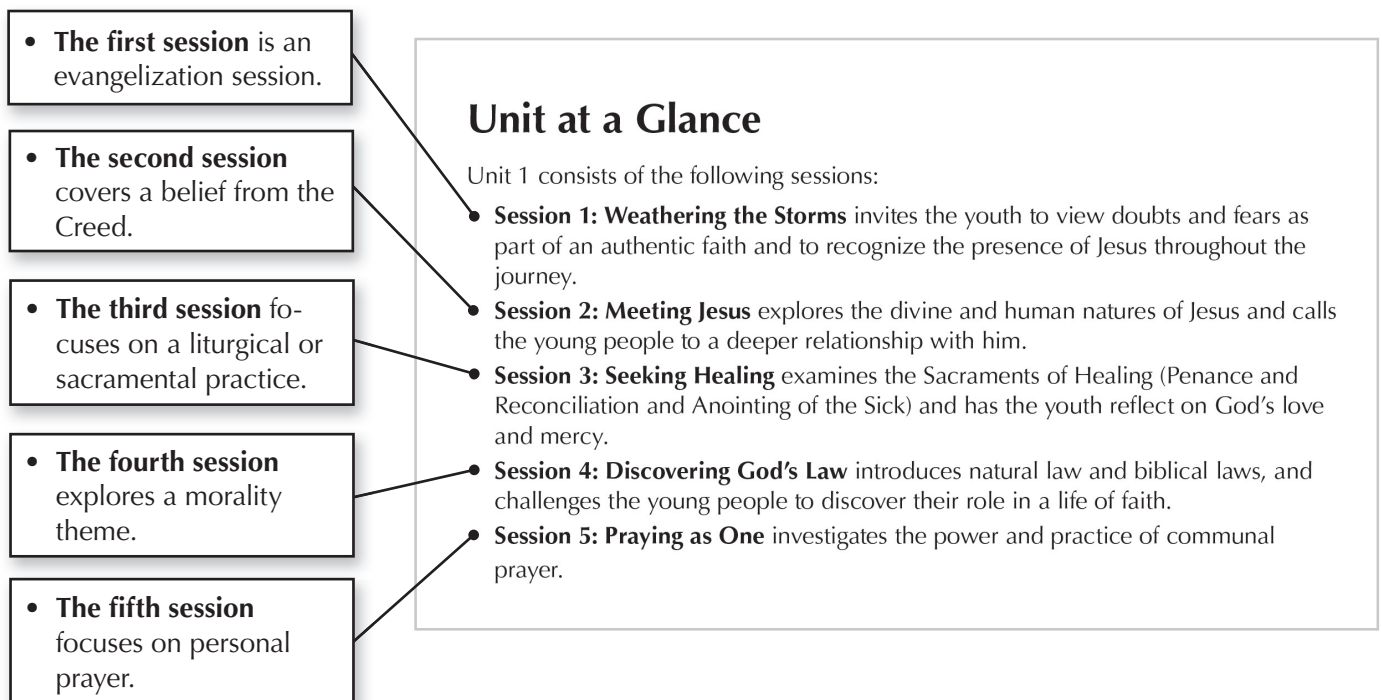
Accepting the Challenge

Unit 5: Follow! Accepting the Challenge invites the young people into discipleship and prepares them for mission. They are challenged to know who they are and whose they are, created by and called by God. The unit's sessions equip the young people with Scripture and inspire them to embrace the challenge and live everyday faith.

Unit at a Glance

The units are structured to embrace the vision that catechesis must begin and end with evangelization and to help the young people understand more deeply when important themes are returned to and built upon. This is why the first session in each unit is an evangelization session, engaging the hearts of young people around a topic that is relevant to their lives and the practice of faith (Trust! Love! Give! Serve! Follow!). The remaining four sessions in each unit explore these topics through the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC).

The sessions in each unit follow this pattern:



With this holistic approach, the young people connect both head and heart to the material as they continue to grow in their everyday faith.

Retreat

The program also offers **Connect! Engaging with Faith**, a 3-hour retreat that invites the youth to deeply enter the gathered community and truly engage with their faith. Though the retreat is intended to be the launching pad for *Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith*, its power and relevancy make it appropriate for use at any point throughout the course of the program.

Session Overview

Session Basics

- **Gathering at a Glance** offers a snapshot of the primary and extension activities, along with their times.

Exploring the Challenge

Session 1

Weathering the Storms

Gathering at a Glance

Pray!

- Matthew 5:14–16 (5 minutes)

Engage!

- Believing the Unbelievable (15 minutes)

Experience!

- Exploring Faith and Doubt (20 minutes)
- Experience More! Exploring Faith (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
- Experience More! Meet Some Big Doubters (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) *

Explore!

- Take Courage (15 minutes)
- Explore More! Weathering the Storms (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) *
- Explore More! Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Pray!

- Isaiah 41:10 (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

- colored pencils
- highlighters
- images of Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, and the tooth fairy on index cards
- reflective music

For Extension Activities

- * a copy of the handout “Meet Some Big Doubters” (TX005889), cut apart
- * a different recording of reflective music

- **Outcomes** names the intended goals for the session.

Outcomes

The young people will:

- explore doubt as a normal reality on their faith journey
- learn to seek God’s assistance through times of doubt
- be challenged to stay focused on Jesus as they journey

Background

“We recognize that a person who doubts is also a person who is seeking God” (LaSalle General Council, “One Call, Many Spiritualities Amidst Secularization,” 2016). As people grow, it can be difficult to imagine what it must be like to go from faith to doubt. Yet, several recent studies show that doubt is a constant companion for many young people. The level of trust in all institutions—including religion—is at an all-time low. And in many ways, who can blame them? Considering this, how do we help these young people move from distrust to trust, from doubt to faith?

Doubt can be easier to navigate when it is seen as a natural part of growing in faith rather than an impediment. Unfortunately, the experience of many youth is that the Church is not a place where they can express doubt. We must overcome this. It is important that we give our youth, and even ourselves, the space to name and wrestle with doubt as part of everyday faith. The Church has a long history of saints who have wrestled with doubt on their faith journeys. Let’s help our young people discover that experiences of doubt can be vital moments of discovery that can lead to a deeper faith.

Connections

- **CFH:** Chapters 4 and 37
- **Scripture:** Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 5:14–16, 14:22–33, 28:16–17; Hebrews 11:1
- **CYB features:** Scripture Highlight near Isaiah 41:10, Growing in Faith near Matthew 14:22–33, Challenge near Luke 17:5–6
- **CCC:** 27–49

- **Background** provides a short reading to help you better understand the material in the session and get excited about sharing it with the young people.

- **Asterisks** indicate that materials are needed for extension activities.

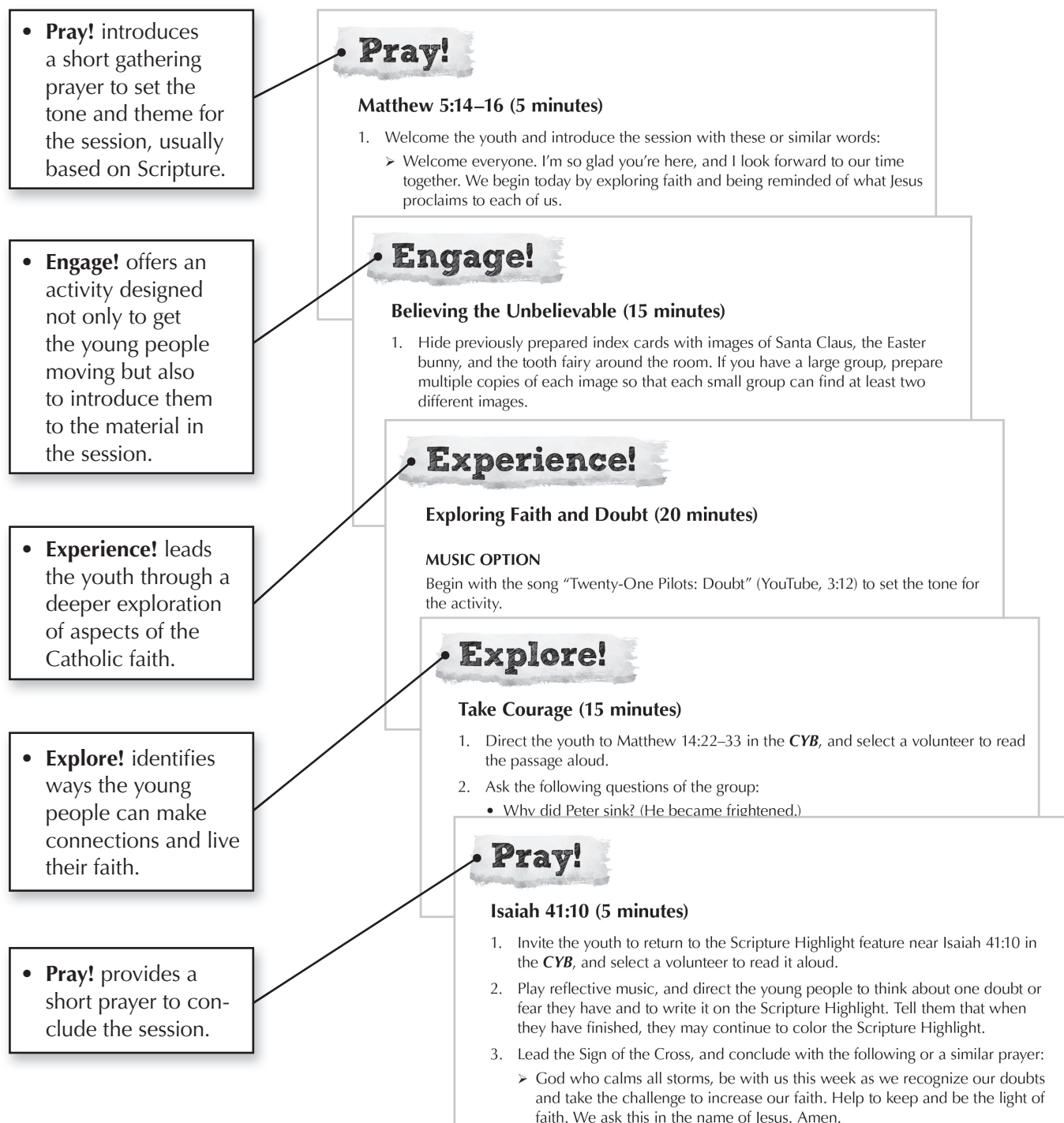
- **Materials and Preparation** provides a list of materials to gather and any advance preparations you need to make before the youth arrive.

- **Connections** identifies **CFH** chapters, **CYB** features, and Scripture passages that are used during the session. Relevant readings from the **CCC** are also identified.

Primary Activities

The program is made up of twenty-five sessions (five sessions per unit). The primary activities for each session require a total of 60 minutes to complete.

Each session is structured as follows:



Extension Activities

Extension activities are provided as **Engage More!**, **Experience More!** and **Explore More!** within their respective category. Use these extension activities as time allows.



- One of the **Explore More!** extension activities always introduces a saint, to help the youth further connect to our Church's tradition.

Explore More!

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to page 419 of the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read the Catholic Wisdom article aloud.
2. Ask the youth to find the image and caption on page 416 of the **CFH**. Select a volunteer to read the caption aloud.
3. Lead a reflection using these or similar words:
 - Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, or Mother Teresa, is a well-known example of someone who said, "Yes, I believe!" and did great things for God's people, despite her doubts. What do you think Mother Teresa did to stay so committed to her ministry to the poor?

Icons and Notes

The young people will use two resources during each session: *The Catholic Faith Handbook*, third edition, and *The Catholic Youth Bible*, fourth edition. Be sure they bring these resources, as well as a notebook and a pen or pencil, to each session.

Experience More!



Catechist Note:
Before the prayer, consider incorporating a quick check-in or follow-up regarding the last session's Challenge feature near Mark 8:25 in the **CYB**.

Pray!

Be with Us, God of Healing (5 minutes)

1. Begin with these or similar words:
 - Welcome! It is so good that we are here together. We will spend time today looking at the many ways Jesus bring healing to our lives and our world.
2. Distribute colored pencils and highlighters and divide participants into four smaller groups.
3. Invite each group to find one of the following Scripture verses and highlight or shade it using colored pencils in the **CYB**:
 - Jeremiah 17:9
 - Jeremiah 33:6
 - Mark 2:16–17
 - James 5:14–15

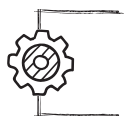
- **Resource icons** are placed in the margins of each session for quick identification of which resource will be used for each activity.

- **Catechist Notes** provide suggestions and insights to help you facilitate your session with greater ease or to draw your attention to potential challenges.

Digital Options

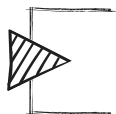
Saint Mary's Press recognizes and encourages the move to using digital devices and the internet as part of our work with youth. For religious education programs that have digital capacities, catechists will find several digital suggestions for each session, ranging from the simple display of video to the creative use of apps. Wherever you find yourself on the digital spectrum, you will find activities that you can use to help your young people connect with and live their everyday faith.

The following icons indicate a digital option and are located in the left margin for easy identification:



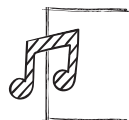
DIGITAL OPTION

This icon indicates that the activity can be adapted to use digital devices and apps.



VIDEO OPTION

This icon indicates the recommended use of a video or movie.



MUSIC OPTION

This icon represents the recommended use of a song or music video.

All these easily-identifiable tools are designed to help you lead sessions that truly awaken the everyday faith of your young people. For more on using these digital tools, see the next section on leading sessions.

Leading the Sessions

Session at Your Fingertips



Session 1
Weathering the Storms

About this Session

Is it ok to question my faith?
Actually, not only is it ok, it's necessary. Saints and scholars doubted and so can we. Questioning and putting our beliefs to the test is an important step in deciding what we believe.

Gathering at a Glance

Pray! Matthew 5:14-16 (5 minutes)
Engage! Believing the Unbelievable (15 minutes)
Experience! (40 minutes)
- Exploring Faith and Doubt (20 minutes)
- Experience More! Exploring Faith (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
- Experience More! Meet Some Big Doubters (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) *
Explore! (35 minutes)
- Take Courage (15 minutes)
- Explore More! Weathering the Storms (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) *
- Explore More! Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
Pray! Isaiah 41:10 (5 minutes)

Pray!

Matthew 5:14-16 (5 minutes)

- Welcome the youth.
- Direct them to Matthew 5:14-16 in the **CYB**. Ask the young people to highlight the verse as you proclaim it.
- Invite youth to think of one good deed they have done for another and to write one word to represent that good deed.
- Ask them to write one word to reflect a time when they struggled to see the light near the verse.
- Lead the Sign of the Cross and conclude:
Jesus, you call each of us to be the light of the world. Some days we are able to shine your light for others. Other times we may not be able to find our own light, much less share it. Be with us now as we explore our faith and our own doubts that are part of faith. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Engage!

Believing the Unbelievable (15 minutes)

- Hide index cards with images of Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, and the tooth fairy around the room.
- Create small groups and have each group find an index card. Next have the youth recall when they stopped believing in the image on their card. Have them share in their small groups.
- Have small groups find another card and this time share whether the character continued to be part of their family celebrations, even after they stopped believing.
- Reconvene the large group, and ask for reactions to the game. Invite a few volunteers to share their stories.

Catechist Note: If your group members are not yet familiar with one another, incorporate a quick icebreaker.

VIDEO OPTION
Instead of using the index cards, show the video "Secret Easter Bunny Song—I Believe" (YouTube, 2:56) as a starting point, and facilitate the same discussion. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWteWY0k>

To complement the catechist guide, the publishing team at Saint Mary's Press has developed a digital presentation for each session to assist you in leading the youth. These Sway presentations, which include descriptions and instructions, allow you to swipe your way through each session as you prepare for it and lead it. They also provide links for any digital recommendations made within the session that can be accessed with a simple tap. To access each Sway, you will need a digital device (smartphone, tablet, or other computer) and access to the internet.

Though these presentations are designed for you, the catechist, they can be displayed during the sessions as well. Projecting the presentations can minimize the need for instructions from you, and can make for seamless display of other video and digital options. To do this, you will need Wi-Fi access at your program location, as the Sway presentations and the links they contain cannot be stored on your digital device.

Presentations for each session can be found at www.smp.org/liveit_online. A list of the sessions in this program will be displayed. When you click on each session, the link to the Sway presentation will open. Once you open the Sway, simply begin swiping or scrolling your way through it.

SWAY Online Resources can be found at
www.smp.org/liveit_online.

Strategies and Tips for Leading Engaging Sessions

Be Prepared

Take time before the session to look over each activity so you can lead with confidence. Before the young people arrive, gather necessary materials and be sure you have enough for each participant. Having some extra materials on hand can eliminate last-minute scrambling.

To minimize your preparation time, keep the following standard materials on hand:

- *The Catholic Youth Bible*, fourth edition, one for each participant
- *The Catholic Faith Handbook*, third edition, one for each participant
- colored pencils
- highlighters
- several different recordings of reflective music

Materials and Preparation

- a copy of the handout “I Am Jesus” (TX005893), cut apart
- copies of the handout “#Jesusthe” (TX005894), enough for each young person to get one strip when cut apart
- reflective music
- a jar to collect the “#Jesusthe” strips
- blank index cards, five for each young person
- paper or plastic bags, one for each small group of six
- clothespins, five per person
- a “clothesline” for each small group

For Extension Activities

- * copies of the handout “Spread the News” (TX005896), one for each young person
- * colored pencils and highlighters
- * a different recording of reflective music

As *The Catholic Youth Bible* is designed to be personalized, devise an easy system to mark the Bibles, ensuring that each young person gets their personal copy for each session. Create a habit that they grab their personal **CYB** and a copy of the **CFH** when they first enter the meeting room to save time distributing these later on. Or, if you send the Bibles home with the young people, send home weekly reminders to bring their Bibles to each session.

Go Digital

Today’s generation of youth is often called the digital generation. Most have grown up using digital devices. They are more comfortable with a smartphone or an iPad than they are with pencil and paper. To ignore this reality is to become irrelevant in their world. As Bishop Ronald Herzog said in a report to the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference: “If the church is not on their mobile device, it doesn’t exist. The Church does not have to change its teachings to reach young people, but we must deliver it to them in a new way” (“Bishops Seeking New Missionaries for the ‘Digital Continent’” in *Catholic Online*).

Catechists have been responding to this reality in new and creative ways. We have found it helpful to talk about these approaches using the following categories:

- **Digital 1.0** has been around for a long time. This approach uses digital media and devices to deliver content and experiences as part of catechesis. Examples are video, music, and PowerPoint presentations. These can be quite engaging, but they are essentially a one-way means of communication—more passive than active. Use sparingly.
- **Digital 2.0** is an approach that uses digital devices to create interactions among the participant, the catechist, other participants, and the content. The young person is not passive. The young person is actively engaged in responding, creating content, and exploring meaning. Examples of this approach include the use of polling apps, gaming apps, and content creation apps.
- **Digital 3.0** is a true e-learning approach, a completely interactive catechetical experience that is delivered primarily through a digital device. A great example is the Confirmation preparation program *Called to Mercy* from Saint Mary's Press (2016). The move to Digital 3.0 is just beginning to make its appearance in catechesis.

Live It! Change the World with Everyday Faith offers suggestions for Digital 1.0 and 2.0 experiences in every session. Keep in mind that digital devices and experiences do not replace face-to-face catechetical experiences. Used occasionally and appropriately, digital experiences will enhance face-to-face experiences.

Here are some quick hints for effectively using Digital 1.0 and 2.0 in these sessions:

Digital 1.0

A big question that often comes up is where to find videos and digital presentations. We've got you covered! The Sway presentations we have already mentioned contain links to videos and presentations that are recommended for use with each session. Additionally, you can search the entire SMP Resource Center for videos and presentations on a variety of topics. You can also try searching YouTube. It is amazing how many videos exist on religious topics.

Some quick tips for using Digital 1.0:

- Remember that PowerPoints should enhance your presentations with visuals and sound. They are NOT the presentation.
- Young people have short attention spans. Videos should generally range from 30 seconds to 3 minutes.
- Always preview before you show any video to youth!

Digital 2.0

You might think that using Digital 2.0 takes technical skill and know-how that is far beyond you. But that's not the case! With a little practice (and even some advice from a young person), you will be able to use it effectively quite quickly. For equipment, you will need a computer, tablet, or smartphone connected to a large screen or projector. The young people will need a tablet or smartphone connected to the internet. They can even work in pairs and share devices.

You can easily get started with only three kinds of apps:

1. A **polling or quiz app** allows you to post questions that the youth can immediately respond to. This can serve as a great discussion starter (the young people will answer more honestly when it's anonymous!), as a way of checking their learning, or to create some fun competition. Some of our favorite polling and quiz apps are Kahoot! and Poll Everywhere.
2. A **content creation app** allows the youth to express their creativity and apply what they've learned. Once the young people have created their masterpiece, you can preview it and share it with the class. Keep it simple. They don't need to create a fifty-slide PowerPoint presentation. Some favorite content creation apps are a meme creator (there are lots to choose from), Padlet, and of course, PowerPoint.
3. A **search engine**, the one kind of app that comes with every smart device, allows young people to search the internet. Have them use Google, Siri, or their browser to look up saints' quotes, *Catechism* teachings, religious art, Church documents, prayers, Scripture readings, etc. There is a lot of great content to find. Be sure to send the young people to safe sites and monitor their searches by walking around and looking over their shoulders!

Create an Intentional Atmosphere

Youth have questions, and sometimes they just need a place to give voice to their doubts. They wrestle with many of the universal challenges of young people: fears of the future, physical changes in their bodies, searching for identity, questions of limitations and goals, and many other issues. Additionally, youth today face challenges unique to this time and place—challenges that may have not existed for earlier generations.

Create an atmosphere of support and trust. Allow the young people to ask questions and to wrestle with them without judgment. You are here to accompany them on their journey, listening to their experiences and questions and gently offering the wisdom of our faith when appropriate. You don't have to have all the answers. Your presence and your witness of faith are often all that is necessary.

Honor the Introverts and the Artistically Challenged

Youth ministry and catechetical programs are often designed to be high energy and interactive. Though these aspects are important, not all youth do well engaging with others all the time. Introverts get energy from quiet time. Each session includes short moments built in to allow all the young people, introvert and extrovert alike, to step back and reflect on the session and make personal connections of faith.

Sessions significantly use the many Scripture Highlights and other options to color in the **CYB**. Be mindful of those who might not enjoy this activity. Coloring is just one form of reflection. Remind the youth that they can use the pages of the **CYB** in any way they find meaningful—coloring, drawing, writing in phrases, full sentences, or any other way that helps them connect.

Connect between Sessions

Connect with your group and their families between sessions, through social media, the parish website, and direct connection, to let parents and guardians know what the young people learned and how they can talk to their youth about the material. If a **CYB** Challenge was offered during the week, send a quick reminder, or perhaps an update on your progress with it. Offer reflection questions on material from the previous session. Send words of encouragement or an image of a Scripture passage from the previous session. Provide prayers and Scripture passages that were used and encourage families to read and pray these at home between sessions.

Share Your Faith through Relationship

Your faith in God and your willingness to respond to the call has brought you here. Be confident in your ability to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with your young people by forming caring relationships with them. You don't have to be perfect or have all the answers. The U.S. bishops remind us:

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, young people are often filled with questions. They long to encounter Christ, and they want to have someone to walk with them in their questioning. They want a first-hand experience of God, and they want that experience to be connected to their everyday life. . . . Once you have the relationship, then the ideas make sense. . . . So you don't start with the idea. You start with a person and relationship. (Julianne Stanz and Tom East, "Accompanying Youth and Young Adults on Their Journey as Missionary Disciples")



Unit 1

TRUST!

Exploring the Challenge

Unit Summary

Psychologists tell us that one of the first stages of human development is learning whether the world is a trustworthy place. Ideally a child learns that they can count on adults to care for them and keep them safe and that they can trust their peers to treat them with respect and friendship. Of course, this is not always the case. One of the hardest lessons to learn in life is that we cannot trust all people and all situations. This is especially true for young people today, with the constant news of school shootings and violence in our world.

As we explore everyday faith with young people, this first unit, “Trust! Exploring the Challenge,” invites the youth to a deeper belief in the reliability of the Catholic faith. The unit begins by looking at the difference that having faith in Jesus can make when facing life’s struggles. It then invites the young people to a deeper relationship with Jesus, encouraging them to trust in God’s mercy and healing love through the Sacraments of Healing. Finally, this unit invites the youth to trust that a life built on God’s Law and communal prayer will be both meaningful and joyful.

Unit at a Glance

Unit 1 consists of the following sessions:

- **Session 1: Weathering the Storms** invites the youth to view doubts and fears as part of an authentic faith and to recognize the presence of Jesus throughout the journey.
- **Session 2: Meeting Jesus** explores the divine and human natures of Jesus and calls the young people to a deeper relationship with him.
- **Session 3: Seeking Healing** examines the Sacraments of Healing (Penance and Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick) and has the youth reflect on God’s love and mercy.
- **Session 4: Discovering God’s Law** introduces natural law and biblical laws, and challenges the young people to discover their role in a life of faith.
- **Session 5: Praying as One** investigates the power and practice of communal prayer.

Session 1

Weathering the Storms

Gathering at a Glance

Pray!

- Matthew 5:14–16 (5 minutes)

Engage!

- Believing the Unbelievable (15 minutes)

Experience!

- Exploring Faith and Doubt (20 minutes)
- Experience More! Exploring Faith (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
- Experience More! Meet Some Big Doubters (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) *

Explore!

- Take Courage (15 minutes)
- Explore More! Weathering the Storms (Extension Activity, 10 minutes) *
- Explore More! Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Pray!

- Isaiah 41:10 (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

- colored pencils
- highlighters
- images of Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, and the tooth fairy on index cards
- reflective music

For Extension Activities

- * a copy of the handout “Meet Some Big Doubters” (TX005889), cut apart
- * a different recording of reflective music

Outcomes

The young people will:

- explore doubt as a normal reality on their faith journey
- learn to seek God’s assistance through times of doubt
- be challenged to stay focused on Jesus as they journey in faith

Background

“We recognize that a person who doubts is also engaged in reflection” (LaSalle General Council, “One Call, Many Voices: Sustaining Spirituality Amidst Secularization,” 2016). As people of faith, it can be difficult to imagine what it must be like to go through life without the anchor of faith. Yet, several recent studies show that doubt is a constant companion for many young people. The digital generation’s level of trust in all institutions—including religion—is at an all-time low. And in many ways, who can blame them? Considering this, how do we help these young people move from distrust to trust, from doubt to faith?

Doubt can be easier to navigate when it is seen as a natural part of growing in faith rather than an impediment. Unfortunately, the experience of many youth is that the Church is not a place where they can express doubt. We must overcome this. It is important that we give our youth, and even ourselves, the space to name and wrestle with doubt as part of everyday faith. The Church has a long history of saints who have wrestled with doubt on their faith journeys. Let’s help our young people discover that experiences of doubt can be vital moments of discovery that can lead to a deeper faith.

Connections

- **CFH:** Chapters 4 and 37
- **Scripture:** Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 5:14–16, 14:22–33, 28:16–17; Hebrews 11:1
- **CYB features:** Scripture Highlight near Isaiah 41:10, Growing in Faith near Matthew 14:22–33, Challenge near Luke 17:5–6
- **CCC:** 27–49

Pray!



Matthew 5:14–16 (5 minutes)

1. Welcome the youth and introduce the session with these or similar words:
 - Welcome everyone. I'm so glad you're here, and I look forward to our time together. We begin today by exploring faith and being reminded of what Jesus proclaims to each of us.
2. Direct the young people to turn to Matthew 5:14–16 in the **CYB**. Distribute the colored pencils and highlighters. Ask the young people to color or highlight the verse in their **CYB**. As they are doing so, proclaim the passage.
3. Ask the youth to think about ways they have been light to others. Invite them to think of one good deed they have done for another and to write near Matthew 5:14–16 in their **CYB** one word to represent that good deed.
4. Invite the young people to think of a time when they struggled to see the light, much less be the light. Ask them to write one word to reflect that experience in their **CYB** near Matthew 5:14–16.
5. Lead the Sign of the Cross and conclude with this prayer or something similar:
 - Jesus, you call each of us to be the light of the world. Some days we are able to shine your light for others. Other times we may not be able to find our own light, much less share it. Be with us now as we explore our faith and our own doubts that are part of faith. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Engage!

Believing the Unbelievable (15 minutes)

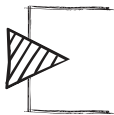
Catechist Note:

If your group is not yet familiar or comfortable with one another, allow extra time for the young people to learn one another's names, or incorporate a simple icebreaker into the activity.

1. Hide previously prepared index cards with images of Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, and the tooth fairy around the room. If you have a large group, prepare multiple copies of each image so that each small group can find at least two different images.
2. Divide the large group into small groups of three or four, and instruct each group to find an index card. Once each group has an index card, instruct the youth to recall when they stopped believing in the image on their card. Invite them to share their stories with their group members.
3. Instruct each group to find another card and to share with their group members whether the character continued to be part of their family celebrations, even after they stopped believing.
4. Reconvene the large group, and ask for reactions to the game. Invite a few volunteers to share their stories.

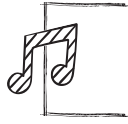
VIDEO OPTION

Instead of using the index cards, show the video "Secret Easter Bunny Song—I Believe" (YouTube, 2:55) as a starting point, and facilitate the same discussion.



Experience!

Exploring Faith and Doubt (20 minutes)



MUSIC OPTION

Begin with the song “Twenty-One Pilots: Doubt” (YouTube, 3:12) to set the tone for the activity.

1. Begin with these or similar words:

- It can be hard to talk about religious faith, especially if we think faith means having absolute certainty about God and religion. But it is easier if we recognize the many ways faith plays a role in our lives. First, let’s look at how we understand faith. How would you describe what faith is? *(Take a few responses. If responses are slow to come, prompt the group by asking, “What does it mean to say ‘I have faith in you’ to someone?”)*
- Let’s see how the Bible explains faith.

2. Direct the youth to Hebrews 11:1, and select a volunteer to read it aloud while the rest highlight or color the verse. Ask:

- What are some things, not church related, that are part of our daily lives that we hope for but are not seen? *(If the youth are hesitant to respond, prompt them with concepts such as Wi-Fi, emotions, confidence, air, or gravity. Develop a list and display it in front of the group.)*

3. Ask a volunteer to choose one of these things and demonstrate its existence. A young person could show gravity by simply jumping, and someone could demonstrate Wi-Fi by using a device connected to the internet.

4. Say:

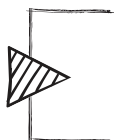
- Faith seems easy when we are talking about having faith in things we take for granted. But what about faith in God? What does it mean to have faith in God? Let’s take a look at one answer.

5. Direct the youth to page 47 of the **CFH**, and select a volunteer to read the first paragraph under the section “Faith Is Our Response to God’s Love.” Follow up by asking these questions:

- Does having faith mean that we never doubt? *(No, doubt is part of faith.)*
- What causes us to doubt? *(our free will and ability to make choices)*
- If we explore our doubts, are we being unfaithful? *(No, we are being exactly who God created us to be.)*

6. Direct all to Matthew 28:16–17 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read the verses. Invite the young people to highlight or color “but they doubted” at the end of verse 18. Conclude with these or similar words:

- Note that even the disciples doubted seeing the resurrected Jesus, **even after all the predictions he made about rising again!** In this passage, they have witnessed the Resurrection, and Jesus is about to commission them. Having faith does not mean that we don’t ever have doubt. Our doubts often lead us to a deeper faith.



VIDEO OPTION

In place of the music option at the beginning of this activity, show the video “A Shadow of a Doubt (spoken word) |@whatishoedoing @chaseGodtv” (YouTube, 7:06) and facilitate a conversation. Note that the video will add time to the activity.



Experience More!



Exploring Faith (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the group to pages 50–51 of the *CFH*, and invite all to read the introduction of the “Characteristics of Faith” section silently. Then ask a volunteer to read the bolded characteristics of faith following each bullet. Invite any clarifying questions regarding the meaning of each characteristic.
2. Draw an imaginary line through the room. Designate one half of the room as “agree” and the other half as “disagree.”
3. Read the first characteristic of faith again. Ask the young people to physically get up and move to the appropriate side of the room if they agree with the characteristic of faith, or the other side if they disagree. Allow only 10–15 seconds for youth to decide and move. After all have moved to a side of the room, select one volunteer from each side to explain the reason for their choice.
4. Repeat this exercise with each characteristic.
5. Conclude by asking the young people to return to their seats. Take a few minutes to identify one characteristic of faith that a majority either agreed or disagreed with. End the activity with the following or similar words:
 - Even though we say faith is certain, this does not mean that we do not have questions and even doubts. We can have both faith and doubt at the same time!
 - Even though we say grace is a gift, we know that it is also a choice. At some point, we must choose to believe even without having answers to all our questions. This is sometime called the “leap of faith.”

Catechist Note:

Be sure to allow the youth to respond freely. Do not try to persuade or “fix” any of their reasoning throughout the exercise.

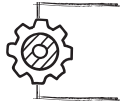
Experience More!

Meet Some Big Doubters (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Begin with these or similar words:
 - We all have times of doubt—it is part of our human nature to doubt! Jesus’ closest friends and his own family doubted him throughout his life and ministry—and Jesus himself prayed to his heavenly Father for the strength to do what his Father called for him to do.
 - Many who experience doubt as part of their faith often feel alone or think they are the only ones questioning. That is just not true. Some of the most faithful people in our tradition faced doubts on their own faith journey.
2. Divide the large group into twelve small groups. Give each group a quote or a name from the handout “Meet Some Big Doubters” (TX005889), and direct them to work together to figure out which group has their match.
3. Give the groups 60 seconds to find their match. At the end of 60 seconds, ask a volunteer from each quote group to read their quote. Have a volunteer from the corresponding name group read the name of the person they think said it. For each, indicate if the pairing is correct or incorrect.
4. Allow any groups who were incorrect to try again, and repeat the process until all groups have found their correct matches.

5. Conclude by once again asking each group to read its quote and the correct source of the quote aloud. Say these or similar words:

➤ As we have seen, many people you might not expect have experienced doubts in their journey of faith.



DIGITAL OPTION

This activity can be done digitally using a game-based app or a polling app.

Explore!

Take Courage (15 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to Matthew 14:22–33 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read the passage aloud.
2. Ask the following questions of the group:
 - Why did Peter sink? (He became frightened.)
 - How did Jesus respond? (Jesus saved him.)
 - How are we like Peter? (We sometimes are scared or doubt Jesus.)
3. Direct the young people to the Growing in Faith feature near Matthew 14:22–33 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read it aloud.
4. In these or similar words, explain:
 - Our faith is often challenged in everyday life. Storms can distract us, and we can find ourselves sinking deeper and deeper, overwhelmed with waves of sadness or anxiety or anger, hardly able to catch our breath. Or sometimes we are just not sure what we believe.
 - In these moments, we can ask Jesus to help. Our prayer can be as simple as “Jesus, please help me!”
 - Don’t let fear of the storm drag you under. Jesus is always there for us, ready to help us in our storms and moments of disbelief.
5. Direct the youth to the Challenge feature near Luke 17:5–6 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read the brief introduction at the top of the feature.
6. Ask the young people to pick one of the bullets and commit to completing that challenge during the week. Invite the youth to highlight or color the bullet they have chosen and to write the date and their initials near the feature.

Explore More!

Weathering the Storms (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to the Scripture Highlight feature near Isaiah 41:10 in the **CYB**.
2. Introduce the activity with these or similar words:
 - We have looked at how doubt can be part of faith, but navigating the doubts and holding to faith can be challenging. It can be difficult to have faith when storms like stress and anxiety and fear come through our lives.



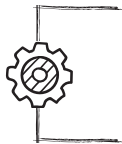
- Sometimes we feel the strong presence of God with us as we face the storms; but sometimes God seems far away. Let's spend some time together exploring doubt and the challenges and gifts it offers to us.
- 3. Lead the young people through a reflection with the following instructions.
 - Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, or begin to reflectively color the verse in your **CYB**.
 - Think about a time in your life when you were caught in a storm, either a real storm or an emotional storm. Who was with you? Where were you? How did you feel during the storm?
 - Remember how you got through that experience. Did friends or family help you? Who or what was the biggest help?
- 4. Select a volunteer to read Isaiah 41:10 aloud.
- 5. Play reflective music and invite the youth to fill in the Scripture Highlight by coloring and writing words or names that came to mind as they reflected on their storm.
- 6. Conclude by stopping the music and proclaiming Isaiah 41:10.

Explore More!



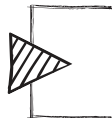
Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to page 419 of the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read the Catholic Wisdom article aloud.
2. Ask the youth to find the image and caption on page 416 of the **CFH**. Select a volunteer to read the caption aloud.
3. Lead a reflection using these or similar words:
 - Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, or Mother Teresa, is a well-known example of someone who said, "Yes, I believe!" and did great things for God's people, despite her doubts. What do you think Mother Teresa did to stay so committed to her ministry to the poor?
 - What is one thing that a young person today can do to stay committed to their faith, even amid doubt?



DIGITAL OPTION

In place of, or in addition to, step 1, have the youth look up Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta on the Lives of the Saints website, at saint.smp.org. Alternatively, show the video "Mother Teresa Film Trailer" (YouTube, 2:03).



VIDEO OPTION

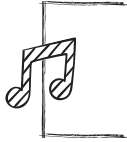
To further explore the life and spiritual struggle of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, show the movie *The Letters* (2014, 114 min, rated A-II and PG) in a separate session.

Pray!



Isaiah 41:10 (5 minutes)

1. Invite the youth to return to the Scripture Highlight feature near Isaiah 41:10 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read it aloud.
2. Play reflective music, and direct the young people to think about one doubt or fear they have and to write it on the Scripture Highlight. Tell them that when they have finished, they may continue to color the Scripture Highlight.
3. Lead the Sign of the Cross, and conclude with the following or a similar prayer:
 - God who calms all storms, be with us this week as we recognize our doubts and take the challenge to increase our faith. Help to keep and be the light of faith. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



MUSIC OPTION

In place of the reflective music in step 2 and the prayer in step 3, close with an appropriate song, such as “Give Me Faith—Elevation Worship” (YouTube, 4:55) or “Walk by Faith (Lyrics) —Jeremy Camp” (You Tube, 3:59).

Session 1

Meet Some Big Doubters

Invite the youth to match the quote to its source. The quotes and their correct sources are listed in the same order on this handout. Keep a copy of the correct answers for yourself.



"I utter words of community prayers, and try my utmost to get out of every word the sweetness it has to give—but my prayer of union is not there any longer—I no longer pray."

"Who among us has not experienced insecurity, loss and even doubts on their journey of faith? Everyone. We've all experienced this, me too. Everyone. It is part of the journey of faith."

"If one has the answers to all the questions—that is proof that God is not with him. . . . The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties."

"[My God,] what a joyous mystery is your presence within me . . . even when I do not feel your presence."

"Sometimes . . . I'm in such a state of spiritual dryness that I can't find a single thought in my mind which will bring me close to God."

"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."





Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Pope Francis

Pope Francis

Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Thomas the Apostle



Session 2

Meeting Jesus

Gathering at a Glance

Pray!

- Mark 8:27–29 (5 minutes)

Engage!

- What Did You See? (15 minutes)
- Engage More! Take the Challenge! (Extension Activity, 5 minutes)

Experience!

- God **AND** Human (15 minutes)
- Experience More! The Human Jesus (Extension Activity, 15 minutes) *

Explore!

- Who Do You Say That I Am? (20 minutes)
- Explore More! Saint Peter (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Pray!

- Mark 8:27–29 (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

- highlighters
- colored pencils
- two sheets of newsprint
- seven copies of that handout “I Am” (TX005890)
- reflective music

For Extension Activity

- * a sheet of newsprint

Outcomes

The young people will:

- explore the divine and human nature of Jesus
- consider their understanding of Jesus and relationship with him
- recognize Jesus as the center of our Catholic faith

Background

At some point in our faith journey, we will likely be presented with the very same question Jesus asked Peter: “Who do you say that I am?” The Church offers us, in both Scripture and Tradition, a rich variety of images and understandings to contemplate. The mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, as fully God and fully human, is foremost among them. The images and titles for Jesus that help us know and understand different aspects of him—Son of God, Emmanuel, the Good Shepherd, the Bread of Life—all exist in the service of revealing God.

Before beginning this session, take a few minutes to answer Jesus’ question for yourself. Who do you say that Jesus is? Where do you experience his presence in your life and your faith? What images and titles of Jesus speak most profoundly to you? Now think of the young people you will lead through this exploration. How would they answer this question? How can you help them be open to who Jesus could be in their lives?

Connections

- **CFH:** Chapter 8
- **Scripture:** Mark 8:27–29; Luke 19:41–42, 19:45–48
- **CYB features:** Did You Know? near Matthew 1:23, Did You Know? near John 5:16–18
- **CCC:** 422–483

Pray!



Mark 8:27–29 (5 minutes)

1. Welcome the young people, and introduce the session with the following or similar words:
 - Welcome back. I'm so glad you're here. We will continue to explore everyday faith as we look at the person of Jesus and ask how he is relevant to our lives.
2. Distribute the highlighters and direct the youth to Mark 8:27–29 in the **CYB**. Invite them to highlight the second question Jesus asks his disciples. Select a volunteer to proclaim Mark 8:27–29 while the rest of the young people are highlighting.
3. Ask the youth to silently reflect on the question Jesus poses, asking these or similar questions:
 - If Jesus were to appear in this room right now and ask you who you say he is, how would you answer?
 - Identify one word or phrase to answer that question for yourself, and write it in your Bible. If you are uncertain how you would answer, write "Who is Jesus to me?" in your Bible.
4. Lead the Sign of the Cross, and conclude prayer with these or similar words:
 - Jesus, we thank you for your presence in our lives. Be with us during our time together as we seek to know you. Help us to see the truth about you and your love for us. We ask this in faith. Amen.

Catechist Note:

Before step 4, consider incorporating a quick check-in or follow-up regarding the last session's Challenge feature near Luke 17:5–6 in the **CYB**.

Engage!

What Did You See? (15 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to stand in two, equal straight lines facing each other in the middle of the room. Explain that those who are standing across from each other are partners. Direct every other pair to sit down while the remaining pairs continue to stand—this way they will not distract each other.
2. Invite the young people to share with their partner three things that happened to them within the last week, two positive and one negative.
3. Give the pairs 4 minutes to share, and then ask them to turn around so they are no longer facing each other. Instruct each youth to change one thing about their appearance (remove a ring, untie a shoe, etc.).
4. Invite the young people to turn around and face their partners again. Go down the line and ask each person to detect the changes in their partner.
5. Reconvene the large group to facilitate a discussion with the following questions:
 - How many of you correctly identified the change in your partner?
 - Did your partner notice the change you made?
 - Do people ever make a change in their appearance hoping that someone will notice, or make a change that we hope somebody won't notice?

6. Conclude with these or similar words:
 - Sometimes it is hard to notice what is right in front of you, even with people you know well.
 - We can often miss the presence of Jesus in our lives and not understand who he is if we don't pay attention.

Engage More!



Take the Challenge! (Extension Activity, 5 minutes)

1. Distribute the colored pencils, and direct the youth to the Challenge feature near Mark 8:25 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read the brief introduction at the top.
2. Choose three different volunteers to read the three bulleted suggestions.
3. Challenge the young people to choose one of the bulleted suggestions to attempt this week. Invite them to put a box around the specific challenge and initial and date it.

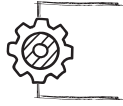
Experience!



God AND Human (15 minutes)

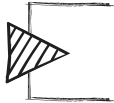
1. Begin by posing the following questions:
 - What does it mean to be human? What are the characteristics that distinguish human beings from other animals?
2. Invite the group to brainstorm, and develop a list on a sheet of newsprint that is hung where all can see. (If prompting is necessary, suggest “able to think” or “imperfect.”)
3. Repeat the same process asking about God (if prompting is necessary, offer “perfect” or “eternal”). Invite the youth to reflect on the two lists by asking:
 - Are these lists similar?
 - How can Jesus be both God and human?
4. Instruct the young people to turn to pages 89–90 of the **CFH**, and select a few volunteers to take turns reading the entire section aloud. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - What does Incarnation mean? (*God became human.*)
 - What does it mean that Jesus is the mediator? (*Jesus reveals God to us and helps us understand what God requires of us.*)
5. Direct the youth to the Did You Know? feature near Matthew 1:23 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read the feature aloud and invite all to color or highlight “God is with us” as the volunteer is reading. Ask each young person to think of a time they knew Jesus was with them and write one word in their Bible to remind them of that experience.

6. Conclude with these or similar words:
 - The Incarnation, the union of the divine nature and human nature in Jesus Christ, is really the gift of God with us.
 - Because Jesus reveals God to us, Jesus is at the center of our Catholic faith.
 - The Gospels help us come to know Jesus, and help us discover the answer to “Who do you say that I am?”



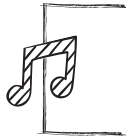
DIGITAL OPTION

Facilitate steps 2 and 3 digitally by using a polling app. Lead a discussion based on the various responses.



VIDEO OPTION

In place of step 4, show the video “Jesus is always human and divine” (YouTube, 1:47) or “Jesus didn’t know everything” (YouTube, 2:06).



MUSIC OPTION

Conclude with music that explores Jesus as God with us, such as “Emmanuel—Amy Grant” (YouTube, 3:01), “Hillsong-Emmanuel (with LYRICS)” (YouTube, 6:23), or “Jesus Emmanuel—Anthem (Lyrics)” (YouTube, 3:09).

Experience More!

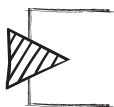
The Human Jesus (Extension Activity, 15 minutes)

1. Begin the activity with these or similar words:
 - Jesus was like us in all ways except sin. But he still struggled with temptation and emotions, just as we do in our everyday lives.
2. Direct the young people to turn to Luke 19:45–48 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read the passage aloud. Direct the youth to the Did You Know? feature near Luke 19:41–42 in the **CYB**, and ask a different young person to read it aloud.
3. Ask the youth to reflect on the emotions that Jesus might have been feeling during the cleansing of the Temple (in addition to those listed in the feature). Generate a list in front of the group on a sheet of newsprint.
4. Invite the young people to pick one emotion and write it in the margin next to Luke 19:45–48 in the **CYB**. Ask them to silently think of a time when they have experienced the same emotion and to write one word, under the emotion word they wrote, that symbolizes the experience.



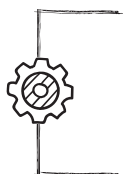
Catechist Note:

Be prepared for some young people to point to the cleansing of the Temple as a moment of sin for Jesus. Explain that it was not a sin, and refer to the Catholic Connection feature near Luke 19:45–48 in the **CYB**.



VIDEO OPTION

In place of step 2, show “Jesus Chases the Money Changers out of the Temple” (YouTube, 1:41).



DIGITAL OPTION

In place of step 3, generate a list of emotions or emoticons and use a polling app to ask the youth to vote for the three most likely emotions. Alternatively, allow the young people to do an online search for the most appropriate emoji to represent what Jesus was feeling and to share it with the group.

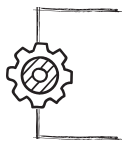
Explore!



Who Do You Say That I Am? (20 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to page 88 of the **CFH**, and introduce the activity with these or similar words:
 - Jesus has many titles, or many ways, people come to know him. Let's look at some of those titles.

Now ask a volunteer to read the first paragraph in the section "Titles of Jesus in the Bible."
2. Direct the young people to the Did You Know? feature near John 5:16–18 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read it aloud. Ask:
 - What titles for Jesus have we encountered so far today? (*Good Shepherd, Bread of Life, Vine, Son of God, Yahweh, Messiah, Lord*)
 - Are you familiar with any other titles for Jesus?
3. Divide the large group into seven small groups. Distribute copies of the handout "I Am" (TX005890), one to each group, and assign each group a Scripture passage from the handout that employs a title for Jesus (also listed here):
 - Matthew 3:17 (Beloved Son)
 - Luke 19:10 (Son of Man)
 - John 1:29 (Lamb of God)
 - John 8:12 (Light of the World)
 - John 10:7 (Gate)
 - John 11:25 (Resurrection and the Life)
 - John 14:6 (Way, Truth, and Life)
4. Direct each group to look up and read their assigned Scripture passage together. Then direct each group to answer the questions on the handout.
5. Reconvene the large group. Ask a representative from each small group to share their answers to the questions on the handout.
6. Conclude by making the following points in these or similar words:
 - Many images of Jesus have come to us from our ancestors in faith.
 - Our personal images of Jesus help us to build our relationship with him. These are the names for Jesus that we can use in our personal prayer to come to know him better.
 - No matter what titles we use for Jesus, remember that Jesus is God, fully divine, and fully human, sharing our human nature. He is at the center of our Catholic faith because he reveals God to us.



DIGITAL OPTION

As part of the small-group time, direct each group to search for art or images of the title for Jesus in their assigned Scripture passage. Then direct each group to create a meme using their modern title or "I am" saying of Jesus.

Explore More!



Saint Peter (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to page 87 of the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read aloud the Sainly Profiles article.
2. Lead a reflection using these or similar words:
 - Recall that Jesus asked Peter the very same question we have been exploring today. Peter answered correctly but is remembered for not accepting that this meant Jesus would have to die.
 - Despite this, Jesus built his Church with Peter as the rock.
 - How do you think Jesus' choosing someone who had made so many mistakes influenced the Church? What does this say about Jesus and his expectations of us?



DIGITAL OPTION

In place of, or in addition to, step 1, have the youth look up Saint Peter on the Lives of the Saints website, at saint.smp.org. Alternatively, show the video "Peter 'The Rock'—Animated Cartoon" (YouTube, 4:26).

Pray!



Mark 8:27–29 (5 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to return to Mark 8:27–29 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to proclaim the passage.
2. Play reflective music, and invite the young people to answer the question Jesus posed to his disciples ("Who do you say that I am?") by writing or drawing an image in their **CYB**.
3. Lead the Sign of the Cross, and then conclude with the following prayer:
 - Jesus, we thank you for making yourself known to us and for showing us God. Help us to see you and be aware of your presence, that we may grow closer to you and your Church. We ask this in faith. Amen.

Session 2

I Am



Circle your assigned Scripture passage, and use your **CYB** to look it up and read it together with your group:

- Matthew 3:17
- Luke 19:10
- John 1:29
- John 8:12
- John 10:7
- John 11:25
- John 14:6

After you have finished reading, answer the following questions:

- 1.** What title is given to Jesus in this passage?
- 2.** What does this title tell us about Jesus?
- 3.** Imagine that you are a Gospel writer trying to describe Jesus with a title that would relate to people today. What title would you give Jesus? Write an “I am” saying that Jesus might use today, or come up with a modern (appropriate) title.



Session 3

Seeking Healing

Gathering at a Glance

Pray!

- Be with Us, God of Healing (5 minutes)

Engage!

- Banana Repair (10 minutes)
- Engage More! Where Do You Stand? (Extension Activity, 15 minutes) *

Experience!

- Jesus Heals (20 minutes)

Explore!

- Finding the Words! (20 minutes)
- Explore More! Practice Makes Perfect (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
- Explore More! Saint John Vianney (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Pray!

- Today I Resolve! (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

- colored pencils
- highlighters
- bananas (one for each small group)
- items for banana repair (paper clips, tape, bobby pins, yarn, paper plates, plastic knives, and any other suitable items)
- copies of the handout “Today I Resolve” (TX005891), enough for each young person to get a bookmark when cut apart

For Extension Activity

- * a candle and matches

Outcomes

The young people will:

- explore different dimensions of the Sacraments of Healing
- identify the steps of receiving the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
- understand the connections between the healing power of the sacrament and the injury of sin

Background

Have you ever had a powerful experience with one of the Sacraments of Healing? These sacraments often accompany significant moments in our faith journey. They can bring freedom from burden and peace of heart at times when we most need it. Not-so-recent statistics (2008) show that about 50 percent of adult Catholics do not practice the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation (CARA: Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics). Imagine what those numbers are today. Do you think they are higher for youth?

The Sacraments of Healing can be intimidating for our young people. Entering a dark confessional to name your weaknesses and failings takes courage. Contacting a priest for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick usually happens at a point of great vulnerability and even today is often misunderstood. Help your young people to move beyond their fears and uncertainty so they can find the grace in the Sacraments of Healing and experience the power of Jesus’ healing love.

Connections

- **CFH:** Chapter 21
- **Scripture:** Mark 2:1–12, Luke 15:11–32
- **CYB features:** Catholic Connection near Mark 2:1–12, Challenge near 1 John 1:9
- **CCC:** 1422–1498, 1499–1532

Pray!

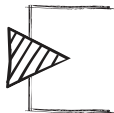


Be with Us, God of Healing (5 minutes)

1. Begin with these or similar words:
 - Welcome! It is so good that we are here together. We will spend time today looking at the many ways Jesus bring healing to our lives and our world.
2. Distribute colored pencils and highlighters and divide participants into four smaller groups.
3. Invite each group to find one of the following Scripture verses and highlight or shade it using colored pencils in the **CYB**:
 - Jeremiah 17:9
 - Jeremiah 33:6
 - Mark 2:16–17
 - James 5:14–15
4. Invite a volunteer from each group to proclaim the Scripture passage assigned to them. Instruct each volunteer to wait for your cue to begin.
5. Lead the Sign of the Cross, and play reflective music. Begin with the following phrase and repeat it between each Scripture passage:
 - Be with us, God of Healing.
6. Allow each Scripture passage to be proclaimed, and conclude with the following or similar prayer:
 - God of Love, we know our world is broken and in need of healing. Be with us as we consider the many ways you can heal our world, our communities, and our hearts. We ask this in faith. Amen.

Catechist Note:

Before the prayer, consider incorporating a quick check-in or follow-up regarding the last session's Challenge feature near Mark 8:25 in the **CYB**.



VIDEO OPTION

In place of the prayer in step 1, begin with the video "Matthew West—Story Behind the Song 'Forgiveness'" (YouTube, 5:37) or "Crowder—Forgiven" (YouTube, 3:56).

Engage!

Banana Repair (10 minutes)

1. Gather supplies for banana repair, including bananas, plates, plastic knives, paper clips, tape, bobby pins, yarn, and any other suitable items. Be sure to have plenty for the entire group. Place these items at the front of the room.
2. Divide the large group into small groups of three or four. Distribute a plate, a plastic knife, and a banana to each group. Instruct one person in each group to put the banana on the plate and cut it into three pieces (without removing the peel).
3. Point to the various banana repair supplies, and instruct each group to use any of the tools to repair their banana, making it whole again.

Catechist Note:

For a cleaner version of banana repair, purchase old shirts from a local thrift store, one for each small group. Cut the shirts into pieces ahead of time and put the pieces of each individual shirt into their own zip-top bag. Distribute the bags to each small group and direct them to try to repair the shirts with the given supplies.

Catechist Note:

Encourage all to participate, indicating that we are starting with what we think. Don't correct or respond. Simply allow the young people to react.

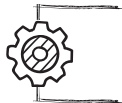
4. Allow a few minutes for banana repair and then reconvene the large group. Select a volunteer from each small group to display their repaired banana.
5. Conclude with the following or similar words:
 - Some things simply cannot be repaired or made like new again once they are broken. For us, sin leads to broken relationships with ourselves, others, and God.
 - Thankfully, we are not bananas. Though we do sometimes make poor choices that leave us in need of repair, God's healing love is always available for us in the Sacraments of Healing.

Engage More!

Where Do You Stand? (Extension Activity, 15 minutes)

1. Begin by asking your group to "popcorn" (answer quickly with a word or short phrase that immediately comes to mind) the following questions. Make sure most have a chance to respond.
 - What is sin?
 - What are the effects of sin?
2. Invite all the young people to stand close together in a circle facing one another. Light a candle in the center of the circle and direct everyone to take one step back.
3. Direct everyone to close their eyes, and lead the activity with the following instructions. Periodically remind the youth to keep their eyes closed until instructed otherwise.
 - Jesus showed us that our hearts should be set on God above all things, even when it's easier to focus on material things. If there has been a time within the last month when you chose a material thing above God, take a small step back.
 - Jesus taught us that we need to love our neighbors as ourselves, and even to love our enemies. If there has been a time within the last month when you chose not to show genuine love to someone, even an enemy, take a small step back.
 - Jesus encourages us to care for our families and to be patient with them.
 - If there was a time within the last month when you lost patience with a family member and chose not to care about their feelings, take a small step back.
 - Jesus asks us to share what we have with those who don't have enough.
 - If there was a time within the last month when you had the opportunity to share with someone less fortunate than you and you chose not to, take a small step back.
 - Jesus expects us to be truthful and fair with God and with one another.
 - If there was a time within the last month when you lied to someone or cheated at something, please turn around with your back toward the candle.
 - The candle is still burning. God's love is always there. Without opening your eyes, please turn around toward the center of the circle.
 - Jesus asks us to reject revenge and to forgive others that hurt us. If there was a time in the past month when you chose to forgive someone for hurting you, please step forward.

- Jesus encourages us to care for the good of all of humanity. If there was a time in the past month when you found a way to help someone personally or a larger community group, please step forward.
 - Jesus taught us to use our time, talent, and treasure as gifts from God to be shared freely. If there was a time in the past month when you freely gave of yourself using your talents, treasure, or time, please take a step forward.
 - Jesus expects us to reject the desire to harm another person. If there was a time within the last month when you felt tempted to hurt someone emotionally or physically and you didn't, please step forward.
 - Jesus wants us to grow closer to God in every way we can. If there was a time within the past month when you called out to God in prayer, or sought God in another way, please step forward.
 - If you don't feel someone near you, please take one more step forward! Everyone may open their eyes.
4. Invite all to be seated, and reflect on the experience by asking the following questions:
 - How did it feel to keep stepping away?
 - Were you aware when other people were near you or no longer near you?
 - How did it feel to be able to step back toward the light?
 5. Conclude the activity with these or similar words:
 - This activity is not unlike the ways we each turn from God in sin.
 - Sin can overtake our lives. It is often a slow process, one little step at a time. But no matter how far away we get, God remains at the center, waiting for us and lighting our path for us to return.
 - Through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, we repair the relationship we have with God and with one another.



DIGITAL OPTION

Facilitate step 1 digitally by using a polling app. Lead a discussion based on the various responses.

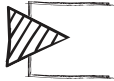
Experience!

Jesus Heals (20 minutes)

1. Before the session, prepare bookmarks, one for each young person, as found on the handout "Today I Resolve" (TX005891).
2. Begin by asking your group the following questions:
 - When do people need healing? (*Take a few responses.*)
 - Are there different ways of being sick or different reasons people need healing? (*Take a few responses.*)
3. Direct the youth to find Mark 2:1–12 in their **CYB**. Distribute the highlighters and colored pencils and instruct the young people to highlight or color important words or phrases as you read the Scripture passage aloud. Ask volunteers to share the words and phrases they selected and, if they are comfortable, the reasons they chose those words and phrases.
4. Distribute the "Today I Resolve" bookmarks, and ask the young people to put them in their **CYB** near Mark 2:1–12.



5. Direct the youth to turn to page 225 of the **CFH**, and select a volunteer to read the first two paragraphs aloud. Follow up by reemphasizing the following points:
 - There are two Sacraments of Healing.
 - They are the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.
 - Through these sacraments, we are able to experience God's healing love.
6. Invite the youth to return to the **CYB** and to find the Catholic Connection feature near Mark 2:1–12. Select a volunteer to read it aloud. Reread the final paragraph of the feature and invite the young people to write a word or phrase in their **CYB** to answer one of the questions.
7. Allow a few minutes for the youth to highlight, color, and reflect, and then conclude with the following points:
 - Jesus makes himself known to us in the sacraments.
 - We turn away from God through sin, but God is always waiting with open arms.
 - We experience his healing love in the Sacraments of Healing.



VIDEO OPTION

In place of step 2, show the video “Jesus Heals the Paralytic” (YouTube, 2:43).

Explore!

Finding the Words (20 minutes)

1. Begin the activity with the following or similar words:
 - Today we're going to take a closer look at the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
2. Direct the youth to page 229 of the **CFH**. Invite them to skim the “Receiving Penance and Reconciliation” section, and ask for volunteers to explain the following terms (bolded in the text):
 - *contrition* (remorse for your sin and the commitment to sin no more)
 - *repentance* (being sorry for your sin and expressing your sorrow to God)
 - *penance* (an act done to repair the harm your sin has caused)
3. Direct the young people to Luke 15:11–32. Divide the large group into small groups of four or five. Ask each group to read the Parable of the Lost Son aloud together, choosing a narrator, older son, younger son, servant, and father and to read their respective parts. (For groups of four, have one person read two of the smaller parts.)
4. Ask each small group to consider the following questions:
 - Which person in the parable do you connect with the most?
 - How do you think the younger son felt when he decided to come back home?
 - How do you think the younger son felt when his father rushed out to greet him?



5. Continue with these or similar words:
 - Like the younger son, we have all made bad choices. We have also all had the opportunity to return home, just as the younger son did. God's offer of love and reconciliation are always there for us. We just need to ask.
 - We ask in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Sometimes it can be hard to find the words. The Church gives us the words in the Act of Contrition.
6. Direct the youth to the "Act of Contrition" article on page 227 of the **CFH**, and lead all in praying the prayer aloud.
7. Conclude by directing the young people to the Challenge feature near 1 John 1:9 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read the short introduction aloud. Invite everyone to silently read the different bullet points. Challenge the youth to choose one of the bulleted suggestions to attempt this week. Invite them to put a box around the specific challenge and initial and date it.



DIGITAL OPTION

Use a polling app to consider the questions in step 4. Alternatively, find and project an image of the Parable of the Lost Son while the youth consider the questions in step 4.

Explore More!



Practice Makes Perfect (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to the Live it! article on page 228 of the **CFH**. Instruct them to return to their previously assigned small groups. Ask each group to review the article together and practice making a good confession by assigning roles and acting out a confession. Provide silly scenarios to keep the mood a bit lighter, such as the following, or ask groups to make up their own:
 - I wore black and navy blue in public.
 - I showed up for a Halloween party without a costume.
 - I told my little sister that Santa Claus was not real.
 - I changed all the school computers to type in Japanese.
 - I only have elevator music on my playlist.
 - I sent a bad picture of my dad to my group chat.
2. Allow time for each group to role-play two practice confessions. Be sure each group member participates.
3. Reconvene the large group and conclude by making the following point:
 - The purpose of our fun confession scenarios is to remind us that though it may sometimes seem so, experiencing the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is not scary at all. God is always waiting with love and healing.
4. Tell the youth when the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is available at the parish.

Explore More!



Saint John Vianney (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to turn to page 231 of the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read the Sainly Profiles article aloud.
2. Lead a reflection using these or similar questions:
 - Saint John Vianney spent countless hours in the confessional every day. What do you think motivated him to do that?
 - Is receiving the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation easier or more of a challenge depending on who is hearing your confession?
 - Saint John Vianney was not a strong student. Why do you think that is important to understanding him as a saint of the Church?



DIGITAL OPTION

In place of, or in addition to, step 1, have the youth look up Saint John Vianney on the Lives of the Saints website, at saint.smp.org. Alternatively, show the video "St. John Vianney HD" (YouTube, 3:49).

Pray!



Today I Resolve! (5 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to return to the Challenge feature near 1 John 1:9 in the **CYB** and to remind themselves of the challenge before them.
2. Invite the youth to retrieve the bookmarks you distributed earlier with the following prayer on them:

Today I Resolve

Lord,
 Today I resolve to do the good
 You created me to do,
 To see the good
 You created me to see,
 To be the good
 You created me to be.
 Amen.

3. Lead the Sign of the Cross and facilitate everyone praying the "Today I Resolve" prayer aloud together.
4. Invite the young people to place the bookmark in their **CYB** on the page with the Challenge feature near 1 John 1:9.
5. Encourage the youth to pray "Today I Resolve" daily. Suggest they take a picture with their phones to have it with them and save it as their background screen as a daily invitation.

Session 3

Today I Resolve

Today I Resolve

Lord,

Today I resolve
to do the good

You created
me to do,

To see the good

You created
me to see,

To be the good

You created
me to be.

Amen.

Today I Resolve

Lord,

Today I resolve
to do the good

You created
me to do,

To see the good

You created
me to see,

To be the good

You created
me to be.

Amen.

Today I Resolve

Lord,

Today I resolve
to do the good

You created
me to do,

To see the good

You created
me to see,

To be the good

You created
me to be.

Amen.

(The prayer on this handout is from *The Catholic Youth Prayer Book*, by Mary Shrader, et al. [Winona MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2007], page 57. Copyright © 2007 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)



Session 4

Discovering God's Law

Gathering at a Glance

Pray!

- Making Decisions (5 minutes)

Engage!

- Truth and Lies (10 minutes)

Experience!

- The Law and Its Sources (20 minutes)
- Experience More! The Precepts of the Church (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
- Experience More! Love Your Neighbor (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Explore!

- What If? (20 minutes)
- Explore More! Saint Thomas More (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Pray!

- The Greatest Commandment (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

- highlighters
- colored pencils
- reflective music
- a copy of the handout "What If?" (TX005892)

Outcomes

The young people will:

- recognize natural law as part of human nature
- appreciate the relationship between the Old Law (the Ten Commandments) and the New Law (the Law of the Gospel)
- discover ways to integrate these laws with the formation of conscience

Background

It can be challenging to play a game without rules, and it can be hard to accomplish a task if we don't know the intended outcome. Can you imagine trying to drive without any rules of the road? It is easy to see laws—any type of laws—as restraining, but laws allow us to live in community together. They provide the guidelines for living together harmoniously. For some Catholics, the Church's moral teachings (based on God's revealed Law) can simply feel like a list of "don'ts" or "thou shall nots." Young people feel this sense of restriction strongly sometimes.

We can think of it a different way though. God's Law, revealed through human reason (natural revelation) and Scripture (Divine Revelation), offers a clear way of knowing God. It also helps us to know God's will for us. If we want to live the lives God calls us to, God's Law is our first and best guide. Think of the laws found in the Bible and the Precepts of the Church as loving advice designed to lead us closer to God and to foster lives of discipleship. When embraced in the spirit of love that gave us the Law in the first place, the Law frees us to love God and neighbor.

Connections

- **CFH:** Chapter 25
- **Scripture:** Exodus 20:2–17, Psalm 19:8–12, Mark 12:28–31, Luke 10:25–37
- **CYB features:** Growing in Faith near Exodus 20:2–17, Scripture Highlight near Leviticus 19:18
- **CCC:** 1776–1802, 1949–1986, 2030–2051

Pray!



Making Decisions (5 minutes)

1. Begin the session with these or similar words:
 - Welcome! What a blessing that we are all here together. Every day we face dozens of decisions both big and small, and with big and small consequences. God has gifted us all with the freedom of choice. We are not controlled by God, but as disciples of Jesus, we make every effort to follow God's will for us.
2. Direct the youth to gather in a circle. Play reflective music, lead the Sign of the Cross, guide the young people through a short meditation using the following prompts:
 - Think of a time when you had to decide to tell the truth to someone. Did you do it?
 - Think of a time when you had to decide to do something you didn't want to do. Did you do it?
 - What factors or people influenced your choices?
3. Conclude with the following or a similar prayer:
 - God who knows our hearts,
Grant us
a mind to know you,
a heart to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
and conduct pleasing to you.
We ask this in faith. Amen.
(Adapted from "Daily Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas")

Catechist Note:

Consider incorporating a quick check-in or follow-up regarding the last session's Challenge feature near 1 John 1:9 in the **CYB**.

Engage!

Truth and Lies! (10 minutes)

1. Divide the large group into small groups of three or four.
2. Instruct each young person to prepare and present three statements about themselves—one that is a lie and two that are the truth.
3. Allow 2 minutes for the youth to prepare, and then invite them to present their statements in any order to the rest of their small group. After each young person presents their statements, the rest of the group should attempt to decide which statement is a lie.
4. Continue the process until each person has presented to their group.
5. Reconvene the large group and process the activity by asking the following:
 - What was the most unbelievable truth you heard? (*Take a few responses.*)
 - What was the most believable lie you heard? (*Take a few responses.*)
 - Why do people lie? (*Take a few responses, such as "to get out of trouble," or to "avoid responsibility."*)

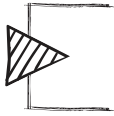
6. Conclude with these or similar words:
 - Today we're going to look at choices we are often faced with and how we make decisions. We will also consider how God can be part of our decision-making.

Experience!

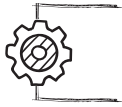


The Law and Its Sources (20 minutes)

1. Begin with a brief discussion of the following questions. Allow for no more than two or three responses to each.
 - Do you think most people understand the difference between right and wrong?
 - How do we decide what is right and what is wrong?
 - Who makes the rules that we follow?
2. Direct the youth to page 276 of the **CFH**, and select two volunteers to read the first two paragraphs in the section "Natural Moral Law." Follow up with these or similar words:
 - We believe that we are equipped to know right from wrong because we are made in the image of God.
 - Nonetheless, we are not perfect and sometimes need guidelines to help us. Let's look at the clearest moral guide we have.
3. Direct the youth to Exodus 20:2–17, and select a volunteer to read the passage aloud.
4. Direct the young people to the Growing in Faith feature near Exodus 20:2–17 in the **CYB**, and ask them to read and quietly reflect on the feature. Distribute colored pencils and highlighters, and ask the youth to circle or highlight the commandment that is the hardest for them to follow. Play reflective music during this time, and allow a few minutes for reflection.
5. Divide the large group into small groups and ask someone in each group to read Mark 12:28–31 in the **CYB**. Ask each group to highlight or color the different commandments in this Gospel passage (one color per commandment). Ask each group to come up with one example of what it means to love your neighbor as yourself and write that in their **CYB**.
6. Reconvene the large group, and ask for a few volunteers to share their example of loving their neighbor. Conclude with the following statements:
 - The Ten Commandments are part of the Old Law, or the Law of Moses. We are given the New Law in the Gospels through Jesus Christ. Both are based on natural law and revealed truth and help us determine right from wrong. Ultimately, the Old Law and the New Law show us how to love God and our neighbors.

**VIDEO OPTION**

In place of, or in addition to, step 2, show the video “What Is Conscience?” (YouTube, 2:37).

**DIGITAL OPTION**

In place of step 5, use a polling app to present different scenarios, and ask the youth to choose which of the Ten Commandments best applies.

**Catechist Note:**

If your group is large, create ten small groups, and assign two groups to each precept. Before reconvening the large group, bring the two smaller groups with the same precept together to discuss their conclusions.

Experience More!

The Precepts of the Church (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to page 280 of the **CFH**, and select a volunteer to read the first paragraph in the section “Church Law.” Invite all to silently read the five precepts listed in the second paragraph.
2. Divide the large group into five small groups. Assign each group one precept by number. Ask each group to answer the following questions for their precept:
 - Why is this law important if you wish to belong to the Church?
 - What things can get in the way of us fulfilling the law?
3. Reconvene the large group, and select a representative from each small group to offer a brief report of their findings.
4. Conclude by directing all to Psalm 19:8–12 in the **CYB**. Choose a volunteer to read the passage aloud.

Experience More!

Love Your Neighbor (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to Luke 10:25–37, and select a volunteer to read the passage aloud.
2. Follow up with these or similar words:
 - It is easy to care for those we love, but the Greatest Commandment of Jesus asks that we love all people as we love ourselves. Let’s spend a few minutes reflecting on that commandment.
3. Direct the young people to the Scripture Highlight feature near Leviticus 19:18 in the **CYB**. Play reflective music, and allow time for the youth to color and reflect. For those who might not want to color, invite them to add their own words or phrases to the Scripture Highlight.

**DIGITAL OPTION**

While the youth are reflecting, project an image of the Good Samaritan in the front of the room.

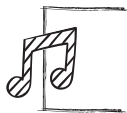
Explore!



Catechist Note: If your group is small, have only one circle move to the right, alternating between inner and outer circles. Add some suspense to the activity by putting questions in a hat and having someone draw them one at a time.

What If? (20 minutes)

1. Introduce the activity with these or similar words:
 - Throughout our lives, we are faced with many choices. The Church offers us commandments and precepts as guidelines for our moral choices, but the path is not always clear when we are facing some decisions.
 - A well-formed conscience will help us to see right and wrong clearly, especially when we are facing a particularly challenging moral decision.
2. Direct the young people to page 284 of the **CFH**, and invite them to silently read the Live It! article.
3. Invite the youth to select a partner. Direct all the pairs to stand up and to form two circles, one inside the other, with one partner in the inner circle and one partner in the outer circle. Ask the partners to face each other.
4. Tell the group they are going to discuss some “What If?” scenarios and apply their conscience to some moral decision-making, following this process:
 - A “What if?” question will be presented.
 - Share with your partner your response to the question as well as the reason for your answer. You will each have 30 seconds to share your answer.
 - After each partner has answered, both circles will take one step to the right, creating new pairs.
 - With each new partner, a new “What if?” question will be presented.
5. Use the questions on the handout “What If?” (TX005892), or create your own.
6. Reconvene the large group, and lead a discussion with these questions:
 - Which questions were easy?
 - Which questions were a struggle?
 - Did you feel your conscience was well-formed enough to make these decisions? Why or why not?
7. Conclude with the following or similar words:
 - Making good choices can be challenging. God’s Law should direct our decisions, and the Church helps us apply God’s Law to difficult situations. The Church provides many opportunities for us to continue to form our conscience throughout our lives.



MUSIC OPTION

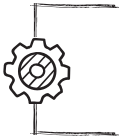
Create a playful atmosphere by introducing the activity with the song “Give a Little Whistle—Pinocchio” (YouTube, 1:50).

Explore More!



Saint Thomas More (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to page 281 of the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read the Saintly Profiles article aloud.
2. Lead a reflection using these or similar words:
 - Saint Thomas More gave his life to stand up for what he believed was right. What modern figures have done the same?
 - Is there a belief you hold so strongly that nothing could convince you to change? What is it?



DIGITAL OPTION

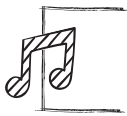
In place of, or in addition to, step 1, have the youth look up Saint Thomas More on the Lives of the Saints website, at saint.smp.org. Alternatively, show the video “The Story of Sir Thomas More” (YouTube, 4:50).

Pray!



The Greatest Commandment (5 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to return to Mark 12:28–31 in the **CYB**. Invite each young person to review the passage silently and to think of one thing they can do this week to love their neighbor better.
2. Invite the youth to write this one thing down in their **CYB**.
3. Lead the Sign of the Cross. Select a volunteer to proclaim Mark 12:28–31 aloud, and then conclude with the following or similar prayer:
 - God, you are our creator and guide. Help us to hear your voice as we make choices and to love as you do. We ask this in faith. Amen.



MUSIC OPTION

Close with an appropriate song, such as “Ancient Words” (YouTube, 4:31) or “Avalon—Testify to Love” (YouTube, 4:38).

Session 4

What If?

Use the following questions or create your own for the “What If?” activity in the Explore! part of the lesson.



What if a friend asks for feedback on her English paper, and the paper is not written well? You know she probably doesn’t have time to make changes without pulling an all-nighter.

What if you are buying some new clothes at the mall, and the clerk gives you ten dollars too much in change?

What if you are with your friend at a store and you see them slip something in their pocket? What if they hand something to you and indicate that you should do the same?

What if you are with a group of friends, and they begin to make fun of someone you know?

What if you know someone cheated on a test that the teacher is curving the grades on, and you know this person’s score is going to affect your grade? What if the person’s score isn’t going to affect your grade?



What if a friend confides in you about being involved in some vandalism at your school, but the police have accused another person you know was not involved?

What if you see online that a classmate has threatened to hurt someone you know?

What if you have a big paper due tomorrow that you haven't started, and a friend offers to write it for you for a fee?

What if you think a classmate has a problem with alcohol but you don't know that person very well?



Session 5

Praying as One

Gathering at a Glance

Pray!

- Matthew 18:19–20 (5 minutes)

Engage!

- Go, Team, Go! (10 minutes)
- Cheering for Us!
(Extension Activity, 15 minutes)

Experience!

- We Pray Together (20 minutes)

Explore!

- The Presence of Christ (20 minutes)
- Explore More! Accepting the Invitation
(Extension Activity, 10 minutes)
- Explore More! Saint Clare of Assisi
(Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

Pray!

- The Lord's Prayer (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

- highlighters
- colored pencils
- two different recordings of reflective music
- unbreakable, tossable objects, one for each participant
- access to the reserved Eucharist in the parish tabernacle

Outcomes

The young people will:

- grow in their understanding of communal prayer
- identify the characteristics and practices of a praying community
- experience communal prayer

Background

The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We are better together. These familiar sayings celebrate the importance of belonging and doing things together. Have you ever had an experience of community that helped you grow or that supported you in a difficult time? What groups of people renew your spirit?

Many young people question the need to attend liturgy and communal prayer. You must reinforce this simple truth—we worship and pray together because God created us to do so. We become our best selves in and through community. As Christians we cannot become our best selves without the Lord and one another. When we pray together, learn together, and serve together, we strengthen one another to become the people God is calling us to be. And as we become our best selves, we become the People of God.

Connections

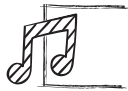
- **CFH:** Chapter 37
- **Scripture:** Matthew 18:19–20, Mark 14:22–25
- **CYB features:** Scripture Highlight near 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Catholic Connection near Luke 11:1–4, Catholic Connection near Mark 14:22–25, Challenge near Mark 14:22
- **CCC:** 806, 2683–2690, 2692–2695

Pray!



Matthew 18:19–20 (5 minutes)

1. Recruit five volunteers, and assign each person one of the passages listed below. Ask each young person to look up their assigned passage, highlight the text, and mark the page in their **CYB** so they can read the highlighted passage during prayer.
 - Ecclesiastes 4:9–12
 - Romans 12:9–10
 - 1 Corinthians 12:25–27
 - Philippians 2:3–4
 - Hebrews 10:24–25
2. Begin the session with these or similar words:
 - Welcome. What a joy it is to see each of you, and what a blessing it is that we can be together. Today we will explore the beauty and gift of praying together.
3. Direct the youth to Matthew 18:19–20, and distribute colored pencils and highlighters. Select a volunteer to read the passage aloud while all highlight verse 20.
4. Lead the Sign of the Cross and play reflective music. Invite the volunteers to proclaim their assigned Scripture passage, one at a time, pausing for a few seconds between each proclamation.
5. Lead a short reflection in these or similar words:
 - As I ask the following questions, I invite you to close your eyes and imagine, as vividly and in as much detail as you can, the people and events I ask about. Don't answer the questions out loud, but instead remember and reflect. (*Pause for a moment after each question.*) Who are the people you most like to gather with? What are some special moments you have had with those people? What have you been able to accomplish with a group of people that you could not have done by yourself? Have you ever felt the presence of God when gathering or doing something with a group?
6. Conclude the prayer with these or similar words:
 - God, we know that when we gather, you are with us and among us. Help us to see you in all who gather in your name. We ask this in faith. Amen.



MUSIC OPTION

In place of step 2, play the song “Gather in Your Name” (YouTube, 4:48).

Engage!

Go, Team, Go! (10 minutes)

- Before the activity, gather a variety of unbreakable items that can be tossed and caught (possibilities include rolls of socks, tennis balls, markers, ping pong balls, big keychains, plastic water bottles, Nerf objects, balls of yarn). You will need one object for each young person. Be certain to keep the game safe for your space and all the youth.
- Introduce the activity with the following explanation:
 - Today we are going to practice working as a team. Each person will receive an object and be assigned to a small-group gathering in a circle. Each group member will place their object on the floor inside the circle.
 - One person will pick up an object from the middle and gently toss it to someone else in the circle, who will toss it to another person.
 - Each person in the group should have the object tossed to them once before the object returns to the original student. Groups will decide their own pattern. The only pattern not allowed is passing the objects to the person directly beside you in the circle.
 - After a pattern has been established, a second group member will pick up another object and follow the same process (while the group continues to toss the first object).
 - We will continue this pattern until all objects are in play and successfully passed within the circle.
- Divide the large group into small groups of five or six. Direct each small group to find its own space and stand in a circle. Distribute objects to each young person and instruct the groups to begin.
- Reconvene the large group after the small groups have experienced some success. Allow the youth to settle down and process the experience using some of the following questions (as time allows):
 - What was it like when you started tossing the first object?
 - Did you ever feel totally comfortable in your pattern? How many objects were in the air at that time?
 - How many times did your group go through the patterns before you knew to turn to your tosser?
 - Did it help you participate and enjoy the game if you felt that the others were encouraging you?

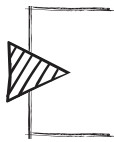
Engage More!

Cheering for Us! (Extension Activity, 15 minutes)

- Introduce the activity by asking the following questions:
 - What is a slogan or a motto? (*a short, memorable phrase used for advertising or to state beliefs*)
 - Can anyone offer an example of a slogan or motto? (*"Just do it!" or "I'm lovin' it"*)



2. Direct the youth to the Scripture Highlight near 1 Thessalonians 5:11 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read it aloud. Follow up with these or similar words:
 - This passage can serve as a good slogan for us as we look at what being a community requires of us. You are welcome to write down reflections or color the highlight while we continue our session today.
3. Continue with the following or similar words:
 - Slogans and mottos often convey a group's purpose and values. They can also help shape the way a community understands itself. Sometimes a slogan or motto names the common experiences we have as a group, united for a common cause.
 - Have you ever been to an event where a large crowd was involved in a cheer or group chant? Or maybe you have been at a smaller gathering but watching a larger crowd on TV?
4. Divide the large group into small groups of four or five. Ask each small group to brainstorm a list of four to five cheers from schools, teams, or other relevant groups. Allow a couple of minutes for brainstorming. Then instruct each group to pick a cheer that they will lead for the large group.
5. Reconvene the large group, and select a volunteer from each small group to lead the cheer for the large group. Conclude the activity with these or similar words:
 - Cheering with a large group for a common purpose or cause creates a certain power. Speaking together with one voice creates a sense of unity and shared purpose, and makes us realize that we are all part of something larger than ourselves.
 - Though we do not stand up and cheer in Church, we feel power and purpose when we speak and sing with one voice.



VIDEO OPTION

In place of steps 4 and 5, show the video “We-Are-N-D-Chant” (YouTube, 0:42), or “Best You’ll Never Walk Alone Ever!!!” (YouTube, 3:12). Alternatively, allow the youth to search online for their own example of a group cheer.

Experience!



We Pray Together (20 minutes)

1. Introduce the activity by asking the youth to sing “Happy Birthday” together (and lead the group). Then ask them to stand and say “The Pledge of Allegiance.”
2. Facilitate a discussion with the following questions:
 - When do we sing “Happy Birthday” or say The Pledge of Allegiance?
 - Do we most often sing or say these alone or with a group?
 - Why are they more powerful in a group?
 - How is going to church like being with your friends and singing “Happy Birthday”?
3. Continue with the following or similar points:
 - The Church is a community with a shared purpose—to live the mission of Christ.
 - As a community, we pray together—often by singing or saying prayers together. And when we pray together, we become even more of a community.

Catechist Note:

Be sure to allow the youth to honestly reflect in the last step. If they disagree with the answer provided in the book, affirm the **CFH**, but then ask, “Why do you think that?”

**Catechist Note:**

If there are some in your group who may not know the Glory Be, invite everyone to bring their Bibles when praying in front of the tabernacle. When it is time, direct the youth to page 1729 of the **CYB** so all can participate in the communal prayer.

4. Direct the youth to page 406 of the **CFH**, and select two volunteers to read aloud the second and third paragraphs in the section “The Importance of Communal Prayer.”
5. Ask the young people to name ways we pray together during Mass (singing, responding to the readings, saying the Creed together). Ask for examples of actions that we do together during Mass (sit, stand, kneel, go to Communion).
6. Direct the youth to the “Catholic Prayers and Devotions” section on page 1728 of the **CYB**. Invite them to pray together some of these traditional prayers that unite the Church community. Or, lead your group in a decade of the rosary.
7. Conclude by directing the young people to the “Reflect” section on page 407 of the **CFH** and asking them to respond to the questions.

Explore!

The Presence of Christ (20 minutes)

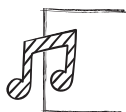
1. Direct the youth to page 409 of the **CFH**. Select a volunteer to read aloud the second paragraph in the “Eucharistic Devotions” section. Direct the group to turn the page and identify another volunteer to read aloud the “Reflect” section on page 410.
2. Facilitate a discussion with the following questions:
 - Has anyone participated in Eucharistic Adoration? (*If so, follow up with questions such as, Where? and Can you explain what it was like?*)
 - Does anyone know where the Blessed Sacrament is kept in churches? (*the tabernacle*)
3. Solicit two volunteers to read the Did You Know? article on page 409 of the **CFH**. Continue with the following questions and comments:
 - Where is the tabernacle in our Church?
 - Can anyone describe it?
 - The tabernacle is a sacred place. We are going to together to spend a few minutes in prayer in front of the tabernacle.
4. Lead the group to the tabernacle. Instruct the youth to kneel. Play reflective music and invite all the young people to experience a few moments of personal prayer.
5. After sufficient time has passed, lead the group in praying the Glory Be aloud together.
6. Conclude by leading the group back to the gathering space.

DIGITAL OPTION

As part of step 3, collect images of the church’s worship space in general and the tabernacle, and project them on a wall in the gathering space.

MUSIC OPTION

At the beginning of step 5, play the music video for the song “Tantum Ergo—Adoration—Matt Maher” (YouTube, 4:42).



**Catechist Note:**

Be sure to allow the young people to express their opinions without correcting or arguing. The goal is to set the tone for taking the challenge. Acknowledge that though not everyone attends Mass weekly, some in your group do.

Catechist Note:

If time allows, during this or a separate session, bring in the parish person who oversees liturgical ministry to help the young people identify the specifics of each ministry and learn the details of how to get involved.

Explore More!

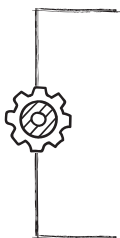
Accepting the Invitation (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the youth to Mark 14:22–25 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read the passage aloud. Invite the young people to highlight or color significant words or phrases in the passage while the volunteer is reading.
2. Direct the youth to the Catholic Connection feature near Mark 14:22–25 in the **CYB**, and select a volunteer to read aloud the first paragraph.
3. Invite the young people to read the rest of the feature silently. When everyone has finished reading, facilitate a short discussion with the following questions:
 - Do you think this article describes teenagers' thinking?
 - Is it important to make Mass a priority?
 - It is usually easier to find excuses? Are there legitimate reasons for missing Mass?
4. Direct the youth to the Challenge feature near Mark 14:22 in the **CYB**. Select a volunteer to read aloud the brief introduction at the top. Then choose three volunteers to read the three bulleted suggestions.
5. Challenge the young people to choose one of the bulleted suggestions to attempt this week. Invite them to put a box around the specific challenge and initial and date it.

Explore More!

Saint Clare of Assisi (Extension Activity, 10 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to turn to page 411 of the **CFH**, and invite a volunteer to read aloud the Saintly Profiles article.
2. Lead a reflection using these or similar words:
 - In addition to Saint Clare of Assisi, many other saints gave up their wealth to follow Christ. Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, Saint Thomas More, Saint Katharine Drexel are some examples.
 - Do you know people who have gone against the wishes of their family and friends to follow a passion?
 - How can a person know when they are doing the right thing even when the important people in their life disagree with them, as Saint Clare of Assisi experienced?



DIGITAL OPTION

In place of, or in addition to, step 1, have the youth look up Saint Clare of Assisi on the Lives of the Saints website, at saint.smp.org. Alternatively, show the video "Discovering our Saints—St. Clare of Assisi" (YouTube, 4:08), which tells of the life of Saint Clare. The video "#STLsisters|Poor Clares" (YouTube, 2:21) explores the life and charism of the religious order Saint Clare founded and would allow for discussion of communal life and prayer.

Pray!



The Lord's Prayer (5 minutes)

1. Direct the young people to find the Catholic Connections feature near Luke 11:1–4 in the **CYB**. Select two or three volunteers to read the feature aloud.
2. Invite everyone to stand and gather in a circle. Introduce the prayer in these or similar words:
 - Great power comes when we pray together. We become part of the prayer, and the prayer becomes part of us. Remember Jesus' words from our opening prayer: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).
 - As part of the Christian community, we pray with not only those who have gathered here but also those around the world and those who have gone before us.
 - Let us conclude our time together by praying the prayer that Jesus taught us.
3. Invite all to join hands and pray the Lord's Prayer.