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THE
Catholic
Faith
Handbook
FOR YOUTH
Third Edition

CATECHIST GUIDE

Virginia M. Halbur

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth

Third Edition

CATECHIST GUIDE

Virginia M. Halbur, editor and contributing writer

Pray It! Study It! Live It!™ resources offer a holistic approach to learning, living, and passing on the Catholic faith.



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Introduction

Quick Overview

This guide is the parish catechist's resource for *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition* (abbreviated *CFH*). The *CFH* is a comprehensive overview of the Catholic faith, in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Its thirty-nine chapters cover the Creed, liturgy and Sacraments, Christian morality, and prayer. The main text of each chapter presents a particular topic of the Catholic faith. The sidebar articles in the chapter enhance the main text by connecting the topic to prayer, Catholic saints, Catholic history, and lived faith. This guide provides the teaching process for the catechist to use in covering each chapter's content and connecting it to young people's life experiences.

In preparation for creating this guide, we spent many hours observing and interviewing catechists and parish catechetical leaders. We developed the lessons to directly respond to the needs we observed. There is one lesson for each chapter in the *CFH*, each 60 to 90 minutes long. The lessons provide time for the participants to read from the *CFH* and are easy to prepare for and follow.

Leading the Lessons

Each lesson in this guide is presented in a two-page spread so that you can teach the entire lesson without flipping pages. The lessons follow the Pray It! Study It! Live It!™ catechetical process that catechists have used with great success. Your preparation consists of familiarizing yourself with the *CFH* chapter content, reviewing the lesson in this guide, and gathering a few supplies. (Be sure to have common supplies such as paper, markers, pens or pencils, a pad of newsprint, and tape on hand for each lesson.)

Each lesson has four components: the opening prayer, a Study It! component, a Live It! component, and a Pray It! component. Each component is assigned a suggested time or time range. If your class session is 60 minutes long, you will need to follow the shorter times; if your class session is 75 or 90 minutes, you can follow the longer times. Here is a quick look at the lesson components.

● Pray It!

Each lesson begins with a short opening prayer related to the chapter topic. Often the prayer uses the Pray It! sidebar in the *CFH* chapter. Suggestions for actively involving participant volunteers in the prayer are included.

● Study It!

The Study It! component is the heart of the lesson; you will commit the majority of your time to it. During this time you will cover or review the chapter content. The Study It! process follows the chapter headings and is typically divided into three sections. Each section has a suggestion for beginning with a simple activity or discussion to prepare the participants for the content in the section. This is followed by reading or presenting that section's content in the *CFH*. A suggestion for reviewing the section content through questions and discussion is also provided.

You can read or present the content of the sections in a variety of ways. Here are some suggestions:

- Have the participants take turns reading the *CFH* section aloud, switching at each paragraph.
- Have the participants read the section silently to themselves.
- Ask the participants to read the entire chapter at home, prior to class. Review the content of each section in class using the lesson summary handout.
- Present the content of each section in your own words, asking volunteers to read key sentences or paragraphs at appropriate times.
- Present the content using the PowerPoint presentations available on the Saint Mary's Press Web site, catholicfaithhandbook.smp.org.

Each chapter contains a lot of content, and it will not be possible to cover it all in depth, especially if your class session is 60 minutes or less. You will need to summarize some sections of each chapter quickly. The lesson directions suggest which sections to summarize, and the lesson summary handout provides numbered summary points to use.

● Live It!

The Live It! component is an engaging learning activity that connects the chapter content to the participants' life experiences. These are typically about 15 minutes long. The activities require a minimal amount of supplies and usually have the young people working together. If your class session is short, you will need to stay on top of the time and keep moving the process forward without too much delay. If your class session is longer, you can allow more time for this learning activity so that the participants can interact more with the content and with one another.

● Closing Prayer

The session concludes with another simple prayer. Like the opening prayer, the closing prayer is often a prayer from the *CFH*. Again, suggestions for actively involving participant volunteers in the prayer are included.

Handouts

Each lesson has two one-page handouts designed to make your life as a catechist a little easier. The first handout is the lesson summary handout, which includes two or three lesson learning objectives that are the main goals of the lesson, and a list of summary points of the key content in the chapter. You can use this handout in the following ways:

- as a quick overview of the main content to help you prepare for leading the lesson
- to distribute to the young people as a review of the chapter content
- to send home to parents and guardians so they are aware of and can reinforce what their son or daughter is learning in the sessions

The second handout is typically used as a learning resource in the Study It! or Live It! components of the lesson process. Sometimes it contains a prayer to use during the Pray It! component. Occasionally, it contains an optional learning activity that can be used to extend the lesson, as an alternative to the Live It! component.

Online Content

All of the handouts in this guide are available online for easy access and customization. Also available online are a variety of other resources that can be used to reinforce the content covered in this unit and provide additional support for lesson planning. These materials include:

- chapter quizzes and answer keys
- answers to the review questions at the end of each chapter in the *CFH*
- PowerPoint presentations
- links to helpful Web sites
- additional learning activities

Go to catholicfaithhandbook.smp.org to see how these support materials might help you.

An Ambassador of Christ

As a catechist you have taken on an exciting and profoundly important task. The patron saint of teachers, John Baptist de La Salle, often reminded his teachers: “You are ambassadors of Christ. God has entrusted you with the care of these young souls.” As a Lasallian ministry, Saint Mary’s Press is deeply appreciative of your ministry. We hope our resources serve you well. Please be assured of our continual prayers for you and the young people you serve.

Lesson 1

Being Catholic: The “CliffsNotes” View

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 1, “Being Catholic: The ‘CliffsNotes’ View,” in the handbook.
- Gather newsprint; a basket; and Bibles, one for each participant.
- On the top of each of four sheets of newsprint, write “Beliefs,” “Practices,” “Attitudes,” and “I Don’t Know.”
- Make one copy of the handout “Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes” (Document #: TX003361), cut apart the items into strips, fold, and place in the basket. Make sure you have enough strips so that each young person has one.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that class is beginning with a traditional Catholic prayer called “Act of Faith,” which is a prayerful commitment to the core truths of our faith. **Ask** them to turn to the Pray It! “Act of Faith,” on page 20 in the handbook.

Lead the young people in the Sign of the Cross and then **invite** them to pray the prayer together.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. Why Are All These People Catholic?

1. **Ask** the participants to respond to the question, Why are you Catholic? **Write** their answers on the board as they volunteer them.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the chapter introduction and the section “Why Are All These People Catholic?” on pages 15–16 in the handbook. The content covers points 1 through 6 on the handout “Lesson 1 Summary” (Document #: TX003360).
3. **(Optional) Ask** the participants to think of a person who is a faithful and committed Catholic. **Direct** the participants to form pairs, and **instruct** them to describe to their partners the characteristics of the people they thought of and how those people motivate and inspire them in their faith.

B. Some Core Catholic Beliefs

1. **Direct** the young people to form groups of three or four. **Ask** each group to think of as many Catholic beliefs as they can. **Write** them on the board as they share them.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the section “Some Core Catholic Beliefs,” on pages 16–18 in the handbook. The content covers points 7 and 8 on the handout “Lesson 1 Summary.”
3. **(Optional) Invite** questions and observations on the content. You could also invite discussion on the Reflect questions on page 18.

C. Some Core Catholic Practices and Catholic Attitudes

Note: If you are running short on time, you may wish to just briefly summarize this section of the chapter.

Direct the participants to read the sections “Some Core Catholic Practices” and “Catholic Attitudes,” on pages 18–21. The content covers points 9 through 11 on the handout “Lesson 1 Summary.”

(Optional) **Invite** questions and observations on the content. You might also invite discussion on the Reflect questions on page 20.

Live It! (15 to 20 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to form pairs. **Tell** the young people that they are going to take time to identify some items that will help them describe what being Catholic means. **Explain** that the basket you prepared contains slips of paper naming various items related to the beliefs, practices, and attitudes of Catholicism.

Share the following point:

- These three categories—beliefs, practices, and attitudes—are closely related: people’s beliefs cause them to act a certain way (practices) and to see the world a certain way (attitudes).

Provide the following directions:

- Line up in your pairs, forming two or three lines that face the table that holds the basket of slips of paper and the tape.
- In turn, each pair will approach the basket and have 10 seconds to choose a slip of paper, decide which heading it belongs under, and tape it on the corresponding sign on the wall. Speak to your partner only to determine where your slip of paper should go.
- Once you have placed your paper on the sign, return to the end of the line, and continue until all the slips of paper have been categorized.

Review the lists. In particular, invite the young people to share with the rest of the group their own titles for Jesus.

2. **Ask** the participants if they think each slip of paper has been posted where it belongs. Decide as a group where any misplaced papers belong and why.
3. **Make** the following comments in your own words:
 - The large number of Catholics in the world testifies to Catholicism’s universal appeal and to the power that the Catholic faith has in people’s lives.
 - The Catholic Church embraces all people, including those who desire a clear and unchanging set of beliefs, as well as those who want to explore how those beliefs are applied to different cultures and a changing world.
 - Catholic beliefs are rooted in the revelation of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
 - Catholic practices are the ways in which Catholics worship and live a moral and faith-filled life.
 - Catholics have a distinct worldview. Even though we hold many beliefs in common with other Christians, there are significant differences in Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes as Catholics live out their faith in the world.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, close by **asking** a volunteer to read 2 Thessalonians 2:15–17 from the Bible. **Ask** everyone to respond by praying the Apostles’ Creed, on page 449 in the handbook.

Being Catholic: The “CliffsNotes” View

Lesson 1 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will explore what it means to be Catholic.
- The participants will understand that beliefs of the Catholic faith are rooted in the revelation of Scripture and Tradition.
- The participants will identify and name some core Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes.

Content Summary

1. Being Catholic is a wonderful and powerful way to experience God in the world and is the fullest way to follow Jesus Christ.
2. The popular image of Catholicism formed by the media is filled with stereotypes and misinformation, and is a misleading source for truly understanding what it means to be Catholic.
3. The great number of Catholics in the world testifies to Catholicism’s universal appeal and to the power that the Catholic faith has in people’s lives.
4. Catholics have a distinct worldview. Even though Catholics hold many beliefs in common with other Christians, there are some significant differences between Catholic and Protestant beliefs, practices, and attitudes.
5. Some common threads surface when Catholics talk about what is important to them about the Catholic faith.
6. Catholic beliefs are rooted in the revelation of Scripture and Tradition.
7. The fullness of God’s revealed truth is called Sacred Tradition and is entrusted to the Apostles’ successors, the bishops of the Church.
8. Catholic practices, the ways in which Catholics worship and live moral and faith-filled lives, are based on Catholic beliefs, so they are also rooted in Scripture and Tradition.
9. Catholics see the world in a unique way because their attitudes reflect God’s Revelation in Scripture and Tradition.
10. Catholics recognize that God is present to, in, and through all creation—including the natural world, people, communities, and historical events.
11. The “Act of Faith” is an old and traditional prayer of the Catholic Church. People prayed it as a sign of commitment to the core truths of the faith.

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Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes

Beliefs

We are created for union with God.

Original Sin deprived us of holiness and justice.

God established covenants as a sign of fidelity.

We believe in one God in three Divine Persons.

Jesus was both fully God and fully human, the Second Divine Person of the Holy Trinity.

Jesus suffered, died, and was raised for our salvation.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity.

The Catholic Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

God's revealed truth is found in Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture.

Practices

Celebration of the Sacraments

Following the Liturgical Year

Faithfulness to the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes

The dignity of the human person

Living out our Catholic social teachings

Honoring the Blessed Mother and the Communion of Saints

Forgiveness of sin

Keeping Sunday holy

Attitudes

Seeing creation as sacred and a potential source of God's grace

Placing trust in the essential goodness of the human person

Recognizing that we are flawed by the effect of Original Sin

Appreciating both faith and reason—religion and science

Putting an emphasis on community life and communal worship

Respecting the diversity of cultures in the world

Being committed to proclaiming Jesus' message to all people



Lesson 2

2

Knowing God: Reason and Revelation

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 2, “Knowing God: Reason and Revelation,” in the handbook.
- Gather Bibles and envelopes, one of each for each participant. Locate a box with a lid, large enough to hold all the envelopes. For added effect, cover the box and lid separately with wrapping paper.
- Make copies of the handout “Prayer Card” (Document #: TX003363) on card stock, and cut it apart as scored. Make enough copies so that each young person will receive a prayer card. Place each prayer card in an envelope, and place the envelopes in the box covered with wrapping paper.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that the opening prayer will begin with a reading from Scripture that illustrates God’s Revelation to us. **Select** a young person to read aloud 1 Samuel 3:1–10,19. After the reading, **lead** the class in the following prayer and have the participants respond “Here I am, Lord” after each statement.

- Good and gracious God, you call to us constantly, without ever giving up on us.
- Help us to open our hearts and minds and ears, and to never give up on your love.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. Our Need for God

1. **Tell** the participants that one way God reveals himself is through creation. **Read** the Pray It! “Story of the Man and the Birds,” on page 24 in the handbook. **Ask** the participants to share some other ways God reveals himself to us.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the chapter introduction and the sections “Our Need for God” and “Reason and Revelation,” on pages 22–25. The content covers points 1 through 4 on the handout “Lesson 2 Summary” (Document #: TX003362).
3. (*Optional*) When the participants have finished the reading, **direct** them to the Reflect directions on page 25. **Invite** them to share their responses to the question.

B. Scripture and Tradition

1. **Write** the headings “New Testament” and “Old Testament” on the board. **Ask** the participants to call out as many names of the books of the Bible as they can think of. Write these on the board under the appropriate headings. Afterward, **distribute** the Bibles, one to each young person, and **instruct** the participants to turn to the table of contents to see which books they missed.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the sections “Scripture and Tradition” and “Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation,” on pages 26–28 in the handbook. The content covers points 5 through 10 on the handout “Lesson 2 Summary.”

3. *(Optional)* When the participants have finished reading, **direct** them to the Reflect questions on page 28. **Discuss** as a class.

● **Live It! (15 to 20 minutes)**

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of four or five. **Invite** the participants to talk within their groups about the best gifts they have been given in their lives. **Ask** each group to create a list of these gifts and then to identify the best three gifts on the list. Ask each group to share its three best gifts, and **write** these on the board.

Lead a discussion on the following questions:

- What characteristics best describe these gifts?
- Do any of these characteristics describe what God gives to us?
- Which ones and why?

Point out that the best gifts are expressions of deep and personal love. God created us out of love and constantly calls us into relationship with him and with one another.

2. **Share** the following points in your own words:
- Revelation is God making himself and his divine plan known to the human race through words and deeds in history.
 - The Church teaches everything we need to know about God; everything we need to know for our eternal union with him has been revealed in Christ.
 - God has provided for this by giving us two sources for coming to know Jesus Christ: Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture.
 - The Holy Spirit inspired the biblical authors to write what God wanted us to know for our salvation.
 - The Bible is without error in communicating what God wants us to know for our salvation and is not meant to be read as historically and scientifically accurate.
3. **Draw attention** to the large gift box. **Explain** that it contains a gift for everyone. **Open** the box and **distribute** the envelopes, one to each young person. **Invite** the participants to open their envelopes and reflect on the messages written on the cards. **Ask** everyone to consider what their response is or will be to God's gift of love to them.

● **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

Following any announcements, close by **leading** the young people in praying Psalm 138:1–3. **Direct** the participants to take turns reading the verses and to respond, after each verse is read, with: "I thank you, Lord, with all my heart."

Knowing God: Reason and Revelation

Lesson 2 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will gain insight into the Catholic Church's understanding of Revelation and its transmission.
- The participants will understand how Catholics come to know the truth about God and why that has meaning for their lives.

Content Summary

1. The Church makes frequent appeal to human reason in teaching us about the religious truths God has revealed. But reason can take us only so far. Ultimately we must trust that God has revealed to the Church what he wants us to know for our salvation.
2. Revelation is God's self-communication and disclosure of the divine plan to humankind through creation, events, people, and most fully, Jesus Christ.
3. The Church teaches everything that we need to know about God.
4. God has provided for this by giving us two sources for coming to know Jesus Christ: Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture.
5. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles handed on everything they knew about Jesus to the first Christians and to the generation who followed them.
6. We speak of Scripture and Tradition as two sources of Revelation, but they are closely connected, and together they form a single sacred Deposit of Faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They can never be in conflict, and each one helps us to understand the other.
7. It is the responsibility of the Church, through her teaching, her worship, and her ministries, to transmit to every new generation all that God has revealed.
8. As the successors of the Apostles, it is the particular and exclusive responsibility of the bishops in union with the Pope—who are also called the Magisterium—to faithfully teach, interpret, and preserve Scripture and Tradition for all believers until Christ returns in glory.
9. The Holy Spirit inspired the Scripture writers to write what God wanted us to know for our salvation.
10. The Bible is without error in communicating what God wants us to know for our salvation and is not meant to be read as historically and scientifically accurate.

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Prayer Card

<p>I have called you by name: you are mine. You are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you. Fear not, for I am with you. (Isaiah 43:1,4-5, NABRE)</p>
<p>I have called you by name: you are mine. You are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you. Fear not, for I am with you. (Isaiah 43:1,4-5, NABRE)</p>
<p>I have called you by name: you are mine. You are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you. Fear not, for I am with you. (Isaiah 43:1,4-5, NABRE)</p>
<p>I have called you by name: you are mine. You are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you. Fear not, for I am with you. (Isaiah 43:1,4-5, NABRE)</p>



Lesson 3

3

The Bible's Big Picture

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 3, “The Bible’s Big Picture,” in the handbook.
- Gather Bibles, one for each participant.
- Make copies of the handout “The Prayer of Saint Anselm” (Document #: TX003365), one for each young person.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that class will begin with a meditation on one of the best known prayers in the Bible, known as a canticle. A canticle is a song and refers to hymns (besides the Psalms) that appear in the Bible. **Distribute** the Bibles and ask the participants to find Luke 1:68–79, the Canticle of Zechariah. **Ask** them to think about what God is saying to them as you read the prayer. End the prayer by saying the Glory Be together.

Study It! (40 to 50 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. The Big Picture of Sacred Scripture

1. **(Optional) Distribute** the Bibles, and **lead** the participants in a brainstorming exercise to identify some of the most important people and events in the Bible. Write the names of the people and events on the board as the young people identify them. You may have to offer some clues to help them out.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the chapter introduction and the sections “The Big Picture of Sacred Scripture,” “Primeval History,” “The Patriarchs,” “Egypt and the Exodus,” “Settling the Promised Land,” “The Kingdoms of Judah and Israel,” and “The Exile and Return,” on pages 30–37 in the handbook. The content covers points 1 through 7 on the handout “Lesson 3 Summary” (Document #: TX003364).
3. After the young people have finished the reading, **direct** them to the Reflect questions on page 37. **Invite** them to share their thoughts on the last question.

B. The Life of Jesus Christ

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of three or four, and assign each group a parable from the Gospel of Mark. **Invite** each group to read its assigned parable and to decide as a group what Jesus is trying to teach. **Ask** each group to share with the class its parable and what Jesus was teaching.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the sections “The Life of Jesus Christ,” “The Early Church,” and “The Last Things,” on pages 37–40 in the handbook. The content covers points 8 through 10 on the handout “Lesson 3 Summary.”
3. **(Optional)** When the participants have finished the reading, **ask** them to choose one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) and to make a commitment to read a chapter a day.

C. The Organization of the Bible

Direct the participants to read the section “The Organization of the Bible,” on pages 40–41 in the handbook.

Note: If you are running short on time, you may wish to just briefly summarize this section of the handbook.

Live It! (10 to 15 minutes)

1. **Direct** the young people to take out their Bibles. **Tell** them to close their eyes, leaf through a few pages of a chosen book in the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, for example), and then stop at a random point. **Ask** the participants to place a finger anywhere on the page, open their eyes, and then silently read the passage closest to their finger. After allowing a moment for them to read their passages, **ask** those who have previously heard their selected passages to raise their hand.
2. **Invite** volunteers to read aloud their passages. **Ask** one of the volunteers to read the first couple verses from his or her passage and then pause. At the pause, **ask** the rest of the young people the following two questions:
 - Can anyone identify and describe the scene or story this reading was taken from?
 - Can anyone guess what the next line or verse is about?

After the group offers a few guesses, **ask** the volunteer who read the initial verses to read the next three or four verses to determine whether any of the guesses were correct. Repeat the exercise, with the other volunteers reading their passages, as time allows. This exercise is intended to lead the participants to a realization that they know more about Scripture than they might have thought.

3. **Share** the following comments in your own words:
 - The Bible consists of various types of literature that, when read and studied as a whole, reveal God’s saving love and plan for our salvation.
 - The big picture of God’s relationship with the human race is called salvation history. It shows how God has worked within the people and events of human history to restore lost union with God.
 - The Gospels tell how God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to conquer sin and death forever. This is the culmination of salvation history. Through Christ Jesus’ sacrifice, God establishes his New Covenant with the human race.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, **distribute** the handout “The Prayer of Saint Anselm” (Document #: TX003365), one to each young person. **Ask** a volunteer to read Philippians 2:6–11 (a canticle) in the Bible. Close by **inviting** everyone to pray together the prayer of Saint Anselm on the handout.

The Bible's Big Picture

Lesson 3 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will be introduced to some significant events in salvation history.
- The participants will understand how salvation history finds its fulfillment in the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- The participants will be able to distinguish between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Content Summary

1. The Bible consists of various types of literature that, when read and studied as a whole, reveal God's saving love and plan for our salvation.
2. The big picture of God's relationship with the human race is called salvation history. It shows how God has worked within the people and events of human history to restore our lost union with God.
3. Salvation history begins with Creation. God's creatures were good and lived in harmony with one another and with God, until the sin of our first parents injured their perfect relationship with God and with each other.
4. The Original Sin of Adam and Eve is passed on to all human beings and makes it more difficult for us to choose good and to choose God.
5. Despite human sin and disobedience, God begins a process of intervention to save us. God makes a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, promising to multiply and bless them so they can lead other nations to God.
6. A key event in salvation history occurs on Mount Sinai, when God extends the covenant he made with Abraham to all the Israelites, promising that they will be his Chosen People. God's covenant with the Israelites is marked by a special Law, summed up by the Ten Commandments.
7. Human disobedience to God's covenant and God's Law keep getting in the way of the fulfillment of God's plan. However, God never abandoned his Chosen People.
8. The Gospels tell how God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to conquer sin and death forever. This is the ultimate event in salvation history and the complete fulfillment of God's saving plan. Through Christ Jesus' sacrifice, God establishes his New Covenant with the human race.
9. Those who are baptized and put their faith in Christ will share in his Resurrection. God's original plan for Creation is now brought full circle as we anticipate the fullness of the Kingdom of God.
10. The Church continues to spread the Good News of God's saving love and his saving plan, through her words and actions.

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The Prayer of Saint Anselm

O Lord my God,

Teach my heart where and how to seek you,

where and how to find you.

.

Lord, you are my Lord and my God,

and I have never seen you.

You have created and re-created me,

all the good I have comes from you,

and still I do not know you.

.

I have not yet accomplished that for which I was made.

.

Teach me to seek you,

and as I seek you, show yourself to me,

for I cannot seek you unless you show me how.

.

Let me seek you by desiring you,

and desire you by seeking you;

Let me find you by loving you,

and love you in finding you.

(This prayer is from *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion*, translated with an introduction by Sr. Benedicta Ward, with a foreword by R. W. Southern [London: Penguin Books, 1973], pages 239–240 and 243. Copyright © 1973 by Benedicta Ward, foreword copyright © 1973 by R. W. Southern. Used with permission of Penguin Books, UK.)



Lesson 4

Faith

4

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 4, “Faith,” in the handbook.
- Gather Bibles, one for each participant; newsprint; and markers.
- Make a copy of the handout “Creedal Statements” (Document #: TX003367) and cut apart the statements along the dotted lines.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that class is beginning with a prayer written by one of the most influential spiritual writers of modern times, Thomas Merton. **Lead** the class in making the Sign of the Cross and praying together the “Prayer of Unknowing” from the Pray It! sidebar on page 51 in the handbook.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. Faith Is Our Response to God’s Love

1. **Lead** a discussion with the young people by asking them to define *faith* and to describe what it means to have faith. **Pose** the question, What characteristics are present when a person has faith? **Record** the participants’ answers on the board as they share them.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the chapter introduction and the section “Faith Is Our Response to God’s Love,” on pages 47–48 in the handbook. The content covers point 1 on the handout “Lesson 4 Summary” (Document #: TX003366).
3. (*Optional*) After the participants have finished the reading, direct them to the Reflect questions on page 48. Invite them to think silently about their answers to the questions or perhaps to journal about them.

B. Faith and the Catholic Church

1. **Direct** the young people to form groups of three or four, and **distribute** a sheet of newsprint and a marker to each group. **Direct** the members of each group to work together to create a list of things they all believe in and to record the list on the sheet of newsprint. The following focus questions may be helpful:
 - What do you set your heart on?
 - What would you stand up for in the face of opposition?

After several minutes, **invite** someone from each group to share the group’s list of beliefs with the rest of the class.

2. **Direct** the participants to read the sections “Faith and the Catholic Church” and “The Characteristics of Faith,” on pages 48–51 in the handbook. The content covers points 2 through 6 on the handout “Lesson 4 Summary.”
3. *(Optional)* After the participants have finished the reading, **direct** them to the Reflect question on page 52. **Lead** a brief discussion on the question presented there.

C. Creeds Are Statements of Faith

Direct the young people to read the section “Creeds Are Statements of Faith,” on pages 52–53 in the handbook. The content covers points 7 and 8 on the handout “Lesson 4 Summary.”

Note: If you are running short on time, you may wish to just briefly summarize this section of the handbook.

Live It! (15 to 20 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of three or four. **Give** each group a sheet of newsprint, a marker, and one or two statement slips from the handout “Creedal Statements” (Document #: TX003367). **Explain** the task as follows:
 - At the top of the sheet of newsprint, write your assigned statement(s).
 - Discuss the statement(s) in your group and put the statement(s) into your own words.
 - Record your rewritten version(s) on the newsprint and add any symbols or images that help to convey the meaning(s) of the statement(s).
2. **Invite** each small group to share its work with the entire group and to post it where everyone can see it. The statements should be posted in the order they appear in the text.
3. **Share** the following comments in your own words:
 - Christian faith is the human person’s response to God’s loving invitation to believe in him. Faith means giving yourself completely—heart, mind, and will—to a loving relationship with God. Faith also means believing in, and being part of, the Church, which is the Body of Christ here on earth.
 - A creed is a brief summary of the things you believe in. As Catholics, we use creeds to affirm our belief in all that God has revealed.
 - God has given you the gift of faith, but only you can decide to accept that gift and act on it.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, **direct** the young people to turn to page 452 in the handbook and **lead** them in praying the Nicene Creed together.

Faith

Lesson 4 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will describe what faith is and what it means to be a person of faith.
- The participants will gain a better understanding of the Church's creeds and how they relate to a life of faith.

Content Summary

1. God's Revelation of himself, particularly in the person of Jesus Christ, is his invitation for us to be in a loving relationship with him and with one another.
2. Faith is a personal act. Each person is free to believe or not to believe in what God has revealed. But belief is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone.
3. Having true faith means believing everything that God reveals; it does not mean picking and choosing the things we want to believe.
4. Christian faith is the human person's response to God's loving invitation to believe in him. Faith means giving yourself completely—heart, mind, and will—to a loving relationship with God. Faith also means believing in, and being part of, the Church, which is the Body of Christ here on earth.
5. Faith is not opposed to science. God created both physical reality and spiritual reality, and the two can never truly conflict.
6. Faith is necessary for salvation. Without faith we would cut ourselves off from God, and that would mean no salvation.
7. A creed is a brief summary of beliefs. As Catholics we use creeds to affirm our belief in all that God has revealed.
8. God has given you the gift of faith, but only you can decide to accept that gift and act on it.

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Creedal Statements

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

I believe that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

I believe that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell.

I believe that on the third day Jesus rose again.

I believe that Jesus ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I believe in the communion of saints.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.



Lesson 5

God Our Father

5

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 5, “God Our Father,” in the handbook.
- Gather Bibles, one for each participant.
- Make copies of the handout “Responding to Mystery” (Document #: TX003369), one for each young person.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Direct the participants to turn to page 449 in the handbook. **Lead** them in the Sign of the Cross, and **invite** them to pray the Apostles’ Creed together.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. The Trinity: One God, Three Persons

1. **Direct** the participants to form pairs, and **explain** that they are to share with each other the reasons they have for believing in God and how they would describe God. **Ask** volunteers to share what they heard.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the chapter introduction and the section “The Trinity: One God, Three Persons,” on pages 55–58 in the handbook. The content covers points 1 through 3 on the handout “Lesson 5 Summary” (Document #: TX003368).
3. *(Optional)* **Invite** the participants to draw a picture of something that symbolizes God for them and to explain the meaning of their drawing with the group.

B. The Father Almighty

1. **Direct** the young people to form six groups, and **assign** each group one of the following Scripture passages: 2 Samuel 22:1–4, Psalm 131, Wisdom 7:24–26, Isaiah 61:7, Hosea 11:1–4, John 10:1–18. **Instruct** the groups to look up and read their passage and decipher what image is being used to depict God. **Ask** the groups to share what they discovered. **Write** the images they share on the board.
2. **Direct** the young people to read the sections “The Father Almighty” and “Creator of Heaven and Earth,” on pages 58–60 in the handbook. The content covers points 4 through 7 on the handout “Lesson 5 Summary.”
3. *(Optional)* **Ask** the participants to reflect on the following question: What does it mean when we say God is love? **Invite** volunteers to share their answers.

C. God is Truth and Love

Direct the participants to read the section “God Is Truth and Love,” on pages 61–62 in the handbook.

Note: If you are running short on time, you may wish to just briefly summarize this section of the handbook.

Live It! (15 to 20 minutes)

- Distribute** the handout “Responding to Mystery” (Document #: TX003369) to the participants and **ask** them to read the questions and circle one of the two answer options for each. After they have answered the questions, **read** each question and its answer options aloud, asking first for those young people who chose option A to raise their hands, and then for those who chose option B to raise their hands. **Explain** that those who chose the same option should group together and share their reasons with at least one other person in the group. **Continue** in this manner for each question, having the participants regroup for each according to their answers, until you have gone through all five questions.
- Ask** the young people to form pairs, and with their partners to define *mystery*. **Invite** a few volunteers to share their definitions with the rest of the class. Then **ask** the participants to think about the question, What are some mysteries of our faith? Again, **ask** for volunteers to respond. (If the young people need help, give examples such as these: How can God exist in three Persons? What is the nature of God? Why were we created?)
- Share** the following comments in your own words:
 - When we talk about “mystery” in relation to our faith, we are talking about a great truth that God has revealed through Scripture and Tradition. We cannot arrive at this truth through reason alone. The mysteries of our faith are not beyond our ability to comprehend, but they are so “big” that we will never fully understand them in this life.
 - The Trinity is the mystery of one God in three Divine Persons. It is the central mystery of the Christian faith. We call it a mystery because it cannot be understood only by reason—God alone can make it known to us.
 - The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three Gods, but one God in three Divine Persons. To use philosophical terms, they share the same “substance” or “essence.” Yet the three are also distinct from one another.
 - The Trinity teaches us that God is not solitary but exists as a communion of Persons united in perfect harmony.
 - Jesus is God the Father’s Divine Son, who has existed with the Father for all eternity. When Jesus Christ took on human nature, he was able to reveal his Father to us in the way that only a child can speak about a parent.
 - Although Catholics honor in a special way the image of God as loving Father, we recognize that any human image we have of God is incomplete.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, **ask** a volunteer to read 1 John 4:7–12. Then **pray** the Collect for Trinity Sunday from the *Roman Missal*, which appears in the Pray It! sidebar on page 57 in the handbook. Close by **inviting** everyone to pray the Glory Be together.

God Our Father

Lesson 5 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will recognize that people use images that describe an aspect of God in order to gain insight into the mystery of God.
- The participants will explore central images of God in Scripture and in Sacred Tradition.
- The participants will investigate the doctrine of the Trinity and consider how it helps people to more deeply understand the mystery of God.

Content Summary

1. The Trinity is the mystery of one God in three Divine Persons. It is the central mystery of the Christian faith. We call it a mystery because it cannot be understood by human reason.
2. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God in three Divine Persons. They share the same “substance” or “essence” but are also distinct from one another.
3. The Trinity teaches us that God is not solitary but exists as a communion of persons united in perfect harmony.
4. Jesus is God the Father’s Divine Son, who has existed with the Father for all eternity. When Jesus Christ took on human nature, he was able to reveal his Father to us in the way that only a child can speak about a parent.
5. There is no creature, no power, and no force anywhere in creation that is more powerful than God. In describing this, we sometimes say that God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (present everywhere), and omniscient (all-knowing).
6. Although Catholics honor in a special way the image of God as loving Father, we recognize that all human images we have of God are incomplete.
7. Scripture and Tradition teach us that God is truth and God is love. In the end these two statements probably say more about God than anything else we could say.

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Responding to Mystery

Read each question and circle one of the two answer options.

1. If you encountered something mysterious, what would you be more likely to do?
 - A. go toward it
 - B. keep your distance

2. If I said you were going to encounter something mysterious today, what would your reaction be?
 - A. curiosity
 - B. just ignore it

3. Which is a better image for representing mystery?
 - A. light
 - B. darkness

4. Which is more likely to be associated with a mystery?
 - A. a problem
 - B. a solution

5. Which holiday has more to do with mystery?
 - A. Halloween
 - B. Christmas



Lesson 6

The Human Person

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 6, “The Human Person,” in the handbook.
- For each group of three or four, gather a Bible, newsprint, markers, tape or glue, scissors, and several newspapers and magazines.
- Make copies of the handout “The Canticle of Brother Sun” (Document #: TX003371), one for each participant.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

6

Tell the participants that the topic for this session is the human person. **Ask** them to turn to page 68 in the handbook and find the Pray It! “Prayer for Accepting Our Humanity.” **Select** seven participants to each read an “I am” statement. **Close** by having everyone read the last two paragraphs of the prayer together.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. Made in the Image of God

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of three or four, and give each group a Bible. **Ask** the groups to locate Psalm 139. **Read** verses 1–16 aloud to the class. After the reading, **ask** the young people to turn to page 70 in the handbook and **invite** each group to answer the three bulleted questions in the Scripture Connection “You Formed My Inmost Being” as if they were the person who wrote the psalm. **Ask** for volunteers to share their answers.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the chapter introduction and the section “Made in the Image of God,” on pages 64–67. The content covers points 1 through 3 on the handout “Lesson 6 Summary” (Document #: TX003370).
3. **(Optional)** After the young people have finished the reading, **direct** them to the Reflect directions on page 67. **Conduct** a discussion on the question presented there.

B. The Fall from Grace

1. **Direct** the participants to form groups of three or four. **Give** each group a sheet of newsprint and a marker. **Invite** the young people to imagine what their world (or city or town) would look like without sin. After giving everyone a few minutes to think quietly, **ask** them to work in their groups to create newspaper headlines that depict some of the events they imagined. **Tell** them to record their headlines on the newsprint. **Invite** each group to report on its vision for a world without sin by reading their headlines.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the sections “The Fall from Grace” and “Original Sin,” on pages 67–70 in the handbook. The content covers points 4 through 9 on the handout “Lesson 6 Summary.”
3. **(Optional)** **Invite** questions and observations on the content. You could also **direct** the participants to the Reflect questions on page 70.

C. Destined for Glory

Direct the participants to read the section “Destined for Glory,” on pages 70–72 in the handbook. The content covers points 10 through 11 on the handout “Lesson 6 Summary.”

Note: If you are running short on time, you may wish to just briefly summarize this section of the handbook.

Live It! (15 to 20 minutes)

1. **Direct** the young people to form groups of three or four. **Provide** each group with three sheets of newsprint, markers, scissors, tape or glue, and a variety of newspapers and magazines. **Ask** the participants to write one of the following headings at the top of each sheet of newsprint:

- Cooperation
- Lack of Cooperation
- Ambiguous

Explain that they are to work in their groups to find stories or pictures that fit the headings as described here. They should cut out each story or picture they find and attach it to the appropriate newsprint:

- **Cooperation:** situations, images, or events that illustrate human cooperation with God’s creation and purposes
- **Lack of Cooperation:** situations, images, or events that illustrate a lack of cooperation with God
- **Ambiguous:** situations, images, or events that are ambiguous—that is, the group members cannot decide whether they illustrate cooperation or a lack of cooperation

2. **Invite** each group to share its findings with the rest of the class. **Highlight** some of the examples of human cooperation that surfaced during the discussion.

3. **Share** the following comments in your own words:

- Human beings are the crown of God’s creation. Made in the image of God, we alone are capable of knowing God and freely returning his love.
- The first Creation story teaches us that God gives human beings a special responsibility for caring for creation, called stewardship.
- The Garden of Eden symbolizes the ideal relationship that God intended to have with human beings. Adam and Eve see God face-to-face. They are in a perfect state of holiness and justice.
- God’s only command to Adam and Eve was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and committed the first sin.
- Adam and Eve’s sin has consequences, not just for them but for all of us! The harmony that should exist between people, between human beings and nature, and between people and God has been wounded.
- The Catholic Church explains the impact of Adam and Eve’s sin in its teaching on Original Sin.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Following any announcements, **distribute** the handout “The Canticle of Brother Sun” (Document #: TX003371) to each participant. **Close** by praying the prayer, alternating sides, with girls and boys praying different verses, or break it up in some other way to provide variety.

The Human Person

Lesson 6 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will examine key aspects of the Church's teaching on Creation.
- The participants will be introduced to the doctrine of Original Sin.

Content Summary

1. Human beings are the crown of God's creation. Made in the image of God, we alone are capable of knowing God and freely returning God's love.
2. We are both physical and spiritual beings. We call this spiritual aspect of human beings the soul.
3. The Book of Genesis has two different Creation stories (Genesis 1:1—2:4 and Genesis 2:4—3:24). The first Creation story teaches us that God gives human beings a special responsibility for caring for creation, called stewardship.
4. The Garden of Eden symbolizes the ideal relationship that God intended to have with human beings. Adam and Eve see God face-to-face. They are in a perfect state of holiness and justice.
5. God's only command to Adam and Eve was to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (see Genesis 2:16–17). Adam and Eve disobeyed God and committed the first sin.
6. Adam and Eve's sin has consequences, not just for them but for all of us! The harmony that should exist between people, between human beings and nature, and between people and God has been wounded.
7. Adam and Eve's sin is called Original Sin, and it affects all humanity.
8. The doctrine of Original Sin is behind another important concept in Scripture and Tradition: that since the fall of Adam and Eve, the human race has been involved in a spiritual battle between good and evil.
9. God has promised to help us win this battle against evil. In fact, through his life, death, and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has already won the battle. We share in his victory by being his faithful followers.
10. Through the sin that resulted in Christ's suffering and death, God turned Adam and Eve's sin into a glorious victory.
11. Jesus Christ has become the new Adam, who rose above temptation to conquer sin and death, including the effects of Original Sin.

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The Canticle of Brother Sun

by Saint Francis of Assisi

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all
blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your
name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through
him.

And he is beautiful and radiant in all his
splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and
the stars;
in the heavens you have made them bright,
precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and
Air,
and clouds and storms, and all the weather,
through which you give your creatures
sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and precious,
and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you brighten the night.
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and
strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother
Earth,
who feeds us and rules us,
and produces various fruits with colored flowers
and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive
for love of you;
through those who endure sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,
for by you, Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily
Death,
from whose embrace no living person can
escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those she finds doing your most holy
will.
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks,
and serve him with great humility.



Lesson 7

The Promise of a Messiah

Preparation and Supplies

- Study chapter 7, “The Promise of a Messiah,” in the handbook.
- Gather newsprint and markers for each group of three or four.
- Create on the classroom whiteboard or on newsprint two different sets of group rules: a set of rules to follow at your meetings as a group and a set of very different rules, rules that might lead to confusion and chaos.

Pray It! (5 minutes)

Tell the participants that class will begin with a portion of a hymn that is sung during the Easter Vigil, called the Exsultet, and that it illustrates how God’s goodness can even come out of evil.

Ask a volunteer to read the prayer in the Pray It! “O Happy Fault!” on page 81 in the handbook. After the prayer is read, say the following:

Leader: Thank you, God, for your love and forgiveness. Please make some good come even from our sins. We ask this in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Study It! (35 to 45 minutes, depending on your class length)

A. God’s Promise to Adam and Eve

1. **Invite** volunteers to share some examples of unfaithfulness that have played out publicly in the news and the consequences suffered as a result of the unfaithfulness. **Be prepared** with some examples of your own. **Lead** a brief discussion on the topic.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the chapter introduction and the section “God’s Promise to Adam and Eve,” on pages 73–75 in the handbook. The content covers point 1 on the handout “Lesson 7 Summary” (Document #: TX003372).
3. **(Optional) Ask** the participants to reflect on a time when they were hurt by someone’s unfaithful behavior. Pose the following questions:
 - How did you respond?
 - Were you able to remain faithful and loving in your response to that person’s unfaithfulness?

B. The Old Testament Covenants

1. **Invite** the participants to write a list of things they do as a sign of their commitment to and relationship with God. **Ask** them to also list the things they count on God to provide in their relationship. **Invite** volunteers to share what they have written.
2. **Direct** the participants to read the section “The Old Testament Covenants,” on pages 75–80 in the handbook. The content covers points 2 through 8 on the handout “Lesson 7 Summary.”

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