

Chapter 5
The Church Readdresses Her Unity
[*Miracle of St. Francis Xavier* by Peter Paul Rubens]

This home assignment will lead students to engage with the religious belief and practice of people whose faith is other than their own. Through interview and reflection, they will learn something about another religion as well as the common ground between other faiths and the Catholic faith. They will be challenged to think through how they might share their own faith in Christ with others. Begin by sharing more information about St. Francis Xavier, the subject of the painting by Peter Paul Rubens.

St. Francis Xavier went to Asia (first India, then China) to preach the Gospel. He knew that he couldn't just show up and tell people about Jesus, and expect them to know what he was talking about. He respected the cultures in which he lived, and he loved the people to whom he ministered. His "strategy" was to learn their language and culture, and even to dress and behave like one of them – he wanted, like St. Paul, to become so like them that they would accept him, and then he would be able to share with them the love of Jesus. Other Jesuits (members of the Society of Jesus, the religious order to which Francis belonged), followed the same strategy, most notably Ven. Matteo Ricci who moved to China and rose to the highest levels of Chinese government and culture in an effort to share the Gospel with the Chinese people.

Have the students use the worksheet to interview a family member or friend who belongs to a different Christian denomination or other non-Christian religion. Tell them to write down key words to help them remember their answers. In a future class meeting, have general class discussion based on the responses students received in their interviews.

Interview Questions

1. How did you become a member of your faith tradition?
2. What is a core tenet of your faith?
3. How do you practice that tenet?
4. What do you find fulfilling about your faith tradition?
5. What are values you have learned from your faith tradition?
6. How does your faith tradition help you to understand who God is?
7. How does your faith tradition help you to live a good life?
8. Who is someone in your faith tradition you find inspiring?
9. From what you know about the Catholic faith, how does your faith tradition
differ?
10. How is it the same?