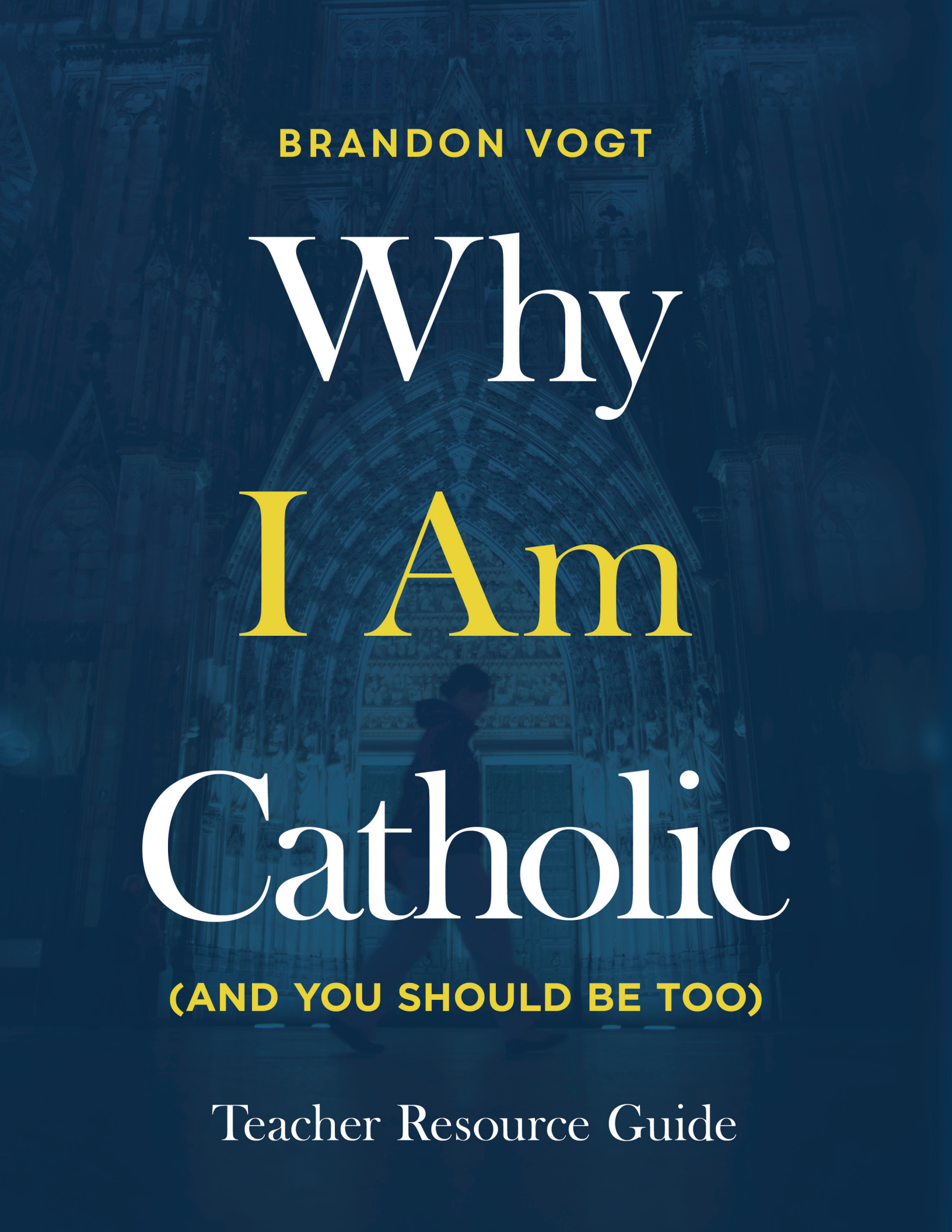




BRANDON VOGT

Why
I Am
Catholic

(AND YOU SHOULD BE TOO)

Teacher Resource Guide

Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too), by Brandon Vogt (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2017) is © 2017, 2019 by Brandon Vogt.

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Contents

Introduction to the Teacher Resource	4
Part I. Catholicism Is True	8
1. Because God Exists	9
2. Because We Need Religion	13
3. Because Jesus Is God	18
4. Because Jesus Started a Church	23
Part II. Catholicism Is Good	29
5. Because It Built Western Civilization	30
6. Because of Its Heroic Charity	37
7. Because It Doesn't Go with the Times	41
8. Because It Offers True Forgiveness	46
Part III. Catholicism Is Beautiful	51
9. Because It Cherishes Beauty	52
10. Because It Lifts Us Up	57
11. Because It's for Everybody	62
Conclusion: Join the Rebellion	66

Introduction

Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too) is a fast-moving, refreshing twenty-first-century case for the faith. It addresses many questions teenagers—non-Catholics, nonpracticing Catholics, and nonbelievers—typically bring up when it comes to what they want to know about the Catholic Church and what might be distancing them from the Church. Likewise, the book encourages teens who are practicing their faith to reflect on what they profess to believe and then confidently and accurately defend it. The activities and lessons in this resource are applicable—with some nuancing—to students in each of these groups.

The book is also a recounting of the spiritual journey of the author, Brandon Vogt. Vogt was one of the millennial “nones” when it came to religion until, as a mechanical engineering student at Florida State University, he began a passionate search for the truth. That search led him unexpectedly to the Catholic Church. He converted in 2008. In 2013, he started StrangeNotions.com, now the largest site of dialogue between Catholics and atheists.

Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too) is a 176-page book that presents an argument for Catholicism in three parts:

- Part I: Catholicism Is True
- Part II: Catholicism Is Good
- Part III: Catholicism Is Beautiful

The book is a perfect source of supplementary reading for Catholic high school theology students. It combines well with existing courses, for example, as a primer on Catholicism for freshmen as part of one of their first-year courses or as an accompaniment to an ecclesiology or Church history course. The book is available at www.avemariapress.com

SCHEDULING OPTIONS

Twelve lesson resources are offered in this manual, corresponding with the eleven chapters of the book and its conclusion. The lesson resources lend themselves well to different scheduling options in combination with a one-semester theology course. For example, the book can be taught over

- Twelve weeks. Assign one chapter for reading per week. Complete some or all of the suggested lesson resource assignments and activities for the assigned chapter. *Suggestion:* Reserve one day per week for focused in-class study of the book.
- Six weeks. Assign two chapters for reading per week. Complete some or all of the suggested lesson resource assignments and activities for the assigned two chapters. *Suggestion:* Reserve two days per week for focused in-class study of the book.

- Four weeks. Assign three chapters for reading per week. Complete some or all of the suggested lesson resource assignments and activities for the assigned three chapters.
Suggestion: Reserve three days per week for focused in-class study of the book.
- Three weeks. Assign four chapters for reading per week. Complete some or all of the suggested lesson resource assignments and activities for the assigned four chapters.
Suggestion: Reserve four days per week for focused in-class study of the book.

GETTING STARTED

Introduce this “mini-course” or “course-within-a-course” with an explanation based on the book’s introduction (pages 1–8). The introduction begins by briefly explaining the author’s journey to Catholicism, focusing on the years from when he was a teen who described himself as “spiritual but not religious” through a searching and exploration time for truth during his college years to his eventual entrance into the Church in his midtwenties. He then describes the reaction he received to his becoming Catholic as “crickets and confusion.” He concludes that choosing to be Catholic is a provocative choice or, as the title to the introduction states, “the only rebellion left.”

The author then shares statistics about how the Catholic Church is losing membership (see pages 3–4). He summarizes by pointing to the fact that 50 percent of millennials have left the Church, and that for every one person who becomes Catholic over six people leave the Church.

The book is not a spiritual memoir of Brandon Vogt. Rather, he explains that it was truth, goodness, and beauty—especially viewed together—that attracted him to the Church and continues his progression as a person and a Catholic.

Assign in class silent, individual reading of the introduction (approximately fifteen minutes). Then call on the class to respond to the following prompts, first in writing either in a notebook or on scrap paper:

- Why are people leaving the Church?
- Why do people return to the Church or remain Catholic?
- What are some questions you have about the Catholic faith?

Collect the papers and summarize the responses anonymously, either calling some out or in a written document.

Explain that the purpose of this short course is to answer these questions and the additional overarching question: “Why should a person be Catholic?”

HOW TO USE THE TEACHER RESOURCE

The teacher resource has a number of elements (listed below) to help support the reading content in the book. Depending on the scheduling option you have chosen, assign the chapter(s) to be read for the particular week(s). The students should complete the reading outside of class time.

Choose elements in the teacher resource that can be used to enhance the students' reading of the book. Some of the elements work particularly well as classroom activities; others are better as individual assignments to be completed outside of class.

BACKGROUND

The background material is intended for the teacher. Read the paragraph to refresh and supplement your understanding of the material in the assigned chapter. You may also paraphrase the background material for the students when you give the students their reading assignment.

OPENER

The opener is designed with an implicit reference to the material in the book. It usually involves a student discussion. There are several ways to handle discussions, for example, with a partner, in a triad, or with the entire class. However, in whatever way you choose, it is always wise to allow the students to pre-respond to whatever has been asked, usually by writing down their response on a piece of scrap paper. Also, when calling on students to respond to the entire class, always allow for a "pass option," allowing the student to refrain from commenting in public at his or her own choosing.

TEXT REFERENCE

The text reference refers to a presentation, exercise, or activity especially geared to one section of the book. The page numbers for the particular section are listed. This material is more explicitly connected to the referenced pages in the book than the opener is. Some of these suggestions ask the students to work in class. Others are teacher-led presentations that require less student feedback.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The writing assignment—usually not more than four or five paragraphs in length—is drawn from the chapter text, a separate article or link, or a Scripture passage, or is directly related to the text reference presentation. Students can work on this assignment in class or as homework. Grade using points, a letter grade, or pass and fail.

READING COMPREHENSION

Reading comprehension questions are questions to help you to determine whether the student has read the chapter. All of the answers are found in the book itself. These can be assigned as an in-class or homework assignment.

ENRICHMENT

This section provides additional material on one or more of the main topics in the chapter. It may be purely for teacher enrichment or lend itself to an extra student assignment.

READING IN CONTEXT

You may wish to create a worksheet out of the reading in context assignment and distribute copies to each student. The intention is to make sure the students understand key words used in the chapter.

VIDEO

One video is suggested for each chapter. The videos are less than ten minutes in length. Play in class, or assign the link for students to watch as homework. A brief writing prompt is included with each video suggestion.

ASSIGNING A BOOK REPORT

As an optional extension to the course and to accompany the reading of *Why I Am Catholic (and You Should Be Too)*, assign the students to read and report on one of the books that contain great conversion stories (pages 162–63) or the author’s ten best suggestions for clarifying the case for Catholicism (pages 171–72). Name some or all of the requirements listed here for the book report. Sample grading rubrics are included on page 67–68 of this resource.

- Use correct heading, title, and general format (e.g., typed, double spacing).
- Make sure the report is the correct length (e.g., three to five pages).
- No switching of tenses.
- No run-on sentences.
- Don’t write in fragments.
- Write a brief synopsis of the book.
- Answer what the book explained about Catholicism.
- Answer why the book was or was not appealing.

PART I

Catholicism Is True

1

Because God Exists

Read pages 11–26.

BACKGROUND

The first reason for accepting Catholicism as a belief system is because it is true. As belief in God is an essential truth of Catholicism, a first essential question is to prove the existence of God. Atheists and agnostics make intellectual arguments against the existence of God. This chapter equips students with three points of evidence and knowledge to logically and reasonably support the existence of God.

OPENER

Scatter five or six different statements such as the following on the board:

- **I believe the sun is shining today.**
- **I believe that the square root of 529 is 23.**
- **I believe that Republicans (or Democrats) do a better job running this country.**
- **I believe my mother loves me.**
- **I believe I am a good listener.**
- **I believe that honesty is the best policy.**
- **I believe scientists will find a cure for cancer.**

Ask the students to share some of the things they believe, and add them to the list. Then ask them to look at all the different beliefs they have shared and consider how they would go about proving each of them. For example, beliefs about the weather can often be confirmed by looking out of the window. Mathematical truths can be proven or disproved by “doing the math.” However, many other beliefs are not so easy to justify. Ask the students how they would go about proving some of the beliefs written on the board. What is the evidence that their mother loves them? How do they know someone is a good listener? Is it possible to “prove” that a particular event will happen in the future? End with a short discussion on which beliefs are reasonable, even though they cannot be “proved” through the use of our senses or our intellect.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 15–26)

Next, erase the board and write, “I believe that God exists.” Begin your explanation of the three clues for God’s existence named in the text and write them under the previous statement:

- 1. The Universe**
- 2. Morality**
- 3. Reason**

Summarize with a statement like the following:

The uniting principle behind each of the three clues is that God uses our very human experiences to prepare us to know and understand him. The beauty we find in the universe is a dim reflection of the beauty of heaven. The moral intuition to the rightness or wrongness of actions is something beyond us. Our ability to come to knowledge about the existence of a personal God pales in the real intimacy we gain with him when he reveals himself to us and gives us the grace to welcome this revelation.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Direct the students to write one paragraph explaining which of the three clues of God’s existence are most compelling and why.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Why is sensory evidence not the best type of evidence when considering the existence of God?
2. Name and explain the Kalam argument for God’s existence.
3. Explain why the cause of the universe could not have been anything within the universe itself.
4. Share an example of a person’s innate sense of right and wrong.
5. Explain the meaning of conscience in your own words.
6. What is an example of something that is objectively wrong?
7. What are the possibilities for where objectively moral facts come from?
8. What is the counterargument to unguided evolution of human reason?

ENRICHMENT

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) shared five “proofs” for the existence of God based on the writings of the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Share these five proofs with the students.

1. *The Unmoved Mover*. There is motion in the world (e.g., neutrons, electrons, protons, and atoms). Whatever is in motion had to be moved by something else. This “something else” also must have been moved by Something or Someone. Continue imagining back to the beginning of time, and we must conclude there was a First Mover, an Unmoved Mover, which is God.

2. *First Cause*. Nothing causes itself. For example, a painting comes about from an artist who was brought into existence by her parents. Who caused these parents? Keep going back to the beginning, and you must conclude there was a First Cause or Uncaused Cause that was eternal. This Being we call God. Today, even those who accept the “big bang” theory of the origin of the universe are forced to ask questions about where the primeval matter that started everything came from. The only logical answer is a Divine Being, who made it.

3. *Everything That Doesn’t Have to Exist Requires an Explanation of Why It Exists* (i.e., “the cosmological argument”). “Nothing” cannot create “something.” Therefore, we are forced to conclude there must be one necessary, eternal Being (God) who always was and who brought other beings into existence.

4. *Supreme Model*. Persons and things in this world have different *degrees* of qualities such as goodness, truth, beauty, and justice. But we can only speak of different degrees of these qualities by comparing them to a Supreme Model or reference point. This perfect model of goodness, truth, and beauty is the perfect being we call God.

5. *Grand Designer*. There is a beauty, immensity, symmetry, and power in our world that forces us to conclude that a Grand Designer made it all. A simple spider spinning its web, a beaver building its dam, the earth rotating around the sun, the chemical mix that produces life, and the awesome process of human reproduction—all these and countless other realities suggest a God who implanted laws in the universe to make it work right. G. K. Chesterton once said, “Show me a watch without a watchmaker, then I’ll take a universe without a Universe-Maker.”

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students define the following words or use them correctly in a sentence.

- **Polemic**. A very critical or harsh verbal or written attack on someone.
- **Theism**. Broadly defined as the belief in one God who is creator of the universe.
- **Transcendent**. Something that surpasses the normal and is above or beyond the range of physical human experience.

- **Philosophy.** A way of thinking about people and the universe that focuses on the nature of human thought and the nature of the universe and looks at connections between them.
- **Empirical.** Based on verifiable evidence or observation.

VIDEO

“Bishop Barron on Why Do We Believe in God?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP2rLgrBtTI>

Time: 6:21

Bishop Barron presents three arguments for why people believe in God. Have the students watch and name the three arguments, choose one that they think is the strongest argument, and explain why in three to four written paragraphs.

2

Because We Need Religion

Read pages 27–38.

BACKGROUND

The word *religion* derives from a Latin word that means “to bind together.” It is natural and good for people to bind themselves together with God, the source of all life and goodness, and with one another as well. As the chapter details, religious affiliation has been dropping in recent years. Many teenagers and young adults continue to identify themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” This is unfortunate because affiliation with religion brings much value. The Catholic religion in particular enables people to seek the truth proclaimed and taught by the Catholic Church.

OPENER

Share the words of the Easter 2013 homily of the late Cardinal Francis George of Chicago on the phenomena of being “spiritual but not religious.” ([homily link](#))

It’s somewhat fashionable these days to describe oneself as “spiritual but not religious.” This is supposed to mean that one is open to an experience beyond the commercial or the political but not tied to “institutional” religion. One claims an experience of transcendence that is bound by no one else’s rules.

People can always make claims to any kind of experience. The question is always: Who cares? Why should anyone care where someone else gets a spiritual high? Because no one really cares, the claim to be spiritual but not religious is always safe. It’s never a threat and can be dismissed quite easily. The claim to be religious is different.

It is a claim that God himself has taken the initiative to reveal himself to us and tell us who he is and who we are. Religion binds us to God according to his will, not ours, in a community of faith that he has brought into existence. Being religious can therefore be threatening.

Being religious as a Christian starts with the belief that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. Faith in Christ’s resurrection is central to Christian religion. Jesus is not just someone’s personal idea. He really exists in a real

body, now transformed by conquering death itself. Those who are “spiritual” often deny Christ’s resurrection as a physical event, something that makes its own demands when you bump into it. They prefer a Christ who is safely an idea in their minds, made in their image and likeness. By contrast, the risen Christ, the real Christ, breaks into our experience and personally seeks those he calls to be religious, to believe what God has done for us, much to our surprise. Meeting the risen Christ spiritually therefore depends upon believing in him religiously.

We are given the gift of faith in the sacrament of Baptism, in which we are configured to the risen Christ. Faith endures, even when there’s not a lot of spiritual tingle in our lives! “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,” is the cry of a religious person who asks Christ to take him beyond his own spiritual experience into a new world where bodies as well as minds share in God’s grace. Faith takes seriously everything that comes from God. The faith-filled person is sure of God and distrustful of himself. Unlike faith in God, experience is often wrong in religious matters.

Our personal faith needs communitarian buttressing, lest it degenerate into an individual spirituality. One solid and sure means of corroborating our personal faith is to check it against the faith of the church, the community founded by Christ upon the apostles. One way to make that check is to go to Peter, the apostle Jesus called to be a rock. Peter and his successors confirm our faith and keep us on the path of true religion.

Also, today some “nones” think of religion from a consumer’s perspective. They treat religion and a religious experience as something to be consumed with little thought to its traditions and doctrines. Likewise, the consumer perspective often holds that worship, prayer, and community can be subtly transformed into a religious product to be consumed and not a communal religious practice and system of beliefs that bind people together with others in common commitment to God and neighbor. The latter is a more authentic understanding of religion.

Call on several students, one at a time, to come to the front of the room and be “on the spot” as you present them with a question, such as one of those listed below:

- How do you witness people having a consumer perspective on religion?
- What is your reaction to Cardinal George’s words?
- How do you understand the difference between being spiritual and being religious?
- Why do people your age drop out of organized religion?
- What do you find positive about being part of a religious community?

- What is the future of organized religion?
- What do you make of so many different religions in the world?

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 35–36)

In “Go in Haste! Be Amazed! Treasure!” (www.wordonfire.org/resources/article/go-in-haste-be-amazed-treasure/5366), Bishop Robert Barron decries the sobering statistics describing the rise of the “nones” before sharing a reflection on a passage from Luke’s Gospel (2:16–21) that sheds more light on the issue. To overcome the staleness of a life without participation in religion, Bishop Barron suggests that people need

- “energy, verve, and enthusiasm” as Mary had when she received the Good News she would be the mother of God;
- “astonishment” at the gifts of God; and
- and the ability to “treasure” the good things God has given us and hold them up in the light against the darkness of the world.

Make copies of the article, and read it aloud with the class.

The second paragraph of the article links to four other articles written about the issue of the lack of religious practice and participation among young people. Divide the class into four small groups. Give copies of one of the linked articles to each member of a group, and ask them to read and discuss it. Call on a representative of each small group to share a summary of their article to the entire class, focusing on these points:

- What is the subject of the article?
- What point does it make regarding religion?
- How can religious people concretely respond to the article?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The text uses two analogies to describe the need for religion in today’s world: John Henry Newman’s comparison to religion as the sturdy banks along the river that keeps the water moving forward and the example of the referee in a sport’s game who is tasked with keeping the rules of the game and helping it to flourish. Have the students write their own analogy that explains the necessity and benefits of religion.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. What is the definition of religion?

2. Why have people throughout history thought of religion as more helpful than oppressive?
3. Who are the “nones”?
4. How is someone who claims to be scientific but does not follow scientific rules and laws like people who call themselves “spiritual but not religious”?
5. What are ways the Catholic Church suggests that people are not alone on their spiritual quests?
6. Name one piece of evidence that suggests religion makes a person happier.

ENRICHMENT

How Do Catholics Interpret the Bible?

For Catholics, the Bible is the Book of the Church. This is a significant statement because for many other Christians the opposite is true: they belong to a church of the Book.

Think about the differences in these two statements.

Catholics believe that Sacred Scripture is “the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit” (*Constitution on Divine Revelation*). It was the Church—real people—that was inspired by God to write the word God intended. The Scriptures (“writings”) are one of the ways that God communicates to humankind.

The inspired text of the Bible contains the fullness of God’s Revelation. In the first century, following the apostolic Tradition, the Church determined which writings were to be included in the Bible. The complete list is called the canon of Scripture. While these books contain the fullness of God’s Revelation, the Church continues to guide the People of God through its integration and application of the truths of Scripture. God continues to guide the successors of the apostles—the pope and bishops—in every generation to preserve, expound on, and spread God’s Word to all. This ongoing teaching is known as the Church’s Sacred Tradition.

Both Scripture and Tradition are accepted by Catholics as equal means for transmitting God’s Word.

What about the phrase “church of the Book”? Honestly, there are several Christian denominations that do not assign equal weight to Scripture and Tradition. For some Christians, the Bible is God’s final revelation to the world. Answers to every human concern can be answered in the pages of the Scriptures according to this view. In these denominations, the Bible is the primary focus for instruction, worship, and prayer.

It’s important to know not only what is in the Bible but also how it was written and how the Bible continues to have a place in the Church today. It is, after all, the Book of the Church.

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students write one or two paragraphs in response to each question with the set of terms below.

1. What is the difference between someone who is *atheist* and someone who is *agnostic*?
2. Name one scientific achievement of each of the following: Galileo Galilei, Sir Isaac Newton, and Charles Darwin.
3. Compare the conversions to Catholicism of St. Augustine of Hippo and St. John Henry Newman.

VIDEO

“Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus”

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IAhDGYlpqY)

Time: 4:03

This video is referenced on page 28. After playing the video, call a student to be “on the spot” and debate the points in the video based on what he or she read in the chapter. Call one or two other students to also be on the spot for the same exercise.

3

Because Jesus Is God

Read pages 39–52.

BACKGROUND

There is quite a bit of historical evidence about the existence of Jesus who lived in the Middle East two thousand years ago. This evidence comes from not only his followers but his enemies as well. His name, information about him, and details of his first disciples are found in several non-Christian sources. However, there is more to “proving” Jesus lived at a certain time and place. Christians believe Jesus is God. What evidence is there for that, and how reliable is the evidence? This chapter examines the Christian Scriptures as a source for the belief that Jesus is God. After this source is verified, its strongest evidence that Jesus is God is discussed: that he rose from the dead.

OPENER

Ask the students a series of questions designed to bring out into the open any confusion in their minds concerning the relationship between Jesus and God. Ask if they agree with each other’s answers and if the answers make sense in relationship to one another.

- Is Jesus the Son of God in the same way that you are the son or daughter of your father?
- Did Jesus create the world?
- Did God die on the Cross?
- Is Jesus alive or dead right now? Was he dead at one time?
- Is Jesus God? Whom did he talk with when he prayed? Himself?
- Can you call yourself a Christian if you don’t think Jesus is God?

Admit to the confusion. Then clarify by explaining that there was an actual historical person named Jesus who lived and died in a country on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. You might want to point it out on a map. Next, draw a timeline on the board that represents the entire scope of the history of the earth. Put an X way over to the right of the timeline to represent the very small period of time that people have inhabited the earth. Then, even farther to the very right of the timeline, put a cross to represent the time in human history when Jesus lived on earth. His life on earth two thousand years ago is a rather short time ago in human history.

Next, have the students locate God on the timeline. Use the word *God*. Give them a few tries before explaining it is impossible. God is before all time and after all time and above and beyond and through all time. You might draw a circle around the timeline. Ask, “What is the relationship between the eternal, mysterious, all-powerful, timeless God and Jesus, the person who lived two thousand years ago off the coast of the Mediterranean. You might have a few students attempt to answer this question. Refer to chapter 3 of the text to further the discussion of why Christians believe Jesus is God.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 45–52)

Share Gospel evidence of Jesus’ divinity from pages 45–48. Put these six reasons on the board to supplement the material in the text:

- 1. Jesus used the traditional name for God, YHWH.**
- 2. Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies.**
- 3. Jesus himself made prophecies that were fulfilled.**
- 4. Jesus performed miracles that can only be explained through divine intervention.**
- 5. Jesus forgave sins.**
- 6. Jesus was always present with God and in control.**

Pose this question: “What do you feel is the most compelling evidence the Gospels offer to believe that Jesus is God?” Call on students to explain their answer.

In a similar manner, summarize the five pieces of historical evidence for believing in Christ’s Resurrection (page 50):

- 1. Jesus died by crucifixion witnessed by many.**
- 2. He was given a burial at a tomb owned by Joseph of Arimathea.**
- 3. His tomb was discovered empty the third day after his death.**
- 4. Several people from different backgrounds, including friends and enemies, interacted with him after his death.**
- 5. After the interactions with Jesus, his disciples experienced a sudden and remarkable transformation.**

Again discuss with the students, “What do you feel is the most compelling evidence of Jesus’ Resurrection?” Call on students to explain their answer.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Have the students choose and look up three of the following passages and write one paragraph for each explaining how it explains an aspect of Jesus’ divinity.

- Isaiah 11:1–2

- Micah 5:1
- Isaiah 7:14
- Psalm 72:10
- Psalm 41:10
- Zechariah 11:12–13
- Isaiah 50:6
- Isaiah 53:7
- Psalm 22:17
- Luke 9:22
- John 13:36–38
- Luke 18:32
- Handout 2-B continued
- Mark 8:31
- Mark 10:32
- John 13:19
- Luke 4:31–37
- Matthew 8:23–27
- Matthew 9:1–8
- John 11:38–44
- John 5:36
- Matthew 26:63–66
- Matthew 27:51–54
- Mark 16:9–15

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Explain C. S. Lewis's "liar, lunatic, Lord" argument for Jesus' divinity.
2. What is a fourth option that Lewis didn't explicitly consider?
3. Name two reasons the Bible is a credible source of evidence about Jesus and his teachings.
4. What evidence for Jesus' miracles comes from non-Christian writing sources?
5. What is a reason that Jesus did not clearly state "I am God"?
6. Name one example from the New Testament when Jesus acted as God.
7. What is the strongest proof Jesus is God?

ENRICHMENT

The Gospels present a common timeline for Jesus' life. Non-Christian historians of the time testify to his crucifixion and make mention of the early Christian Church he founded. While the Gospels were not written to be biographies, they still refer to actual events in Jesus' life. Finally, the early martyrs, some of whom joyfully died for Jesus, also testify to his real existence and the impact he had on his followers.

Non-Christian beliefs about Jesus' identity vary widely. A comparison of the views of several (albeit not nearly "all") world religions is available at www.religionfacts.com/jesus/religious_views.htm. It is notable that many non-Christians, and in fact even many atheists, regard the man Jesus with a high degree of respect.

Especially in a society, however, that tends to relativize the idea of religious truth or moral absolutes, this respect can lead even well-intentioned Christians to wonder if it really matters whether Jesus was more than a wonderful model of human life and service. Students wrestling with this might be encouraged to consider some of the scriptural examples in this chapter more closely. Could Jesus, for instance, be a "nice guy," a role model, and even a respected messenger of God but not truly God—and yet refer to himself as the Son of Man, forgive the sins of others, or stand before the Sanhedrin and affirm his divine identity?

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students look up and write the part of speech, phonetic pronunciation, and definition for the following words.

1. explicitly
2. skepticism
3. perspective
4. consensus
5. suffice

6. intuition
7. extraordinary
8. scenario
9. trilemma
10. nondenominational

VIDEO

“How Can Jesus Be Both God and Human?”
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=qX7q3yDoFD0)

Time: 2:41

Bishop Robert Barron discusses the various heresies surrounding belief in Jesus’ humanity and divinity before explaining the Church’s understanding, defined at the Council of Chalcedon. After watching the video, have the students write a sentence about Jesus’ humanity and divinity that uses the correlative conjunctions “both-and.”

4

Because Jesus Started a Church

Read pages 53–69.

BACKGROUND

Why should a person's search for a church end with the Catholic Church? This chapter emphasizes how Christ instituted the Church rather than author Scripture. In fact, Sacred Scripture was written and arbitrated as inspired by the authority of the Church. Jesus taught, ministered to, saved, and continues to be present in the Church today, especially in his Body and Blood in the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. This, too, is a prime reason to be Catholic.

OPENER

Central teachings in this chapter are that (1) Christ founded the Church and (2) Christ remains present in the Church. To open, write these two questions on the board:

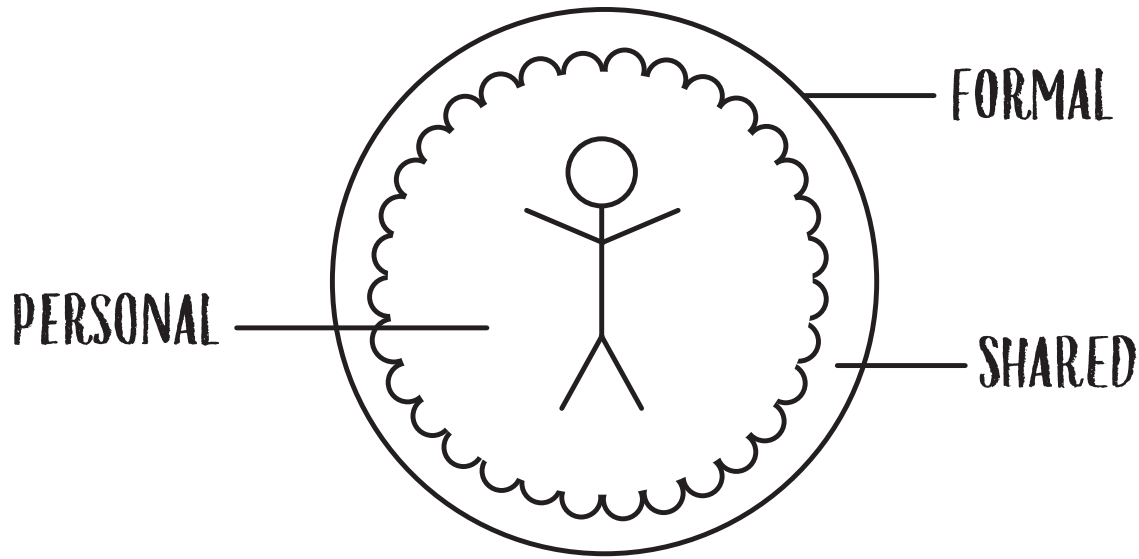
- **What are the origins of the Church?**
- **How is Christ present in the Church?**

Have the students copy these questions in a notebook or journal and write one- to two-paragraph responses to each. Next, have them share their responses to each question with a partner. After a brief time, call on students to summarize and share their answers with the entire class. Record the responses on the board.

Zero in on the Catholic Church's unity. Point out that Catholics are united by (1) the profession of one creed, (2) the worship of God celebrated in the sacraments, and (3) the succession of bishops through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Call on students to describe any experiences they have had of going to Mass in different parts of the country or world. Ask, "In what ways was the Mass essentially the same in these different places?"

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 57–59)

Explore further the students' commitment to the Catholic Church. Draw the following faith diagram on the board:



Explain that the stick person stands for the individual's personal relationship with God. This is Ryan's relationship with God, Nancy's relationship with God, and so forth. (Use the real names of the students present.) Continue by saying that "God loves each person in this classroom uniquely. God knows everything about each person and loves us as we are. And each person in this room has a unique and special way of responding to God. Some may be very close to God; some may be hardly on speaking terms with God. Some expect God to give them everything they want; some see God as expecting too much from them."

Share a quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

Faith is a personal act—the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given your faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. (166)

Explain that the wavy line around the stick figure stands for the system of values that is part of the faith system of the community. These are values a person sees lived out in their family, their parish, and among their group of Catholic friends. They include all those values that groups consider important and expect a person to live up to: truthfulness, sharing forgiveness, respect for authority, reverence for life, gratitude, and prayerfulness. This aspect of faith is hard to pin down, but it has a very powerful influence on a person's life. The more a person accepts a community's faith system, the more they feel as if they belong; if the person rejects the values lived there then they really don't belong to that community. Usually people want to belong to a group whose values and faith system they share; and conversely, they naturally absorb the values of the faith to which they belong.

The outside circle in this faith diagram represents the third aspect of Catholic faith. This is the faith of the institutional Church. This aspect of faith includes the doctrines the Church teaches, the commandments and moral codes the Church upholds, the Mass and sacraments and other liturgical practices of the Church, the Scriptures and the Church's interpretation of them, and the Church's hierarchy and governance—all of the formal institutional means the Church has designed to preserve and transmit the faith of Christ down the centuries. As the *Catechism* says, "As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith" (171).

Explain that this chart represents three aspects of the one Catholic faith. This is a faith that is gifted to Catholics at Baptism and must be fully accepted by a person in order to make it fully theirs.

Tell the students you are going to ask them to respond to three statements. If they hold up five fingers it means they agree with the statement strongly. If they hold up one finger it means they do not agree with the statement at all. The other amount of fingers (two to four) fit into the middle of the spectrum. These are the statements:

- I want to deepen my personal relationship with God.
- I want to live my daily life according to a Catholic value system and belong to communities and groups that uphold Catholic values.
- I want to be an active member of the Catholic Church.

Call on students with a variety of responses (one to five) to share their reasoning for responding to each statement.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

In a 1926 essay, G. K. Chesterton, an English writer, wrote,

The difficulty of explaining "why I am a Catholic" is that there are ten thousand reasons all amounting to one reason: that Catholicism is true. I could fill all my space with separate sentences each beginning with the words, "It is the only thing that . . ." As, for instance: 1) It is the only thing that really prevents a sin from being a secret. 2) It is the only thing in which the superior cannot be superior, in the sense of supercilious. 3) It is the only thing that frees a person from the degrading slavery of being a child of his age. 4) It is the only think that talks as if it were the truth; as if it were a real messenger refusing to tamper with a real message. (From *Twelve Modern Apostles and Their Creeds* (1926) reprinted in *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton*, Vol. 3, Ignatius Press, 1990)

In two separate written entries, each two to three paragraphs in length, assign the students to do the following:

1. Choose and explain the meaning of one of Chesterton's four reasons for why he is Catholic.
2. Finish four sentences about why you are Catholic beginning with the words "It's the only thing that . . ."

READING COMPREHENSION

1. What do most Christians agree on? What is one disagreement among Christians?
2. Name the two major splits in Christianity in history.
3. How does the Catholic Church view other religions regarding its claim to hold the fullest expression of truth?
4. What is the meaning of *sola scriptura*?
5. How does the Catholic Church refute *sola scriptura*?
6. How does the Catholic belief in the Eucharist differ from the majority of Protestant views?
7. Name and explain the four marks of the Catholic Church.
8. What are two ways the Catholic Church is the "something solid" Chesterton referred to (page 58)?

ENRICHMENT

Jesus gave Peter teaching authority (see Matthew 16:18–19) that has been passed on to the pope and bishops. Expand on the definitions of these key concepts of the Church's Magisterium, or teaching authority.

- *Magisterial teaching* refers to the role of the pope and bishops to teach authentically, that is, "with the authority of Christ" (CCC, 2034). Normally, this teaching can be found in papal encyclicals (letters), pastoral letters of the bishops, and sermons.
- *Infallibility* refers to the Catholic belief that on the essential matters of faith and morals, Church teaching is infallible or "without error." This teaching is based on Jesus' promise to always remain with the Church, and it occurs especially when the world's council of bishops gathers and meets with the pope in an ecumenical council.
- *Papal infallibility* applies in one instance: when the pope teaches *ex cathedra*, or "from the chair," of St. Peter. To be an *ex cathedra* teaching, it must be by the pope in his role as visible head of the Church, be addressed to all Catholics, be a definitive teaching

on a matter of faith or morals, and be an unchangeable decision in which the pope has used his full authority.

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students locate and write down a word from the chapter that is a synonym (or means the same thing) as the words listed below.

1. rupture [schism]
2. impulses [whims]
3. fidelity [allegiance]
4. indirectly [implicitly]
5. proud [arrogant]
6. destabilizing [undermining]
7. construed [interpreted]
8. articulate [coherent]

VIDEO

“Why Be Catholic and Not Just Christian?”
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJCbCs-y1_k)

Time: 8:58

Fr. Mike Schmitz explains the value of the Church's authority and why that makes her unique.

Assign the students to answer these questions after watching the video:

1. How does the decision at the Council of Jerusalem counter *sola scriptura*? Read Acts of the Apostles 15:1–21.
2. What did Chesterton say was ultimately the best reason for being Catholic? What is your reaction to Chesterton's answer?

PART II

Catholicism Is Good

5

Because It Built Western Civilization

Read pages 73–83.

BACKGROUND

The Church has the pivotal role in the establishment of Western civilization, including most of the progress that has been made for the good of humankind. Today, science and religion are often said to conflict. Actually, the Church from her Jewish roots of worshiping, not nature or the earth, but a good Creator who made nature and the earth, led to the development of scientific study. There are countless Catholic scientists, many of them priests. Catholics scientists are credited with several scientific breakthroughs, including recently the “big bang theory” as discovered by Fr. Georges Lemaître. Also, the Church built a university and educational system that preserved much of the art, literature, and history after the fall of the Roman Empire. As an institution, the Church has sponsored and supported more works of charity than any other. The Church also laid the groundwork for an international system of law based on the premise that “all people are created equal.”

OPENER

To prepare for the material in this chapter discussing the influence of the Church on science, help the students to further identify different types of truth. For example:

- It is 110 miles from Los Angeles to San Diego. (geographical truth)
- Ronald Reagan was president of the United States in 1981. (historical truth)
- $12 \times 12 = 144$. (mathematical truth)
- I have known Mary for many years. (relational truth)
- My mother loves me. (emotional truth)
- It is raining cats and dogs. (symbolic truth)
- Water is made up of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. (scientific truth)
- God loves me. (religious truth)

Point out that Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition contain all kinds of truth described above. Regarding science, biblical writers reflect the scientific understanding of their day,

which was very primitive. Sacred Tradition also addresses various scientific issues, from the shape of the earth to medical ethics. As the chapter points out, not only has the Church supported science, but also several great scientists were Catholics (including priests) and many scientific discoveries were made by Catholics (including priests).

Create a chart like the one below, and print it on the board or a slide. Call on students to help fill in the chart, comparing and contrasting scientific and religious truth.

SCIENTIFIC TRUTH	RELIGIOUS TRUTH
From God	From God
Objective—cannot be shaped by whim	Objective—cannot be shaped by whim
Based on observations and measurements	Based on revelation, philosophy, the use of reason, and personal experience
Helps people live in harmony with the world around them	Helps people live in harmony with the world around them; helps people orient their lives according to God’s plan for creation
Explains only those things that can be observed or measured	Helps people understand the purpose and meaning of life; is not concerned with physical measurements or cause and effect
Cannot set you free	Is the truth that sets you free
Tells us nothing about right or wrong	Helps us to understand sin as a rejection of truth

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 74–80)

The relationship between faith and science is a pivotal topic for Catholics and those questioning the Catholic faith. There are many mistaken views on the subject. The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) of Georgetown University surveyed a variety of Catholics (various levels of participation) in 2017 on the subject of faith and science.

Print copies of the report's summary (Mark M. Gray and Jonathon L. Wiggins, "Catholics' Opinions about Faith and Science," *CARA Special Report* (Fall 2017), cara.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CARA_Fall2017_Special-Report_FaithScience-FINAL.pdf), and distribute one to each student.

Read or summarize the opening of the report (pages 1–2). Focus on the statement from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (159) on the relationship between faith and science. Next, divide the students into five study groups to read and develop a summary of their assigned section that they will be able to present to others.

Group 1: The Origin of the Universe and of Life on Earth (pages 2 to 4). Focus the summary on what Catholics believe and why the Church does not have an official teaching on this issue.

Group 2: Climate Change (pages 4 to 6). Focus the summary on what Catholics believe and what the Church teaches. The group should also present a brief summary of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si*.

Group 3: Scientists and the Catholic Church (page 6). Students should summarize what Catholics know about scientists. Also, each person in the group should do brief research on one of the scientists mentioned in the first paragraph of the section and include a synopsis of the person's life and major scientific work in his or her presentation.

Group 4: Organic Science (pages 6 to 7). Focus the summary on key issues in this area including the role of religion's authority in this area, designer babies, human cloning, stem cell research, and genetically modifying humans.

Group 5: Science and Morality and The End Times and Beyond (pages 7 to 8). Focus the summary on the issues presented including the understanding of "complete truth," the responsibility for pain and suffering, and the Church's pro-life stance. Likewise, summarize the results of the survey around end time issues such as the earth's demise and the study of space.

Allow the majority of one or more class periods for the study groups to prepare their reports. Next, have the students regroup to teaching groups with at least one person from each study group in each teaching group. Each person in the teaching group is to give a three- to five-minute presentation on their area of study.

Use the concluding portion of the class to summarize the article, especially based on its conclusion (page 8).

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The Church is present in local history and culture in every state and local community in the United States. For example, cities and streets are named for Catholics or Church beliefs. Catholic hospitals, charity organizations, and colleges are also in most communities. Write about three to four paragraphs sharing the history and/or work of two examples of the Church's presence (other than a parish or parish schools) in your own community.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. What did historian Thomas Woods write about the Church's connection with Western civilization?
2. Name two problems with the view that the Church did everything in its power to stop scientific progress.
3. Why did scientific research in the field of seismology become known as "Jesuit science"?
4. What were Fr. Georges Lemaître's alternative findings about the big bang theory?
5. What two things are necessary before science can commence?
6. What historical event led to the Catholic monasteries founding an educational system, including universities?
7. What made the Church's charity work so revolutionary?
8. How did the Church lay the groundwork for our current systems of law?

ENRICHMENT

Dr. Stacy Trasancos is the author of *Particles of Faith: A Catholic Guide to Navigating Science (Student Edition)*, a book on faith and science with accompanying teacher resources to facilitate a course or unit on the topic for high school students. The book is available at www.avemariapress.com. In the book's first chapter, Trasancos writes,

How many times do we hear of teens or young adults saying they have accepted science and rejected faith? This is what is called a false *dichotomy*—that is, a false choice—because you do not have to pick one and give up the other. Nevertheless, we must also admit that there are many scientific conclusions that seem to contradict Christian faith. It can cause a sense of anxiety.

One of the controversies between faith and science that is often cited is the Church's censoring of the scientist Galileo Galilei in the seventeenth

century. The common belief of the time was that the Earth was the center of the *universe* and that celestial bodies (in the heavens) were made from different (divine) material than bodies on land. This knowledge was, of course, incomplete. People were right to maintain faith that God created a celestial realm beyond our imaginations, but they were wrong about how it existed. They were right to maintain that humans were central in the hierarchy of creatures, but they were wrong to think the Earth is the center of the universe. Galileo taught that the sun, not the Earth, was the center of the universe. His defense of his worldview seemed to attack Pope Urban VIII, and to make a long story short, the politics of the issue led to his censure. Galileo was more right, but he was still not completely correct about the position of the celestial bodies. Thanks to the efforts of scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, and theologians, however, the Church eventually came to understand a changed worldview where the sun was the center of the solar system (not the universe). In 1992, St. John Paul II formally acknowledged the errors of the Galileo affair.

This entire well-known Galileo affair teaches us an important point: Faith and science are two different manifestations of the same reality. When they seem to have conflicting conclusions, it is because our knowledge is not complete.

There is a natural tendency to dive into a new topic or question feeling either anxious to understand the topic and the answers right away or to dismiss the question because the information seems difficult and hidden behind technical language. Try to temper both extremes.

Learning is difficult if you are not clear about what you know and do not know, and there is no shame in admitting limits. Truly, it is an intellectual virtue to be honest about the limits of your knowledge, and it is quite liberating and clarifying.

When you are new to a topic or question, write down what you understand, try to articulate what you think you grasp, and pinpoint precisely where you begin to be confused.

Then, do not rush to form an opinion. The most controversial topics involving science and religion are debated because there are no clear answers. Learn what is known about science, but remember that science is *provisional*. Something is provisional when it supplies a temporary commodity. We say that food is provisional, for example. Scientific theories and models supply temporary explanations until better ones are discovered

with more research. To say science is provisional is to say that science is never complete. Try to understand a variety of opinions, note them, and file them away for later if you are not sure how they fit together. If you are not ready to articulate an opinion, do not. If someone presses you, say, “I have not formed my opinion yet, because I am still learning.”

You might be surprised at the number of useless debates that such honesty will spare you. Before you begin a journey to gain new knowledge, realize that you are entering a conversation between faith and science that is already in progress. In time, you will form your own views, and you may even alter the future course of this conversation.

St. Thomas Aquinas, citing Aristotle, gave this reminder: “A small mistake in the beginning is a big one in the end.” If you are going to the store, for instance, and you take the first step in the wrong direction, it doesn’t matter how many steps you take afterwards, you won’t get there. The right first step for discussing science in the light of faith is to allow yourself to experience awe and wonder when you see creation. Develop a view that sees all of creation as the handiwork of God.

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students list the names of the following Catholic scientists and one or two words that define what scientific work or discovery they are most associated with. They will need to research some of the scientists online.

1. Louis Pasteur

2. Blaise Pascal

3. Roger Bacon

4. Fr. Giambattista Riccioli

5. Nicholas Steno

6. Fr. Anthanasius Kircher

7. Fr. Roger Boscovich

8. Fr. J. B. Macelwane

9. Fr. Nicholas Copernicus

10. Fr. Georges Lemaître

VIDEO

“Bishop Barron on Scientism and God’s Existence”

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZkHv8iTJPo)

Time: 8:51

Have your students watch the video and write a three- to four-paragraph summary. In a second part, have them copy and paste an argument and counterargument presented in the comments below the video and write their own statement supporting either one with an explanation of why they sided how they did.

6

Because of Its Heroic Charity

Read pages 85–95.

BACKGROUND

Jesus' command to love one another as he loved them was followed by this declaration: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for his friends" (Jn 15:13). Catholics ever since, from the apostles to those living today, have obeyed Christ's words and have heroically given themselves over in love to others. The chapter tells three such examples of witness in detail: St. Lawrence Martyr in the third century who gave away the Church's riches to the poor before he was martyred, St. Damien of Molokai in the nineteenth century who embraced the lepers he was assigned to and brought them dignity, and St. Teresa of Calcutta in the twentieth century who likewise treated the poorest of the poor with compassion. The sheer number of examples of heroic charity in all the centuries of the Church is a central reason that people are attracted to the Catholic Church.

OPENER

Have the students sit in small group circles of four to six members each. Pass out sheets of paper, pens, and envelopes to each person. Explain that they will be writing a "letter of affirmation" to each person in their group. The letters should be as concrete as possible, telling each person things such as the following:

- what is special and unique about them
- the special talents and gifts observed in them
- why he or she is an appreciated part of the class and school
- the signs of charity he or she exhibits to others

Each person should write a letter for everyone in the group, seal the letters, and wait until the end of the activity time to deliver them. Remind the students to be constructive and polite and that they may feel embarrassed if they receive letters that have been written with more care than the letters they send.

When the activity is completed and the students have read their letters, make the point that their very action in writing their letters was an act of love and that they probably read examples of how others view them as a loving person. The subject of this chapter is how

Catholics have witnessed love to others in the world in heroic ways for the entire history of the Church.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 85–86)

Share the following information:

In the two millenia of Christianity, approximately seventy million people have given their lives for the faith, and about two-thirds of that number were martyred since 1900. About two million Armenian Christians were massacred between 1905 and 1918 by the Turkish government. Much of the persecutions and murder of Christians in recent decades has taken place in primarily Islamic nations.

St. José Sánchez del Río was martyred in 1920 during the height of persecution of the Church in Mexico. Mexicans during this time were imprisoned for wearing religious medals or even saying “*Adiós*” in public (*Adiós* literally means “to God”). Bishops closed churches. A wave of protest among the 95 percent Catholic population erupted into what is known as the Cristero Rebellion. Nearly fifty thousand soldiers for the Church fought against federal troops. One of the heroes of the movement was Fr. Miguel Pro, a Jesuit priest who, along with his brother, was arrested and falsely accused for trying to kill the Mexican president. Prior to his execution by firing squad, Fr. Pro extended his arms in the shape of a cross and yelled “*Viva Cristo Rey*,” Spanish for “Long live Christ the King.” Pope John Paul II beatified Miguel Pro in 1988. St. José Sánchez del Río and twelve other martyrs were canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Ask the students to respond in writing to the following question: “What challenges and opposition to your Catholic faith do you face (1) in your own family, (2) among your peers, and (3) in society at large?” After they have had a chance to reflect and write, call on several volunteers to share their responses to each part of the question.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. What did Pope Francis mean when he said the Church is like a “field hospital”?
2. Why was St. Lawrence appointed archdeacon of Rome by the pope?
3. What did St. Lawrence show the emperor when he asked to receive the Church’s treasure?
4. Who was St. Damien sent to minister to in Hawaii?
5. What surprised the people the most about St. Damien?

6. What was Mother Teresa's primary mission to the people of Calcutta?
7. How were Mother Teresa's sisters able to light the life of the lonely man in Australia?

ENRICHMENT

Other quotations by the saints mentioned in this chapter:

St. José Sánchez del Río

- "My faith in Christ cannot be sold even though I know it involves torture and death."
- "I die happy because I die in the ranks of the Lord."

St. Lawrence Martyr

- To his executioners: "At last I am finished; you may now take from me and eat."
- To God before his death: "I thank you, O Lord; that I am permitted to enter your portals."

St. Damien of Molokai

- To his superior in 1886 after contracting leprosy: "As I wrote to you about two years ago that I had then suspicions of the first germs of leprosy being in my system—the natural consequence of a long stay with these lepers—be not surprised or too much pained to know that one of your spiritual children is decorated not only with the Royal Cross of King Kalakaua, but also with the cross more heavy, and considered less honorable, or leprosy with which our Divine Savior has permitted me to be stigmatized."
- Written in his notebook: "Be severe toward yourself, indulgent toward others. Have scrupulous exactitude regarding God: prayer, meditation, Mass, administration of the sacraments. Unite your heart with God. Remember always your three vows, by which you are dead to things of this world. Remember always that God is eternal, and work courageously in order to one day be united with him forever."

St. Teresa of Calcutta

- "Intense love does not measure. It just gives."
- "I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be not more hurt, only more love."
- "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."
- "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."

- “I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask, ‘How many good things have you done in your life?’ Rather he will ask, ‘How much love did you put into what you did?’”

READING IN CONTEXT

Use each of the following words from chapter 6 in separate sentences describing an action of your faith or the faith of another present in today’s world. *Example: My resolve never **wavered** even when my peers tempted me with a behavior I knew to be inappropriate.*

1. struggled
2. persecuted
3. summoned
4. distributed

VIDEO

“Mother Teresa Acceptance Speech” (www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1979/teresa/acceptance-speech)

Time: Play from 9:05 to 19:12.

In this section of the video from her 1971 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Mother Teresa speaks about abortion. After the students have watched the video, ask them to respond in writing to the following questions:

- What did Mother Teresa say is the greatest destroyer of peace today? How so?
- What are three practical pro-life practices you can make part of your life?

Save some time to allow students to share their responses with others.

7

Because It Doesn't Go with the Times

Read pages 97–111.

BACKGROUND

Many who disagree with the Catholic Church do so without ever having researched her positions on issues they find troubling. This chapter considers two such issues in particular: the Church's teaching on sexuality and the role of women, especially the possibility of women priests. In fact, with research, you can understand that some of the Church's teachings can be changed (e.g., the requirement to not eat meat on Friday) while some cannot. The Church is the safeguarder of objective truths, not the innovator.

OPENER

This chapter discusses some of the common reasons people choose *not* to be Catholic or common criticisms they hold of the Church. Begin by asking the students, "What are some of the reasons a person might be Catholic?" List the reasons on the board, for example:

- **My parents are Catholic.**
- **I want to go to heaven.**
- **I was baptized without having a choice in the matter.**
- **Most everyone I know is.**
- **I go to a Catholic school.**
- **I believe in Jesus.**
- **It's a family tradition.**

Mark a plus (+) sign by reasons you (and the students) consider to be the "better" reasons for being a Catholic. Call on several students to discuss their reasons and why they named them.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 102–107)

As the text points out, love is central to the Church's position on issues revolving around sex (homosexuality, abortion, divorce, and cohabitation). Review the four principles of love covered in this section:

1. Love is a gift.

2. True love is always fruitful.
3. Love is faithful.
4. Our sexual proclivities and experiences are not our main identities.

Call on students to go through these principles, explaining their meaning and how they can help to explain the Church's position on the issues mentioned above.

Also, a love relationship is characterized by several other related qualities, including the following:

- *Commitment.* Love weathers the ups and downs of disagreements, tragedies, and other challenges to persevere. Also, because it takes patience to forge bonds of understanding and trust, commitment to the long term is essential.
- *Forgiveness.* Love accepts the other person as-is, though not perfect, and will forgive the other in order to strengthen the relationship. Also, someone who loves is always ready to say, "I am sorry. Please forgive me."
- *Respect.* Love respects the personal gifts the other person brings to the relationship, helps to nurture those gifts, and encourages the other person to reach his or her full potential.

Love is different from other relationships like friendship because it can exist even when it is mostly one-sided.

Students should also be aware of the differences between love and infatuation. A romantic infatuation is any relationship that involves sexual attraction or sexual feelings. Share some of these ways that it is different from love.

INFATUATION . . .

comes and goes quickly
is insecure and jealous
is emotional and dependent
feels pressure to act quickly
is centered on physical attraction, sex, and pleasure
may lead you to do things you regret
harms your other relationships
makes it difficult to work
is confining
is self-centered

LOVE . . .

grows slowly
is confident and peaceful
is balanced and independent
can wait for the right time
is attracted to the whole person
brings out the best in you
enhances all of your relationships
helps you organize and work well
is freeing
is self-giving

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Ask the students to write five other characteristics for infatuation and love. Allow time for them to share what they wrote with a partner or with the entire class.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Explain the difference between individual people changing and changing specific truths and teachings.
2. What is an example of a Church teaching that can change?
3. What is an example of a Church teaching that cannot change?
4. What is a primary reason that some people who criticize the Church are misinformed?
5. Explain, for example, why the Church prohibits divorce and remarriage and homosexual behavior.
6. Why is it a legitimate criticism to say that there are not enough women in Vatican offices?
7. How does the Church base its teaching on a male-only priesthood?

ENRICHMENT

More on Attempts to Redefine Marriage

In a speech given to the Roman Rota in 2004, Pope John Paul II said, “Marriage is not just any old union between human persons, susceptible to being configured according to a plurality of cultural models. When the Church teaches Matrimony is a natural thing, it proposes a truth made by reason for the good of couples and society.”

Contrary to objections, marriage between one man and one woman does not discriminate against any group of individuals. The natural definition of marriage implies certain parameters that apply equally to everybody. Anyone who wishes to marry must

- be of marriageable age;
- not be a close relative of the intended spouse;
- not be married already; and
- be the opposite sex of the intended spouse.

If any person claims the “right to be married” outside of these parameters, he or she is demanding not equal rights but additional rights.

Simply put, a union between two people of the same sex cannot intrinsically be a marriage. Marriage by its very nature is between one man and one woman. “The vocation to

marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator” (CCC, 1603). Marriage was not created by either the government or the Church. Marriage was created by God from the beginning. Neither the government nor the Church can redefine marriage.

MORE ON THE ISSUE OF THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Jesus went against the cultural norms of his day in his relationship with women. Jesus regularly interacted with a group of women and had several women disciples during a period and place in history in which women and men typically were not friends, especially in public. He taught women “at his feet.” In his society, women were not usually allowed to learn directly from a rabbi at the synagogue or in any other forum. The Gospels record that a group of women disciples were the first to attest to Jesus’ Resurrection and were counted on to proclaim the Resurrection to others. Nevertheless, Jesus still did not count them among the Twelve Apostles.

This teaching, part of the Deposit of Faith, is often questioned today when the fundamental equality and dignity of women is stressed. But the Church responds that the gift of vocation to the priesthood can be compared to the vocation of motherhood for women. Like ordination, motherhood can only be received as an unmerited gift. A woman cannot will herself to be a mother. Also, as Holy Orders is a sacrament for the service of others, motherhood is not primarily for the benefit of the mother but for the good of her child.

READING IN CONTEXT

Listed below are pairs of words that sound the same but mean something different. Write your own sentence for each word using it in the correct context.

1. sense/cents

2. some/sum

3. principal/principle

4. accept/except

VIDEO

"Because It's True // '5 Reasons to Be Catholic'"

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-3aIGLc9Xk>)

Time: 5:13

The video features Brandon Vogt, the author of the book, reviewing Jesus' founding of the Church. After watching the video, have the students write three sentences that begin with the words, "The Church is true . . .". Allow an opportunity for sharing.

8

Because It Offers True Forgiveness

Read pages 113–123.

BACKGROUND

In the Sacrament of Penance, the Church provides a way for us to confess and be absolved of our sins. There is no guesswork when it comes to wondering if we are really forgiven if we aren't or if we are not forgiven when we are. This sacrament, which was instituted at the direction of Jesus to Peter, and now ministered by priests and bishops, brings with it liberation from sin. We are not judged when we go to Confession; rather, we are welcomed and treated with compassion. The priest absolves our sins "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We can celebrate this sacrament as many times as we need to.

OPENER

Give the students half-sheets of paper. Tell them that what they are about to write should be printed in a manner other than their usual handwriting so that the papers will remain completely anonymous. Explain that the papers will be collected and read aloud.

Have the students finish this sentence: "The sin in my life is . . ." Add that they are to list two or three areas of sinfulness in their lives. For example, they should list things that they themselves do deliberately and repeatedly, that they know are wrong, and that are in some way going against the basic rules of respect for God, for others, and for self. (You should also complete the same writing yourself.)

Collect the papers and shuffle them well. The students should be aware that your paper is included in the pack. Then read the papers aloud to the class. (If the group is not large enough to ensure anonymity, you may choose not to read them aloud.)

Ask several students to respond to the activity. How did it feel to write down their sins? How did it feel to hear their sins read aloud? How did they feel when they heard all of the sins read aloud? How do they think God reacts to all that sinfulness?

Call on one student to respond to the following questions:

- What can you do about sin in your life?
- Can you change?
- Suppose you were someone who wrote about the rotten way you treat a parent? What can you do about that?

- Suppose your sin is getting drunk every weekend? Can you change that?
- How does a person go about getting rid of the pattern of sinfulness?

Ask the entire class to respond to the question “What can you do about sin in your life?” List the suggestions on the board and comment about how effective each would be to get rid of sin. Write the boldface words on the board.

1. You could do **nothing**. (Emphasize that not only would the sin not go away but also it will probably get worse.)
2. You could resolve to do something about that sin—**tomorrow**. (The students should be quick to point out that tomorrow never comes.)
3. You could **seriously resolve** to do something to change that sin now, or the very next time the temptation comes along. (Call on several students to see if this will work for them.)
4. You could **talk to God** about the problem. You could ask him to help you to really keep your resolution to change. (The students will not find this much more helpful than the last suggestion. They will say things like “How do you know if God is listening?”)
5. You could **talk to someone** who would understand your problem, who would give you guidance on how to overcome the habit of sin you are concerned about. (Ask how many have “someone” in their world with whom they can really share deep and personal problems of this kind.)
6. You could combine three, four, and five in the Sacrament of Penance.

Ask several students about what might happen if they did number 6, celebrated the Sacrament of Penance. Say, “Suppose you took the sins you wrote on your paper and resolved to do something about them, prayed, and then brought your sins to the priest for guidance, prayer, and forgiveness. Would that make a difference in what you actually did about that area of sinfulness?”

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 118–121)

The text shares the author’s personal story of this first Confession. Review with your students ten steps for celebrating the Sacrament of Penance. Number the board 1 to 10. Randomly fill in two or three of the steps. Call on students to help you fill in the rest. Explain each of the steps.

1. Spend some time examining your conscience. Consider your actions and attitudes in each area of your life (e.g., faith, family, school, work, social relationships). Ask yourself: Is this area of my life pleasing to God? What needs to be reconciled with God? With others? With myself?

2. Sincerely tell God that you are sorry for your sins. Ask God for forgiveness and for the grace you will need to change what needs changing in your life. Promise God that you will try to live according to his will for you.
3. Approach the area for confession. Wait at an appropriate distance until it is your turn.
4. Make the Sign of the Cross with the priest. He may say, "May God who has enlightened every heart help you to know your sins and trust his mercy." You reply, "Amen."
5. Confess your sins to the priest. Simply and directly talk to him about the areas of sin in your life that need God's healing touch.
6. The priest will ask you to express your contrition or sorrow and to pray an Act of Contrition. Pray an Act of Contrition you have committed to memory.
7. The priest will talk to you about your life, encourage you to be more faithful to God in the future, and help you decide what to do to make up for your sins—your penance.
8. The priest will then extend his hands over your head and pray a prayer of absolution for your sins. You respond, "Amen."
9. The priest will wish you peace. Thank him and leave.
10. Go to a quiet place in church, and pray your prayer of penance. Then spend some time quietly thanking God for the gift of forgiveness.

Conclude the discussion by taking a survey of Confession times in your area. Divide the students into five to ten small groups, and assign each a parish. Have them report on the Confession day and time. Have each student make a chart listing all of the information that is reported.

CHURCH	DATE(S)/TIME(S)
St. Finbar	Saturday after 7:00 a.m. Mass
Our Lady of Lourdes	Mondays at 11:30 a.m.; Saturdays from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
St. Augustine	Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. and by appointment

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The reconciliation process is made up of an examination of conscience (sorrow), confession of sins, a commitment to change (accepting penance), forgiveness, and absolution. Read Jesus' famous parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11–32. Explain how each part of the reconciliation process is present in the parable. Write three or four paragraphs.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Define *moral therapeutic deism*.

2. Explain why Catholicism is the only religion that provides a cure for sin.
3. Most Protestants pray to God directly for forgiveness. What are three problems associated with this method?
4. How did Jesus set up the Sacrament of Penance in the Church?
5. What is an act of contrition?
6. What are the words the priest speaks after the penitent's act of contrition?
7. Instead of just being a "good person," what does Jesus demand of us?

ENRICHMENT

What is it like for a priest to hear a confession? The article "My Side of the Confessional: What Is It Like for a Priest?" (*Life Teen Blog*, lifeteen.com/blog/my-side-of-the-confessional-what-is-it-like-for-a-priest) by Fr. Mike Schmitz addresses how he views the penitent and the rewards he feels as priest in the sacrament. Make copies of the article for each student, and have them read it. To follow up with the subject, invite a priest to your classroom to take questions from the students. Have the students prepare their questions beforehand. Leave it to the priest's preference about whether he wants to view the questions prior to the classroom visit.

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students write one sentence each for the following words explaining what it has to do with the Sacrament of Penance.

1. sin
2. contrition
3. forgiveness
4. absolution
5. repentance

VIDEO

"One Minute Inside a Catholic's Head - Episode 2"

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW8ewtGFMso>)

Time: 1:26

The short video (about one minute) is set in line for confession and probe out loud what one person is thinking before receiving the sacrament. Using the film as a model, break the students into small groups of three or four, and have them create their own "One Minute Inside a Catholic's Head" for Confession. One person can be the narrator for each group; the other two can be the penitents in line. Everyone in the group should help devise the script. Allow time for the small groups to present their vignette before the entire class.

PART III

Catholicism Is Beautiful

9

Because It Cherishes Beauty

Read pages 127–135.

BACKGROUND

St. John Paul II, in his 1999 *Letter to Artists*, reminds us that it is through the arts that religious truths are made tangible, “making perceptible . . . the world of the spirit, of the invisible God.” The pope was reiterating what the Church has always held true: that awareness of God is supported and built upon when our minds are attuned to the true, the good, and the beautiful. The Catholic Church has produced and protected the arts and encouraged people to create art as a way to share in and experience God’s role in creation. Similarly, the recognition of beauty in the world is a connection with the transcendent and holy and a way for us to discover and know God.

OPENER

“Truth, Beauty, and Sacred Art” is the subject of paragraphs 2500–2503 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Assign the students to read these paragraphs from the *Catechism* (http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P8N.HTM). In these paragraphs, the Catechism teaches that truth has its own beauty because it corresponds to reality. God’s truth reveals itself in his magnificent creation and in the words of Scripture. Through their creative works of art, humans express their relationship to truth and beauty. When human art (especially sacred art) reflects God’s truth, beauty, and love, then it helps the divine majesty and draws us to adore, pray, and love the Triune God.

Remind the students that the desire to know God is built into their very being. Ask, “How did the beauty of art, music, film, literature, or a beautiful natural scene inspire a personal connection with God?” Have them write a two- to three-paragraph answer to the question, citing one or more examples. Allow time for students to share their responses with a partner. Then call on volunteers to summarize either their own response or their partner’s response for the entire class.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 127–130)

The text explains the value of art to the Church, pointing out that art is valuable first because the beauty of art points to the beauty of God and second because creating art is a participation in God’s very creative power. St. John Paul II’s *Letter to Artists* (w2.vatican.va/

[content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii let_23041999_artists.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_20060327_plenary-assembly_final-document_en.html)) provides a broad overview of the history of Christian art, emanating from images taken from Scripture in the earliest days of the Church to current times post Second Vatican Council.

Give each student a copy of the *Letter to Artists*. Assign for reading sections 7–11. Then have the students choose and complete two of the following assignments.

- Sketch one of the Christian symbols used in the early Church (e.g., fish, loaves, shepherd).
- Answer in three to four written paragraphs: What is the meaning of iconoclasm? What was the iconoclast crisis? What was the decision regarding this crisis at the Council of Nicaea in 787?
- Re-create a map of the interior of a medieval church or cathedral, and include the following elements: narthex, nave, aisle, choir, transept, crossing, porch, ambulatory, and chevet. Include a color-coded key for identifying each element. Below the map have students write a one-sentence definition for each element.
- Choose and write a three-paragraph biography of one of the artists mentioned in section 9. Print a copy of one of the person's works of art, and attach it to your assignment. Write two paragraphs about the art, explaining what you find appealing and how it helps you connect to the beauty of God's world.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

What can the Church do today to support modern artists? Write three of your own ideas. Next summarize the pastoral proposals listed in the document *Via Pulchritudinis* (http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_20060327_plenary-assembly_final-document_en.html).

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Why has the Catholic Church never seen art as dangerous or debased?
2. How did the Catholic Church offer support to artists during the Middle Ages?
3. What was the rational framework the Church contributed to art that allowed the Renaissance to soar?
4. Besides finding art beautiful and inspiring, why else does the Church support art?
5. Retell how art helped poet Paul Claudel to understand that God is real.
6. What did Plato mean when he suggested that from one particular beautiful object we can rise steadily to “the open sea” of the beautiful itself?

ENRICHMENT

Ask the students to do an internet search to find links for the paintings listed below. Each selection presents a different dimension of Christ. As they view the paintings, ask them to answer these questions in well-written paragraphs:

- What is the message of the artists?
- Why do you think different artists see the same subject so differently?
- Which of these paintings speaks most forcefully to you? Why is this so?

1. *ICON OF THE HOLY SAVIOR, ARTIST UNKNOWN*

This thirteenth-century mosaic found in the great Byzantine church Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (Constantinople) is based on a sixth-century icon from the Greek monastery of Mount Athos. The mosaic shows Jesus with his hand raised in benediction as he holds the Bible. This is no purely human Jesus. He is robed in royal purple and is surrounded by a halo that signifies his eternal nature. This icon is often called a visual representation of the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon, which said that Christ was true God and true man.

2. *THE CREATION OF ADAM, MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (1475–1584)*

This depiction of the creation of Adam is the centerpiece of the large fresco found on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In this painting, Michelangelo depicts the eternal nature of God, who creates man out of nothing by a gesture of his hand. God is seen as surrounded by angels. To stress his eternal nature, God is represented as a mature man with the muscular body of a youth.

3. *MADONNA AND CHILD ENTHRONED WITH SAINTS, RAFFAELLO (RAPHAEL) SANZIO (1463–1520)*

In this painting, the infant Jesus and the Madonna are seen enthroned in heaven as Jesus is worshipped by several saints, including the infant John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, Catherine, and Cecilia. The fact that these saints lived in different centuries stresses the fact that, for God, there is no past or future. His time is not chronological (measurable and sequential time) but *kairological* (time that is not bound by sequence or measurement but rather by emotional significance). He lives in an eternal “now,” where all are alive for him.

4. *AND VERONICA IS STILL AMONG US WITH HER VEIL OF COMPASSION . . . (ET VÉRONIQUE AU TENDRE LIN, PASSE ENCORE SUR LE CHEMIN . . .), GEORGES ROUAULT (1871–1958)*

Rouault was a devout Catholic and his artistic works stress the human sufferings of the Divine Christ. The artist was trained in producing stained glass. This medium is prominent

in his paintings and etchings. Horrified by the devastation of World War I, Rouault constructed a series of fifty etchings from 1917 to 1927 that he titled *The Miserere* (Have Pity on Me). These etchings focus on the life of Christ and the horrors of contemporary war and exploitation of the poor. The particular etching cited here brings to life the legend of Veronica's veil. According to this legend, a young woman named Veronica wiped the bloody face of Jesus with her veil as he made his way on the road to crucifixion. In gratitude for her compassion, Christ left the imprint of his sorrowful face on her veil.

5. *THE BLACK CHRIST*, RONALD HARRISON (1940–2011)

Harrison, a South African citizen, painted this image of Christ in 1962 during the worst days of violence of the apartheid regime in South Africa, which segregated blacks from the rest of the population. Harrison portrays Christ in the image of Albert Luthuli, a South African leader of black Africans, being crucified by the white political leaders of South Africa, John Vorster and Hendrik Verwoerd. The painting was once displayed in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. In this painting, Harrison emphasizes the human nature of Christ and his solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized.

Prior to collecting and grading the papers, allow students to comment on the paintings. Project a slide of each, and go through the paintings one by one.

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students match the names of people mentioned in this chapter with what they are most associated with.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. Paul Claudel | A. <i>Last Supper</i> |
| 2. Michelangelo | B. Chief architect of St. Peter's Basilica |
| 3. Dostoyevsky | C. Understood God was real at Notre Dame Cathedral |
| 4. Pope Leo X | D. <i>The Idiot</i> |
| 5. Raphael | E. <i>David and Pietà</i> |
| 6. John Calvin | F. <i>Divine Comedy</i> |
| 7. Plato | G. <i>Symposium</i> |
| 8. Dante | H. Preferred barren worship settings |
| 9. Bramante | I. Madonnas |
| 10. Da Vinci | J. His court was artistic hub of Rome |

VIDEO

"The Canticle of Creation"

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpPSZkmr_Is)

Time: 2:30

The thirteenth-century canticle attributed to St. Francis of Assisi is prayed along with beautiful imagery from God's creation. Have your students watch the video and write their own poem or prayer in praise of God and the beauty of his world.

10

Because It Lifts Us Up

Read pages 137–148.

BACKGROUND

Humanism, originating from the Enlightenment, teaches that “man is the measure,” or in other words, humans are responsible for giving life its shape and meaning. From this perspective often arises the belief that because of humanity’s great role, God must be denounced. Oppositely, the Church teaches that human beings and God are not at odds with each other; in fact, God and humans cooperate with each other in harmony, lifting up humanity to the threshold of eternal glory. The Catholic Church uplifts all people to this goal of eternity along with love, respect, and care in this life based on the human dignity of all as something given to people by God, not earned through any deeds.

OPENER

Introduce the students to humanism and its surrounding terms.

Humanism began in northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, primarily initiated by Christians (though they were often skeptical of the institutional Church). For example, Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) proposed what he termed “negative theology.” This was based on the insight that God is separated from the world by a large chasm and so humans are more likely to know about what God is not rather than what he is. Erasmus (1466–1536) was called the “prince of humanists.” He was an ordained Catholic priest but only rarely celebrated Mass. He seemed to hold that Christianity was only an ethical system. His ideas paved the way for the Protestant Reformation.

The idea of *Christian humanism* evolved to combine the revised interest in humanity with the Christian faith. Christian humanism begins with the moral teachings of Christ and affirms that humans are made in the image and likeness of God. This forms the basis for personal worth. Christian humanism showed that it was possible to remain faithful to the Gospel while honoring the unique contributions of humans.

Secular humanism holds no faith in God. It is the philosophy that humans are the basic measure of everything and has its roots in the rational thinking of classical Greece and the teachings of Socrates and Plato. Secular humanism values science, reason, and human intelligence. It holds that there is no place for religion or God.

ASSIGNMENT

Have the students read the conclusion of *Caritas in Veritate* (*In Charity and Truth*; http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html) and write a two-page summary entitled “Pope Benedict XVI’s View on Humanism” based on this final section of the pope’s 2009 encyclical.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 141–142)

Share the following six aspects of how God made each person unique and in his own image, male and female. Make a copy of this list for each student, or project it where all can see.

1. You possess great dignity, value, and worth. A human is “the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake” (CCC, 356, quoting *Gaudium et Spes*, 34).

2. You are able to participate “in the light and power of the divine Spirit” (CCC, 1704). By your intellectual abilities, you can understand the order of things established by God. You can hear God’s voice in your conscience, urging you to do what is right and to avoid what is evil (see CCC, 1706). By your free will, you can choose to direct your life toward the good (see CCC, 1704). Your obligation to follow God’s law “is fulfilled in the love of God and neighbor” (CCC, 1706).

3. You—and every other person on earth—reflect the divine image. Your gender is part of your identity. You have been created male or female. Both genders are equal, with inalienable dignity, that is, dignity that cannot be changed or taken away. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity between genders are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life.

4. Your human nature is a unity of the spiritual and material worlds. You have a body and a soul. Every soul is created at the moment of conception by God and is immortal. God willed you to be whole and entire, comprising body and soul. Your soul is endowed with intellect and free will, reflecting the image of God. Your human nature is a reflection of Christ, who revealed what it means to be in the image of God, as he is God’s Revelation.

5. You have been given a place of honor in creation. God has placed humans, created in his image and likeness, at the summit of creation. You are responsible for taking care of and developing the many gifts of creation God entrusted to you. You are a steward of God’s creation.

6. From the moment of your conception, you were “destined for eternal beatitude” (CCC, 1703).

Next, share with the students this simple rhyme to help them remember what God reveals about creation and their own uniqueness:

**God alone made all that is.
Made of God’s love,
we all are his.**

Ask them to create their own similar rhyme that represents one of the aspects of their uniqueness from the list above and design it creatively on a piece of card stock. Tell them to put the number of the aspect on the back side of the paper. Share a few of the completed projects with the class, asking them to guess the number of the aspect being described.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Read this quotation and then choose one of the prompts that follow and write a three- to five-paragraph response:

Christian revelation shines a new light on the identity, the vocation and the ultimate destiny of the human person and the human race. Every person is created by God, loved and saved in Jesus Christ, and fulfills himself by creating a network of multiple relationships of love, justice and solidarity with other persons while he goes about his various activities in the world. Human activity, when it aims at promoting the integral dignity and vocation of the person, the quality of living conditions and the meeting in solidarity of peoples and nations, is in accordance with the plan of God, who does not fail to show his love and providence to his children. (*Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, 35)

- How do your relationships with others help you to reach your human potential?
- Write a letter to a person you love telling him or her how the love you share has made you a better person.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. What is humanism, and from where does it originate?
2. Why has Catholicism been depicted as the most antihumanistic faith?
3. In fact, what is the third option of how the Church views humanity based on Isaiah 26:12?
4. Share your own example of how God enjoys working through secondary causes.
5. What are three abilities that point to humans being created in God's image?
6. Name and explain two principles that show why the Catholic Church lifts up people while also rejecting so many lifestyles.
7. Explain why Catholicism is ultimately the greatest humanism.

ENRICHMENT

One of the new techniques of artists at the time of the Renaissance that allowed for new ways to represent both humans and landscapes were the rules of *perspective*. This was a technique that gave paintings and sculptures a three-dimensional effect. Filippo Brunelleschi is credited with inventing perspective. In Florence, he created for the cathedral a large dome that he modeled on the dome of the Pantheon in Rome. At 185 feet in height, it was the largest structure built in the world since AD 125. Leon Alberti, an artist, explained Brunelleschi's ideas of perspective and developed what he called the "perspective net," a design in which an artist looked over an eyepiece and a net in which the artist could reproduce the outlines of the model on paper with grids corresponding to the net. Leonardo Da Vinci's famous painting *The Last Supper* uses perspective—specifically, converging lines to create a vanishing point—to draw the viewer's eyes to the space above Jesus. This also gives the painting the illusion of space and depth.

Have the students do the following:

- Write a one-paragraph description of Florence's Duomo.
- Draw a model of Alberti's "perspective net."
- Examine Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and answer, What is another technique the author used to draw the viewer's eyes to Jesus?

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students write a definition for the following words, and use each word in a sample sentence.

1. materialist

2. free thinker

3. rationalist

4. agnostic

5. skeptic

6. humanist

VIDEO

"Because It's the Greatest Humanism // '5 Reasons to Be Catholic'"

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=fatW6qfIfPI)

Time: 3:27

Have the students watch the video summary of chapter 10 by the book's author, Brandon Vogt. Then have them write three to four paragraphs answering the question, "Why does Catholicism offer the greatest view of humanism?" Remind them to cite evidence from the video and the text.

11

Because It's for Everybody

Read pages 149–160.

BACKGROUND

The word *catholic* means “universal.” It is one of the four marks of the Church (one, holy, and apostolic are the others). The mark of universality is meant to be expansive, as the chapter suggests. It is also meant to be welcoming and inclusive. Irish novelist and poet James Joyce described the Church in *Finnegans Wake* as “here comes everybody” to express that the Church has plenty of room for all. From this catholic mark of the Church comes her description of a Church of “unity with diversity.” This chapter describes five of many types of Catholics: thinker, partier, ordinary man, skeptic, and sinner. These aren’t the only descriptions of Catholics, nor is one type exclusive to any one Catholic. The universality of the Church allows Catholics to fit under a number of categories as well as leave others behind.

OPENER

Explain the differences between *unity* and *uniformity* in relation to the Church’s mark of universality. That the Church’s catholicity celebrates her unity does not mean that each of her members lose their individuality of personality, race, or culture. In fact, the Church celebrates diversity within her unity. Point out the following:

- Unity recognizes that people complement each other; that is, in their differences people need each other to make a whole.
- Unity requires that people are open and welcoming to each other, not isolated from each other.
- Unity requires that people respect individual differences and not allow differences to prevent people from coming together.
- Unity requires that people care for each other so they will have the will to come together.

Have the students individually read 1 Corinthians 12:1–26. Then choose one student to be “on the spot” and come before the class to answer the following questions:

- What does the passage say about unity?

- How does the passage depict unity as being different from uniformity?
- How do your family history and own individual qualities bring uniqueness to the Church?

Choose a few other students to be on the spot and answer the same questions.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 149–151)

The Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows is the southernmost church in the world. It is also one of five Catholic churches in Antarctica and one of eight churches total. One of the churches, the Chapel of the Snows at the McMurdo Station, is nondenominational with the Catholic Mass being celebrated there. Share photos and more information of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Snows. Here is one source: Billy Ryan, “The Catholic Church in Antarctica Carved out of Ice,” *uCatholic* (blog), June 28, 2017, www.ucatholic.com/blog/the-catholic-church-in-antarctica-carved-out-of-ice/.

The point of the story is that the Catholic Church is physically present everywhere, literally to the ends of the earth. As an opening activity, have the students create a written and a visual presentation of three Catholic churches:

1. A favorite church in their diocese (other than their own parish)
2. A favorite church they visited outside of their diocese
3. The most unique Catholic church they have ever visited

Have the students include basic information about each church (its name, when it was founded, and its location) and why they chose it. Have them include at least three photos of each church either printed or digitally.

Call on several students to share with the class one of the churches they have chosen.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Have the students write one-paragraph profiles of three Catholics they know who reflect the diversity of the Church. The people they choose to describe can also be fictional or compilations of people they know.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Name one way that Catholicism is the most universal religion.
2. Explain *quaestio disputata*, the method St. Thomas Aquinas used to answer questions of faith.
3. How do you understand G. K. Chesterton’s quote “In Catholicism, the pint, the pipe, and the Cross can all fit together”?

4. Why did Chesterton react positively about Catholicism after his umbrella went missing in a Catholic church?
5. Name three saints who struggled with their beliefs.
6. Explain what Pope John Paul II meant by the “law of gradualism” related to morality.

ENRICHMENT

Share the following statistics from the 2019 *Pontifical Yearbook* about some numerical aspects of the Catholic Church. You may wish to present these as a discussion, having the students guess some of the percentages before you reveal them.

- Out of a world population of 7.4 billion, 1.3 billion or 17.7 percent are baptized Catholics.
- The Catholic population is distributed by continent this way: 48.5 percent in America, 21.8 percent in Europe, 17.8 percent in Africa, 11.1 percent in Asia, and 0.8 percent in Oceania.
- In the relationship between 2017 and 2016, positive indexes of the growth rate of Catholics characterize all the territorial divisions: compared to the world figure of 1.1 percent, the rates of variation of Africa and of Asia reach respectively + 2.5 percent and + 1.5 percent; Europe is the only continent to have an almost zero trend (+ 0.1 percent), while for America the growth rate (+ 0.96 percent) is below the world level.
- The number of candidates to the priesthood worldwide has decreased from 116,160 in 2016 to 115,328 in 2017, a drop of 0.7 percent. Europe contributes 14.9 percent to the world total; America, 27.3 percent; Asia, 29.8 percent; and Africa, 27.1 percent.

READING IN CONTEXT

Have the students explain the meaning of each sentence, focusing on the definition of each boldface word.

1. Catholicism is **capacious**.
2. Protestant churches are fairly **monochromatic** compared to the Catholic Church.
3. Catholics are far from being **monotonous**.

4. St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* is intended as a **primer** on the faith.
5. Catholicism is **emphatically** alive and unquestionably **jovial**.
6. The Church offers an open doorway to the **rabble** and the **shufflers**.
7. Catholicism is a welcome place for **skeptics**.
8. The Church rejects **trite** answers to important questions.

VIDEO

"St. Mary Catholic Church: A Diverse Small-Town Parish Working toward Unity"
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvSczbeysaY)

Time: 3:11

The video mentions how music can be a source of unity in the Church. Have the students share a YouTube link of one liturgical song with lyrics they believe would strengthen the unity of the local Church and the universal Church. Tell them to write two paragraphs explaining their choice.

CONCLUSION

Join the Rebellion

Read pages 161–169.

BACKGROUND

The conclusion to *Why I Am Catholic* outlines several steps a person who is considering converting or returning to Catholicism can take. These include reading other stories of people who have converted (both ordinary and contemporary people to great saints) and seeking out answers to other questions you have about the Catholic faith. From there, if a person is interested in connecting or reconnection with the Catholic Church, other final steps are offered: connecting with a parish, talking with a priest, and joining a Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults course (RCIA) and a local parish. All of these steps are outlined clearly in the book. They are also worthwhile reading for students who remain practicing Catholics either out of their own personal choice or on the basis of supporting their family's wishes. The steps outlined in the conclusion encourage all Catholics to join the "rebellion" that being a Catholic offers in today's wobbling culture.

OPENER

Call on a volunteer to come before the group. Interview the person about why he or she belongs to the Church, what it means to be Catholic, what the person likes about being Catholic, and so forth. Ask questions such as the following:

- What are some things you like about being Catholic? What are some beliefs or practices that you find challenging or difficult?
- What kind of Catholic do you envision yourself being ten years from now? Twenty years from now?
- When are you most proud to be a Catholic?
- What differentiates you as a Catholic from peers who are not Catholic?
- What do you think is the Church's most important mission today?
- When do you think the Church is at its best? At its worst?
- Why do you want to continue being Catholic?
- How do you come to know Jesus in the Church?

As time permits, repeat the interview with other volunteers.

TEXT REFERENCE (PAGES 162–163, 171–172)

If you assigned book reports at the beginning of the course for one of the books listed on pages 162–163 or pages 171–172, collect them now. Use the following grading rubrics:

CATEGORY	5	3	1	0
Content and Meaning	The entire report summarizes the content of the book and its meaning to the student.	Most of the report summarizes the content of the book and its meaning to the student.	The student provides little or no information connecting the content of the book to why it is meaningful for him or her.	No attempt has been made to connect the content of the book to its meaning to the student.
Organization	The report is very well organized. Sections and sentences flow in logical sequence.	The report is fairly well organized. Sections and sentences mostly flow in logical sequence.	The report is hard to follow. Sections and sentences rarely flow in logical sequence.	Ideas seem randomly arranged making the report hard to follow.
Style	Sentence structures are varied, and language is precise. There are no run-on sentences or fragments.	Some varied sentence structure and preciseness of language. There are one to three run-on sentences or fragments.	Limited variety of sentences and language or simplistic. There are four to six run-on sentences or sentence fragments.	Language and sentence structure is repetitious; numerous run-on sentences and sentence fragments cause the book report to be unreadable.

CATEGORY	5	3	1	0
Requirements	All of the requirements (length, double spacing, grammatical style) were met.	About 75 percent of the requirements were met.	About 50 percent of the requirements were met.	Many requirements were not met.
Effort	The book report was completed in a thoughtful and reflective manner by the student; quality effort is evident.	The book report was completed in a thoughtful manner overall, but some effort seems to be lacking.	The book report obviously lacks effort.	No effort is made to complete the book report as required.

If you are referencing the books listed on pages 162–163 for the first time, peruse the list with the students, offering comments, reviews, and recommendations of any of the books you are familiar with.

For example, you may reference *Seven Storey Mountain*, an autobiography of Thomas Merton, a Catholic priest and Trappist monk and one of the great spiritual writers of the twentieth century.

When Merton was young, he was constantly trying to answer what he would do next with his life. Merton had lived a Bohemian lifestyle. Orphaned at age fifteen, he eventually settled in New York City where he studied and taught English at Columbia University. With images of Catholicism from his earlier days spent in France, Thomas began instruction and was then baptized into the Catholic Church at a parish near Columbia. Even before his Baptism, he felt he had a vocation to the religious life.

Merton decided to make a retreat to the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani in rural Kentucky. One of his friends warned him as he was leaving, “Don’t let them change you.” Thomas answered, “It would be a good thing if they changed me.”

In 1941, Thomas Merton entered the abbey for good. When he was allowed by his superior to write, Thomas was prolific. His autobiography of his spiritual journey, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, with the many twists and turns that led him to Catholicism and the monastery, became a best seller and brought him lasting renown.

Make a copy of this famous Merton prayer, and pray it with your students.

THE ROAD AHEAD

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think that I am following
your will does not mean that I am actually
doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in
fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road
though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever
with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Amen.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Have the students meet in pairs and answer this question, using one-word responses only: “What do you think of when you think of the Catholic Church?” Tell them to print every word on a piece of paper. Then have them circle three words that stand out the most to them. Finally, tell them to each write two to three paragraphs about one of the words, explaining why this word stands out most when they think of the Catholic Church.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. Which of the listed books on conversion stories appeals to you most by title and author? Why?
2. Examine the Catholic.com website. What is one question and answer you found most interesting?
3. Choose one topic on the StrangeNotions.com website and comment in the discussion. Copy and paste your comment (and any replies to your comment) here.

4. Look at a Catholic parish website. What information does it provide for those inquiring about becoming Catholic?

ENRICHMENT

Provide the following information for Catholic students interested in deepening the practice of their faith in the immediate years ahead.

CATHOLIC COLLEGES IN THE UNITED STATES

There are more than two hundred Catholic colleges in the United States. They have undergraduate enrollments of all sizes—from less than one thousand students to more than twenty thousand students. They are also located in every region of the country in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Some Catholic universities also have renowned medical and law schools and offer several other professional and graduate degrees. Besides these basic facts, there are other reasons for a person to consider attending a Catholic college. For example:

- *Community environment.* At a Catholic college you won't be treated like a number. You will meet new friends of many different racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. You will be supported by caring professors and staff.
- *Moral environment.* Don't be fooled, students at Catholic colleges are not perfect and make their share of immoral choices. However, the policies of the institution itself will be geared to promote Christian morality (e.g., speaking out for the right to life for everyone, from the unborn to the aged and infirmed).
- *Global environment.* One of the marks of the Church is that it is catholic or universal. The first universities were Catholic and connected to monasteries. There are Catholics and Catholic colleges worldwide, and many of the Catholic colleges in the United States have excellent study-abroad programs. Also, courses are taught from a global perspective where solidarity with the entire human race—especially the poor—is stressed.
- *Faith environment.* Whether it is a crucifix in a classroom, a priest or religious serving as a rector in a dorm, a required theology course, or the celebration of the sacraments on campus, a Catholic college offers the opportunity to continue to practice the faith you first learned in your family and will want to practice in your own life and family in the future.

The National Catholic College Admission Association provides information for prospective students and their families at www.catholiccollegesonline.org.

Also, most public colleges sponsor a Newman Club, named after John Henry Cardinal Newman who was raised in the Anglican Church of the early nineteenth century before

converting to Catholicism at the age of forty-two. In the past, it was rare for Catholics to attend non-Catholic colleges. The first Newman Club was sponsored at the University of Pennsylvania in 1883, insisting that its members not become “clannish or narrow in a religious sense.” This motivation continues today as Newman Clubs have an interfaith focus while including celebration of the sacraments, RCIA classes, and catechetical studies more specifically for their Catholic members.

COMMITTED SERVICE EFFORTS

As part of a high school curriculum or parish project, high school students may have committed themselves to Christian service. Typical efforts usually involve either focused work in their own community or a project where they travel to an area in need and spend a week or two helping to do physical repairs on houses, schools, or churches. Serving others is an ongoing practice of the Christian life and of membership in the Catholic Church.

St. Teresa of Calcutta offered this advice about service: “Just begin, one, one, one,” she said. “Begin at home by saying something good to someone in your family. Begin by helping someone in need in your community, at work, or at school. Begin by making whatever you do something beautiful for God.”

Catholic Charities USA is the largest private network of social service organizations in the United States working to support families, reduce poverty, and build communities. There are local chapters of Catholic Charities in each Catholic diocese that can be found at <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/find-help/>. Encourage students to explore the volunteer opportunities through their local Catholic Charities.

In the future, when your students are of college age, there are several “summer immersion” volunteer opportunities that encourage participation in a focused area of service. These programs usually include time for community building, reflection and prayer, and education before, during, and after the actual experience. The programs may take place in the United States or in another country. For example, one Catholic college offered a program in which students work with local agencies in the poverty-stricken Appalachian region as well as another program in Ghana in which students train youth in computer skills.

After college, many new graduates choose to do a year of service prior to beginning their careers. Oftentimes, this year affords the opportunity to discern a future path clearly not only in career but also in vocation. For example, the largest Catholic volunteer agency is the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Volunteers are assigned to various places and tasks, including working with the elderly, teaching in impoverished schools, and ministering to people with AIDS. The volunteers live in community with each other, making time for prayer and learning to model simple living. For more information, see the Jesuit Volunteer Corps website at www.jesuitvolunteers.org.

TEEN-FOCUSED RETREATS

As the term indicates, the experience is meant to allow a person to “retreat” from his or her daily cares, concerns, and responsibilities to take up a focused, faith-filled experience that includes many of these elements: an opportunity for a deepening of prayer, a sense of belonging with fellow retreatants, interaction with adult Catholics of other ages (usually the retreat leaders), informal celebrations of the sacraments, especially Penance and Eucharist, and an increased awareness of and desire to make an adult-level faith commitment.

Teens Encounter Christ (tecconference.org) is a Catholic movement of spirituality that focuses on the paschal mystery. Founded in Lansing, Michigan, following the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the purpose of the retreat is to encourage older teens and young adults to come to know Christ in a personal way and to make a heartfelt decision to follow him. The retreat is usually held over three days and includes songs, music, witness talks, and celebration of the sacraments. It is available on a regular basis in most dioceses.

Another popular outreach program that your students may consider attending, first as a participant and perhaps later as a leader, are those sponsored by National Evangelization Teams (netusa.org). NET is based in Saint Paul, Minnesota, but sends out “teams” of young adults (usually between eighteen and thirty years old) after a period of training to dioceses across the country. Once at their destination, the teams meet with a contact person there and are told specifically how the diocese would like them to minister to their youth. Some dioceses have NET work in a Catholic high school for a week, visiting a different class each day. Others sponsor youth rallies. Many have retreats scheduled at several different parishes. Usually a team will stay in a diocese for two to five weeks. Sometimes team members stay at a rectory or parish center. Mostly they stay with host families.

Encourage your students to look for an opportunity to participate in a retreat sponsored by their parish, school, or elsewhere in their diocese. They can use the time away to reflect on their high school experience, life with their family, and ways they will be able to take the lessons learned to a future vocation.

RELIGIOUS MINISTRIES GUIDE

The Catholic News Publishing Company annually releases *A Guide to Religious Ministries for Catholic Men and Women*. More information along with other online resources is listed at www.religiousministries.com. Links include information on colleges, seminaries, diocesan vocation offices, retreat houses, and more. There are several other tools for discerning a religious vocation listed in the guide, including a selection on some common apostolic works or ministries performed by priests, brothers, and sisters. Some of the most common ministries include parish work, social work, health care, home missions, campus ministry, childcare, foreign missions, chaplaincies, religious education, counseling, education,

communications, spiritual direction, and inner-city work. If your students have an interest in one or more of these ministries, they should explore more at the website above or through your local diocesan vocation office.

READING IN CONTEXT

Using all of the following terms, write a paragraph explaining how a person might become a member of the Catholic Church:

- RCIA
- convert
- Easter Vigil
- full initiation

VIDEO

“How to Avoid to Becoming Catholic”

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrURxxQuNTY)

Time: 8:36

Lizzie Reezay, a popular YouTube host, recently became Catholic. In the video she lists twenty things a person should do to not become Catholic. Have the students watch the video and react to her first reason: that she did not know any committed Catholics when she was a teenager. Have the students write one paragraph telling whether they agree with her assessment. As a follow-up to the video, copy and assign the reading of the article “Lizzie Reezay: Recent Convert, YouTube Star Talks Church Fathers and Evangelization” (Matthew E. Bunson, National Catholic Register, July 5, 2018, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/lizzie-reezay-recent-convert-youtube-star-talks-church-fathers-and-evangeli>).