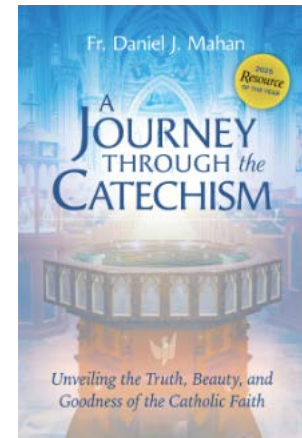


A Journey through the Catechism: *Unveiling the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness of the* *Catholic Faith*

A Journey through the Catechism: Unveiling the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness of the Catholic Faith is both a primer and a source book on Catholicism. It serves well as student text to accompany a semester-long introductory course on the Catholic faith.



The scope of the text is broad, and the approach of the writing is conversational and approachable. *A Journey through the Catechism* is organized in four parts and twenty-four chapters, mirroring the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. *A Journey through the Catechism* offers a comprehensive overview and understanding of both the basic and more complex teachings of the Catholic Church by leading students through a pastoral and open-minded survey of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Organized around the four pillars of the *Catechism* (creed, sacraments, Christian life, and prayer), the text is structured in a question-and-answer format that serves the objectives of both catechesis and evangelization.

Addressed both to non-Catholics making initial inquiries about the Catholicism and to lifelong Catholics who come with burning questions about deeper matters of faith, the question-and-answer format allows teachers to arrange lessons around the four pillars of the *Catechism* (creed, sacraments, Christian life, and prayer) and as issues organically arise from their students. The author of the book is Fr. Daniel J. Mahan, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Institute on the Catechism. Fr. Mahan, a longtime parish priest in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, turns no one away; when an answer seems difficult, he offers students advice on how to proceed with further reading, research or how to seek one-to-one care. *Journey through the Catechism: Unveiling the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness of the Catholic Faith* has won several honors, including the 2025 Book of the Year Award given by the Association of Catholic Publishers.

Content of an Introduction to Catholicism Course

The subject of this course is the *kerygma*; that is, the basic message of the Catholic faith that was first announced by the Apostles who announced the Gospel in public squares from in and around the Holy Land all the way to Rome. This message forms the core of both the Church's Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition and is passed on through the generations through the

Deposit of Faith. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* articulates the kerygma; we can refer to it as *echoes of the kerygma* reverberating to us today. Journey through the *Catechism* shows how the basic message of kerygma resounds today through a human experience we share with everyone who has ever lived. The text highlights the echoes of kerygma through four common perspectives of human experience:

Creation

We are created to be in union with God. God has a plan for our life. He wants to be in relationship with us.

Fall

The union with God was broken by the sin of Adam and Eve. This sin had consequences that extend to us today.

Redemption

God responds to the world's sin by coming into the world. Jesus Christ, true God and true man," allowed himself to be sacrificed on the Cross so that our relationship with God might be made be healed and made whole again.

Restoration

God asks us to live in the way we he originally intended for human persons. We are to lead others to Jesus Christ by our own sharing of the Gospel.

This four-part message of kerygma is the content the course. The text shares this message in words (look for these same icons to accompany discussion questions at the end of the chapter); the course itself provides ways for the message to be incorporated in the mind, hearts, and hands of the students.

A Project-Based Learning Course

The *A Journey through the Catechism* Introduction to the Catholic Faith course is a project-based learning course. Project-based learning is an instructional style that encourages students to apply knowledge and skills around academic topics through engaging, learning activities. There are several key components and benefits of project-based learning including building collaboration and teamwork among peers, increasing individual student engagement, building presentation skills, and focusing on practicing key lessons. Project-based learning is especially adaptable in courses with block scheduling and extended class periods. Project-based learning focuses on teachers as facilitators, guiding and supporting students and directing collaborative and independent learning.

There are eight, one-week projects for this course connecting *A Journey through the Catechism* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with the following essential Catholic faith topics:

Project 1: Private Revelations

Project 2: The Trinity

Project 3: Life Events of Jesus

Project 4: The Paschal Mystery

Project 5: The Holy Spirit and Pentecost

Project 6: The Sacramental Life of the Church

Project 7: The Blessed Mother and the Rosary

Project 8: Eschatological Foundations: The Four Last Things

All of the projects are:

- introduced with a whole class presentation
- connected with chapter vocabulary terms
- designed as group projects (with a partial individualized component)
- worked on mainly in class
- presented to the whole class when complete
- reviewed through peer and self-evaluation
- assessed with grading rubrics

Teacher Planning for Course Projects

A weekly project overview for teachers is provided for each of the eight projects corresponding with main topics in *A Journey through the Catechism*. This overview offers an overall project focus, detailed objectives, a scheduling overview and more in the following format:

Project-Based Learning Lesson Plan	
Project Title	
Topic	
Group Size: <i>Whole, Small Groups, & Individual</i>	
Project Focus <i>Stated as one or more focus questions</i>	

CCC References	<i>Specific references to the Catechism of the Catholic church are listed by paragraph number</i>	
Textbook References	<i>Specific references to the Journey through the Catechism are listed by chapter and page numbers.</i>	
Project Objectives	<i>Concrete objectives for students are named.</i>	
Vocabulary	<i>Understanding vocabulary terms (referenced in the textbook) are part of each project. These terms and their definitions are listed here.</i>	
Materials	Student <i>All of the materials students need for the week including books, digital components, printed handouts, and more are listed here.</i>	Teacher <i>All of the materials teachers need for the week including lecture notes, display models, charts, and more are listed here.</i>
Assessments	Formative <i>Daily check-ins with teacher, student research organizers, and peer/self-evaluations are listed here.</i>	Summative <i>Grading and analytic rubrics are provided for daily and overall student objectives</i>

Differentiation	<i>This section presents a differentiation of whole class, small group, and individual lessons and activities that will take place during the week</i> <i>Also, adaptations are suggested for different student learning styles along with remedial, and enrichment options.</i>
Project Outline	<i>A general five-day project outline is offered with notes on how this in-class project that can be finished at home if needed. These days are flexible and can be adjusted to fit the needs of your students.</i>

A daily Monday through Friday project overview for teachers is provided for each of the sixteen weekly projects. These include daily objectives, teacher and student material lists, vocabulary terms connected with the daily task, assessments, remediation suggestions, extra assignments for early finishers, and differentiation points related to whole class, small group, and individual assignments. In addition, one teaching approach (e.g., lecture ideas) is offered per day. A general daily schedule is arranged like this:

- Day 1: Introduction
- Day 2: Research and Planning
- Day 3: Workday
- Day 4: Presentations
- Day 5: Presentations and Reflections

Student Resources for Course Projects

Several resources are included to aid students in complete each course project. A weekly project overview offers students an overview of the project, including focus questions, objectives, vocabulary terms, and a five-day outline and timeline. Particular instructions for each project follow. These instructions include ways to establish group roles, requirements for each individual student, requirements for accepted references, and requirements for class presentations.

Other student materials (some vary by project) include project models and sample formats and several forms; for example:

- Group sign up forms
- Peer and self-evaluation forms
- Research outline directions
- Research organizers
- Grading rubrics
- Project samples

Additional Assessment Resources

Assessments for the course vocabulary terms are accessed in several formats, including matching, fill-in-the blank, and short answer. These assessments are offered project by project and as an overall course vocabulary assessment.

Who This Course Is For

- Theology departments that want to offer an introduction to the faith course for all students
- Theology departments that want to provide a overview of the faith to non-Catholic or un-catechized students
- Theology departments on block-scheduling looking for project-based learning
- Theology departments interested in offering honors and enrichment projects to some or all students
- Campus ministry programs needing an active way to prepare catechumens and candidates for reception of sacraments of initiation