



SYMBOLON[®]

THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

PART 2
LIVING THE FAITH

LEADER'S GUIDE

INTRODUCTION
SESSIONS 1-10

Edward Sri
Lucas Pollice
General Editors

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SESSION 1

THE SACRAMENTS: Baptism & Confirmation 13

SESSION 2

THE EUCHARIST: Source & Summit of Christian Life 27

SESSION 3

WALK THROUGH THE MASS: Exploring the Sacred Liturgy41

SESSION 4

PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK: God's Mercy Revealed53

SESSION 5

MATRIMONY AND HOLY ORDERS: The Sacraments of Service & Communion.....67

SESSION 6

A CATHOLIC MORAL VISION: Virtue, Grace, & the Path to Happiness81

SESSION 7

A LOVE THAT LASTS: Discovering Authentic Love..... 93

SESSION 8

A LOVE THAT LASTS: God's Plan for Sexuality..... 105

SESSION 9

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Building a Civilization of Love119

SESSION 10

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Protecting the Dignity of the Human Person.....131



What does *Symbolon* mean?

In the early Church, Christians described their Creed, their summary statement of faith, as the *symbolon*, the “seal” or “symbol of the faith.”

In the ancient world, the Greek word *symbolon* typically described an object like a piece of parchment, a seal, or a coin that was cut in half and given to two parties. It served as a means of recognition and confirmed a relationship between the two. When the halves of the *symbolon* were reassembled, the owner’s identity was verified and the relationship confirmed.

In like manner, the Creed served as a means of Christian recognition. Someone who confessed the Creed could be identified as a true Christian. Moreover, they were assured that what they professed in the Creed brought them in unity with the faith the Apostles originally proclaimed.

This series is called *Symbolon* because it intends to help bring people deeper into that communion of apostolic faith that has existed for 2,000 years in the Church that Christ founded.

SYMBOLON

THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Welcome to *Symbolon*. In *Symbolon:Knowing the Faith* (Sessions 1-10), we walked through the “big picture” of the Catholic Faith using the Creed as our guide. Now in *Symbolon:Living the Faith* (Sessions 1-10), we turn our attention to how we encounter God in the sacraments and the moral life. Through the sacraments, Christ’s work of salvation is communicated to our lives. Transformed by sacramental grace, we are made capable of living a life worthy of the Gospel in imitation of Jesus Christ.

The leader’s guide, participant’s guide, and videos are the three components you’ll be using for each of the *Symbolon* sessions. All three work together to enable the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist to help the participants to receive the Catholic Faith and apply it to their everyday lives.

We’ve found that when these resources are used along with your personal witness to the Faith, all the participants grow together in knowledge of the Catholic Faith and in relationship with our Lord. Journeying deeper into the Church becomes so much more than following a set of teachings or customs as lives are transformed by God’s truth and grace.

SOME OF THE WAYS SYMBOLON IS BEING USED TODAY

- **Men’s & Women’s Groups:** For groups of men and women within the parish to grow in the Faith through study, discussion, prayer, and service
- **Bible Study Groups:** To explore more the profound connections between the Sacred Scriptures and the teachings of the Catholic Church
- **RCIA:** As a comprehensive overview of the Catholic Faith that helps catechumens and candidates discover what it means to believe in and live out the Catholic Faith
- **Before/After Masses:** To enrich people’s understanding of the Faith they profess and the mysteries of the liturgy in which they participate each Sunday

- **Advent & Lent:** To enhance efforts for ongoing conversion, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent
- **Catechist Training:** For those who teach the Faith throughout the parish, to help them have a more complete and cohesive understanding of the Catholic Faith and to help them express it more clearly to those whom they teach
- **Parent Sessions:** To help parents fulfill their role as the first educators of their children in the Faith, especially in preparation for Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation
- **Small Christian Communities:** To deepen the growth of parishioners as they participate in a variety of subgroups and apostolates within the parish
- **Families:** As an in-home tool to help parents raise their children to be lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ
- **Individuals:** As a resource for anyone who wants to understand the Catholic Faith better and be equipped to live it out and explain it to others better

LEADING A SYMBOLON SESSION

Everything you need to lead a *Symbolon* session is found in the leader's guide. The resources are carefully crafted to lead participants through an opening of their hearts and minds to God's Word, into the key truths of the particular doctrine that is the focus of the session, and ultimately to make a response of faith by turning more fully to the Lord with each session.

The leader's guide for each session begins with a one-page overview of the doctrine and the key points that will be covered in the lesson. This is a way to get the "big picture" of the session firmly in your mind.

The rest of the leader's guide takes you step by step through each session. Each step has a script, which you can use verbatim or as a guide for what you would like to say in your own words. If you choose to use the script, it will help if you take the time to become very familiar with it so that it will have a natural feel as you read it. If you use your own words, you'll want to study the script so that you don't leave out an important idea.

HERE ARE THE KEY STEPS RECOMMENDED FOR AN EFFECTIVE SYMBOLON SESSION:

- 1. Opening Prayer:** Your leader's guide gives an opening prayer along with Scripture suggestions for an optional celebration of the Word of God (see *Symbolon* in the RCIA Process below). The opening prayer is also found in the participant's guide, so participants can read along in order to focus their attention more during the prayer.
- 2. Introduction:** The leader gives a brief overview of the topic, including the key points for the session. This helps contextualize the topic, show its relevance for daily life, and inspire participants to delve into the particular aspect of the Faith that is being presented.
- 3. Video Part I:** The first video introduces the topic and relates it to someone seeking a relationship with God and the Church. This will help the participants open themselves to the truths that will be explored more deeply in the next video.
- 4. Proclamation:** A summary statement of the doctrine that is the focus of the session is provided in the leader's guide. It is a statement of faith in what God has revealed, which can touch the hearts of the participants who are now open to hear his Word. This prepares participants for the more extensive teaching that comes in Video Part II.
- 5. Video Part II:** Episodes 1-6 provide a second video that goes into more depth on the topic and gives a brief but thorough explanation of the essential truths that helps unlock our understanding of the doctrine. It also includes a section on life application, calling participants to a deeper conversion and inviting them to give their lives more to Jesus through material presented or doctrine presented. Episodes 7-10 each cover all the necessary material in one video.
- 6. Break:** A 10-minute break is recommended.
- 7. Discussion:** Discussion questions are included in both the leader's and participant's guides. The questions are designed

to help participants retain the key points by engaging with the doctrine through discussion. The questions also help to make the teaching more personal by asking the participants to apply what they have heard to their own daily lives. If you have a large group, consider forming smaller groups for the discussion, with team members facilitating and keeping each small group on track.

- 8. Summary and Exhortation (Optional):** As a small group leader or catechist, you are ultimately God's instrument to transmit the Faith to the persons participating in this program. The videos and other materials can help you do this in an engaging and articulate way, but they can't replace you as a living witness. You may, therefore, want to give a brief summary of some of the key points from today's session. Your leader's guide includes a summary of the key points to include, along with references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for each key point. You might choose to include a brief personal witness, a compelling quote from a saint, or a relevant Scripture in your exhortation. All of these resources can be found in your leader's guide or the corresponding *Catechism* citations.
- 9. Call to Conversion:** The climax of a *Symbolon* session comes when participants take time to prayerfully reflect on all they've learned and examine their lives in light of the lesson. Direct people to their participant's guides, where personal reflection questions are provided. You may want to read through the meditations and questions with them from your leader's guide. Allow quiet time for them to reflect, to talk to God in prayer, and to respond by writing down their thoughts.
- 10. Closing Prayer:** End the session with a prayer that verbalizes our response to what has been presented. The closing prayer in your guide has been specifically chosen to reflect back to God an appropriate response to his loving action in the session.

Both the leader's and the participant's guides have references for further reading and study. The participants are encouraged to memorize and reflect on a Scripture Verse of the Week with every session. These resources will help them throughout the week to nurture the faith that has been deepened through your catechetical session.

HOW TO LEAD SMALL GROUPS

The *Symbolon* leader's guide provides opportunities for small group discussion, and the success of any small group begins with a leader. Leading a small group discussion doesn't mean you have to lecture or teach—a successful small group leader facilitates, getting group participants to interact with each other as they make new discoveries. Here are some tips to help you get started as you lead and facilitate your small group:

ENVIRONMENT

- **Discussion-Friendly**—Set up your meeting space so discussion and conversation happen naturally. Avoid sitting at tables or desks; instead arrange chairs in a circle or meet in a living room environment that encourages casual, friendly conversation. Choose a meeting space that's free of distractions and offers a fair amount of privacy.
- **Prep Ahead**—Because your study includes video segments, set up and test equipment ahead of time. Queue videos so they're ready to go to avoid losing valuable discussion time.
- **Snacks**—Depending on your meeting time, consider offering a light snack so participants won't be distracted by a growling stomach. If you don't offer any food items, always have water available for participants.

LOGISTICS

- **Name Tags**—Especially when you first begin meeting, have participants wear name tags so you can easily address them by name and other participants don't have to worry about trying to remember everyone's names.
- **Supplies**—Always have extra pens on hand for people to take notes. Also consider having highlighter pens, paper, Bibles, and extra materials available for participants to use.
- **Be Prompt**—While you can encourage a time to mingle at the beginning of your meeting time, don't let it get out of control so you have to rush through materials and discussion. If people know you're dedicated to starting on time, they'll begin to arrive a bit early to socialize. Likewise, reserve your meeting space for 30 minutes after you're scheduled to end so people can mingle afterward. Be diligent to start and end on time.

BEFORE YOU MEET

- **Prepare**—Look over discussion materials and preview video segments before your meeting time. Go through the questions yourself to make your own discoveries about how they apply to your life—this will help your credibility as a leader.
- **Pray**—Take time to pray for group members individually and lift up any needs they've expressed during previous meetings. Pray specifically for the Holy Spirit to open participants' hearts to spiritual growth, renewal, and new discoveries.
- **Evaluate**—As you get to know the needs of individuals and your group's dynamics, evaluate your discussion materials and highlight information or questions that you think would be particularly helpful and insightful for your group.

DURING THE MEETING

- **Set the Tone**—Let group members know from the beginning that your time together is meant to be for discussion and discovery, not lecture. Also remind participants that every question and answer is welcomed and worthy of discussion.
- **Encourage Involvement**—Work to invite all participants to engage in discussion. Don't be afraid of periods of silence, especially during your first few meetings. If one person begins to dominate the discussion time or gets off track from the topic, kindly acknowledge the person and invite him or her to explore that topic more after your group time. Ask questions such as “What do the rest of you think?” or “Anyone else?” to encourage several people to respond.
- **Open-Ended Questions**—Use questions that invite thought-provoking answers rather than “yes” or “no,” “true” or “false,” or a one-word, fill-in-the-blank answer. As leaders, your job is to get participants to think about the topic and how the Scriptures and reflections are applicable to their daily lives.
- **Affirm Answers**—People are often reluctant to speak up for fear of saying something wrong or giving an incorrect answer. Affirm every participant by saying things such as “Great idea,” “I hadn't thought of that before,” or “That's a great insight.” These types of phrases communicate that you value everyone's comments and opinions.

- **Avoid Advice**—Remember, you're acting as a facilitator—not a college professor or counselor. Instead of giving advice or lecturing, when appropriate, offer how a Scripture passage or something in the video spoke to you personally, or give an example of how you've been able to apply a specific concept to your own life.
- **Be Flexible and Real**—Sometimes your group time may veer off-track due to something that's going on in the culture or community (for example, a natural disaster strikes your area or a group member is experiencing a family tragedy). Use relevant topics as a time to model for participants how God is always with us, and that we can seek guidance from Scripture, from the Church's teachings, and from the Holy Spirit in every situation. If you model relevant discussion and transparency, your group participants are more likely to do the same.
- **Transitions**—As you get close to ending the session, transition discussions toward a time to share how participants will apply what has been discussed to their lives in the upcoming week. Close your time together in prayer each time you meet. Invite participants to share requests, either verbally or in writing, so you know how you can pray for them throughout the week.

AFTER THE MEETING

- **Stick Around**—As the leader, make yourself available after your meeting time for questions, concerns, or further discussion that a participant may have been hesitant to discuss during the scheduled time. If a question arises that has you stumped, admit that you don't have the answer but that you'll contact someone who may be able to provide an answer, such as your parish priest or deacon, or your diocese.
- **Follow-Up**—Throughout the week you may have an opportunity to follow up with group participants, especially when it's relevant to send an email or make a phone call for things such as a prayer request, question, birthday or anniversary, or significant life event. Making contact with group members during the week to see how they're doing, how they are making lessons relevant in their own lives, or giving a quick encouragement to engage in daily Scripture reading and prayer will only strengthen the relational connections between you and your group participants.

SYMBOLON IN THE RCIA PROCESS

Though *Symbolon* is used for all kinds of adult faith formation settings, it was designed with the RCIA process in mind—which is fitting because the Church teaches that the process of the baptismal catechumenate is the model form of evangelization and catechesis.

For those using *Symbolon* for RCIA, the first 10 sessions on the Creed (*Symbolon:Knowing the Faith*) and the second 10 on the Sacraments and moral life (*Symbolon:Living the Faith*) are ideal for the period of the Catechumenate because they provide a systematic and organic presentation of all the essential dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Faith which are to be presented during this period.

Each *Symbolon* session is also designed in such a way that the catechumens or candidates are not only provided this “complete” and “suitable” catechesis (RCIA, 75.1), but they are also guided through a process of discovery and conversion to Jesus Christ. Each session provides discussion questions that help apply the teaching they have received to their lives; then the catechumens and candidates are led into an explicit call to conversion—a prayerful encounter with Christ and his Church followed by a firm resolution to live out their call to discipleship in their daily lives.

Also, each *Symbolon* session provides suggested Scripture readings to be used for a celebration of the Word of God. The RCIA liturgical text calls for special celebrations of the Word of God to be held during the period of the Catechumenate, especially at the beginning of catechetical sessions. “These celebrations of the word are...celebrations held in connection with catechetical instruction” (RCIA 81).

The model for how to conduct a celebration of the Word of God using the Scripture reading suggested in the leader’s guide can be found in the RCIA ritual books paragraphs 85-89.

Augustine Institute partners with dioceses across the country to offer comprehensive on-site leadership training for RCIA directors, team members, sponsors, and clergy. For more information, visit formed.org.

SAMPLE 90-MINUTE SESSION

Below is the suggested outline for an hour-and-a-half *Symbolon* session. Use the time allotments as a guideline; the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

Time	Steps	Section Overview
5 minutes	STEP 1: Opening Prayer/ Celebration of the Word	Situate the session in the context of prayer.
4 minutes	STEP 2: Introduction of the Theme	Provide a brief outline of the session's key points.
10 minutes	STEP 3: Video Part I	Play the video.
10 minutes	STEP 4: Proclamation	Summarize the doctrine that is the focus of the session.
20 minutes	STEP 5: Video Part II	Play the video.
10 minutes	STEP 6: Break	
15 minutes	STEP 7: Discussion	Facilitate discussion in large or small groups.
5 minutes	STEP 8: Summary and Exhortation	Summarize the main points from the study, and encourage participants to surrender their lives more fully to Jesus through what they have learned.
10 minutes	STEP 9: Call to Conversion	Allow participants time to respond to the session with reflection and journaling.
1 minute	STEP 10: Closing Prayer	Close in prayer.

SAMPLE 120-MINUTE SESSION

Below is the suggested outline for a 2-hour *Symbolon* RCIA session. Use the time allotments as a guideline; the length of time spent on each section will vary from group to group.

Time	Steps	Section Overview
10 minutes	STEP 1: Opening Prayer/ Celebration of the Word	Situate the session in the context of prayer.
4 minutes	STEP 2: Introduction of the Theme	Provide a brief outline of the session's key points.
10 minutes	STEP 3: Video Part I	Play the video.
5 minutes	STEP 4: Proclamation	Summarize the doctrine that is the focus of the session.
20 minutes	STEP 5: Video Part II	Play the video.
10 minutes	STEP 6: Break	
25 minutes	STEP 7: Discussion	Facilitate discussion in large or small groups.
25 minutes	STEP 8: Summary and Exhortation	Summarize the main points from the study, and encourage participants to surrender their lives more fully to Jesus through what they have learned.
10 minutes	STEP 9: Call to Conversion	Allow participants time to respond to the session with reflection and journaling.
1 minute	STEP 10: Closing Prayer	Close in prayer.

Session 1



THE SACRAMENTS

BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9972037-4-5

THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism & Confirmation



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

In *Symbolon: Knowing the Faith* (Episodes 1-10), we considered God’s plan of salvation as summed up in the Creed, walking from Creation, the Fall, and redemption to the Church, the saints, and the Second Coming.

At the climax of this story of salvation is Jesus’s Death and Resurrection. But that took place some 2,000 years ago. How are the fruits of Christ’s redemption dispensed in our lives? Through the sacraments.

We will now see how Christ works through the sacraments and liturgy to apply the fruits of salvation to our lives. Indeed, “Christ manifests, makes present, and communicates his work of salvation through the liturgy of his Church” (CCC 1076).

For Catholics, the word *sacrament* might convey a sense of ritual and religious experience. But for those not familiar with the Church, the idea of a sacrament can be puzzling. What is a sacrament? How do the sacraments work? Do I really need all of this ritual? Can’t I just have a simple relationship with God?

These are some of the questions we’ll be discussing in this session. Today, we begin by looking at the seven sacraments instituted by Christ in general, and then focus more specifically on two Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation. In the next four sessions, we’ll consider the other sacraments of the Church. Along the way, we will see how the sacraments draw us into the story of salvation, deepen our union with God, strengthen us in the Christian life, and assist us in the key moments of our lives.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **What is a sacrament?**
- **The different kinds of sacraments**
- **How the sacraments are a key part of the Christian life**
- **Why Baptism is considered the “gateway” to the Christian life**
- **Why Catholics baptize infants**
- **The significance of Confirmation and its relationship to Baptism**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER



SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*.

This week as we begin to examine the sacraments, let us begin by praying Psalm 111.

Have participants turn to page 11 of their guide to find the opening prayer and discussion questions.

Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who have pleasure in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures for ever.

He has caused his wonderful works
to be remembered;

the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people

the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;

all his precepts are trustworthy,
they are established for ever and ever,

to be performed with faithfulness
and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people;

he has commanded his covenant for ever.

Holy and awesome is his name!

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

a good understanding have all those who practice it.

His praise endures for ever!

—Psalm 111

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

**Suggested Scripture readings for
a celebration of the Word of God**

*(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your
leader's guide)*

Luke 3:16

Matthew 28:19–20

Romans 6:3–6

STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: Many of you may have heard the word *sacrament*. But what does it mean? It derives from the Latin word meaning “sacred” or “holy,” and that’s just what a sacrament is—a holy or sacred action. In the Catholic Church, there are seven sacraments that are part of a Christian’s spiritual life from birth to death.

In this session we are going to look more closely at the sacraments:

- **What is a sacrament?**
- **The different kinds of sacraments.**
- **How the sacraments are a key part of the Christian life?**
- **Why Baptism is considered the “gateway” to the Christian life?**
- **Why Catholics baptize infants?**
- **The significance of Confirmation and its relationship to Baptism.**

We will start by watching a short video.



STEP #3

VIDEO PART I: THE SACRAMENTS



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 13 minutes.

STEP #4

PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We've just been hearing how Jesus gave us the sacraments and how they are his way of meeting us in our lives when and how we need him.

The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace instituted by Christ to give his divine life to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. The sacraments are experienced in everyday life.

The sacraments can be divided into three groups. The first are the Sacraments of Initiation, which lay the foundations of the Christian life. These are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Next are the Sacraments of Healing, which heal and strengthen the soul weakened by illness or sin. These are Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. Third are the Sacraments of Service, which are directed toward the salvation of others. These are Matrimony and Holy Orders.

Baptism is the gateway of the Christian life. Through this sacrament, the soul passes through Christ's Death and Resurrection and experiences death of the old self and rebirth as a child of God as the soul is forgiven of its sins and made into a new creature, filled with Christ's Spirit. The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens and confirms the grace of Baptism, gives the Holy Spirit to root us more deeply in Christ and in his Church's mission and strengthens us to bear witness to Christ in the world.



DIGGING DEEPER

Sacraments in Other Churches

Catholics and the Orthodox Churches believe in seven sacraments established by Jesus. Anglicans teach that Jesus established two sacraments, Baptism and the "Supper of the Lord," but that the other five "are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel." Most Protestant churches, following the early Reformers, accept only Baptism and Communion as sacraments.

STEP #5

VIDEO PART II: BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

SAY: In our second video segment, we are going to look more closely at the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

Play video Part II, which will play for approximately 26 minutes.

STEP #6

BREAK

After stopping the video,

SAY: Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their guide to find these questions.

SAY: Welcome back to our session on the sacraments in general and Baptism and Confirmation specifically. Let's talk a little about what we learned in the last video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

SAY: Dr. Sri gave a description of the baptismal ritual in the early Church at the Baptistery of St. John Lateran in Rome. Everything about the ritual symbolized what happens to the soul in Baptism. Through the sacrament, the risen Jesus unites us to himself and shares with us the new life he won by his Death and Resurrection. The sacrament achieves what it symbolizes: a spiritual death and rebirth in Christ.



How would you respond to someone who asks: “Why have you Catholics made Christianity so complicated with all your rules and rituals?”

(The simple answer to that question is: Because Jesus ascended into Heaven, and we need to think seriously about how we worship him and live our lives as his disciples until he returns in glory. Just before he ascended to his Father, Jesus commissioned his disciples to make disciples of all nations, and he promised that he would be with them always [Matthew 28:18-20]. His disciples had to be thinking: “How will he remain with us if he ascends to Heaven?” Their question was answered when the Holy Spirit descended upon them at Pentecost, and the Church, the Body of Christ, was born. Through the liturgy and sacraments of the Church, Jesus continues the work of salvation that he began during his earthly life. Rules and rituals are about truth and grace. Jesus saves us through truth and grace.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

What are some of the outward signs and symbols used in Baptism, and what do they represent?

- *Water: plunging into water can be seen as symbolizing spiritual cleansing, but even more, it represents dying to our old sinful self and rising as new creations in Christ as we pass through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus through Baptism.*
- *White Garments: white garments are symbolic of the soul, now cleansed from sin.*
- *Candle: the candle represents the light of Christ in the world and the presence of Christ in the life of the newly baptized.*
- *Oil of Salvation: this anointing with oil before Baptism is a sign of strength to resist evil and preparation for new life in Christ.*
- *Sacred Chrism: this anointing after Baptism permanently conforms our soul to Christ and makes us sharers in his mission as Priest, Prophet, and King.)*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

Why is it significant that in Confirmation we are anointed with Sacred Chrism?

(Anointing with oil played an important role in Old Testament time in creating prophets, priests, and kings. “Christ” comes from the Greek word “Christos” meaning “anointed one.” Jesus says in Luke 4:18: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.” Jesus is “the Christ” because he is the Anointed One from God. We are called “Christians” because we are “anointed ones” in Jesus Christ. We were first anointed with Sacred Chrism at our Baptism and then again in our Confirmation. Sacred Chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam fragrance. The fragrance reminds us that we are sanctified and called to be what St. Paul calls Christians in 2 Corinthians 2:15: the “aroma of Christ” in the world. The oil reminds us that we are strengthened in the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Catholic Faith.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Infant Baptism

The early Church fathers referred to infant Baptism as having come from apostolic times.

“The Church received from the apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants. The apostles, to whom were committed the secrets of the divine sacraments, knew there are in everyone innate strains of [original] sin, which must be washed away through water and the Spirit” (Commentaries on Romans 5:9 [A.D. 248]). —Origen

“Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them” (The Apostolic Tradition 21:16 [A.D. 215]). —Hippolytus

Sacramental grace given to a soul does not distinguish between young and old. Although they are innocent of any actual sin, children are born with the stain of Original Sin, which is washed away in Baptism, allowing them to begin living as sons of God.



DIGGING DEEPER

The Baptismal Candle

“In the Rite of Baptism there is an eloquent sign that expresses precisely the transmission of faith. It is the presentation to each of those being baptized of a candle lit from the flame of the Easter candle: it is the light of the Risen Christ, which you will endeavour to pass on to your children. Thus, from one generation to the next we Christians transmit Christ’s light to one another in such a way that when he returns he may find us with this flame burning in our hands.”

—Pope Benedict XVI

STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- “Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131).
- “The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.” (CCC 1131).
- The Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments as having been established by Christ (CCC 1210–1211).
- Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are the Sacraments of Initiation, which lay the foundations of the Christian life (CCC 1212).
- Reconciliation (or Penance) and Anointing of the Sick are the two Sacraments of Healing, which heal and strengthen the soul weakened by illness and sin (CCC 1420–1421).
- Matrimony and Holy Orders are the two Sacraments of Service, directed toward the salvation of others (CCC 1534).
- Baptism in particular is the gateway of the Christian life. Through this sacrament, the soul passes through Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection and experiences death of the old self and rebirth as a child of God (CCC 1213).
- The effects of Baptism include:
 1. Forgiveness of sins, including the forgiveness of Original Sin as well as all mortal and venial sins that the person may have committed (CCC 1262).
 2. Being made into a new creature filled with Christ’s Spirit (CCC 1265).
 3. Being incorporated into the Church (CCC 1267), which is the Mystical Body of Christ.
 4. Sealed with an “indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ” (CCC 1272), “which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship” (CCC 1280).
 5. Made citizens and heirs of Heaven (CCC 1272–1274).
 6. Participation in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus, through which he finds redemption (CCC 1214).
 7. Conferring of Sanctifying Grace (CCC 1266).

- Baptism gives us new birth into the life Christ. Therefore, it is necessary for salvation (CCC 1277).
- Confirmation perfects the grace of Baptism and gives the Holy Spirit to root us more deeply in Christ and in his Church's mission. It strengthens the soul against temptation and gives us the strength to defend the Faith and to bear witness to Christ in the world (CCC 1303, 1316).
- Confirmation deepens baptismal grace, and “imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian's soul” (CCC 1285, 1317). It unites us more firmly with Christ, increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit, binds us to the Church, and gives the strength to spread the Gospel (CCC 1303).
- It is important to remember that the sacramental grace of Confirmation is not given to those who are in a state of mortal sin. While it is recommended that all confirmands receive the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Confirmation, it is essential for those who are aware of having committed mortal sin.

STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION



SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on the sacraments in general and on Baptism and Confirmation in particular. Use your guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. A sacrament is a great mystery of participation in divine life and configuration to Christ, which conveys to the recipient specific sacramental graces. In particular, Baptism and Confirmation confer a character that conforms a person to Christ, and the person receives a participation in divine life, namely his divinization. If you have already been baptized, what does this mean to you? How can Baptism help you in daily life? If you are anticipating Baptism, what are you looking forward to? In what other ways can the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, help you to grow in your spiritual life?
2. Consider the following quote from St. Diadochos of Photiki:

“Before holy baptism, grace encourages the soul towards good from the outside, while Satan lurks in its depths, trying to block all the intellect's ways of approach to the divine. But from the moment that we are reborn through baptism, the demon is outside, grace is within. Thus, whereas before baptism error ruled the soul, after baptism truth rules it.”

What does it mean that after Baptism “grace is within”? How does the knowledge that through Baptism you have the power and the ability to resist temptation affect you? If you truly acted as if you knew you had that power, how would your life be different from now on?



3. In the video, we heard that the sacraments fill us with Christ's life and draw us deeper into communion with God. When we want to grow spiritually or morally, we need to go to the sacraments where Jesus waits to heal, sanctify, and restore us. The presenter then asked questions that we must all answer: Will you make it a priority to frequent the sacraments? Are you willing to make the sacraments an essential part of your life? How can you begin to encounter Christ more frequently in the sacraments through the liturgy, and make this encounter the main emphasis of your life?
4. It is important to remember that the sacramental grace of Confirmation is not given to those who are in a state of mortal sin. While it is recommended that all confirmands receive the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Confirmation, it is essential for those who are aware of having committed mortal sin.

STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the sacraments and their role in your life. Your Guides will give you prompts if you need some guidance.

Let's close our time together by renewing our baptismal promises. If you have not yet been baptized, silently reflect on these words and the Christian life you may soon be entering.



Renewal of Baptismal Promises

V. Do you reject Satan?

R. I do.

V. And all his works?

R. I do.

V. And all his empty promises?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

R. I do.

V. God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever.

R. Amen.

Session 2



THE EUCHARIST

SOURCE & SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9972037-4-5

THE EUCHARIST

Source & Summit of Christian Life



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

The sacrament of the Eucharist lies at the very heart of the Catholic Faith. When we receive Holy Communion, we are united with Jesus in the most intimate way possible here on earth. For the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ. The almighty God, Creator of the universe, humbles himself so that he can become one with us each time we attend Mass and receive Communion.

But the idea that a sliver of bread and a drop of wine can truly be changed into Christ's Body and Blood can be difficult for our limited minds to grasp. After all, they still look like bread and wine! Indeed, when we do stop to consider what is really happening in the Eucharist, the miracle is almost beyond comprehension.

While the Eucharist has the outward appearance of bread and wine, it is the Body and Blood of Christ that we must consume to have eternal life. This is a central mystery of our Faith: Jesus's Real Presence in the Eucharist, yesterday, today, and until the end of time. In fact, many famous converts have joined the Church because they came to believe that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist.

As we explore the Church's teachings on the Eucharist, may our minds be open to a deeper understanding of the mysteries and our hearts be filled with a greater love for our Lord.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **The Eucharist as Real Presence—what it means and why it is central to the Catholic Faith**
- **In the Eucharist, the mode of Christ's Real Presence is as the Victim/Sacrifice and Priest for our redemption and salvation.**
- **Why Jesus couldn't have been speaking metaphorically when he said to eat his Body and drink his Blood**
- **The Eucharist as sacrifice—how the Sacrifice of the Mass makes present Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, and how knowing this makes a crucial difference for our participation in the Mass**
- **The Eucharist as Communion—how Jesus longs for us to receive him in Holy Communion**
- **How Christ's Eucharistic presence remains with us in the tabernacles in our Catholic churches, where the consecrated hosts are reserved**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER

SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*.

Have participants turn to page 19 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.

This week as we learn more about the Eucharist, let us join together in praying the *Anima Christi*, which means “the soul of Christ.” St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, was particularly fond of this prayer. This translation is by Blessed John Henry Newman.

**Soul of Christ, be my sanctification;
 Body of Christ, be my salvation;
 Blood of Christ, fill all my veins;
 Water of Christ’s side, wash out my stains;
 Passion of Christ, my comfort be;
 O good Jesus, listen to me;
 In Thy wounds I fain would hide;
 Ne’er to be parted from Thy side;
 Guard me, should the foe assail me;
 Call me when my life shall fail me;
 Bid me come to Thee above,
 With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
 World without end. Amen.**

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

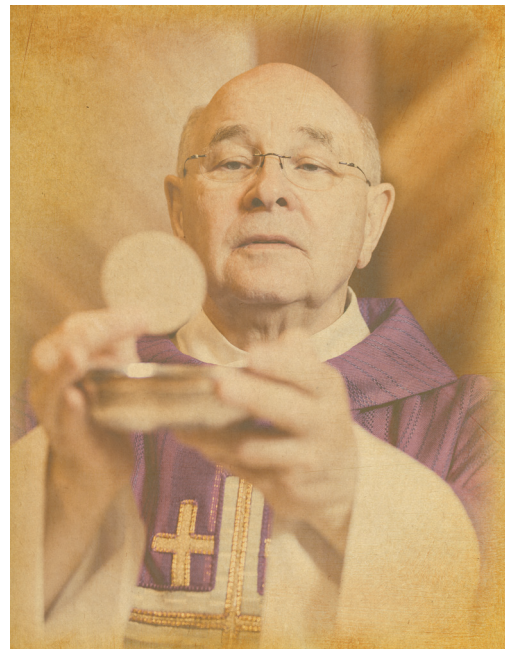
Suggested Scripture readings for a celebration of the Word of God

(see “Introduction to Symbolon” in your Leader’s guide)

1 Corinthians 11:24–27

John 6:53–58

Luke 22:19–20



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: When we go to Communion, the priest or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist holds up the host and says, “The Body of Christ.” We reply, “Amen,” which means “So be it,” asserting that we do believe that we are going to be taking Christ into our very bodies. When we stop to think about what’s really happening with the host, it’s one of the greatest miracles of all time...and it happens at each and every Catholic Mass.

In this session we are going to explore the Eucharist. Some of the topics we will look at include:

- **The Eucharist as Real Presence—what it means and why it is central to the Catholic Faith**
- **Why Jesus couldn’t have been speaking metaphorically when he said to eat his Body and drink his Blood**
- **The Eucharist as sacrifice—how the sacrifice of the Mass makes present Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, and how knowing this makes a crucial difference for our participation in the Mass**
- **The Eucharist as Communion—how Jesus longs for us to receive him in Holy Communion**
- **How Christ’s Eucharistic presence remains with us in the tabernacles in our Catholic churches, where the consecrated hosts are reserved**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3


VIDEO PART I: THE EUCHARIST



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 15 minutes.

STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,

 **SAY:** We just heard how Jesus gives himself—Body and Blood, soul and divinity—in the Eucharist and how the Eucharist is a fundamental mystery of the Catholic Faith.

At Mass, the bread is changed into the Body of Christ and the wine is changed into the Blood of Christ.


This is not a chemical change since the outward, sensible appearances of bread and wine remain, but underneath those appearances of bread and wine, Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. This is what we call the Real Presence.


In the Mass, the mode of Christ’s Real Presence is as the Victim/Sacrifice and Priest for our redemption and salvation. As a liturgical memorial, the Mass makes present Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross in order to apply the fruit of his sacrifice to our lives. At every Mass, we are called to join our lives in union with Christ’s gift of himself to the Father.

When we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving the very Body and Blood of Jesus into our souls. He loves us so much that he desires to be with us in this intimate way. When we receive Holy Communion, we need to take time for loving thanksgiving and union with Jesus.

STEP #5

VIDEO PART II: SOURCE & SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

 **SAY:** In our second video segment, we are going to look at how the Eucharist impacts our lives.

 *Play video Part II, which will play for approximately 23 minutes.*



DIGGING DEEPER

The Eucharist

The word *Eucharist* comes from the Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” While Scripture does not directly use this term for communion, it is implied in the Last Supper where it says that “after having given thanks” Jesus broke the bread. By the late first or early second century, the Church fathers Ignatius of Antioch and Justin Martyr were referring to the celebration of the “breaking of the bread” with the word *Eucharist*.

STEP #6

BREAK

After stopping the video,



SAY: Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guide to find these questions.



SAY: Welcome back to our session on the Eucharist. Let's talk a bit about what we learned in the last video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

SAY: The miracle that God performs in the Eucharist is transubstantiation, which means the substance of the bread and wine has changed into the Body, Blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ while the outward appearance of bread and wine remain the same.

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote in a beautiful Eucharistic hymn: "Faith will tell us Christ is present, when our human senses fail." What does this mean to you?

(Father Riley said that if you look at a consecrated host under a microscope, you will not see the cellular structure of a human body, you would see bread. This is when our human senses fail and when we exercise faith. However, there is a story of a scientist named Professor Odoardo Linoli who looked at a host under a microscope and actually saw human heart tissue. This is the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano, Italy, that occurred in the 8th century. During the celebration of the Mass, a host turned from bread into flesh and has been naturally preserved without decay for 12 centuries. In 1970, Professor Linoli and his assistant, Professor Bertelli, did scientific analysis on the tissue and determined that it was human heart muscle. This is just one of many documented Eucharistic miracles that have occurred throughout the history of the Church. Just as Jesus said, "Do not be faithless, but believing" [John 20:27] as He allowed Thomas to put his fingers into the nail prints in his hands and wound in his side, Eucharistic miracles tell us to not be faithless, but believing.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

What is the relationship between the Eucharist and the Jewish feast of Passover? How might the Passover background shed light on the need to receive Jesus in Holy Communion? How might the Passover background shed light on the Mass as sacrifice?

(The relationship of the Eucharist with Passover: The Eucharist was instituted in the context of the Jewish Passover feast. Jesus gave us the Eucharist as the new Passover meal. At Passover, the people sacrificed a lamb and ate of it to symbolize the covenant union of the people with God. At the Last Supper, Jesus used the same sacrificial language from the Passover, applying it to himself and offering his Body and Blood for our sins.)

How the Passover sheds light on Holy Communion: Just as the ancient Jews had to partake of the sacrificial Passover lamb for their covenant union with God to be renewed, so we Christians must partake of the new Passover lamb—Jesus Christ—in Holy Communion to deepen our union with God.

How the Passover sheds light on the Mass as sacrifice: The ancient Jews celebrated their Passover each year as a “memorial”—a liturgical “making present” of the first Passover in Egypt. At the Last Supper, when Jesus speaks of his Body being offered up and his Blood being shed and then says “Do this in memory of me,” he is evoking this understanding of memorial not merely as a way of remembering past events, but as a way of making present God’s saving works in history—in this case, the saving work of Christ on the Cross.)



DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

How can the Eucharist be a true sacrifice when Jesus is no longer dying on the Cross, but has been raised from the dead and is seated in Heaven?

(The Eucharist is an “unbloody” sacrifice that re-presents, that is, makes present again, the Sacrifice of the Cross because it is “its memorial and because it applies its fruit.” —CCC 1366

The Sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice because Jesus is one and the same. Only the manner of offering has changed.

In the sacrifice of the Eucharist, just as in the sacrifice of the Cross, Jesus is both Priest and Sacrifice. Jesus does not literally die again at each Mass, but his sacrifice is re-presented each time we celebrate the Eucharist.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Receiving Communion

“A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to . . . receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible” (Code of Canon Law, Can. 916).

“A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before holy communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine” (Can. 919 §1).

“After being initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year” (Can. 920 §1§2).

STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- The Eucharist is the “the source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324).
- The Real Presence: At Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is not a chemical or physical change because the outward, sensible appearances of bread and wine remain, but under those appearances of bread and wine, Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist (CCC 1374).
- The Eucharist as sacrifice: The Mass is a sacrifice because it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the Cross, because it is its memorial (CCC 1366). At every Mass, we are called to join our lives in union with Christ’s gift of himself to the Father (CCC 1368).
- As a biblical memorial, the Mass makes present Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross in order to apply the fruit of his sacrifice to our lives (CCC 1366).
- Communion: Jesus loves us so much he desired to come to us in Holy Communion. When we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving the very Body and Blood of Jesus into our souls (CCC 1391).
- It is important to take time for loving thanksgiving with Jesus after we receive him in Holy Communion, which nourishes and strengthens our life in Christ (CCC 1391-92). Although all are invited, not all are ready to receive the Eucharist, either because of serious sin that has not been brought to the Sacrament of Reconciliation or for a lack of full communion with the Catholic Church (CCC 1400).



STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION

SAY: Spend a few minutes reflecting on the gift of the Eucharist. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. When you consider that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord, how does that change or deepen your appreciation for the Mass? If you have already received your First Communion, how can you show your love for Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, more fully and completely?
2. In the video, we learned some ways to build a closer relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist, including visiting him at a Eucharistic Adoration chapel, spending a few minutes after Mass in thanksgiving, and attending daily Mass. What is one way that you could begin to spend more time with Jesus this week?
3. Reflect on the following quote by St. Thérèse of Lisieux:

“Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you—for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart...go without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love.”

When you read that Jesus is waiting for you alone, what thoughts come to mind? How can you best respond to this invitation of love? What fears or concerns are holding you back? Can you let them go and “receive the Jesus of peace and love”?



STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the great gift we have in the Eucharist. Your Guide will give you prompts if you need some guidance.



Let's close our time together in prayer.

May the partaking of your Holy Mysteries, O Lord,
 be not for my judgment or condemnation,
 but for the healing of soul and body.
 O Lord, I also believe and profess
 that this (which I am about to receive)
 is truly your most precious Body
 and your life-giving Blood,
 which, I pray, make me worthy to receive
 for the remission of all my sins
 and for life everlasting. Amen.

—Prayer before Holy Communion
 from the Byzantine Liturgy



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

The Names of the Sacrament: CCC 1328–1332

Bread and Wine; Body and Blood: CCC 1333

Institution of the Eucharist: CCC 1337–1344

Sacramental Sacrifice: CCC 1357–1368

Transubstantiation: CCC 1376–1377

Fruits of Communion: CCC 1391–1395

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 17

St. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (*On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*)

The Eucharist: A Bible Study Guide for Catholics by Fr. Mitch Pacwa

Eucharist (Catholic Spirituality for Adults) by Fr. Robert Barron

Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper
 by Brant Pitre

God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

Code of Canon Law, 912–923 (available at www.vatican.va)

Session 3



WALK THROUGH THE MASS

EXPLORING THE SACRED LITURGY



SYMBOLON
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-9972037-4-5

WALK THROUGH THE MASS

Exploring the Sacred Liturgy



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

From the time of the Apostles, Christians have gathered on Sundays to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Early Christians would read the Scriptures, listen to a homily, and pray prayers of petition. The priest then offered bread and wine, and the people received the Eucharist in Holy Communion. It was the Mass then—and it is the Mass today.

In order to better appreciate the sacred mysteries of the Liturgy, we need to understand how the Mass is arranged and what happens in each of its four basic parts. We then can begin to understand how Christ's one sacrifice on Calvary is made present to us through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. As we do so, we enter more profoundly into the Sacred Liturgy and encounter Jesus, present and alive for us today.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **How the Mass we celebrate today links back to apostolic times**
- **The four main sections of the Mass**
- **How we encounter God in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist**
- **What we can do to “get more” out of every Mass**
- **Why we must attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER



SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*.

Have participants turn to page 27 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.

This week we will learn more about the Mass. Let's begin by praying part of the "Prayer Before Mass," written by St. Thomas Aquinas.



Almighty and everlasting God,
behold I come to the Sacrament of thine only-begotten Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ:

I come as one infirm to the physician of life,
as one unclean to the fountain of mercy,
as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness,
as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.
Therefore I implore the abundance of thy measureless bounty
that thou wouldst vouchsafe to heal my infirmity,
wash my uncleanness,
enlighten my blindness,
enrich my poverty
and clothe my nakedness,
that I may receive the Bread of Angels,
the King of kings, the Lord of lords,
with such reverence and humility,
with such sorrow and devotion,
with such purity and faith,
with such purpose and intention
as may be profitable
to my soul's salvation.
Amen.

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

**Suggested Scripture readings for
a celebration of the Word of God**

*(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your
Leader's Guide)*

Revelation 4:4-11

Acts 2:42-47

1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:17-34

STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: Each Sunday Catholics gather together to celebrate the Mass, the central act of worship that makes Christ's sacrifice on Calvary present to us. With the entire Church, we enter sacred rites that date back to the time of the Apostles. We learn about God's revelation through Scripture, and then we partake in the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Lord in Holy Communion.

In this session we are going to take a walk through the Mass and consider the following important topics:

- **How the Mass we celebrate today links back to apostolic times**
- **The four main sections of the Mass**
- **How we encounter God in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist**
- **What we can do to “get more” out of every Mass**
- **Why we must attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation**

We will start by watching a short video.



DIGGING DEEPER

Communion Fast

Catholics are required to abstain from solid food or drink for one hour before Communion. Water or medicine may be taken any time before reception. The sick and aged are required to fast only fifteen minutes. Originally the Eucharistic fast was from midnight until Communion was received. In 1964 Pope Paul VI established the current norms.

STEP # 3

VIDEO PART I: WALK THROUGH THE MASS



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 12 minutes.

STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We have just learned how the sacred words and rituals of the Mass go back to the time of the early Church, and how in the Mass God gives himself to us and in return we give our praise back to God.

The Mass consists of four principal parts. The first is the Introductory Rites, where we humbly acknowledge our sins, ask for God's mercy, and prepare our souls for worship with opening prayers.

The second part of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Word, where the Word of God is proclaimed through an Old Testament reading, a Responsorial Psalm, a New Testament reading, and a reading from the Gospels.

The third part of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In this part, the bread is changed into the Body of Christ and the wine is changed into the Blood of Christ. Christ's sacrifice is made present, and we receive the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ in Holy Communion. In the Mass, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, gives himself to us through his Sacred Body and Blood, which is truly and really present in the Eucharist.

The last and final part of the Mass consists of the Concluding Rites. We are sent off to bring Christ into the world after having heard God's Word and been nourished by his Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

Finally, the Sunday obligation to attend Mass is an opportunity to give ourselves to the Lord so that he can give himself to us in this most profound, intimate way through the Eucharist.

STEP #5

VIDEO PART II: EXPLORING THE SACRED LITURGY



SAY: In our second video segment, we are going to look at the profound significance of the rites and rituals that make up the Mass.



Play video Part II, which will play for approximately 22 minutes.

STEP #6

BREAK

After stopping the video,



SAY: Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants turn to their Guides to find these questions.



SAY: Welcome back to our walk through the Mass. Let's talk a little about what we learned in the last video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

What are some examples of words in the Mass that come directly from Scripture? What are some examples that come from the earliest days of the Church?

(One example is "Peace be with you"—words Jesus spoke to his disciples. Another example is the prayer we say before Communion: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. But only say the word and my soul shall be healed." This is taken directly from the Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant.

In the early Church, the priest would say, "The Lord be with you," and the people would respond, "and with your Spirit," just as we do today. The priest would also say, "Lift up your hearts," and the people would respond as we do: "We lift them up to the Lord.")

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

In the video presentation, we learned that in the Mass, Christ's sacrifice is made present. In what ways are we called to unite our lives to Christ's sacrifice made present in the Mass?

(We are called to offer our entire lives—all our works, all our joys, all our sufferings—in union with Jesus' perfect offering of himself to the Father (CCC 1368). By participating in the sacrifice of the Mass in this way, we are ever more conformed to Christ's sacrificial love.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3



SAY: We are obligated to eat, drink, and breathe in order to stay alive. We should think of our Sunday obligation to attend Mass in the same way. God gave us the commandment to “keep holy the Sabbath” because he knows that without it we will die.

What would you say to a friend who says it is not necessary to attend Mass every Sunday?

(St. Padre Pio, who was known to celebrate Mass for 2–3 hours, said: “It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without the Holy Mass.” Though we receive Jesus in the Word and the Eucharist, the Mass is not just for our benefit. We are offering our prayers with Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice for the salvation of souls. In other words, the world needs the Mass, and Jesus desires our cooperation with him. Also, we are transformed through our worship of God. So, why go to Mass? Because God wants to transform us and through us to transform the world. The penalty of mortal sin shows us just how important the Mass is for the world.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Names for the Sacrament

The Eucharist is described by various names, which highlight different aspects of the sacrament. It is referred to as:

- *The Eucharist* because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek word *eucharistein* means “to give thanks.”
- *The Lord’s Supper* because of its connection with the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Mass.
- *The Breaking of the Bread* because that is what Jesus did at the Last Supper and it is the way his disciples recognized him after the Resurrection. The first Christians often used this term.
- *The Eucharistic Assembly* because it is celebrated in the assembly of the faithful.
- *The Holy Sacrifice* because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ and includes the Church’s offering.
- *The Holy and Divine Liturgy* because it is the center of the Church’s worship.
- *Holy Communion* because in receiving the Eucharist at Mass we unite ourselves to Christ.
- *Holy Mass*, after the word *mission*, meaning “sending forth” of the faithful to live out God’s will in daily life.

(See CCC 1328–1331 for more information.)

STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL) SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- The Mass consists of two great parts that together constitute one single act of worship: the Liturgy of the Word, with Scripture readings, the homily, the Creed, and general intercessions; and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, with the presentation of the bread and wine, the Eucharistic prayer in which Christ's Body and Blood becomes present, and the Communion Rite (CCC 1346, 1408).
- The Liturgy also has rites at the start of Mass that prepare us for God's Word and the Eucharist and rites at the end of Mass that send us forth into the world. In the Introductory Rites, we gather together to prepare our souls to encounter God in his Word and Jesus in the Eucharist (CCC 1348), while in the Concluding Rites, the faithful are sent forth to bring the good news of salvation to the entire world (CCC 1332).
- Catholics are obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, if possible during the Easter season (CCC 1389, 1417).



STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION



SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on the mystery of the Mass. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. Do I come to Mass to receive or to give? What am I doing to prepare my soul for Mass?
2. In the video, we learned some ways to “get more out of the Mass,” including praying in the car on the way to church, listening for a specific point or prayer that particularly touches us, and remaining for a few minutes after Mass to give thanks. What is one thing that you could do this week to prepare for Mass?
3. Reflect on the following quote from St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina:

“It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do without Holy Mass.”

Prayerfully consider how St. Padre Pio’s statement expresses the importance of the Mass. How does this change the way you view the obligation to attend Mass? How can you more completely give yourself to Jesus at each Mass?



STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Mass and what it means in your life. Your Guides will give you prompts if you need some guidance.



Let's close our time together by praying part of St. Thomas Aquinas's "Prayer After Mass."

I give thanks to thee, O Lord,
 most holy, Father almighty, eternal God,
 that thou hast vouchsafed,
 for no merit of mine own,
 but out of thy pure mercy,
 to appease the hunger of my soul
 with the precious body and blood of thy Son,
 Our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Humbly I implore thee,
 let not this Holy Communion be to me
 an increase of guilt unto my punishment,
 but an availing plea unto pardon and salvation.
 Amen.



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

The Mass through the Ages: CCC 1345

The Structure of the Mass: CCC 1346

Introductory Rites: CCC 1348

The Liturgy of the Word: CCC 1349

The Offertory: CCC 1350

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: CCC 1351-1353

Sunday Obligation: CCC 1359, 1417

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 14

A Biblical Walk through the Mass: Understanding What We Say and Do in the Liturgy
 by Dr. Edward Sri

The Mass: The Glory, the Mystery, the Tradition
 by Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina

The Mass of the Early Christians by Mike Aquilina

The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth by Scott Hahn

Session 4



PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

GOD'S MERCY REVEALED



SYMBOLON
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

God's Mercy Revealed



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

God, in his infinite mercy, understands that we will fall short, we will sin—but he doesn't leave us in that sin. Through the Sacrament of Penance we can be restored to love and friendship with God and receive the grace to mend our relationships with each other. Like the father of the prodigal son, he welcomes us back at the smallest sign of our sorrow and repentance. Just as Jesus did not condemn the adulterous woman, he forgives us completely and tells us to “Go and sin no more.”

Little wonder then that the Sacrament of Penance, also known as Reconciliation, is one of the last and greatest gifts Jesus left us. When he told his Apostles after the Resurrection, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven,” (John 20:23), he gave them authority to bestow the Father's tangible mercy to all generations that follow. As the priest, given the power through apostolic succession to forgive sins in Jesus's name, grants us “pardon and peace,” we can be sure that we are truly forgiven our trespasses, no matter how dark and ugly they might be, as long as we come with contrite hearts and repentance. What an incredible gift of mercy and forgiveness!

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **Why Penance is such an important part of Catholic Faith**
- **Why we confess our sins to a priest**
- **A step-by-step guide to reception of the Sacrament of Penance**
- **The benefits and graces of frequent Confession**
- **And finally, a look at the other sacrament of healing—Anointing of the Sick**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER



SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*. This week we will examine the Sacraments of Reconciliation, or Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick.

Have participants turn to page 27 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.

Let us begin with this short prayer for healing, for we are always in need of Christ's healing and mercy.



Lord, you invite all who are burdened to come to you.
Allow your healing hand to heal me.
Touch my soul with your compassion for others.
Touch my heart with your courage and infinite love for all.
Touch my mind with your wisdom,
that my mouth may always proclaim your praise.
Teach me to reach out to you in my need,
and help me to lead others to you by my example.
Most loving heart of Jesus,
bring me health in body and spirit
that I may serve you with all my strength.
Touch gently this life which you have created,
now and forever. Amen.

—www.ourcatholicfaith.org

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

Suggested Scripture readings for a celebration of the Word of God

(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your Leader's Guide)

Psalm 32

1 John 1:8-10

Matthew 18:18



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: We are all sinners. But even though we sin, God loves us so much that he gives us a way to confess our sins and be restored to a relationship with him through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus also gives us the powerful Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to give us grace, strength, and peace during illness and even at the time of our death.

Some of the topics we will look at in this session include:

- **Why Penance is such an important part of the Catholic Faith**
- **Why we confess our sins to a priest**
- **A step-by-step guide to reception of the sacrament**
- **The benefits and graces of frequent Confession**
- **And finally, a look at the other Sacrament of Healing—Anointing of the Sick**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO PART I: PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 14 minutes.

STEP # 4

PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We have learned about how the Sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick are God's great instruments of mercy and healing throughout our lives.



DIGGING DEEPER

Penance

"The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: effort at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity 'which covers a multitude of sins.'" —CCC 1434

Jesus, the divine Son of God, came to reconcile us to the Father. He forgave people's sins and gave this power to the Apostles to exercise in his name. We can see this when he said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22–23).


This power has been handed down throughout the centuries through apostolic succession to the bishops and priests in the Church today in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Through this sacrament, our sins are forgiven. The sacrament reconciles us with God, reconciles us with the Church, gives us "peace and serenity of conscience," and gives us greater spiritual strength to help us overcome sin in the future.

Finally, in a second Sacrament of Healing—Anointing of the Sick—a baptized person who is seriously sick or in danger of death because of illness or old age is anointed with holy oil. This sacrament unites the person's sufferings with Christ's sufferings, and strengthens them to endure their trial. And if the person is dying, it prepares them for entrance into eternal life.

STEP #5

VIDEO PART II: GOD'S MERCY REVEALED


 **SAY:** In our second video segment, we are going to look more deeply at what the Church teaches about the Sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick.

 *Play video Part II, which will play for approximately 29 minutes.*

STEP #6

BREAK

After stopping the video,

 **SAY:** Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.

 **SAY:** Welcome back to our session on Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Let's talk a little about what we learned in the last video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

Dr. Sri explains the beautiful painting in St. Peter’s Basilica near the confessional booths. The painting is of the biblical scene where Peter begins walking on the water but sinks when he takes his eyes off Jesus. The analogy is that sin results when we take our eyes off Jesus, but he is there to forgive us and save us. We need to reach out to him like Peter and ask him to save us. As St. John writes in our opening Scripture verse: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

How can we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus so that we are not susceptible to sin?

(The Catechism teaches that our human nature “is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin—an inclination to evil that is called ‘concupiscence’” [CCC 405]. This means that sin is attractive to us and temptations will draw our attention away from Jesus. Daily prayer, receiving grace through the sacraments, avoiding areas of temptation, and supporting Christian friendships help us to keep our eyes on Jesus. The more we grow in intimacy with Christ, the more we desire him above everything and the less we are attracted to sin.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

According to the presenters, what are the effects of the Sacrament of Penance?

- (• *Forgiveness of sins*
- *A restored relationship with God*
- *Repaired relationship with the Church and our fellow Christians*
- *Peace and serenity of conscience*
- *Strength to overcome future sin and the ability to grow in grace)*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

Pope St. John Paul II said: “Confession is an act of honesty and courage—an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God.”

What is keeping you from encountering Jesus in the Sacrament of Penance more often?

(Pope St. John Paul II’s quote inspires us to ask ourselves: “Do I need to be more honest with myself, more courageous in my weakness, and more trusting of God’s love and mercy?”)



DIGGING DEEPER

Why Confess Our Sins?

“The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission, man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible.”

—CCC 1455

STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

Let's review what we've learned about Penance and the Anointing of the Sick.

- Jesus, the divine Son of God, came to reconcile us to the Father. He forgave people's sins and gave this power to men to exercise in his name. In John 20:19–23, we are told he breathed on the Apostles and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
- Only God can forgive sin, but he does so through the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (CCC 1441–1442).
- This power has been handed down to the Apostles' successors throughout the centuries to the bishops and priests in the Church today (CCC 1444–1445, 1461).
- The sacrament reconciles us with God, reconciles us with the Church, gives us "peace and serenity of conscience," and gives us greater spiritual strength to help us overcome sin in the future (CCC 1496).
- As we prepare for confession, we should examine our consciences (CCC 1453). One way to do this is by using the Ten Commandments as a starting point.
- In the Sacrament of Penance, the penitent, in order to confess properly and receive absolution, must mention the type and number of times the sin was committed. There must also be a firm purpose not to commit the sin again, at least a partial contrition, and an intention to fulfill the penance involved. To willfully conceal one's sins in confession is a sacrilege against the sacrament, and the person's sins will not be forgiven.
- The spiritual effects of the Sacrament of Penance include: reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace; reconciliation with the Church; peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation; and increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle (CCC 1496).
- The second Sacrament of Healing is the Anointing of the Sick:

This sacrament is given by a priest to a baptized Catholic, in a state of sanctifying grace, who has a life-threatening or pathological illness, is going to have a life-threatening operation, or in danger of death because of illness or old age. The sacrament unites the sick person to Christ's suffering, gives strength, courage, and peace to endure their suffering in a Christian way, give the person to fight temptation to the very end, and brings forgiveness of sins if the person is not able to receive the Sacrament of Penance because their physical state is so grave that they are not able to make a proper confession. The sacrament also can bring restoration of health, if it is conducive to the person's salvation, and it prepares them for passing to eternal life (CCC 1532).

STEP #9 CALL TO CONVERSION

SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

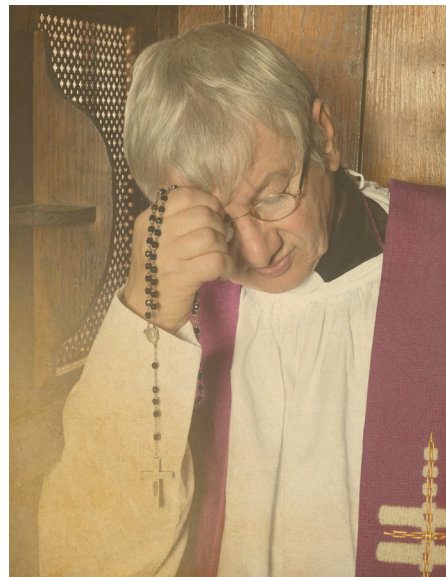
1. Recall the Gospel story of the woman caught in adultery and the story of the prodigal son. What do these stories reveal about God's mercy and his desire to forgive and heal you?
2. Read and reflect on the following message from Pope Francis:

“One might say: I confess only to God. Yes, you can say to God ‘forgive me’ and say your sins, but our sins are also committed against the brethren, and against the Church. That is why it is necessary to ask pardon of the Church, and of the brethren in the person of the priest. ‘But Father, I am ashamed....’ Shame is also good, it is healthy to feel a little shame, because being ashamed is salutary. When a person feels no shame, in my country we say that he is ‘shameless’; ‘sin vergüenza.’ But shame too does good, because it makes us more humble, and the priest receives this confession with love and tenderness and forgives us on God’s behalf. Also from a human point of view, in order to unburden oneself, it is good to talk with a brother and tell the priest these things which are weighing so much on my heart. And one feels that one is unburdening oneself before God, with the Church, with his brother. Do not be afraid of Confession! When one is in line to go to Confession, one feels all these things, even shame, but then when one finishes Confession one leaves free, grand, beautiful, forgiven, candid, happy. This is the beauty of Confession!”

—General Audience at St. Peter’s Square (2/19/14)

3. What is keeping you from encountering Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Is there something that you need to confess in order to be “restored to health”? Remember what Pope St. John Paul II said:

“Confession is an act of honesty and courage—an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God.”





DIGGING DEEPER

There are two types of sin: Mortal Sin and Venial Sin

“Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him.”

—CCC 1855

“For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: ‘Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent’ (RP 17 § 12).”

—CCC 1857

If any of these three conditions is absent, then the sin is venial.

“Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it.” —CCC 1855

STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Church’s teaching on Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Your Guides will give you prompts if you need some guidance.



Let’s close our time together today by saying an Act of Contrition. This prayer should be memorized by all who will be receiving the sacrament.

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having off ended thee,
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments,
but most of all because they off end thee, my God,
who art all-good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace,
to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

Amen.



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

Jesus Reconciles Us to the Father: CCC 1485

Names of the Sacrament of Penance: CCC 1423–1424

God Alone Forgives sin: CCC 1441

Priests Given Power of Forgiveness: CCC 1442, 1444–1445

The Spiritual Effects of the Sacrament of Penance: CCC 1496

Contrition: CCC 1451

Absolution: CCC 1449

Anointing of the Sick: CCC 1532

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapters 18–19

Apostolic Exhortation, Reconcilio et Paenitentia by St. John Paul II

Lord, Have Mercy: The Healing Power of Confession by Scott Hahn

Going to Confession? by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Go in Peace: Your Guide to the Purpose and Power of Confession
by Father Mitch Pacwa and Sean Brown

The Light Is On for You: The Life-Changing Power of Confession
by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

Pastoral Care of the Sick (Bilingual Edition)
by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Session 5



MATRIMONY AND HOLY ORDERS

THE SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE
& COMMUNION



SYMBOLON
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

MATRIMONY AND HOLY ORDERS

The Sacraments of Service & Communion



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

We all know the familiar words: “To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.” They are part of the time-honored traditional vows of marriage, and they form the cornerstone of the Catholic Rite of Matrimony.

But the wedding ceremony is just the beginning of the Sacrament of Matrimony. A marriage is shaped day by day, as the husband and wife grow in love, trust, and mutual self-giving over their lifetimes.

Marriage takes a lot of work. According to Professor Scott Stanley at the University of Denver, a young couple marrying for the first time today has a lifetime divorce risk of 40 percent. All in all, living an authentic Catholic marriage in today’s world is a real challenge.

That’s why Matrimony is a Sacrament of Service. Through the graces offered by the sacrament, Jesus gives the strength to love our spouse as Christ does and offer our own life to our spouse as a witness of that love.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **Why Matrimony is a sacrament**
- **The concrete ways the sacrament helps couples every day**
- **How Christ’s love for his Church is the model for marriage**
- **The importance of the lifelong commitment of marriage**
- **What an annulment is...and isn’t**
- **The second Sacrament of Service—Holy Orders—and how this sacrament comes in an unbroken line from the Apostles**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER

 **SAY:** Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*.

Have participants turn to page 35 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.

This week as we learn more about Marriage and Holy Orders, let us begin by praying a part of a prayer for marriage from the U.S. Catholic Bishops.

 God our Father, we give you thanks for the gift of marriage: the bond of life and love, and the font of the family.

The love of husband and wife enriches your Church with children, fills the world with a multitude of spiritual fruitfulness and service, and is the sign of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, for his Church.

May your Holy Spirit enlighten our society to treasure the heroic love of husband and wife, and guide our leaders to sustain and protect the singular place of mothers and fathers in the lives of their children.

We ask all these things through Christ our Lord, Amen.

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

Suggested Scripture readings for a celebration of the Word of God

(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your Leader's Guide)

John 2:1-11

Genesis 2:22-24

Mark 10:6-9



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: In Genesis God said that it was not good for man to be alone. That's why marriage was created—starting with Adam and Eve. This week we are going to look at the Sacrament of Matrimony and how the grace we receive through the sacrament enables us to live out that relationship as God intended. We will also take a look at another Sacrament of Service—Holy Orders.

Some of the topics we will examine include:

- **Why Matrimony is a sacrament**
- **The concrete ways the sacrament helps couples every day**
- **How Christ's love for his Church is the model for marriage**
- **The importance of the lifelong commitment of marriage**
- **What an annulment is... and isn't**
- **The second Sacrament of Service—Holy Orders—and how this sacrament comes in an unbroken line from the Apostles**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO PART I: MATRIMONY



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 12 minutes.



STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,

SAY: We have just heard how Matrimony is the sacrament that enables a couple to live their lives together in the union God desires. We will also be looking at the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Marriage is a covenant given by God for the good of the couple and for the procreation and upbringing of children.

When validly contracted between two baptized people, Matrimony is a sacrament in which couples are called by their love to signify the union of Christ and the Church. The sacrament helps couples in their daily lives to grow in sacrificial love and unity, giving them the grace to love each other with the love of Christ for his Church.

Christian marriage has four key aspects that are reflected in the wedding rite. Marriage is a free, total, faithful, and fruitful gift of one's self. Like Christ's love for the Church, marriage is based on free consent, total self-giving, life-long commitment, and willingness to accept children as a gift from God.

The second sacrament directed toward service is the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The mission entrusted by Christ to his Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church today through the ordained ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons.



DIGGING DEEPER

The Beauty of Married Life

"Tertullian [an early Christian writer] has well expressed the greatness of this conjugal life in Christ and its beauty: 'How can I ever express the happiness of the marriage that is joined together by the Church strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels and ratified by the Father?'

...How wonderful the bond between two believers with a single hope, a single desire, a single observance, a single service! They are both brethren and both fellow-servants; there is no separation between them in spirit or flesh; in fact they are truly two in one flesh and where the flesh is one, one is the spirit."

— Pope St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*

STEP #5

VIDEO PART II: THE SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE & COMMUNION

SAY: In our second video segment, we are going to look at the Sacrament of Matrimony and what it means in the Catholic Church, as well as the other Sacrament of Service—Holy Orders.

Play video Part II, which will play for approximately 29 minutes.

STEP # 6

BREAK

After stopping the video,



SAY: Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP # 7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.



SAY: Welcome back to our session on Matrimony and Holy Orders. Let's talk a bit about what we learned in the last video segment.



DIGGING DEEPER

Vocations

A "vocation" in the Catholic sense is your God-given destiny or purpose in life. Everyone has a unique gift from God that allows him or her to further the good news in the world—one lives out this gift through one's vocation. While "vocation" often is used to mean a call to the priesthood or to the religious life, the Church recognizes marriage as a vocation as well. The basic states of life in which Catholics live out their vocations are single (which encompasses those laity who never marry or who are widowed), married, ordained, and the consecrated life.

"The discernment of a vocation is above all the fruit of an intimate dialogue between the Lord and his disciples. Young people, if they know how to pray, can be trusted to know what to do with God's call." —Pope Benedict XVI

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

Let's begin with a simple review: What are the four aspects of Christian marriage as reflected in the Rite of Matrimony, and what does each entail?

(Marriage involves a free, total, faithful, and fruitful gift of one's self. Like Christ's love for the Church, marriage is based on free consent, total self-giving, lifelong commitment, and fruitfulness, seen in a willingness to accept children as a gift from God.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

After his second divorce, a popular American entertainer had this to say about marriage in an interview on television: "Well if you have to work at it then maybe it's not worth having... I have to work at everything else in my life. I have to work at my work. I just think a marriage should be easy, not hard." How would you respond to that comment?

(Marriage is a covenant, not a contract. Contracts can be terminated, covenants cannot. Contracts are about what we get. Covenants are about what we give. Giving is not easy but it becomes easier with practice. The easier it is for you to love, the more joy you will have. Marriage is worth the work. As with most things in life, the more you work, the better things become. Several studies have shown that more than 50 percent of couples who have divorced wished they had tried harder to make their marriages work.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

A priest said: “While it is true that no one will ever call me daddy, thousands call me Father.” Why do we call priests “Father”?

(We call priests “Father” because we are their spiritual children. God gives priests the power to bear Christ in souls. The Church is the Bride of Christ, and the priest stands in place of the Bridegroom. As the best-man of the Bridegroom and friend of Christ, the priest is called to give his life for the Church in order to bring forth divine life in souls and to incorporate men and women into the kingdom of God. As a priest, he brings forth thousands of spiritual children through his sacramental ministry.)



STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- Marriage is one of the seven sacraments instituted by Christ. Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, and it is validly contracted between a baptized man and a baptized woman in the state of sanctifying grace. (CCC 1601).
- Marriage is a covenant given by God for the good of the couple and for the procreation and upbringing of children (CCC 1650, 1652).
- Marriage is a sacrament in which couples are called to signify the union of Christ and the Church (CCC 1616–1617).
- The Sacrament of Matrimony helps couples in their daily lives to grow in sacrificial love and unity, giving couples the grace to love each other with the love of Christ for his Church (1661).
- Christian marriage can be seen as having four key aspects that are reflected in the wedding rite. Marriage involves a free, total, faithful, and fruitful gift of one's self. Like Christ's love for the Church, marriage is based on free consent, total self-giving, life-long commitment, and fruitfulness seen in a willingness to accept children as a gift from God (CCC 1625, 1628 ff.).
- Marriage is indissoluble, meaning it is lifelong and no human power can break its bonds (CCC 1644).
- In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the mission entrusted by Christ to his Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church today through the ordained ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons (CCC 1536).
- In the Sacrament of Matrimony, the husband and wife are given sanctifying grace to help them fulfill the duties that pertain to the marital state. This grace is intended to help perfect their love, to assist them in attaining holiness and “in welcoming and educating their children” (CCC 148).



STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION

SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about the Sacrament of Matrimony. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. If you are married, how does your union signify the union of Christ and the Church? In what areas do you fall short? Where can you improve? Are you asking God for the daily grace of the Sacrament?
2. If you aren't married, how can you use your single state to reflect Christ's sacrificial love and service to others more?
3. Reflect on the following quote from Pope St. John Paul II:

“Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family—a domestic church.”

How is the marriage relationship not just a feeling but an “act of the will”? How does this differ from what the world thinks about marriage?



STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders. Your Guides will give you prompts if you need some guidance.



Let's close our time together by praying the U.S. Catholic Bishops' prayer for the discernment of vocations.

O God, Father of all mercies,
Provider of a bountiful harvest,
send your graces upon those
you have called to gather the fruits of your labor;
preserve and strengthen them in their lifelong service to you.

Open the hearts of your children
that they may discern your holy will;
inspire in them a love and desire to surrender themselves
to serving others in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Teach all your faithful to follow their respective paths in life
guided by your divine Word and truth.
Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary,
all the angels, and saints, humbly hear our prayers
and grant your Church's needs, through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

—U.S. Catholic Bishops' Prayer for the Discernment of Vocations



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

Marriage in God's Plan: CCC 1602–1605

Marriage in the Lord: CCC 1612

Marriage as a Model of Christ's Union with the Church: CCC 1616

The Rites of Matrimony: CCC 1621–1624

Matrimonial Consent: CCC 1625–1629

Mixed Marriage and Disparity of Cult: CCC 1633–1636

Permanence of Marriage: CCC 1638–1640

Grace of the Sacrament: CCC 1641–1642

The Indissolubility of Marriage: CCC 1644

Fidelity of Conjugal Love: CCC 1646

Openness to Fertility: CCC 1652–1654

Holy Orders: CCC 1536–1538

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapters 20, 21

Life-Giving Love: Embracing God's Beautiful Design for Marriage by Scott Hahn and Kimberly Hahn

Men, Women and the Mystery of Love: Practical Insights from John Paul II's Love and Responsibility by Edward Sri

Three to Get Married by Venerable Fulton J. Sheen

Marriage: The Mystery of Faithful Love by Dietrich Von Hildebrand

Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan from USCCB United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio by St. John Paul II

Session 6



A CATHOLIC MORAL VISION

VIRTUE, GRACE, & THE PATH
TO HAPPINESS



SYMBOLON
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

A CATHOLIC MORAL VISION

Virtue, Grace, & the Path to Happiness



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

The word *morality* is often viewed as something negative today. It is associated with “rules” that keep us from having too much fun.

But that’s not the Catholic view of morality. For the Catholic Church, morality is all about the quest for happiness. In Catholic teaching, living a moral life means following the plan of the God who made us so that we can be fully alive. It means becoming all that God has created us to be.

So why does the world have such a different take on morality than the Catholic Church? Much of the world today holds to moral relativism: the idea that everyone can make up their own morality, that there isn’t really anything right or wrong, true or false—all that matters is that you follow what you believe.

One problem with moral relativism is that it is focused on self. Without a higher standard outside of ourselves calling us to generosity, perseverance, loyalty, and heroic sacrifice, we become trapped in self-interest. Instead of following God’s plan for our lives, we follow our own plan, making up our own ethics, which, instead of challenging us to give ourselves more in sacrificial love, often supports our advantage, comfort, or pleasure.

In this week’s session, we learn that morality is simply following our Maker’s plan for our lives and in doing so, we become authentically whole and holy.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **What leads to true happiness**
- **The difference between the modern view of freedom and the biblical view of freedom**
- **Virtue and why we need it to live life well**
- **The three things that make an act moral**
- **Why we can never do evil so that good may result—in other words, why the end never justifies the means**
- **Sin and how it hinders our pursuit of happiness**
- **What we need to have a correctly formed conscience**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER



SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*. This week we will learn more about a Catholic moral vision. Let's begin with this prayer by St. Augustine of Hippo.

Have participants turn to page 53 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.



Christ Jesus, Sweet Lord,
why have I ever loved,
why in my whole life
have I ever desired anything except you,
Jesus my God?
Where was I when I was not in spirit
with you?
Now, from this time forth,
do you, all my desires, grow hot,
and flow out upon the Lord Jesus...
O, Sweet Jesus,
may every good feeling that is fitted
for your praise,
love you, delight in you, adore you!
God of my heart,
and my Portion, Christ Jesus,
may my heart faint away in spirit,
and may you be my Life within me!

—St. Augustine of Hippo

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

Suggested Scripture readings for a celebration of the Word of God

(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your Leader's Guide)

1 John 5:14-20

Romans 7:15-20

Psalm 38:17-22



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: This week we will be looking at the Catholic vision of morality.

We are going to be examining such topics as:

- **What leads to true happiness**
- **The difference between the modern view of freedom and the biblical view of freedom**
- **Virtue and why we need it to live life well**
- **The three things that make an act moral**
- **Why we can never do evil so that good may result—in other words, why the end never justifies the means**
- **Sin and how it hinders our pursuit of happiness**
- **What we need to have a correctly formed conscience**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO PART I: A CATHOLIC MORAL VISION



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 15 minutes.

STEP # 4

PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We have learned a little about the Church's moral vision and how it allows us to live truly authentic and heroic lives.

Let's summarize now some key features of the Catholic moral life.

God loves us so much he revealed to us the pathway to happiness. All people desire to be happy, but true happiness is found only in God and in following God's moral law.



DIGGING DEEPER

What is Sin?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines sin as “an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as ‘an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law’” (CCC 1849). There are many kinds of sins that can be classed according to whether they “concern God, neighbor, or oneself; they can be divided into spiritual and carnal sins, or again as sins in thought, word, deed, or omission” (CCC 1853).

Freedom is not merely the ability to make choices, but the ability to perform actions of excellence directed toward what is good. To be truly free we need more than good desires and intentions. We need virtue. Virtue is the habitual disposition to do the good. It helps a person rise above his selfish desires and give the best of himself to God and others. God's grace helps us to overcome our habits, grow in virtue, and live a life worthy of a child of God.


The morality of human acts has three parts: the kind of action itself, the person's intention, and the circumstances surrounding the action. We must follow our conscience, but we must have a well-formed conscience that is formed according to the teachings of Christ and the Church.


Sin is a spoken word, an action, or a desire contrary to God's moral law. Mortal sin breaks friendship with God while venial sin hinders one's friendship with God.

To receive God's mercy we must acknowledge our sin, repent, and ask God for his forgiveness. We do this primarily in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

STEP #5

VIDEO PART II: VIRTUE, GRACE, & THE PATH TO HAPPINESS


 **SAY:** In our second video segment, we are going to look at how morality is really about happiness and why we need virtue in order to become truly free.

 *Play video Part II, which will play for approximately 30 minutes.*

STEP #6

BREAK

After stopping the video,

 **SAY:** Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in this last video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.

 **SAY:** Welcome back to our session on morality. Let's talk a bit about what we learned in the last video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

In the video we learned that freedom is not simply the ability to make choices. What, according to the presenter, is the hallmark of true freedom? What do we need to be truly free?

(Freedom is the ability to perform actions of excellence, directed toward what is good. It is the ability to live life with excellence. To be truly free, we need virtue which enables us to let go of our selfish desires and make sacrifices for others and live according to God's plan.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

How do we know whether our choices are morally good? What are the three elements of a good moral act?

(There are three sources of the morality of human acts: the object (or the act itself), the intention, and the circumstances. For an act to be good, the act itself and the intention must both be good. A good intention can never make an evil act good. The circumstances of an act can contribute to increasing or diminishing the goodness or evil of an act or determine the subjective responsibility of the person committing the moral act (for example, did he or she have sufficient knowledge or freedom, etc.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

American novelist Mark Twain said: "It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare." What is your interpretation of this quote?

(Physical courage can be seen when someone does his or her duty and/or protects others despite danger of injury. It is admirable. However, it can take far greater courage to do what one knows to be right, which may result in misunderstanding, disapproval, and even ridicule. A person with moral courage is willing to make personal sacrifices in order to do what is right. Integrity is having the moral courage to do what is right when no one is watching.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Formation of Conscience

How do we form our conscience to conform to God's will? We use the Word of God handed on in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition as interpreted by the Magisterium as "light for our path," and we are assisted by the Holy Spirit. The *Catechism* reminds us that this is a lifelong task. It begins in childhood with the teaching of virtue. A properly formed conscience prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart (CCC 1784). As St. Augustine says, "A good conscience is the palace of Christ; the temple of the Holy Ghost; the paradise of delight; the standing Sabbath of the saints."

STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL) SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- Morality in the Catholic tradition is all about the pursuit of happiness. God placed in the human heart a desire for beatitude, for true happiness, which is found only in him (CCC 1725). So Catholic morality answers the question, “What kind of life leads to true happiness?”
- God’s moral law flows from his fatherly heart. God loves us so much that he reveals to us the pathway to happiness, which is found in his moral law (CCC 1975).
- The perfection of freedom is not simply the ability to make choices, but the ability to perform actions of excellence directed toward what is good (CCC 1744). Yet, to be truly free, we need more than desires and good intentions. We need virtue.
- Virtue is the habitual disposition to do the good. It helps a person rise above his selfish desires and give the best of himself to God and others (CCC 1803).
- We cannot live the virtuous life fully on our own. We need God’s grace to help us (CCC 1810–11). And we need the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity to inform the moral virtues and dispose us to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity (CCC 1840–41).
- There are three sources of the morality of human acts: the object (or the act itself), the intention, and the circumstances. All three must be good for an act to be good. One may not do evil so that good may result from it (CCC 1757, 1761).
- Sin is a spoken word, an action, or a desire contrary to God’s moral law. Mortal sin breaks friendship with God, while venial sin hinders one’s friendship with God. One commits mortal sin by choosing deliberately, with full knowledge, something that is gravely contrary to God’s moral law (CCC 1871, 1874). To receive God’s mercy, we must acknowledge our sin, repent, and ask God for his forgiveness. And we do this, especially in the case of mortal sin, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- The Catholic Church teaches that a person must follow his conscience, which is “man’s secret core, and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths” (CCC 1795). But one’s conscience can remain in ignorance or make erroneous judgments. That is why one must properly form his conscience with the Word of God found in Scripture and proclaimed in the Church’s teachings (CCC 1802).

STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION

SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about the Catholic moral vision. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

1. In the video, the presenters talked about how our relativistic culture says there are no moral truths for everyone to follow. Prayerfully consider some of the ways in which the relativistic culture affects you. Are you sometimes afraid or hesitant to say there are some things that are morally wrong for everyone? Are there some areas of your life where you rationalize certain immoral choices, preferring to “make up your own morality” instead of allowing the teaching of Christ and the Church to guide you?
2. Today’s session discussed virtue as a habitual disposition to do the good. Prayerfully consider how well your life reflects the cardinal virtues.
 - a. How well do I live a prudent life, making wise decisions based on what is truly most important in life?
 - b. How well do I live a temperate life, exhibiting self-control especially in attraction to pleasures of food, drink, and sex?
 - c. How well do I live out courage, exhibiting a consistent willingness to endure pain and suffering for what is good?
 - d. How well do I exhibit justice in my daily life, fulfilling my responsibilities toward God and others in my family, friendships, workplace, and society?
3. Which of these virtues do you think you need to grow in most? What is one thing you can do this week to help you grow in this area? Turn to God each day in prayer, asking for his divine assistance.



STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER

 **SAY:** I hope you take time this week to reflect on what the Church teaches about morality. Your Guides will give you prompts if you need some guidance.

 Let's close our time together by praying the Our Father, the great prayer that Jesus gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

Freedom and Responsibility: CCC 1731–1734

Freedom as a Right: CCC 1747

Sources of Morality: CCC 1750–1754

Good and Evil Acts: CCC 1755

Formation of Conscience: CCC 1783–1785

Necessity to Obey Conscience: CCC 1800

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapters 23-34

An Introduction to Moral Theology by William May

A Refutation of Moral Relativism: Interviews with an Absolutist by Peter Kreeft

Making Choices: Practical Wisdom for Everyday Moral Decisions by Peter Kreeft

Encyclical Letter, *Veritatis Splendor* by St. John Paul II

The Heart of Virtue by Donald DeMarco

Session 7



A LOVE THAT LASTS
DISCOVERING AUTHENTIC LOVE

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

A LOVE THAT LASTS

Discovering Authentic Love



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

In his Apostolic Exhortation *On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World (Familiaris Consortio)*, Pope St. John Paul II stated, “God created man in His own image and likeness: calling him to existence through love, He called him at the same time for love. God is love and in Himself He lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in His own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being” (FC 11).

In the world’s view, love is often defined by the Greek word *eros*—the passionate love that seeks pleasure in the company of a beloved. This kind of love focuses on what we can get out of the relationship, particularly a romantic relationship. It’s about good feelings, emotion, and pleasure. It’s primarily about getting, not giving.

The kind of vocational love St. John Paul II talks about is called *agape*—a total, committed, and unconditional love that centers not on what we can get from the other person, but on what we can give.

This kind of love mirrors the love of the Trinity and the love that God has for each one of us. It’s a selfless and self-sacrificing love. But in a divine paradox, the more we practice *agape*, the more we give of ourselves to another, the more we discover the deep, lasting love our hearts desire. We will only find our fulfillment and happiness when we live total self-giving love in relationship with God and the people in our lives.

Pope Benedict XVI taught that *eros* and *agape* are not intrinsically opposed. If the passionate love of *eros* ascends to the sacrificial love of *agape*, *eros* and *agape* can become united in Jesus Christ, who loves us so much he gave up his life for us. Such a love then becomes “concern and care for the other,” a true self gift (*Deus Caritas Est*, 6, 10). For as the *Catechism* explains, “To love is to will the good of the other” (CCC 1766).

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **The essential differences between *eros* and *agape***
- **What it means to love according to God's plan**
- **Why the only way we can find the love we desire is by living God's authentic love**
- **The joy and freedom that comes from living *agape*—the love that lasts**
- **The essential characteristics of this authentic love**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER



SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*. This week we are going to look at the Church's teaching on what love truly means. Let us begin with prayer.

Have participants turn to page 61 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.



Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may
not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life.

—Prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

Suggested Scripture readings for a celebration of the Word of God

(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your Leader's Guide)

1 Corinthians 13:4–8

1 John 4:18–19

Matthew 22:37–39



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: We all want to love and be loved. But sometimes our relationships end up making us feel more lonely and unloved than ever.

In this session we are going to look at:

- **The essential differences between *eros* and *agape***
- **What it means to love according to God's plan**
- **Why the only way we can find the love we desire is by living God's authentic love**
- **The joy and freedom that comes from living *agape*—the love that lasts**
- **The essential characteristics of this authentic love**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO: DISCOVERING AUTHENTIC LOVE



Play video Part I, which will play for approximately 18 minutes.

STEP # 4

PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We have just learned some of the truth about the Catholic view on love.

True love is much more than a feeling. It seeks what is best for the other person. As the *Catechism* explains, “To love is to will the good of another” (CCC 1766).

Authentic love is more than *eros*, that passionate love that suddenly overcomes person, causing him or her to look inward and focus on the good feelings and the pleasure one receives in a romantic relationship.



DIGGING DEEPER

The Need for Love

“Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer ‘fully reveals man to himself.’ If we may use the expression, this is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity.”

— Pope St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*


Love must also be *agape*, that total, committed, unconditional, and even sacrificial love. This is the love that God has for us and the kind of love that we are to have for each other, especially in marital love.

Eros and *agape* are not intrinsically opposed. However, when *eros* is taken completely separately from *agape*, it becomes selfish, not focused on the other, and can turn into a using of the other person (*Deus Caritas Est*, 6).


But when *eros* and *agape* are united in Christ and the love of *eros* ascends to the love of *agape*, love becomes a true self gift and willing the good for the other (*Deus Caritas Est*, 10).

If we desire true love and happiness, we must learn how to desire the best for those we love and strive to give rather than receive in our relationships.

STEP #5 ANNOUNCEMENT

 **SAY:** In today's session, we are discussing love and our relationships—topics that are very intimate and personal. Before we go deeper into the Church's teachings on these important topics, we will first take some time after the break to reflect on the true meaning of human love and how it affects our lives. All the necessary material for today's session is covered in just one video. We will now allow time for discussion and reflection on the specific topics discussed so far.

STEP #6 BREAK

 **SAY:** Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in the video segment about true love and how it affects our lives.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP # 7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.



SAY: Welcome back to our session on a love that lasts. Let's talk a bit about what we learned in the video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

What are some of the characteristics of *agape* love? Why does *agape* love fulfill us in ways that *eros* alone cannot?

- (• *Agape love focuses not on what we can get out of a relationship, but on wanting the best and highest good for the other person.*
- *It looks toward giving, rather than getting.*
 - *It mirrors God's love in the Trinity and God's love for us.*
 - *Because it is an essential part of God's plan for all humanity, it fulfills our needs both to love and be loved in a way that nothing else can.)*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

How has music, media, and the entertainment industry distorted the meaning of love?

*(You have heard the expression "sex sells." Well, when it comes to music, media, and entertainment, "eros sells." Rarely is *agape* love identified in music, movies, entertainment, and popular culture. Relationships are portrayed as emotional, sexual, and self-serving. Sex is portrayed as a passionate driving force, difficult to resist, and its purpose is more about recreation and self-satisfaction than expressing selfless love. It is a tragedy that too many people settle for a counterfeit when in reality they were made for *agape* love.)*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

What do you think it means that "man cannot fully find himself, except through a sincere gift of himself"?

(Made in the image and likeness of God, we were made to love as God loves. In fact, we are to become like God and share in his life here and now and gloriously in Heaven. As we grow in selfless love, by the grace of God, we discover more deeply the meaning of our existence. This is why we can never be fully satisfied with our life here on earth. We are ultimately made to abide in God forever in Heaven.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Three Words for Love

“That love between man and woman which is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings, was called eros by the ancient Greeks. Let us note straight away that the Greek Old Testament uses the word eros only twice, while the New Testament does not use it at all: of the three Greek words for love, eros, philia (the love of friendship) and agape, New Testament writers prefer the last, which occurs rather infrequently in Greek usage. As for the term philia, the love of friendship, it is used with added depth of meaning in Saint John’s Gospel in order to express the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.” –Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 3.



STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segment. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- We considered two dimensions of love—*eros* and *agape*. *Eros* is the Greek word that describes that passionate love that suddenly overcomes you. It looks inward and focuses on the good feelings and the pleasure one receives in a romantic relationship. It is often seen as “worldly love” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 3).
- The Bible uses the Greek word *agape* to describe total, committed, unconditional, and even sacrificial love. This is the love that God has for us and the kind of love that we are to have for each other, especially in marital love (*Deus Caritas Est*, 7–9).
- *Eros* and *agape* are not intrinsically opposed. However, when *eros* is taken completely separately from *agape*, it becomes selfish, not focused on the other, and can turn into a using of the other person (*Deus Caritas Est*, 5).
- The Christian view of love is when *eros* and *agape* are united in Christ, and the love of *eros* ascends to the love of *agape* and love becomes a true self gift and willing the good of the other (*Deus Caritas Est*, 6, 10).
- “By contrast with an indeterminate ‘searching’ love, this word [*agape*] expresses the experience of love which experiences a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care of the other” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 6).
- Vatican II teaches that man, who is created in the image and likeness of God, is called to imitate the self-giving love of the Trinity: “This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 24).
- God gave man and woman the vocation of love and thus the ability to love as he loves us (CCC 2331).
- Marriage and sexual love are ordered to this complete self-giving of husband and wife—“Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement ‘until further notice.’ The ‘intimate union of marriage, as a mutual giving of two persons, and the good of the children, demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable union between them’” (CCC 1646).

STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION

SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about lasting love. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:



1. In the video, the presenter encourages us to prayerfully consider how the world's view of love has changed how we look at relationships. In what ways have you been influenced by the world's view of love? How might this have affected your previous (or current) relationships?
2. Think about what a love built on wanting the very best for another person would look like. Take some time now and reflect on how this way of loving would change your relationships with:
 - a. Your spouse (if you have one)
 - b. Your boyfriend/girlfriend (if you have one)
 - c. Your children (if you have them)
 - d. Your friends
 - e. Your co-workers
 - f. Your relatives
3. Reflect on the following quote from Pope Francis about *agape* love.

“Agape, the love of each one of us for the other, from the closest to the furthest, is in fact the only way that Jesus has given us to find the way of salvation and of the Beatitudes.”

Why do you think Pope Francis says that *agape* is the “only way” to find the way of salvation? How can you live this out in your own life?

STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Church's teaching on lasting love. Your Guides will give you prompts if you need some guidance.

Let's close our time together with this short prayer.

God, my Father,
may I love you in all things and above all things.
May I reach the joy which you have prepared
for me in heaven.
Nothing is good that is against your will,
and all that is good comes from your hand.
Place in my heart a desire to please you
and fill my mind with thoughts of your love,
so that I may grow in your wisdom and enjoy your peace.

—<http://www.catholic.org/prayers>



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

God is Love: CCC 2331

Love as Vocation: CCC 2392

Chastity: CCC 2337–2339

OTHER RESOURCES:

Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan

by USCCB United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est* by Pope Benedict XVI

Men, Women, and the Mystery of Love: Practical Insights from John Paul II's Love and Responsibility by Edward Sri

Session 8



A LOVE THAT LASTS GOD'S PLAN FOR SEXUALITY

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

A LOVE THAT LASTS

God's Plan for Sexuality



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

The Catholic view of human sexuality is that it is a great gift to humanity. It is part of God's beautiful and transformative plan to bring a husband and wife into the deepest possible union within the Sacrament of Matrimony—when a man and woman unite their very selves in a total gift of self, a gift of self that is open to creating new life.

In the Catholic view, all love, but especially marital love, is supposed to be self-giving, and the sexual embrace is when spouses give themselves totally to the other—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Sex is not just a physical act but the outward expression of what God means when he says that two shall become one.

The reality is that God wants to transform our lives—every aspect of our lives including our sexuality—so that we can live the abundant life Jesus promised to his followers. That's why the Church proclaims the truth about the proper use of our sexuality. The Church's teachings on sexuality are intended to help us say "yes" to God's plan for love so that our sexuality can become the great gift of self that it was created to be. Just as the banks of a river channel the water so that it can be a powerful force instead of a wasteful flood, so, too, the Church's teaching on marriage and sex helps channel our sexuality into a life-giving, creative force that brings the love of Christ more into the world.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **Why sex is meant to be an expression of total, self-giving love, a love in which couples give themselves to each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually**
- **How marital sex must be both unitive and procreative**
- **How the marital embrace fits into the total, free, faithful, and fruitful aspects of marriage**
- **What the Church teaches about contraception**
- **Why the separation of pleasure from self-giving love is so destructive**
- **The challenge—and joy—of life long love**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER



SAY: Welcome to our next session of *Symbolon*. This week we are going to look at the Church's teaching on God's plan for love and sexuality. Let us begin by prayerfully reflecting on this scriptural passage from First John:

Have participants turn to page 69 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.



Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God.

He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

—I John 4:7-12

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

Suggested Scripture readings for a celebration of the Word of God

(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your Leader's Guide)

Genesis 2:22-24

Proverbs 30:18-19

I Corinthians 7:1-16



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: Sex is one of the greatest gifts God gives to a husband and wife. God has revealed to us through Christ and the Church the truth and meaning of sex as a way that husband and wife give a complete gift of self to another. However, this great gift of sexuality is often distorted and abused, which can cause a lot of hurt and damage to our relationships. In this session, we will be exploring this gift of sex and how the Church's teachings reveal the truth and beauty of human sexuality as the greatest expression of marital love.

Some of the topics we will look at in this session include:

- **Why sex is meant to be an expression of total, self-giving love, a love in which couples give themselves to each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually**
- **How marital sex must be both unitive and procreative**
- **How the marital embrace fits into the total, free, faithful, and fruitful aspects of marriage**
- **What the Church teaches about contraception**
- **Why the separation of pleasure from self-giving love is so destructive**
- **The challenge—and joy—of lifelong love**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO: GOD'S PLAN FOR SEXUALITY



Play video segment, which will play for approximately 36 minutes.



DIGGING DEEPER

Conjugal Love

"In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal 'knowledge' which makes them 'one flesh,' does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person. Thus the couple, while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother."

—St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 14

STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,

 **SAY:** We have just learned about the Catholic view on sexuality.

Jesus Christ revealed the fullness of love—a love that is free, total, faithful, and fruitful. In marriage, we reflect Christ’s fullness of love (CCC 1617).

In the sexual act, a couple’s physical union is meant to express a profound personal union. Through the act, the couples say with their bodies, “I give myself to you totally and faithfully, holding nothing back—I give myself to you spiritually, emotionally, and physically” (CCC 2360–2361).


There are many ways we can engage in sexuality that keep us from total self-giving. We can engage in sex without a lifelong commitment or withhold our fertility. When this happens, sex is no longer a total gift of self. It instead becomes a using of the other person.

Chastity and self-mastery create the foundation for lifelong, lasting love.

We are all called to live chastely, whether married or single, because chastity involves the self-mastery needed for the proper use of our sexuality.

If we have sinned in our sexuality, Jesus wants to heal and forgive us and help us move forward in life with him. He does this especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

STEP #5 ANNOUNCEMENT

 **SAY:** We just learned a lot about the Church’s teachings on sex—many of which are very counter-cultural and challenging in many ways. After the break we are going to take some time to reflect and discuss how we can more profoundly live out these teachings in our lives and relationships. If we have fallen short in living out God’s plan for sexuality in our lives, the good news is that he is ready to heal and forgive us and give us the grace to live out this plan fully in our lives. God only desires for us to have fullness of life and love, especially in our sexuality and relationships with others. All the necessary material for today’s session is covered in just one video. We will now allow time for discussion and reflection on the specific topics discussed so far.

STEP #6

BREAK

SAY: Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in the video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.



STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.

SAY: Welcome back to our session on God's plan for love and sexuality. Let's talk a little about what we learned in the video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

How is total and self-giving love at the very heart of our sexuality?

- (• *Authentic love and the love of marriage is a total self-gift.*
- *Sex is not just a physical act, but should express the total giving of one's self—personally, emotionally, and spiritually—to the other person.*
- *Our bodily self-giving is an expression of our complete gift to the other in accord with Christ's own gift to the Church.)*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

The *Catechism* teaches that “sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes” (CCC 2351). Unfortunately, the Church is often portrayed as being “out of touch” when insisting that sex is for procreation and for bonding within a sacramental marriage. And yet, in our hyper-sexualized culture, it is obvious that something has gone seriously wrong.

It has been said that sex is like atomic power. When used according to God's plan, it creates massive amounts of energy... but when used contrary to God's plan, it destroys. What are some examples that demonstrate this point?

(Abortion, divorce, abuse, prostitution, human trafficking, rape, pornography, contraception, the objectification and exploitation of human beings...these are all serious consequences of using sex contrary to God's plan. Pope St. John Paul II wrote: “The family is the center and the heart of the civilization of love” [Letter to Families, 13]. The misuse of sex destroys families and results in the moral decline of society.)

- *The world often regards sex as something fun and pleasurable, but not as the deepest expression of love and self-gift. This can cause a lot of emotional pain and broken relationships.*
- *The world separates sex and marriage, which leads to a distorted view of sex. This can lead to the acceptance and even celebration of such things as promiscuity, masturbation, pornography, and contraception.*
- *The Church sees sex as a great gift through which a man and woman come to the deepest expression of love and a complete gift of self—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.*
- *The Church recognizes the marital act as part of the free, faithful, and fruitful union of husband and wife that reflects Christ's love for the Church.)*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

The word *contraception* means “against conception.” It is the deliberate prevention of conception. In the 1960s the birth control pill, an oral contraceptive, was invented and was considered by many to be a miracle for mankind. As oral contraceptives were gaining in popularity, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical in 1968 titled *Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life). This reaffirmed the Catholic teaching against contraception and predicted that the promises of contraception would turn out to be false.

Contraception was supposed to make marriages better, but from 1965 to 1975 the divorce rate doubled. Why do you think that is?

(Couples waited to have children and they had fewer children. Children help parents to grow in virtue, as a couple realizes that it is no longer just about them—they are now responsible for the care and formation of their child. This has a powerful impact in bonding a couple.

They are more willing to work through their problems when they have children. Secondly, the divorce rate doubled because contraception made adultery more tempting as it removed the consequences of a child out of wedlock. Thirdly, with fewer children and more women working, women did not necessarily need a man's income. In addition, most adulterous affairs begin in the workplace. Finally, contraception has led to more premarital sex and unmarried couples living together [cohabitation], which has been shown to increase the chances of divorce, unwanted pregnancies, and abortion.)





DIGGING DEEPER

Contraception vs. Natural Family Planning

The Church teaches that one can never separate the two meanings of sex—the unitive and the procreative. Contraception not only separates but also violates both of these meanings of sex, while the practice of Natural Family Planning honors and preserves the unitive and procreative meanings of sex. Pope St. John Paul II reflected upon this:

“When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings that God the Creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as ‘arbiters’ of the divine plan and they ‘manipulate’ and degrade human sexuality—and with it themselves and their married partner—by altering its value of ‘total’ self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.

“When, instead, by means of recourse to periods of infertility, the couple respects the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as ‘ministers’ of God’s plan and they ‘benefit from’ their sexuality according to the original dynamism of ‘total’ selfgiving, without manipulation or alteration.”
(Familiaris Consortio, 32)



STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL) SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary on the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- Our sexuality affects all aspects of our person in both body and soul. It especially concerns our capacity to love and to procreate (CCC 2332).
- The union of man and woman in marriage is meant to be a reflection of Christ's love (CCC 2335).
- In marriage, a couple's physical union is meant to express a profound personal union (CCC 2360).
- The spouses' union is for both the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two cannot be separated without harming the couple's spiritual life (CCC 2363).
- Various forms of sexual expression keep us from total self-giving:
 - Lust (CCC 2351)
 - Masturbation (CCC 2352)
 - Pre-marital sex (CCC 2353)
 - Pornography (CCC 2354)
- Conjugal love is intended to be fertile and procreative (CCC 2366).

STEP #9 CALL TO CONVERSION

SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about the Church's teachings on human sexuality. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

- I. Reflect on the following quote from Pope St. John Paul II:

“Consequently, sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such.

It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death. The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: if the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally.” (Familiaris Consortio, 11)



If you are married, consider how you use your sexuality in your marriage. Do you truly give a total gift of yourself to your spouse, physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Is your sexual relationship with your spouse an expression of personal trust, intimacy, and union, or more about use, gratification, and pleasure?

If you are single, and considering marriage, do you respect the gift of your sexuality as a gift that you may someday give to your spouse in the Sacrament of Matrimony?

2. Do you need any healing or forgiveness in the area of sexuality and purity? Start now by entrusting yourself to the mercy of Christ, and trust that he will give you the grace to love your spouse or possible future spouse with a total and authentic love. Do not be afraid to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where Christ is waiting to forgive, heal, and strengthen you.

STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Church's teaching on God's plan for sexuality.



Let's close our time together today with the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous,
love is not pompous,
it is not inflated,
it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered,
it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things,
endures all things.

—I Corinthians 13:4–7



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading, see the following *Catechism* passages:

Sexuality: CCC 2333–2335, 2360–2362

Fecundity of Marriage: CCC 2366

Regulation of Procreation: CCC 2368

OTHER RESOURCES:

Encyclical Letter, *Humanae Vitae* by Pope Paul VI

Pope St. John Paul II: *Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio on the Role of the Christian Family in the Church and the World*

Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, & Defense, 3rd Edition
by William May, Joseph Boyle, Ronald Lawler

Good News about Sex & Marriage: Answers to Your Honest Questions about Catholic Teaching by Christopher West

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 30

Session 9



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

BUILDING A
CIVILIZATION OF LOVE



SYMBOLON
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Building a Civilization of Love



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

Have you ever heard the expression “Actions speak louder than words”?

Christians have believed that since the very beginning. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read how Jesus’s disciples served the poor, aided the sick, tended to the widows and orphans, confronted the evils of the day, and generally went about building a civilization of love.

Then, as the Faith spread and became more accepted, people began to reflect more on the reasons behind their actions to discuss what makes Christian living so different from the rest of the world. Over the next 2,000 years, this combination of practical action and contemplation has formed the basis of what is called Catholic social teaching. This tradition has much to offer the world today as it faces a wide range of social, economic, and cultural issues such as abortion, poverty, immigration, healthcare, and marriage in the family.

Catholic social teaching affects the way we act every day in our families, our places of work, our communities, and ultimately in the entire world. What’s more, Catholic social teaching isn’t just for Catholics. It embodies Christ’s message to serve and is meant for the entire world. It is the love of neighbor in concrete action, united to build a civilization of love.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **How the Church’s social teaching helps us love one another as Christ loves us**
- **How we are called to imitate Jesus in serving the people around us: in our families, workplaces, churches, and local communities**
- **How serving and caring for others, especially the poor, is a key characteristic of being a disciple of Christ**
- **How some of the greatest poverty in the world is not material poverty, but a poverty of love, or what Pope Francis calls a “poverty of relationships”**
- **The ways that Catholic social teaching affects our lives today and helps us to apply the Gospel to the many social issues we face**
- **The call to responsibility to encounter and care for the poor and the most vulnerable around us**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER

SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*. This week we are going to look at the Church's social teachings. Let us begin by saying the "Prayer for Life."

Have participants turn to page 77 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.

Father and maker of all,
you adorn all creation
with splendor and beauty,
and fashion human lives
in your image and likeness.
Awaken in every heart
reverence for the work of your hands,
and renew among your people
a readiness to nurture and sustain
your precious gift of life.

Grant this through our Lord
Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in
the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.
Amen.

—from *Catholic Household Blessings
& Prayers* at www.usccb.org

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

**Suggested Scripture readings for
a celebration of the Word of God**

*(see "Introduction to Symbolon" in your
Leader's Guide)*

Psalm 82:3-4

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

Romans 12:9-21



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: We see throughout Jesus's life and mission his love and concern for the poor, the outcast, and the most vulnerable all around him, and how he called his disciples to serve others in imitation of him. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to follow his example and take responsibility to care for those around us who are most in need. Following the example of Jesus and this call to responsibility is the foundation of the Church's social teaching. In this session, we will begin to look at the Church's social teaching and how we can live these powerful teachings in our daily lives with the people we encounter every day.

Some of the topics we will look at include:

- **How the Church's social teaching helps us love one another as Christ loves us**
- **How we are called to imitate Jesus in serving the people around us, in our families, workplaces, churches, and local communities**
- **How serving and caring for others, especially the poor, is a key characteristic of being a disciple of Christ**
- **How some of the greatest poverty in the world is not only material poverty, but a poverty of love, or what Pope Francis calls a "poverty of relationships"**
- **The ways that Catholic social teaching affects our lives today and helps us to apply the Gospel to the many social issues we face**
- **The call to responsibility to encounter and care for the poor and the most vulnerable around us**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO: BUILDING A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE



Play video segment, which will play for approximately 18 minutes.

STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We just gained some insight on Catholic social teaching.

Human persons are made to show forth the image of God and to live in unity together, reflecting the unity of the Trinity (CCC 1877–1889).

Catholic social teaching begins with living and loving as Jesus did and promotes a deeper understanding of how to live together in society. From this revelation of Christ, the Church offers principles, criteria, and guidelines for ordering a just society that fosters the flourishing of all human persons (CCC 2419–2422).

Love of neighbor cannot be separated from love of God. Catholic social teaching sheds light on our entire lives to teach us to live in accord with the dignity of each and every person. It provides a foundation for the greater flourishing of the human person.

Individuals participate in the common good of society, first, by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility (one's family, work, etc.) and, secondly, by actively taking part in public life to ensure institutions promote the common good and dignity of the human person (CCC 1913–1915).

Society, through its social, economic, and political practices and institutions, should promote the exercise of virtue and the priority of spiritual values, which point to what is truly most important in life (CCC 1886–1888, 1895).

Catholic social teaching is lived out in our daily lives, in our families, and in the way that we treat every person with whom we come in contact.

STEP #5 ANNOUNCEMENT



SAY: In today's session, we are discussing how Jesus is calling us to care for those in need and the most vulnerable around us—a topic that is very personal and important. Before we go deeper into the Church's social teaching and how it sheds light on the various social, economic, and cultural issues we face in the world today, we must remember Catholic social teaching begins and ends with each individual person—most immediately with the people God has placed in our lives. After the break, we'll take some time to reflect on how we personally can build a just society and civilization of love through our ordinary actions in our daily lives. We'll also consider the people in our lives who need our time, our care, and our love. All the necessary material for today's session is covered in just one video. We will now allow time for discussion and reflection on the specific topics discussed so far.



DIGGING DEEPER

Catholic Social Teaching

*“Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God’s special love for the poor and called God’s people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came ‘to bring glad tidings to the poor... liberty to captives ... recovery of sight to the blind’ (Luke 4:18-19), and who identified himself with ‘the least of these,’ the hungry and the stranger (cf. Matthew 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the Eucharist.” —from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, www.usccb.org*

STEP #6

BREAK

After stopping the video,



SAY: Now let’s take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned in today’s video segment.

Break should be about 10 minutes.

STEP #7

DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guides to find these questions.



SAY: Welcome back to our session on Catholic social teaching. Let’s talk a little about what we learned in the video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

Dr. Jonathan Reyes said that before there was a defined “Catholic Social Teaching,” the Church was already living it. From the very beginning, the Church cared for the poor, the sick, and the abandoned. The Church created the education system and the health care system, and has fed, clothed, and housed more people than any other group or institution in history.

**How does this statement embody Catholic social teaching:
“To know Jesus is to want to make him known”?**

(Jesus said: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you” [John 13:34]. Jesus raised the bar from “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” [Matthew 22:39]. It is difficult to love ourselves until we understand and experience the depth of God’s love for us. The reality is that the more we know and love Jesus, the more we know and love ourselves. And the more we know and love ourselves, the more we are able to love others. The love of Jesus within us is the reason and inspiration we love and serve others. The Church will serve more heroically and be able to meet more needs in the world when more Catholics grow in intimacy with Jesus. This intimacy is cultivated in prayer, the sacraments, and study.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

As an heiress to a fortune, St. Katharine Drexel could have had a comfortable, luxurious lifestyle. Instead, she used her fortune to start schools for Native Americans and African Americans and founded a religious community to serve them. She wrote: “If we wish to serve God and love our neighbor well, we must manifest our joy in the service we render to him and them.”

St. Katharine Drexel witnessed with her life that joy is found in what you give and not in what you have. Why do you think true joy is found in generosity and service?

(Jesus says in John 15:11: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” Service to God and others puts our own preferences second. Selflessness brings great freedom, peace, and joy because it allows God’s love to flow more easily through us.)

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

Pope Francis has repeatedly used a word in his writings and speeches to the Church. That word is “encounter.” When he was Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina, he lived in a simple apartment and rode the bus to work. His simplicity and humility created the opportunity for him to be more present to people, to “encounter” them. Through his attentive listening, encouragement, and charity, people would encounter the love of Jesus and be more drawn to God.

How is “encounter” at the heart of social justice?

(St. Paul writes to the Philippians: “Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves” [Philippians 2:3]. When we put others first, then we are more present to them. Too often in our daily lives we forget that the people around us have immortal souls that God desires to be with him forever. Our smartphones, our televisions, our music, our cars, our clothing, etc., are not immortal, and yet we often put our things and our own interests before others. We often choose comfort in things over the joy we experience from encountering others.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Social Teaching and the Truth

“Catholic social teaching emerges from the truth of what God has revealed to us about himself. We believe in the triune God whose very nature is communal and social. God the Father sends his only Son Jesus Christ and shares the Holy Spirit as his gift of love. God reveals himself to us as one who is not alone, but rather as one who is relational, one who is Trinity. Therefore, we who are made in God’s image share this communal, social nature. We are called to reach out and to build relationships of love and justice.”

— from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, www.usccb.org

STEP #8 (OPTIONAL)

SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segment. Here are some key points you may want to cover.

- The vocation of humanity: Human persons are made to show forth the image of God and to live in unity together, reflecting the unity of the Trinity (CCC 1887-1889).
- Love of neighbor cannot be separated from love of God (CCC 1878).
- “The human person . . . is and ought to be the principle, the subject, and the object of every social organization” (CCC 1892).
- We are called to treat each person as our “neighbor” (CCC 1931).
- Catholic social doctrine: The Gospel of Jesus Christ promotes a deeper understanding of how to live together in society. From this revelation of Christ, the Church offers principles, criteria, and guidelines for ordering a just society that fosters the flourishing of all human persons. This teaching is known as the social doctrine of the Church (CCC 2419–2422).
- Social justice: A just society respects the dignity of every human person, considering the other person as “another self” (CCC 1931).
- Social justice allows each person to obtain what is rightfully theirs according to their nature and vocation (CCC 1928).

- Participation and responsibility: Individuals participate in the common good of society first by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility (one's family, work, etc.) and secondly by actively taking part in public life to ensure institutions promote the common good and dignity of the human person (CCC 1913–1915).
- Promotion of virtue and spiritual values: Society, through its social, economic, and political practices and institutions, should promote the exercise of virtue and the priority of spiritual values, which point to what is truly most important in life (CCC 1886–1888, 1895).

STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION

P SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about Catholic social teaching. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions.

1. Reflect on the following quote from Saint Teresa of Calcutta:

“We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.”

In what ways does this statement speak to you?

2. What poverty do you see around you? Who do you know who is unwanted, unloved, or uncared for? How do you treat the members of your own family? Do you know someone who is going through a very difficult time in their lives?
3. What is one concrete action you can take this week to begin to meet the needs of those God has placed in your life?



STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Church's teaching on Catholic social teaching. Let's end our session by praying the Justice Prayer.



Come, O Holy Spirit!

Come, open us to the wonder, beauty, and dignity of the diversity found in each culture, in each face, and in each experience we have of the other among us.

Come, fill us with generosity as we are challenged to let go and allow others to share with us the goods and beauty of earth.

Come, heal the divisions that keep us from seeing the face of Christ in all men, women, and children.

Come, free us to stand with and for those who must leave their own lands in order to find work, security, and welcome in a new land, one that has enough to share.

Come, bring us understanding, inspiration, wisdom, and the courage needed to embrace change and stay on the journey.

Come, O Holy Spirit,
Show us the way.

—www.usccb.org



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading on Catholic social teaching, see the following *Catechism* passages:

Respect for the Human Person: CCC 1928–1933

Solidarity as Part of Social Justice: CCC 1939–1942

Love of Neighbor: CCC 1878

Human Person at Center of Every Social Organization: CCC 1892

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 24

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (available online from www.vatican.va)

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions from USCCB, 1998

Encyclical Letters, *Laborem Exercens* and *Centesimus Annus* by Pope St. John Paul II

Encyclical Letter, *Caritas in Veritate* by Pope Benedict XVI

Session 10



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

PROTECTING THE DIGNITY
OF THE HUMAN PERSON



SYMBOLON
THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Nihil Obstat: Ben Akers, S.T.L.

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver

June 1, 2014

Copyright © 2014/2016 Augustine Institute. All rights reserved.

With the exception of short excerpts used in articles and critical reviews, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, printed or electronic, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Excerpts from the *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition* © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, D.C. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Some Scripture verses contained herein are from the Catholic Edition of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright ©1965, 1966 by the Division of Christian Educators of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, copyright ©1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modification from the Editio Typica* copyright ©1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Writers: Sean Dalton, Woodeene Koenig-Bricker, Lucas Pollice, Dr. Edward Sri

Media/Print Production: Brenda Kraft, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, John Schmidt

Graphic Design: Stacy Innerst, Jane Myers

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the many catechists, teachers, and diocesan leaders from across the country that have given invaluable advice and guidance in the development of SYMBOLON:

Michael Andrews, Keith Borchers, Steve Bozza, Dr. Chris Burgwald, James Cavanagh, Chris Chapman, Fr. Dennis Gill, Jim Gontis, Dr. Tim Gray, Lisa Gulino, Mary Hanbury, Deacon Ray Helgeson, Dr. Sean Innerst, Ann Lankford, Deacon Kurt Lucas, Sean Martin, Martha Tonn, Kyle Neilson, Michelle Nilsson, Ken Ogorek, Dr. Claude Sasso, Scott Sollom, Deacon Jim Tighe, Mary Ann Weisinger, and Gloria Zapiain.

Augustine Institute

6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310

Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Information: 303-937-4420

formed.org

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Protecting the Dignity of the Human Person



LEADER PREPARATION OVERVIEW

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” Cain’s question to God after the murder of his brother Abel often echoes in our own hearts. *Am I the keeper of the addict on the street? The unwed mother? The homeless veteran on the corner? The widow on my block? The elderly in the nursing home?*

The Gospel tells us, “Yes, we are responsible for them; we are responsible for all in need. We are our brother’s keeper because we are all part of the one human family.” This solidarity with every other person lies at the heart of Catholic social teaching. Despite our modern individualistic attitude and general indifference to the plights of those who are suffering, the Church tells us that we have the responsibility to carry on Jesus’s mission—which involves serving the sick, the poor, and the needy, and defending the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death.

In fact, how we treat the “least of these” will be the ultimate standard by which we are judged at the end of our lives, for Jesus tells us whatever we do to the poor and needy, we do to him. The bottom line of Catholic social teaching is that when we encounter those in need, we encounter the Lord himself.

That’s why Catholic social teaching isn’t just for Catholics; it’s for the entire world. It is a way to think about and act on the issues that face all of us in order to bring about a greater flourishing and happiness of every human person. It’s a way to help all people live in accord with basic human dignity and to bring about true and lasting peace in the world. As Pope Paul VI said, “If you want peace, work for justice.”

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **Why Catholic social teaching contributes to the flourishing of all peoples, not just Catholics**
- **The difference between rights and responsibilities in society**
- **Why the essential dignity of each human person is at the heart of Catholic social teaching**
- **Why abortion and euthanasia are always morally wrong**
- **What the Church means by a “preferential option for the poor”**
- **How Catholic social teaching inspires the proper attitude toward earthly possessions and social economic relationships**

STEP # 1

OPENING PRAYER

SAY: Welcome to this session of *Symbolon*. This week we are going to look at the Church's social teachings on the dignity of the human person. Let us begin in prayer.

Have participants turn to page 87 of their Guide to find the Opening Prayer and discussion questions.

O God, our Creator, all life is in your hands from conception until death. Help us to cherish our children and to reverence the awesome privilege of our share in creation. May all people live and die in dignity and love. Bless all those who defend the rights of the unborn, the handicapped and the aged. Enlighten and be merciful toward those who fail to love, and give them peace. Let freedom be tempered by responsibility, integrity and morality.

—www.catholic.org/prayers

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

(Optional)

Suggested Scripture readings for a Celebration of the Word of God

(see Introduction to Symbolon in your Leader's Guide)

Micah 6:8

1 John 3:17-18

Isaiah 58:10-12



STEP # 2

INTRODUCTION



SAY: It has often been said that Catholic social teaching is one of the best kept secrets in the Church. Why would one say this? First, the Church's social teachings are just not known and lived out by many people today. However, more importantly, Catholic social teaching presents a rich and beautiful vision for living out the Gospel in service to those around us—by living out the commandment of Jesus to love your neighbor as yourself. From this revelation of Christ, the Church offers principles, criteria, and guidelines for ordering a just society that fosters the flourishing of all human persons. In fact, Catholic social teaching is not just for Catholics, but to help each and every person flourish and live fully according to his or her human dignity.

In this session, we will be exploring these powerful social teachings that call us to protect and promote the dignity of the human person in all places and circumstances and bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every facet of social life.

Some of the topics we will look at include:

- **Why Catholic social teaching contributes to the flourishing of all peoples, not just Catholics**
- **The difference between rights and responsibilities in society**
- **Why the essential dignity of each human person is at the heart of Catholic social teaching**
- **Why abortion and euthanasia are always morally wrong**
- **What the Church means by a “preferential option for the poor”**
- **How Catholic social teaching inspires the proper attitude toward earthly possessions and socia-economic relationships**
- **What Catholic social teaching tells us about our economic activity and participation in political life**

We will start by watching a short video.

STEP # 3

VIDEO: PROTECTING THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON



Play video segment which will play for approximately 36 minutes.

STEP #4 PROCLAMATION

After the video has stopped,



SAY: We have just gained some insight on the dignity of the human person.

Jesus showed a special love for the poor. The Church continues this preferential love for those who are most in need, whether those are suffering from unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness, and various forms of poverty such as material poverty, a poverty of love and relationships, and the spiritual poverty of those who do not know Christ's saving love.

Human dignity is protected when basic human rights are protected. This begins with a fundamental right to life and protection for that life from conception to natural death. In addition to basic human rights, we all have basic responsibilities to our families, our communities, and all of society.

Leaders in authority and individuals in society should seek not just their own interests, but the common good, which is "the sum total of conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (CCC 1924).


We all have a personal responsibility to pursue the common good. "[N]either the state nor any larger society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and intermediary bodies" (CCC 1894). This particular teaching is known as the principle of subsidiarity.


The family is the fundamental unit of human society, where we learn to live and love and grow in virtue and become complete human persons.

Economic life should be ordered not just to production and profit, but first of all to the good of the whole person and the entire human community (CCC 2426).

Our solidarity with the human family challenges us to be responsible for other people, communities, and nations. It seeks a more just social order and peace and harmony within the human family (CCC 1941).

STEP #5 ANNOUNCEMENT

 **SAY:** We have just learned about the richness and wisdom of Catholic social teaching, including how we are called to be responsible for the poor and the most vulnerable around us and how we can daily work to build a more just society. After the break, we will take some time to discuss this important topic more in-depth and how we can more profoundly live out the Church's social teachings in our daily lives. All the necessary material for today's session is covered in just one video. We will now allow time for discussion and reflection on the specific topics discussed so far.

 *We will not have a second video segment for this session to allow for discussion and reflection.*

STEP #6 BREAK

 **SAY:** Now let's take a short break. When we come back, we are going to discuss some of the things we learned.

Break should be about 10 minutes.



DIGGING DEEPER

The Dignity of the Human Person

"In a world warped by materialism and declining respect for human life, the Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and assisted suicide. The value of human life is being threatened by increasing use of the death penalty. The dignity of life is undermined when the creation of human life is reduced to the manufacture of a product, as in human cloning or proposals for genetic engineering to create 'perfect' human beings. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person."

—from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, www.usccb.org

STEP #7 DISCUSSION

Have participants refer to their Guide to find these questions.



SAY: Let's talk a little about what we learned in our video segment.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

What aspects of Catholic social teaching that we just learned about challenge you the most, and why?

- *Being moved by the call to serve the poor*
- *The call to protect human life, even the unborn*
- *How we need to participate in political life*
- *The vocation to lead the family as the place of learning virtue and charity*
- *Not seeing people as “social ills” or as “other people’s problems,” but understanding the reality that the poor and those in need are our responsibility)*



DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

Reflect on the following quote from St. Basil the Great:

“The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit.”

How does this quote challenge you to be more aware of the needs of the poor? What is something specific you can do in your own life to be a more generous steward of the goods God has entrusted to you so you can use them not for yourself but to help others?

- (• *The realization that goods do not just belong to me, but that I have to be a just steward of the good God has given to me*)
- *Not to be wasteful of food*
- *Not to hoard goods and things*
- *Give alms to the poor and those in need*
- *Buy extra groceries and donate them to a food bank*

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

How does the Catholic view of rights and responsibilities differ from the world’s view?

(The Catholic view is that human dignity is protected when basic human rights are protected. This begins with a fundamental right to life and protection for that life from conception to natural death. In addition to basic human rights, the Catholic view is that we all have basic responsibilities to our families, our communities, and all of society. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI warned world leaders that selfish individuals were deliberately abusing the Human Rights Act to get what they want without any thought given to the common good. Pope Francis has said numerous times that religious liberty is a fundamental human right that is under attack. For example, as Church teaching conflicts with the emergence of so called “sexual and reproductive rights,” there is increasing pressure in society to silence people of faith. The Church views these rights to be in conflict with our responsibility to the family, which is the fundamental unit of human society, where we learn to live and love and grow in virtue and become complete human persons.)



DIGGING DEEPER

Human Life and Human Dignity

“Catholic social teaching is based on and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Human dignity comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.”

— from *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, www.usccb.org

STEP # 8 (OPTIONAL) SUMMARY & EXHORTATION

At this point, the facilitator, small group leader, or catechist has the option to give a summary of the main points that have been presented in the video segments. Here are some key points to cover:

- Catholic social teaching is beneficial for all persons, not just Catholics. It's a vision for building a society that promotes the flourishing and happiness of all persons because it is built on the essential dignity of each person (CCC 1929).
- "Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature" (CCC 1930).
- Human dignity is protected when basic human rights are protected. This begins with a fundamental right to life and protection for that life from conception to natural death (CCC 2258, 2270, 2277–2279).
- A just society respects the dignity of every human person, considering the other person as "another self" (CCC 1944).
- Jesus showed a special love for the poor. The Church continues this preferential love for those who are most in need, whether those suffering from unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness, and various forms of poverty such as material poverty, a poverty of love and relationships, and the spiritual poverty of those who do not know Christ's saving love. Our love for the poor is shown primarily through the corporal works of mercy (feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead) and the spiritual works of mercy (instructing, advising, consoling, comforting, forgiving, and bearing wrongs patiently). Among these, giving alms to the poor is the chief witness to charity (CCC 2447).
- The family is the basic cell of society. It is the sanctuary in which people are nurtured and educated and formed. This is why it is crucial to promote strong family life, which in turn helps build a society with virtuous citizens who contribute to the common good (CCC 2207).
- Subsidiarity: This is a personal responsibility. "[N]either the state nor any larger society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and intermediary bodies," especially the family (CCC 1894).
- Catholic social teaching also inspires the proper attitudes toward earthly possessions and social and economic relationships. It offers principles and guidelines that protect human dignity, build a just society, and promote human flourishing (CCC 2407).

- Economic life should be ordered not just to production and profit but first of all to the good of the whole person and the entire human community. (CCC 2426). A society, therefore, should safeguard that its economic activity truly serves the common good, ensuring that “goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity” (2459).
- Solidarity: Our solidarity with the human family challenges us to be responsible for other people, communities, and nations. It seeks a more just social order and peace and harmony within the human family. This solidarity with others ensures the just distribution of goods and just remuneration for work and a more just social order. (CCC 1939–1941).
- Justice and Solidarity Among Nations: On the global level, there must be solidarity among nations. Nations must work toward “a common effort to mobilize resources toward objectives of moral, cultural and economic development” in their own countries and throughout the world. Wealthier nations have a grave responsibility to assist those who are unable to foster human development on their own (CCC 2438).

STEP #9

CALL TO CONVERSION



SAY: Spend a few moments reflecting on some of the things we learned today about Catholic social teaching. Use your Guide to write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:

In the Gospel of Matthew chapter 25, Jesus tells us that the primary criterion for how God will judge us is how we loved and cared for others. Now imagine that you are going before the judgment seat of God and you see that Jesus is dividing up the people and placing the “sheep” on his right (those who are righteous) and the “goats” on his left (the wicked, those who are condemned).

You then hear him say to the sheep on the right: *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me... Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me”* (Matthew 25:35-36, 40).



Then you hear Jesus say to the goats on his left:

“Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me... Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me” (Matthew 25:41–43, 45).

1. If you were to go before the judgment seat of God today, what side would you be on?
2. What changes can you make in your life now to move you even more toward those on the right, who are entering eternal glory?

STEP #10

CLOSING PRAYER



SAY: I hope you take time this week to reflect on the Church’s teaching on the dignity of the human person. Let us end by praying Psalm 139.



Lord, you have probed me, you know me:
you know when I sit and stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.
You sift through my travels and my rest;
with all my ways you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
Lord, you know it all...

You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.
My bones are not hidden from you.
When I was being made in secret,
fashioned in the depths of the earth,
your eyes saw me unformed;
in your book all are written down;
my days were shaped, before one came to be.

—Psalm 139



FOR FURTHER READING

For more in-depth reading on Catholic social teaching, see the following *Catechism* passages:

Human Rights: CCC 1928, 2258, 2270, 2277–2279

Preferential Option for the Poor: CCC 1932, 2443–2446

Dignity of Human Life: CCC 2258, 1930

Opposition to Abortion: CCC 2270–2275

Euthanasia and Social Justice: CCC 2276–2279

The Importance of Family: CCC 2207

OTHER RESOURCES:

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 24

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (available online from www.vatican.va)

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions from USCCB, 1998

Encyclical Letters *Laborem Exercens* and *Centesimus Annus* by Pope St. John Paul II

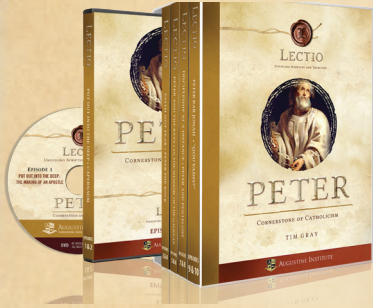
Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* by Pope Benedict XVI

Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Gaudium* by Pope Francis

Blessed are the Poor by Fr. Thomas Dubay

LECTIO™

Compelling Catholic presenters bring together insightful teaching and practical guidance using the *lectio divina* disciplines of reading, reflection, response and contemplation to make Scripture come alive.



PETER- THE CORNERSTONE OF CATHOLICISM

**Was he a poor fisherman? An impetuous student? A bungling disciple?
A coward who became the “Rock” of the Church?**

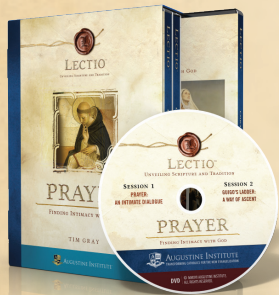
Let’s find out the answers together as Dr. Tim Gray takes us on a journey into the life of one of history’s most compelling characters. Bringing together Biblical stories, historical knowledge, solid Church teaching, and personal insights, Dr. Gray gives a fresh perspective on the fisherman who Jesus entrusted with his Church.

EUCHARIST- DISCOVERING THE MASS IN THE BIBLE

Jesus said, “This is my Body,” and “This is my Blood.”

Some say they’re merely symbols of remembrance. Others say they’re really the Body and Blood of Christ but can’t explain how that’s possible. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life—but why?

Acclaimed author and scholar Dr. Brant Pitre will tackle those questions and more in *Lectio: Eucharist, Discovering the Mass in the Bible*. In ten sessions, he will open Scripture to deepen our understanding of the mystery and wonder that is the Eucharist—and how it will transform your life.



PRAYER- FINDING INTIMACY WITH GOD

Does prayer ever seem like a one-sided conversation?

Dr. Tim Gray masterfully uses the Church’s tradition of *lectio divina* to show the simple steps to make prayer an effective effort of love and intimacy. *Prayer: Finding Intimacy with God* captures in six sessions the secret to opening both hearts and minds to Scripture as the means to hear God and then respond in conversation, basking in his presence and resolving to live in and through his love.

EVANGELIZATION- AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

How is Jesus working in our lives to fulfill his call to evangelize? How are we called to respond in the midst of conflict, rejection, and outright persecution?

In *Evangelization and the Acts of the Apostles*, Dr. Mary Healy combines Bible study with Church teaching and practical wisdom to show how modern Catholics can effectively impact people for Jesus Christ.



Featured on
FORMED®



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE®

Discover the site that gathers
more Catholic content in one place.

One convenient website



Save the time you used to spend searching and find the Catholic content you want—on demand and available when you are.

High quality



You'll always find beautiful, trustworthy, Catholic content.



New and updated regularly

Discover new and fresh materials every week.

More choices



Easily choose from a wide range of content options: movies, Ebooks, audio talks, and video studies.

Log in to formed.org for a free 7-day trial.

ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO DEEPER STUDY?

We offer unparalleled training for new evangelists at our Graduate School of Theology in Denver and through our state-of-the-art distance education program.



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE®

UNDERSTAND, LIVE, AND SHARE YOUR FAITH

Learn more at www.augustineinstitute.org
or contact our admissions office at 303-937-4420.