

Catechist Handout

Week 7 – 11/14/2021

Christian Initiation



CATECHIST NOTES

Christian Initiation as practiced at Holy Family

We see the process of Christian initiation as "... a developmental journey by which a person, no matter their age, comes to a new understanding of him/herself as a disciple of Christ and member of His Church."

We understand that this process is a "...blend of instruction and formation in the faith" that

- progresses through gradual stages;
- unfolds the Church's rites, symbols, and biblical signs;
- incorporates the participants into the Christian community of faith and worship."

The Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist - lay the foundations of every Christian life."

They are to be seen as intricately connected, each part of the one process we call Christian Initiation.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1212.

[Westerhoff's Styles of Faith John Westerhoff, a religious educator and ...](#)

There are many theories about how faith develops. Here is one I have found helpful over the years and may help you as work with teens.

OBJECTIVES

1. Build on and expand from the session on Catholic Identity
2. Explore with teens the process of Christian Initiation and how Confirmation is part of that process
3. Invite teens to reflect on where they are in their own journey of faith and what their next steps might be

OVERVIEW

1. **5:15-6:45pm – Small group lesson plan/dismissal**
 - a. See note below on topic coverage concerning "*Baptism as Holy Ground*" during your class time.

LESSON COMPONENTS

- A. Community Building
- B. Shared experiences by adults and teens
- C. Scripture & Prayer
- D. Catholic Teaching/Insight (included in key ideas, etc)
- E. Putting Faith Into Action

****Both FLAME 1&2 students should have just attended the "*Baptism as Holy Ground*" talk last Wednesday as part of their Confirmation Preparation. Please take some time during this lesson to unpack what was learned as a class – what did they think of the message? How does it relate to them?**

Key Ideas for this Week



1. All of us are on a unique life journey.

As Christians we believe that God has entrusted to each person a plan/purpose that is unique to them. Discerning what this plan is unfolds within our life's journey.

2. God's will for every being is that they become what God created them to be.

"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." St. Catherine of Sienna

3. The purpose of religious faith (all faiths) is to help people live well and love deeply.

When religious beliefs and/or practices are corrupted by immoral people or for immoral purposes they cease to be reflective of the God they claim to

KEY IDEAS FOR THE WEEK cont.

reveal. Because all religious traditions are led by imperfect human beings they are always in need of scrutiny and reform.

4. Christian faith is continuously being formed by the work of the Holy Spirit through multiple means

- **Personal experiences and encounters**
- **The search for truth and the exercise of love**
- **Reason** – reasoned faith is characterized by some measure of logical or evidential support. It cannot contradict truth. It works with all human endeavors committed to the search for truth (the sciences, philosophy, the arts, insights and perspectives from other religious and spiritual traditions).
- **Sacred Scripture** – divine truth revealed
- **Tradition** – the knowledge/wisdom gained from those who came before
- **Engagement with the Community of Faith**

5. Christian Initiation...

- is "... a developmental journey by which a person, no matter their age, comes to a new understanding of him/herself as a disciple of Christ and member of His Church."
- This journey is a "...blend of instruction and formation in the faith" that
 - progresses through gradual stages;
 - unfolds the Church's rites, symbols, and biblical signs; and
 - incorporates the participants into the Christian community of faith and worship."
- Begins with an awareness, a stirring of the heart, a desire, a longing, a sincere curiosity about something more, something deeper, something truer. It ends with embracing a way of life grounded in a lifelong relationship with the sacred.

6. The Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist

- lay the foundations of every Christian life
- are to be seen as intricately connected, each part of the one process we call Christian Initiation.

Community Builder (20-25 minutes)

Direct teens to TH1-2

Introduction

All of have a unique story to tell, because everybody's life journey is unique to them.

Direct the teens' attention to the text under the My Life Journey graphic. Ask how many agree with the statement? Why do they think that's a true statement?

Introduce the concept of the value of self-reflection. You can speak to the positive benefits of self-reflection (i.e. better decision making, more accurate assessment of feelings, knowing why we think or believe certain things) OR the consequences of not being self-reflective (i.e. making the same mistakes over and over, not really understanding our own motives) Ask them to contribute to your list of examples.

Direct your teens to do the self-reflection activity (5-8 min) ←

Have the teens share parts of their story with each other

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[Religious Education and Sponsoring Faith in Adolescents](#) – This a short but academic article, however the section on **The Faith 'Sponsoring' or 'Mentoring' Process** beginning on page 4 is worth the read. I believe this is what we are trying to accomplish in both IGNITE and FLAME

[Catholic dissent: When wrong turns out to be right | USCatholic.org](#)
Short article with good information

[Authority and Dissent in the Catholic Church | Dr. William E. May ...](#) Good article written for adults.

YouTube Videos

Bishop Barron on Why What You Believe Matters
www.youtube.com/watch?v=carFbpDsRPI - better for adults than teens

Bishop Barron on Faith and Reason -
www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcH_5lecu5s - could be used with teens

Assure teens they

Don't have to fill in all the blank spaces in the boxes on TH1.

They can use as many of the stars as they want to on the Map – TH2. If there are not enough stars, they can add more.

For sharing think about dividing the large group into smaller groups

OR

Discuss the video **Navigation**,

- What idea presented in the video did you find helpful? Why?
- Do you think using navigation as a metaphor for finding our way through life was effective? Why or why not?
- Was there any point made in the video you disagreed with? Why?
- If you want to review the GPS system Matthew Kelly says God gave us direct the teens to Aaron Ross's article **Here's Why You Believe What You Do** on TH 3-5.

OR

Catechist/Peer witness – **no more than 5-7 min** on key people, experiences and events that have influenced you.

Shared experiences by adults and teens (20-25 min)

Present the following points in your own words

1. **Life comes before Faith.** Everyone has a life story; not everyone has a Faith story.
2. Ask your teens how many of them are part of FLAME because their parents are making them? Ask the whole group why they think this is important to parents? If you are a parent share with them why it would be important for you?

Ask your teens if they have noticed a difference in what they believe or their relationship to the Church as a result of being in FLAME? This might be a good time to have your peers share what changed for them or why they chose to be a peer.

3. Share with teens that **the purpose of religious faith (all faiths) is to help people live well and love deeply.** Share an example from your own life.

Ask them share experiences where their faith has helped them in their life? Share a time they wished their faith or the Church had helped them but didn't...Share a time their faith or the Church made something in their life harder or more confusing...

Note: Make sure you let them know that when religious beliefs and/or practices are corrupted by immoral people or for immoral purposes they cease to be reflective of the God they claim to reveal. Because all religious traditions are led by imperfect human beings they are always in need of scrutiny and reform.

4. **Christian faith is continuously being formed by the work of the Holy Spirit through multiple means**

- Personal experiences and encounters
- The search for truth and the exercise of love
- Reason – reasoned faith is characterized by some measure of logical or evidential support. It cannot contradict truth. It works with all human endeavors committed to the search for truth (the sciences, philosophy, the arts, insights and perspectives from

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Think about having one of the peers lead the discussion.

Click on this link for the Navigation Video by Dynamic Catholic...
<https://vimeo.com/85732602>

Again the Ross article can be useful here

- other religious and spiritual traditions).
- Sacred Scripture – divine truth revealed
- Tradition – the knowledge/wisdom gained from those who came before
- Engagement with the Community of Faith

5. Christian Initiation is "... a developmental journey by which a person, no matter their age, comes to a new understanding of him/herself as a disciple of Christ and member of His Church."

- This takes time (at Holy Family 15-16 years)
- a "...blend of instruction and formation in the faith" that progresses through gradual stages;
- unfolds the Church's rites, symbols, and biblical signs; and
- incorporates the participants into the Christian community of faith and worship."

Confirmation is part of this process as is Baptism and Eucharist. In fact the reception of Confirmation ends the period of Christian initiation and launches them into the fullness of the Christian life. In Confirmation they, not their parents, make a personal and public commitment to embrace a way of life grounded in a lifelong relationship with the sacred.

Prayer (5 min)

- Set the stage
 - Gather the group together
 - Have everyone take a few deep breaths and place themselves in a quiet space.
- Reading – from the writings of Joan of Arc at 19 years of age – TH5

"Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing, and so they give their lives to little or nothing. One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it...and then it's gone.

But to surrender who you are and to live without belief is more terrible than dying – even more terrible than dying young."
- **Reflection:** Ask the teens to take a moment and re-read the text from Joan of Arc and underline or highlight words or phrases that struck them.

OR

Pray Thomas Merton's Prayer of Unknowing (TH5)

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Ask your teens if they have things to add to this list or share examples from their own lives where they have experienced this.

That is why FLAME has small groups, large group presentations, service projects and retreats

This is why we have them participate in special rituals at the 4 pm Mass.

This is why we make Teen Community and offer programs like Peer Ministry, NCYC, Passion Play, Mission Trip, Drop-In Nights...

Putting Faith into Action (5 min) –

- Have teens fill in two of the “I Have Learned” boxes

CATECHIST NOTES

I know this was a packed lesson but it is important.
Thanks for all you do!

LESSON PREPARATION NOTES:

Is there something I want to pick up or go over from last week's class?

My community building activity this week will be

What parts of the lesson will the Peer Ministers lead/facilitate?

Do I need anything from the Faith Office prior to class?

Other

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Things I will need for class this week:

The Key Ideas/Objectives for this week are

Things I need to consult Teen Faith about
