

Catechist Handout

Week 5 – 10/24/2021

Catholic Identity

OBJECTIVES

- For teens to examine basic understandings of the Catholic faith
- To provide teens with a chance to ask questions about the Catholic faith
- To present teens with some things that makes the Catholic faith unique
- For catechists and peers to witness why they themselves choose to be Catholic
- To explore with teens what they value about Catholicism or could come to value about Catholicism
- To help teens sort out whether they themselves want to be Catholics.

OVERVIEW

1. 4:00- 5:00pm - Mass
2. 5:15-6:45pm – Small Group Lesson Plan

LESSON COMPONENTS

- A. Community Building
- B. Shared experiences by adults and teens
- C. Scripture & Prayer
- D. Catholic Teaching/Insight (covered in other components)
- E. Putting Faith Into Action

Announcements

COMMUNITY BUILDERS (choose 1)

1. Word Association Activity

- a. Direct teens to complete **Associative Thinking box on TH1**. You can have teens do it individually, in pairs or small groups or as a class **OR**
- b. Everyone sits in a circle. The first player, chosen randomly, says the word Catholic out loud. The next player, in clockwise order, has to quickly say a word that has some connection with the previous word. What counts as a connection is down to the parliament of players to determine: if somebody doesn't like a connection, they can challenge it, and everyone votes on whether or not to allow it. In the event of a tie, the word is allowed.

CATECHIST NOTES

Catholicism is a world-wide religion with **1.285 billion** followers. It is a diverse, complex religion with a variety of expressions. It has a 2,000 + year history. Teens often wrestle with such complexity. Being Catholic is anything but simple.

Often teens and adults believe that what they have heard and been taught about Catholicism is the authentic Catholicism. Just because someone tells you, even authoritative teachers like members of the clergy and significant lay leaders, does not make it true. Even authoritative teachers sometimes unwittingly pass on false or clumsily worded teaching as the TRUTH. What students hear and understand may also be questionable. Add to this that Church teaching develops! Some teachings change as a result of new knowledge or the demands of cultural settings. Core teachings also evolve in the sense that various dimensions of the teaching are emphasized or nuanced in order that the faithful might more fully understand them. Many have left Catholicism because of poor teaching on these matters.

A player is eliminated, or takes a forfeit, if any of the below happen:

1. They take more than three seconds to make a connection.
2. They repeat a word that has already been said in this game.
3. They are challenged and lose the vote.

Eliminated players can still make challenges and cast votes. The last player standing is the winner.

2. Create a trivia game or quiz game around Catholicism using the Kahoot platform (see <https://kahoot.com/welcomeback> - this is a popular tool used in schools today. Your peers should be able to help you with this.

3. Take A Stand Activity

- a) Create four signs with the following text and post them on four different walls or corners of a room: • Strongly agree • Somewhat agree • Somewhat disagree • Strongly disagree
- b) Select statements from those below or create your own.

- 1. Catholics believe there's no such thing as absolute truth. What's true for you may not be true for me.**

Catholics do believe in absolute truth, the fullness of which resides in God, who is always revealing what is true. The Church is committed to teaching what God reveals as true, but is not in itself the repository of all truth, since revelation is on-going.

- 2. Catholics believe the Pope is the head of the Church and rules with total authority**

Catholics believe CHRIST is the head of the Church. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth (Christ's representative). The Pope has 3 main jobs.

1. The Pope is first and foremost a Pastor. He represents Christ's love and concern for every single individual. That is why the Pope's priority lies in getting to know people, understanding how they live, listening to their concerns and sharing their sufferings and their joys.

2. The Pope is the Unifier of the People of God. Catholic means **universal**. The Catholic Church has members in every country, language group and culture in the world. The good of the worldwide Church and the autonomy of local Churches need to be balanced. The Pope governs the Church in solidarity with all the Bishops.

The Pope also meets with heads of state and maintains diplomatic relationships with more than 100 nations and works with the leaders of other religious and spiritual traditions for the good of all people.

3. The Pope is the Prime Witness to Faith. This includes both preaching announcing the message to non-Christians, and teaching, explaining an element of Christ's message in today's context.

CATECHIST NOTES

The Catholic Church, is guided by the Holy Spirit **but is not without sin.** Not only do individual Catholics sin, Catholicism has been guilty of dramatic institutional failures that have done great damage (i.e. the current sexual abuse crisis; refusing to bury the victims of suicide in consecrated ground in times past, a long history of anti-semitism to name only a few). Teens are especially sensitive to such hypocrisy. The fact is the Church itself has not always been true to its own teachings or manipulated those teachings to serve itself rather than Christ.

Let us be cognizant of these realities as we engage our teens about the value of Catholicism.

If you are not sure of what the Church teaches on a particular issue/question please ask or do some research. If you go to the internet make sure you are you are working with credible sources.

We have tried to include the correct teaching for the issues we raise in this lesson plan.

3. **As a Catholic I don't need to go to Church. All that really matters is that I am a good person.**

Worship is the moral responsibility of all Catholics. Furthermore, the Church proclaims that the celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. Participation in the Eucharist is one of the defining characteristics of a Catholic.

4. **Catholics should follow their conscience in all things for the Church allows dissent**

The primacy of conscience is a bedrock of Catholic moral teaching. This essential belief lays the responsibility of having a well formed conscience on each individual Catholic and the responsibility for helping individual Catholics attain a well formed conscience on the Church. Reasoned dissent is allowed. Suppressing dissent of individual conscience has often fostered corruption on the part of the institutional Church.

5. The Catholic tradition teaches that the economy must serve people, not the other way around and upholds the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property, and economic initiative.

Everything listed above is accurate. This does not give license for workers to be unjust (i.e. corrupt unions and associations) or that safe working conditions and fair wages cannot be negotiated. Some wrongly believe that Catholic Social teaching negates the right to private property. This is not true.

CATECHIST RESOURCES

[Basic Tenets of Catholicism - Beginning Catholic](#) – great basic summary for catechists.

[CATHOLICISM](#) – 10 part video series by Bishop Robert Barron. Well done. You may choose to watch various videos based on your own questions or questions from your teens. This would not necessarily engage teens.

[Pope Paul VI: Creed of the People of God - Beginning Catholic](#) - an excellent overview of the most essential beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.

Central Characteristics of Roman Catholicism
<https://www.smp.org/resourcecenter/resource/2698> *This handout is included in the TH for this lesson*

Busted Halo | Faith Shared Joyfully
<https://bustedhalo.com>
unique media resource that utilizes a relevant and accessible voice to help people understand the Catholic faith, put it into practice in their everyday lives, and share it with others.

Catholics Come Home
<https://www.catholicscomehome.org/two-minute-answers/> The Young Adult section is especially good

Life Teen
<https://lifeteen.com/>
More traditional than HF

3. Church teaching is never static but continues to evolve over time

This statement is true. This does not negate that the core teachings (what the Church refers to as the Kerygma) will never change (i.e. Christ is fully human and fully divine, Christ rose from the dead, God is the fullness of truth, the totality of love and the source of life, all life is sacred...), but these teachings must be presented in ways every age and people understand. The way teachings are expressed must change. Teachings and practices that are not part of the kerygma or didache have changed and will continue to change.

4. Catholics believe that the most authoritative source of truth is the Bible

Catholics believe that there are two authoritative sources of revealed truth, Scripture and Tradition. This is what distinguishes Catholicism from other Christian Churches. It is also true that Catholics interpret the scriptures contextly and therefore see apparent scriptural contradictions as a way our ability to interpret scriptural truth evolves over time.

5. The Catholic Church teaches that only baptized Christians will be saved.

The Catholic Church teaches that all who seek God with a sincere heart and live righteous lives will be saved. Those who have come to know Christ as the Savior (not all who have been exposed to Christian teaching, know it in its fullness) and reject him are not thought to be seeking God with a sincere heart.

6. The Catholic Church traces its beginnings to the Apostles

This is true. Jesus' followers established the Church in response to Jesus' command (Mat. 28: 19). This is what it means to be an apostolic Church.

7. To consider oneself a Catholic one must value the sacraments and receive them frequently

This is true. The Catholic Church is a sacramental Church and according to history was the first Christian sacramental Church. Orthodox Christian Churches are also sacramental Churches. All sacramental Churches say active participation in the sacramental life and frequent reception of the sacraments is essential.

c) Read statements aloud slowly. Tell participants to go stand under the sign (Strongly agree, somewhat agree, strongly disagree, somewhat disagree) that reflects their personal response to the statement.

d) Based on yours and your participants' comfort levels, facilitate discussion around differences of agreement. Have "agrees" defend their opinions to "Disagrees" and vice versa. Be careful to prevent majority opinions from overwhelming others.

Shared experiences by adults and teens (choose 1 or 2)

Ten Great Reasons to be Catholic

1. Show this video by Matthew Kelly (4 min. long)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=DScbZg7L47E Make sure teens understand this is Matt Kelly's list.
2. You and/or one of your peers share your reasons for being Catholic. This needs to be heartfelt, honest. It would also be helpful to share your struggles with the church. This needs to be prepared ahead of time.
3. Then have your teens share the reasons they have for being Catholic and their struggles with the Church. Remind them that being a Catholic because their parents/family is Catholic is only a beginning. Confirmation is about making their faith their own. Reinforce that reasoned dissent is possible within the Church, but only after they are sure they understand what they are dissenting from. Make sure they know all Catholics have doubts and that it is a moral obligation to call out the Church when it is not true to itself and Christ's teachings.

Why Be Catholic and Not Just Christian? (9 min. long)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJCbCs-y1_k

Show this video to your small group. This is an **apologetic presentation**. Fr. Mike Schmitz is making an argument in defense of the faith. He is not heavy-handed but teens (and you) may disagree with him. That's okay as long as you give your reasons for disagreeing – not just I disagree. This could lead into your discussion in the following options or your discussion of this week's scripture text.

Comparison Chart

Read through the chart as a group. Check out what some of the differences are in Christian faiths. Ask teens if they have any questions or anything to add!

More reading

Read CYB (orange Bible) pages C33-C40 (near p. 1536) or CYB (tan/green) pages 1716-1733. This gives more information and description about what Catholic believe and what makes us unique as a faith.

Vote with Your Feet

On the next two pages are some statements for discussion. But for this discussion, teens should get up and walk to the position that they agree with. Designate one side of the room to be "I agree" and the other to be "I disagree" with a neutral zone in the middle. When you read a statement, teens should vote with their feet and go to the spot that matches their view.

Catechist and peers will then call on teens to ask them why they believe what they do and to defend their side a bit.

CATECHIST NOTES

This is the heart of the lesson. Choose your options for this section carefully.

These two options allow for very personal sharing on the parts of catechists, peers and teens. If you choose these make sure you and your peers view the video **before** class.

Apologetics (from Greek ἀπολογία, "speaking in defense") is the religious discipline of defending religious doctrines through systematic argumentation and discourse. **Christian apologetics** is a branch of Christian theology that attempts to defend Christianity against objections. Apologists seek **intelligent faith**, reasoned faith.

Call on a variety of teens in order to get them to speak. These are opinions, so everyone should have the chance to share theirs!

If you did this as the Community Builder choose something else. You can use these statements for a Kahoots quiz or for the Take a Stand Activity or combine taking statements from both.

Then, the catechist will share the Catholic view. The class will discuss whether they agree or disagree with what the Catholic Church teaches. Questions and explanations are on the next 2 pages. Note: You will have to make a question board that shows which questions have been read/which are left.

Vote with Your Feet

Discussion statements:

1. Jesus founded the Catholic Church
2. When we consume the Eucharist, it is the literal body and blood of Jesus
3. Non-Catholics can receive Communion at a Catholic Church
4. It is a sin to be gay or lesbian
5. God wants us to be happy
6. It's okay to do something bad so that something good will come from it
7. We are not responsible for the sins of others
8. Society is more important than the individual
9. Family is more important than God
10. Men and women are equal

1. Jesus did found the Catholic Church

(a) Christ completed the founding of His Church just before His Ascension, when He commissioned the apostles to make disciples of all nations. Earlier in His public ministry He had instituted the sacraments, chosen the twelve apostles, instructed them by word and example, and conferred on them the power of teaching, ruling, and sanctifying.

(b) The Gospels show that Christ founded the Church in the form of a visible, hierarchical society, that is, one made up of subjects and superiors who rightfully rule subjects. The Roman Pontiff and the bishops under him are the ruling hierarchy of the Church. The Church is also a monarchical society in which the Pope rules with full power, that is, with jurisdiction over the entire Church. Peter was the first head of the Church founded by Christ.

(c) After Pentecost Sunday the apostles began to carry out their mission, which through them and their successors continues and will continue until the end of time.

2. It is Jesus

The Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence is the belief that Jesus Christ is literally, not symbolically, present in the Holy Eucharist—body, blood, soul and divinity. Catholics believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist because Jesus tells us this is true in the Bible:

“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh. The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:48-56).

3. Non-Catholics cannot receive Communion at a Catholic Church

Catholics believe in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, meaning that what appears to be bread and wine is really Jesus' body and blood—not just a symbol of his body and blood. When Catholics receive Holy Communion, it

is an expression of the unity among all those in communion with the Catholic Church throughout the world, who maintain the belief in the Real Eucharistic Presence of Christ. Therefore, only those who believe in the True Presence may participate in this sacrament of oneness with Christ and his Church. "... [T]he celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is wholly directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion" (CCC 1382).

However, this is NOT our practice at Holy Family. Under Fr. Terry's direction as Pastor we practice "**close communion**", meaning members of other churches in the same denomination (all Christians) are allowed to break bread together with the members of the local church. He bases his decision upon the Scriptural teaching on the Lord's Supper found in 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 and promotes open participation for believers. All those who are true believers in God through personal faith in Jesus Christ, His Son, are worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper by virtue of the fact they have accepted the death of Christ as payment for their sins (see also Ephesians 1:6–7). Furthermore, he is convinced God can use our belief in the real presence in the Eucharist to lead others to a deeper and richer experience of the Eucharist.

4. It is NOT a sin to be gay

In the eyes of the church simply being gay or lesbian is **not** a sin—contrary to widespread belief, even among educated Catholics. This may be one of the most poorly understood of the church's teachings. This is not church teaching. Nowhere in the Catechism does it say that simply being homosexual is a sin. As any reputable psychologist or psychiatrists will agree, people do not choose to be born with any particular sexual orientation.

5. God DOES want us to be happy

God has placed in our hearts such an infinite desire for happiness that nothing can satisfy it but God himself. All earthly fulfillments give us only a foretaste of eternal happiness. Above and beyond that, we should be drawn to God.

6. It is NOT okay to do something bad so that good can result.

We may never deliberately do something evil or tolerate an evil so that good can result from it. Sometimes there is no other course of action but to tolerate a lesser evil in order to prevent a greater evil. The end does not justify the means.

7. We are NOT responsible for the sins of others.

We are not responsible for other people's sins, unless we are guilty of misleading or seducing another person to sin or of cooperating in it or of encouraging someone else to sin or of neglecting to offer a timely warning or our help.

8. The individual is more important

In God's sight every individual matters in the first place as a person and only then as a social being. Society can never be more important than the individual person. Humanity may never be means to a societal end. Nevertheless, social institutions such as the State and the family are necessary for the individual; they even correspond to his nature.

9. God is more important than family

Without relationship a person cannot live. A person's most important relationship is the one s/he has with God. This has priority over all human relationships, even family relationships. Children do not belong to the parents, nor do parents belong to their children. Every person belongs directly to God. Only to God is man bound absolutely and always.

10. God endowed men and women with identical dignity as persons.

Both men and women are human beings created in God's image and children of God redeemed by Jesus Christ.

It is just as unchristian as it is inhumane to discriminate unjustly against someone because he is male or female. Equal dignity and equal rights, nevertheless, do not mean uniformity. The sort of egalitarianism that ignores the specific character of a man or a woman contradicts God's plan of creation.

Are You Smarter Than A Catholic Fifth Grader?

Below is a Jeopardy-style trivia game. These are questions about our faith that are normally taught before/during 5th grade religious Ed.

Break the class into 3-4 groups, and have them take the challenge on!

Game questions on pp. 8-9 of this handout.

SCRIPTURE & PRAYER

Matthew 13:-20

Read through the passage twice so that teens can get a clear understanding of what it is they're reading. The main focus of the commissioning is present in verse 18.

Discuss the questions on THO3.

- What is Jesus telling Peter?
- What will Jesus protect the Church from?
- Catholics uses this as justification for Peter being the first Pope. What do you think?

CATECHIST NOTES

PLEASE DO NOT SKIP THIS part of the lesson. This is an important verse in Catholic history, and it is good for teens to biblically see how our faith was formed.



Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grade Catholic?

Divide up the groups by small groups. Each small group picks a spokesperson, who with the collaboration of his group chooses a category. 1st grade level questions are worth 100 points, 2nd grade 200 points, etc. The group, through the spokesperson, answers the question according to each level. If they answer correctly, they are awarded the points. An incorrect answer means the next group gets to try for ½ the amount of points, and if they are also wrong, the third group gets a try for ¼ (No more than three teams may answer each question.)

Each team gets to “cheat” off of a team leader.. They have two options: “Peek” (which means they can hear the answer and decide whether or not to use it) and “copy” (they have to take the team leader’s answer no matter what). If a team does NOT use both cheats by the end of the game, they get an extra 50 points per leftover cheat. The final question is worth double or nothing. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Categories:

Confirmation

Marriage/Holy Orders

Sacraments

Last Things

Mass

Prayer

Confirmation:

100: True or false: The sacrament of confirmation is one of the three “sacraments of initiation?” (**True**)

200: True or false: Confirmation is similar to graduation—once I have been confirmed, my faith really won’t grow much more. (**False!**)

300: Who typically administers the sacrament of Confirmation? (**Bishop**)

400: In addition to the laying on of hands, the rite of Confirmation includes being anointed with _____. (**Chrism/oil**)

500: After Confirmation, one shares more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the _____ with which he is filled (**Holy Spirit**)

Prayer:

100: Name three well-known prayers.

200: True or false: God prefers that we do not bother him with petty needs and “unimportant” prayers (**false**)

300: The part of the Mass when the Church lifts her intentions to God is called the prayer of the _____. (**Faithful/Petitions**)

400: What is the name of the item that Mary gave us through St. Dominic? (**The Rosary**)

500: What is the name of the book used to pray the Liturgy of the Hours (**Breviary**)

Sacraments:

- 100:** What is normally the first sacrament that a person receives? (**Baptism**)
- 200:** In an emergency, who can baptize someone else (**Anyone with the right intention**)
- 300:** Who baptized Jesus and in what body of water? (**John the Baptist in the River Jordan**)
- 400:** What is the name of the prayer we say in Confession? (**Act of Contrition**)
- 500:** What are the Sacraments of Initiation? (**Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation**)

Last Things:

- 100:** What sacrament is associated with bodily healing and forgiveness of sins? (**Anointing of the sick**)
- 200:** What is the place where we are eternally separated from God? (**Hell**)
- 300:** What is the place or condition of temporal punishment for those who must be purified before entering heaven? (**Purgatory**)
- 400:** Other than Jesus, who else's body and soul are in heaven? (**Mary and/or Elijah and/or Enoch**)
- 500:** What will happen on the last day? (**Judgment, reunited to our bodies, eternity-any of these**)

Mass:

- 100:** The Eucharist is the true presence of whom? (**Jesus**)
- 200:** Where is the consecrated host kept when Mass is not being celebrated? (**Tabernacle**)
- 300:** What are the two main parts of the Mass? (**Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist**)
- 400:** What day of the year is there no Mass celebrated? (**Good Friday**)
- 500:** What is transubstantiation? (**Changing of substance, or when the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ**).

Marriage and Holy Orders

- 100:** Who else besides bishops and priests receive holy orders? (**Deacons**)
- 200:** What can end a valid marriage? (**Death**)
- 300:** What do we call men in formation and studying for the priesthood? (**Seminarian**)
- 400:** What is the word for when a marriage is declared invalid? (**annulment**)
- 500:** The bishops are the successors to what group of men? (**The Apostles!**)

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

CATECHIST NOTES

Things I will need for class this week:

The Key Ideas/Objectives for this week are

Things I need to consult Teen Faith about
