

FLAME TEEN HANDOUT

Week 5 – My Catholic Identity

Aflame
with the
**Holy
Spirit**



**identity
formation**
creating a clear and stable sense
of who I am and who we are

**CATHOLIC
identity**
the things we believe and
do as Catholics

If we make the decision to take our faith seriously, over time, our faith will become an integral part of who we are and will influence our worldview and our choices.

The word *catholic* means

UNIVERSAL

open to all

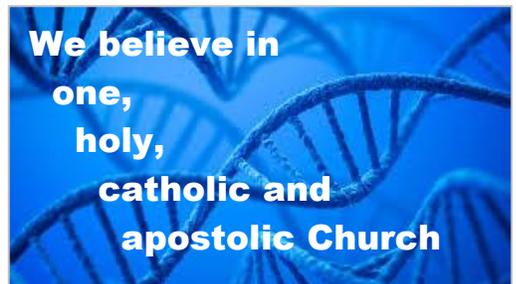


5 Characteristics of Catholic Identity - Catechist's Journey – Joe Paprocki

- A sense of **sacramentality** → Finding God in all things
- A commitment to community
- Reverence for scripture and tradition
- An attitude of faith and hope
- Respect for all life

The Four Marks of the Church

- We are all members of the Body of Christ who share, "... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."
- Christ's Church is rooted in love; animated by the Holy Spirit, a chosen people, called to be Christ's witnesses in the world.
- Christ died, once for all and his Church exists to serve all people in every time and place
- We trace our origin back to the apostles and like those first disciples continue the mission and ministry of Jesus until He comes again in glory.



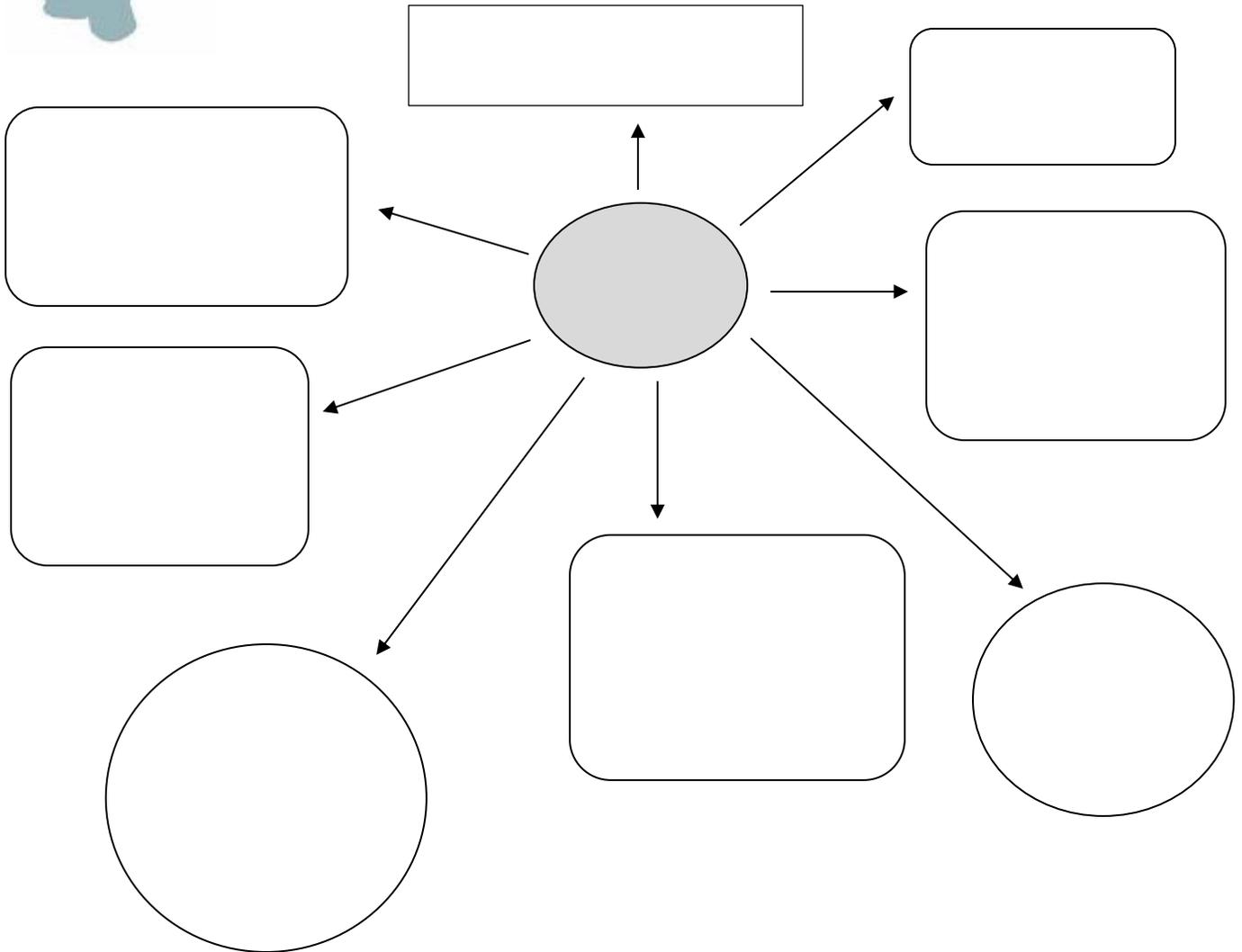
the Church's DNA; it's essential attributes



ASSOCIATIVE THINKING is the process of linking one thought or idea to another.

RADIANT THINKING is a specific form of associative thinking where the thinking radiates out from a central idea.

(What words, phrases or images come to your mind when you hear the word...)



**WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?**

39% of the world's population are Christians. Why do you think so many people in the world identify as Christians? What do you think attracts people to the Christian faith?

Why do 52% of those who identify as Christians further identify as Catholics? What do you think attracts people to Catholicism?

Central Characteristics of Roman Catholicism

Catholicism is a remarkably rich religion, characterized by a complex tapestry of beliefs, practices, values, rituals and traditions. When **viewed "from the outside"**-- that is, by those who do not share its communal life--Catholicism is probably most frequently identified by its most public expressions, such as its communal worship and the well-known and central role played by the pope.

The active Catholic, however, experiences the Catholic Church **"from the inside"** and takes on what could be called a particular Catholic worldview, a certain Catholic perspective on the nature and meaning of life. Below are some of the primary characteristics of that Catholic worldview.

- Catholics believe that God is present to, in, and through all dimensions of existence--the natural world, persons, communities, historical events, natural objects--that is, in all creation.
- Catholics are convinced that God uses all these elements of creation to communicate grace, that is, to reveal God's own nature and to enter into relationship with people.
- Catholics have a profound sense of discovering, experiencing, and responding to God in union with other believers, that is, within community.
- Catholicism is committed to proclaiming the message of Jesus to all people in all cultures and at all times.
- Catholicism is open to all truth and to every good value, no matter what its origin.
- Catholics, though diverse in terms of culture, are united in terms of faith, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist.
- Catholicism is historically rooted in the experience and witness of the Apostles and in the life of the earliest community of believers, whose story is told in the Christian Scriptures.
- The beliefs and practices of Catholicism are rooted in both the Scriptures and Tradition. Tradition refers to the teachings and practices that have emerged through the church's history under the guidance of the Spirit.
- Catholicism tries to take a position of "both-and" rather than "either-or" in regard to most matters.
- Catholicism respects and embraces a wide variety of spiritualities and prayer forms.
- Catholicism recognizes and respects the human capacity for rational thought as a profoundly important gift of God, and it urges its members to seek truth wherever it can be found.
- Catholics recognize the authorized leadership role of the ordained minister and, in a special way, that of the bishops and the pope.
- Catholics believe in the principle of shared leadership and the call to ministry of all believers.
- Catholics honor and hold in particular esteem the great people of faith who have preceded them, the saints, and in a very special way, the mother of Jesus, Mary.
- Catholics are committed to the transformation of the world through active engagement in the work of justice and peace.

Common MISCONCEPTIONS about Catholicism

Catholics are not actually Christian because...

- They are superstitious and naïve (i.e. they pray to Mary and the saints, worship statues and icons and practice irrelevant and obsolete medieval rituals).
- They don't read, know, or care about the Bible, having replaced it with man-made traditions.
- They take their orders from the Pope, believing everything he says comes directly from God and is therefore infallible (without error).
- Catholics can pay to have their sins forgiven.
- The Catholic Church is opposed to science and rejects evolution
- Only baptized Catholics can go to heaven
- Catholics hate the LGBT community and anyone else who doesn't fit into their way of thinking.
- Catholics have a lot of secret societies that try to control the world

- Catholic men who are ordained forfeit the right to marry.
- The reason women are not allowed to be ordained is because the Church believes in the spiritual equality between men and women.
- Dissent from Church teaching is strictly forbidden.
- Catholics must first confess their sins to a priest instead of going directly to God to ask for forgiveness.
- There is no such thing as a *hierarchy of teachings* (some teachings being more important than others) in the Catholic Church.
- God the Father sent his only Son to die in order to ransom human beings from sin.
- Participating in the celebration of a sacrament guarantees that one receives the grace given by the sacrament.

MISCONCEPTIONS many Catholics have about Catholicism

...the faith that grows out of questioning is stronger than the faith born of blind obedience.



Catholicism is a complex, dynamic and engaging faith practiced by 18% of the world's population. For two thousand years people all around the world have lived and imagined it in a rich diversity of ways. Be careful of those who try to reduce it to oversimplified formulas or pious platitudes.



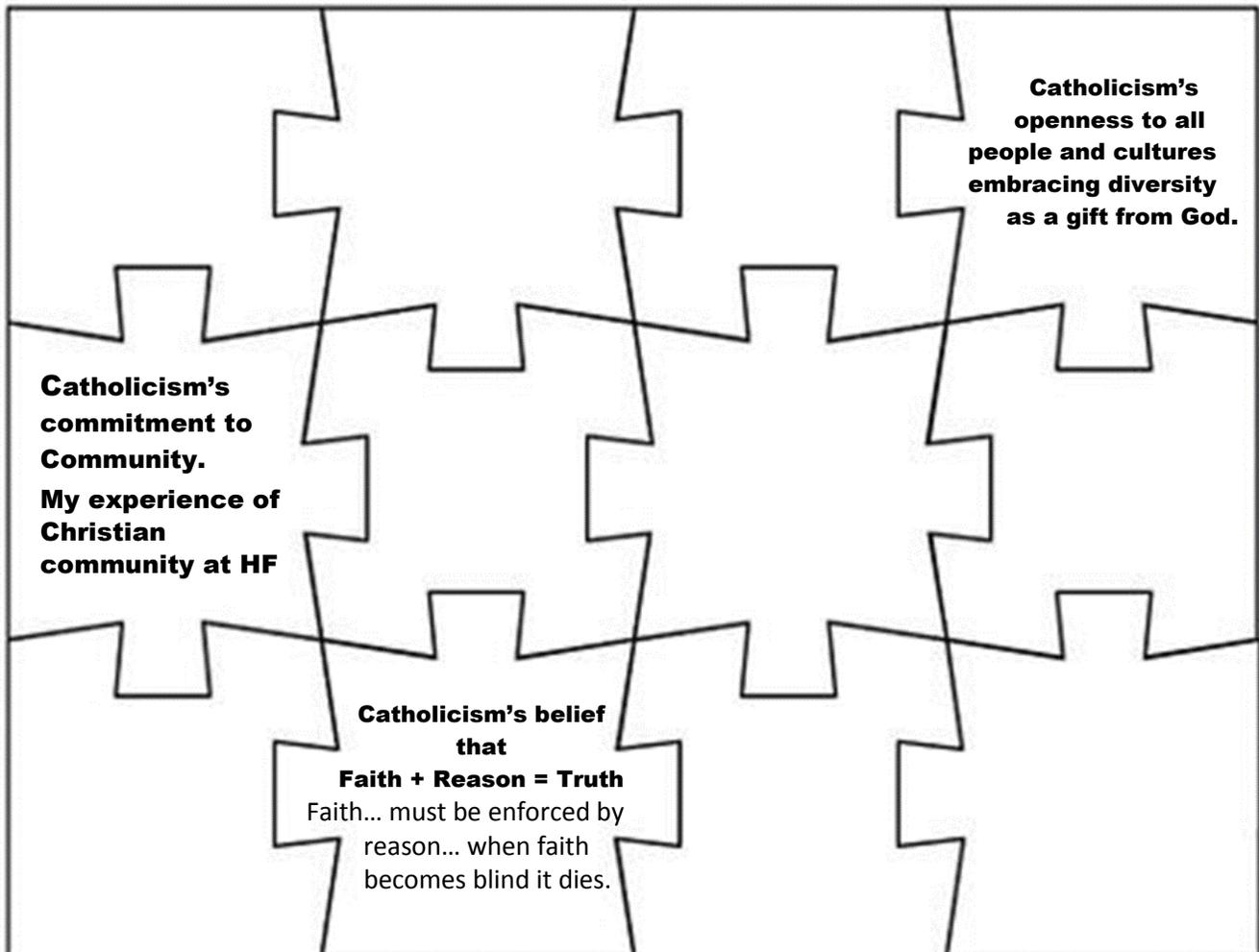
1 Corinthians 12: 12-27

In many of his letters, St. Paul uses the metaphor of the human body to describe the nature or essence of the Church.

1. Do you find this metaphor effective in helping you understand what the Church is meant to be? If so how?
2. What do you think are the limitations, if any, of thinking about the Church in this way?
3. How would you compare the image of the Church as the **Body of Christ** with say the image of the Church as the **People of God**, used in the letters of Peter? How are they similar? How are they different?
4. What connections might Paul be trying to draw between Christ's Body in the Eucharist with the Church becoming or being the Body of Christ in the world?
 - 4 a. What does that tell us about the Eucharist?
5. Do you think talking about the Church as the Body of Christ is relevant today?
6. How does thinking about yourself and your small group as being part of the Body of Christ impact your experience of being part of FLAME, the Holy Family Teen Community? The Catholic Church?

****Read the *Cultural Connection* box on CYB (orange) 1625 for more insight into this**

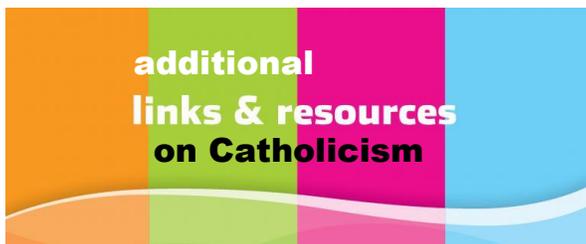
What do you value as part of your Catholic identity?



Let's Compare...

	Catholics	Other Christian faiths
History	Formed when Jesus entrusted the Church to the Apostles, with special leadership responsibilities to Peter. His is why the Church claims apostolic succession. This is symbolized by the unbroken line of 266 popes which includes the current pontiff, Pope Francis.	For the first thousand years of Christianity, "Roman Catholic" and "Christian" were synonymous. It wasn't until what's known as the "Great Schism," which happened in 1054, that Christianity began to substantially separate. All Christian Churches claim apostolic succession but only Catholics have a pope. Nondenominational churches are often founded by individual pastors; they have little affiliation with historic denominations.
Leadership in the Church	The model for all leadership in the Church is Jesus. Catholics refer to this kind of leadership as 'servant leadership'. All members of the Church participate in the priesthood of all believers through Baptism. Those who are called to serve the Church through the Sacrament of Holy Orders become deacons, priests or Bishops. In celebrating the Rite of Ordination men receive a permanent spiritual mark, called a <i>character</i> , signifying that they represent Jesus' presence in the Church. Through their leadership in the Church, they help continue Jesus' presence on earth in the tradition of the apostles. Currently the Church only ordains men. Priests and Bishops are not allowed to marry.	In the Protestant churches, married and female clergy are the norm. Eastern Orthodoxy does not ordain women but allows married men to become priests but not bishops.
Sacraments	There are seven solemn rites, called sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Matrimony, Reconciliation (also known as Penance or Confession), The Anointing of Sick and Holy Orders.	Most Protestant churches practice two sacraments: Baptism and the Eucharist. Their understanding of Baptism is similar to Catholicism's; their understanding of Eucharist is not. Most non-denominational or congregational Christian churches practice only Baptism.
Communion	The bread and wine consecrated during the Catholic Mass, known as the Body and Blood of Christ, embodies Jesus. This is known as the doctrine of the Real Presence. Catholics believe the real presence of Jesus is also found in the Word of God, the community of the baptized and the person of the priest.	In most Protestant churches, the ritual serves to commemorate Jesus' death and resurrection. It is a symbol. One sect, the Lutherans, do believe in a physical presence of Christ in communion. There's a minority of Protestants that don't celebrate Communion at all.

<p>The Pope</p>	<p>Catholics see in the pope the successor of the Apostle Peter, the first head of their Church, who was appointed by Jesus. The papal office of today gets its validity by an allegedly unbroken chain of consecrations, ranging from the first century to the present; this is known as "Apostolic Succession."</p>	<p>Protestants do not see Peter's primacy among the apostles as embodied in one person called the Pope. According to the Evangelical Christians, Catholic belief in the Papacy contradicts the teachings in the Bible.</p> <p>Even though there is a wide separation of thought on who the head of the church is, a greater dialogue is happening between Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants than ever before!</p>
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- **Catholic Youth Bible** C33-C40 (by page 1536)
- **Busted Halo | Faith Shared Joyfully** <https://bustedhalo.com> - 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.
- **Life Teen** <https://lifeteen.com/> - website designed for Catholic teens.
- **Catholics & Cultures** – <https://www.catholicsandcultures.org/> - website on the cultural diversity of Catholicism.
- **Catholics Come Home** - <https://www.catholicscomehome.org/two-minute-answers/> The Young Adult section is especially good

I Learned Statements – complete at least two of the sentences below

The image shows a collection of six sticky notes on a grey background. The notes are arranged as follows:

- Top left: A lined sticky note with the text "I discovered. . .".
- Top middle: A blank white sticky note with the text "I learned...".
- Top right: A lined sticky note with the text "I was reminded that. . .".
- Bottom left: A large blank white sticky note with the text "The question I have is. . .".
- Bottom middle: Two small blank white sticky notes, one above the other.
- Bottom right: A lined sticky note with the text "I was surprised by. . .".