

KNOW IT! PRAY IT! LIVE IT!

A Family Guide to

**The Catholic
Youth Bible**

LISA-MARIE CALDERONE-STEWART

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*This book is dedicated to
Michael James Stewart and Ralph Pierre Stewart IV*

First junior high, and then senior high. For quite a while, we were the perfect “youth ministry family,” equipped with our own teenagers. Me at the diocese, Dad at the parish.

Our best stuff came after field-testing it at home. Stories of your personal ups and downs found their way into books and workshops. It's about time someone gives you credit, right?

Well, this is a thank-you for being so patient with us . . . for trying out the new prayers, the new stories, and the new activities . . . for giving us your opinions on what would and would not work with a youth group . . . for having one of your parents along at practically every retreat and church event you attended . . . for standing up at the microphone at youth congresses and youth-led workshops . . . for having your words quoted by your proud parents, who were trying to be youth advocates . . . for being youth leaders . . . for being good sports . . . for being good sons. You have helped us break new ground in youth ministry. You taught us what family means. You taught us what love looks like.

Author Acknowledgments

Thank you, Mom!

*God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.
She is more beautiful than the sun,
and excels every constellation of the stars.*

(Wis 7:28–29)

Thank you, Ralph!

*I take pleasure in three things,
and they are beautiful in the sight of God and of mortals:
agreement among brothers and sisters, friendship among neighbors,
and a wife and a husband who live in harmony.*

(Sir 25.1)

Thank you, Leif Kehrwald and Bob Stamschorr!

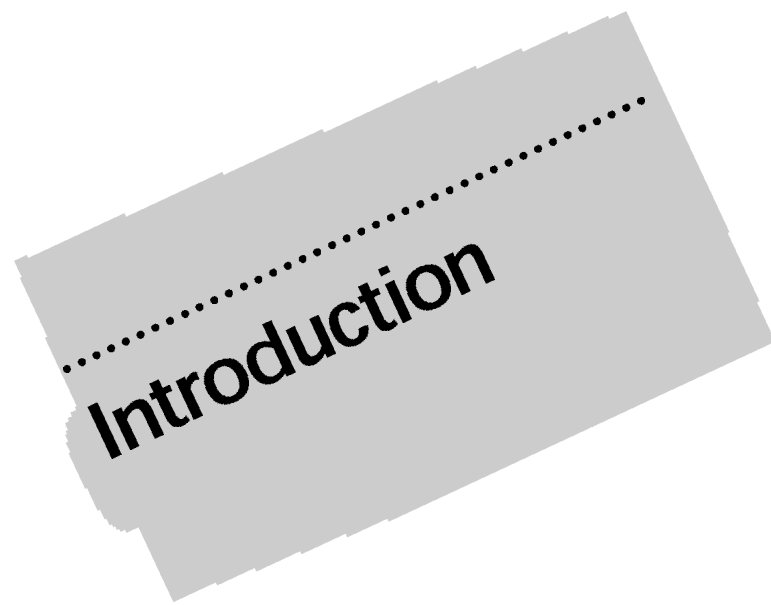
I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. (Phil 1.3–5)

Thank you, Bishop Ken Untener!

*Go in peace, daughter, and may I hear a good report about you as long as I live.
(Tob 10.12)*

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Introduction

It's time to explore *The Catholic Youth Bible (CYB)*!

This is the book for you and your family! It's for you if you are a teenager. It's for you if you are the parent of a teenager. It's for you even if you aren't a teenager or a teenager's parent! As long as you know a teenager, or like teenagers, or once were a teenager, this is a book that you will enjoy and learn from. With seven easy-to-read chapters, this book will help you explore biblical themes that relate to life's questions. How easy are these chapters? Just take a look at this!

Overview of the Seven Chapters

Each of the seven chapters asks a major life question and looks at a cluster of major biblical themes that relate to the question:

CHAPTER 1: WHY ARE WE HERE?

Themes: covenant, creation, Advent, Christmas, birth, Baptism, new life, water

CHAPTER 2: HOW DO WE LIVE?

Themes: Reign of God, teachings and advice, salt and light

CHAPTER 3: HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Themes: waiting, patience, desert, Lent, suffering, time, sand

CHAPTER 4: WHY DO WE DIE?

Themes: sin and salvation, reconciliation, paschal mystery, life after death, seeds

CHAPTER 5: HOW DO WE MAKE A COMEBACK?

Themes: mission and discipleship, power of the Spirit, Confirmation, wind

CHAPTER 6: WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO BE?

Themes: social justice, human concerns, dignity of the person, globe

CHAPTER 7: WHO IS GOD?

Themes: revelation of God, images of God, the Eucharist

The Chapter Pattern

Each chapter follows the same pattern, with the same six sections:

REAL LIFE

Each chapter begins with real life situations of teenagers that relate to the chapter question and the chapter themes. For example, the letters and e-mails in chapter 1 relate to the chapter's question, Why are we here?

Sometimes the opening situations are from one point of view, and other times from several points of view. Sometimes one person talks, and other times several people talk. All the situations are straight out of real teen life.

A CLOSER LOOK

Next the chapter takes a closer look at the issues raised, and how it pertains to themes of faith that relate to the chapter's question. Catholic beliefs about these themes are explained in simple language, challenging you to dig a little deeper into what the story is really about.

IN THE BIBLE

At this point the material urges you to jump right into the Bible to examine a story or passage that deals with the chapter's questions and faith themes. It breaks open the Scriptures by connecting them to real modern day issues and exploring what God's word in the Scriptures says about them.

CHECK IT OUT

As you probably know already, the *CYB* is filled with articles, maps, charts, and indexes to help you better understand the Scriptures. This section of each chapter is filled with Scripture passages that relate to the chapter's topic or issue. You are encouraged to identify and investigate what those other related Scripture passages and articles are all about.

WHAT NEXT?

Take action! This is the part of each chapter that helps you take some action based on what you have thought about, talked about, and learned thus far. Ideas for family activities are given, but naturally, you can do some of the activities by yourself or with teen or adult friends. And of course you don't have to do all the activities suggested, but having lots of ideas does make it easier to choose. Do whatever sounds good to you!

TAKE TIME TO PRAY

After all that talking and reading and thinking and learning, it is time to pray. This section gives you an easy-to-do prayer that you can pray as a family. Teens or parents can also pray it alone, with a friend, or with a group.

How Does a Family Use This Book?

We hope families will use this book together, and that can happen in several ways:

You (parents and teenagers) might decide to sit down on the couch and look through one of the chapters together, as a family, discussing important ideas as you move along. Or you may decide each to go through a particular chapter alone, and then later get together to discuss what you learned. You can discuss each section, and use some of the reflection questions in the "What Next?" section to guide your discussion. Maybe you will even make some plans together based on your insights and conversations. Or perhaps you'll get involved in one of the projects listed in

the "What Next?" section. The prayer in "Take Time to Pray" is good to do together but can be done separately, no matter where or when it fits in.

If you are looking for a longer plan with more details, you might consider this week-by-week outline:

Week 1: As a family you choose to do one chapter together. (You could start at the beginning of the guide with chapter 1, but you might want to start with chapter 3 if Lent is just beginning, or chapter 5 if Pentecost is around the corner.) Each of you borrows this book on a different night and separately reads the opening story, the section called "Real Life." Once you all have had a chance to read it, you gather at the dinner table and discuss the story and its character.

Week 2: Each of you borrows the book on a different night again and reads "A Closer Look." After that you all gather at the dinner table to discuss.

Week 3: Each of you borrows the book again on a different night and reads "In the Bible," looking up the passage mentioned in that section, as well as any relevant articles in the *CYB*. After you all have done the reading, you discuss it, perhaps this time in the living room. The *CYB* and this guide might be passed around and referred to throughout your discussion.

Weeks 4, 5, and 6: Over the next three weeks, you each pick a different Scripture passage from the "Check It Out" section, and read it along with any related *CYB* articles. When you gather as a family during these weeks, each of you talks about the Scripture you read and how it relates to the overall themes your family has been discussing. By reflecting and reviewing this way, you will teach one another.

Week 7: Each of you might separately read the "What's Next?" section, and then come together to express your ideas of what else you'd like to do as a family. You could do this at the dinner table, in the living room, or anywhere else. You may want to research a bit to learn what your parish and community already have going.

Week 8: You may take one evening to do the "Take Time for Prayer" section together. One of you might collect all the needed supplies and create a conducive atmosphere.

Weeks 9, 10, etc: Your family may get involved in whatever projects you chose during week 7. The length of time your project(s) take depends on what you choose, and how involved you get. Your family might decide

to begin another chapter in a week or two or a month or two . . . whenever everyone seems ready to start on a different theme.

So Let's Get Started!

You don't have to start at the beginning of this book, but that is a good place to launch your studies! Actually, you can start with any chapter—maybe the one whose question strikes you the strongest. But once you decide on a chapter, you should try to walk through it until the end.

So . . . congratulations on choosing to explore *The Catholic Youth Bible!* Here's hoping that your new Bible and this new family guide will help you appreciate the word of God more fully as a family (whether you are a teenager, a teenager's parent, or otherwise!).