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Teaching Activities Manual for

THE
Catholic
Faith
Handbook
FOR YOUTH

A resource for high school teachers

**Compatible
with the first
and second
edition!**

Teaching Activities Manual for

*The Catholic Faith
Handbook for Youth*

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Handbook for Youth*

A Resource for High School Teachers

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Introduction to *Teaching Activities Manual for “The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth”*

The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth

Congratulations on selecting this new tool to help you share our dynamic Catholic faith with young people. *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth (CFH)* provides “an overview of the important teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church” (*CFH*, p. 7). Just as *The Catholic Youth Bible™* brought the truths of the sacred Scriptures to young people, so does the *CFH* bring the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith to young people.

In a way the *CFH* is like a *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for teens. It contains the essential teachings of the *Catechism* but uses language and examples that are easier for youth to understand. The structure of the *CFH* mirrors that of the *Catechism*. Following a couple of introductory chapters, you will find these sections in the *CFH*:

- *Part A: The Creed.* This section is an overview of what Catholics believe about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. It is based on the Apostles’ Creed.
- *Part B: Liturgy and Sacraments.* This section is an overview of how Catholics worship God and encounter Jesus Christ through the seven sacraments of the Church.
- *Part C: Christian Morality.* This section is about Catholic moral decision making, sin, and conscience. The Ten Commandments are used as the basis for exploring and understanding what the Church teaches about specific moral issues.
- *Part D: Christian Prayer.* This section is about the Church’s teaching on prayer. It talks about types of prayer, ways of praying, and what we pray for when we pray the Lord’s Prayer.

In the back of the *CFH*, you will find a section titled “Catholic Quick Facts,” which includes the following materials:

- an overview of major Catholic beliefs and practices
- a collection of traditional Catholic prayers and devotions
- a listing of patron saints and their causes
- a glossary of Catholic terms and definitions
- timelines of human, Church, and biblical history

An additional feature of the *CFH* is sidebars in each chapter. There are five categories of sidebars:

- *Did You Know?* articles provide additional information that a well-informed Catholic should know.
- *Live It!*™ articles contain ideas and advice for putting faith into action.
- *Looking Back* articles provide material to help youth better understand and appreciate the extensive and rich history of the Catholic Church.

- *Saintly Profiles* articles give short biographies of thirty-seven saints of the Church.
- *Pray It!*[™] articles expose youth to various ways they can expand their prayer lives.

The purpose of this content is to help youth understand and live the Catholic faith. For your students the *CFH* is a tremendous resource for personal faith development. For you it is an excellent teaching tool to help guide the students as they learn more about the Catholic faith and themselves.

The Content and Structure of This Manual

Overview

This book, *Teaching Activities Manual for “The Catholic Faith Handbook”: A Resource for High School Teachers (CFH TAM)*, is not designed to provide a curriculum for using the *CFH* as a textbook in your school. Instead it is designed to help you make your current curriculum more meaningful and effective. There are thirty-seven chapters in the *CFH TAM*, each coinciding with a chapter in the *CFH*.

For each chapter you will find several activities that address the chapter’s main themes. Each chapter has a core activity, which is designed to take 30–45 minutes to accomplish. The core activity is followed by a core-activity extension that can be used in class or, in most cases, assigned as homework. The core activity and its extension are perfect for a substitute teacher to use with your class on days you are not there. Each chapter also includes several additional activities, which are smaller exercises that can enhance your curriculum.

You will also find two appendices to help you present the material in the *CFH*. The first, “Additional Resources,” lists resources such as books, movies, and songs to use with your class. A special feature of this appendix is a list of songs from Oregon Catholic Press’s *Spirit & Song* collection that coincide with each chapter. *Spirit & Song* is a wonderful set of hymnals and CDs for teens, with a mix of traditional, contemporary, bilingual, and liturgical music. It includes pieces from different cultures and works about social justice, as well as familiar songs from well-known Christian composers. This music can be used for prayer experiences with your class and as a unique medium to help express the themes of your lessons.

The second appendix, “Prayer Experiences,” is a collection of prayer services on themes present in the *CFH*. The ten prayer experiences in this appendix require minimal supplies and are designed to take 10–20 minutes. You might use these experiences to invite your students into prayer when wrapping up a major topic in your class.

Content Example: Chapter 11

For an example of the content of this teaching activities manual, let’s look at chapter 11, which introduces the mission of the Catholic Church. The core

activity invites the students to examine the mission of the Church in proclaiming the Good News, serving the needs of poor people, and building the Reign of God. The resource that accompanies this activity presents scriptural images of the Church's mission. The core-activity extension directs the students to connect with their parish communities by examining their parishes' mission statements and how their church communities help further the larger mission of the Church. Four additional activities connect the personal missions of the students with the mission of the Church. In appendix A, you will find, for this chapter, additional audio resources.

Ways to Use *The Catholic Faith Handbook* and This Manual

Problems

With an understanding of what the *CFH* and this teaching activities manual offer, you are faced with the question, How can I use these resources to share the Catholic faith with students in my school? To answer that question, let's look at several problems the *CFH* and this teaching activities manual can help you with.

Your Teaching Time and Curriculum Are Limited

Problems

- Does your school have a limited religion curriculum owing to schedule pressure? Are you without a survey course of Catholicism, a sacraments course, or a morality course?
- Does your school have to work within the state requirements by counting a course in world religions as a course in world cultures, thus squeezing out religious education content?
- Does your elective structure mean that some students may not study prayer or social justice?

Solutions

- Study the creed or sacraments sections of the *CFH* (parts A or B), or both, throughout the ninth grade as a way of helping all ninth-grade students to become conversant with the basics of the Catholic faith, if those topics will not be covered later.
- Add a five-week unit on the sacraments at the end of a Church history course, using the sacraments section (part B).
- Assign various chapters of the prayer section (part D) and the second quick-facts section to each year of religious study so that the students get a gradual exposure to prayer.
- Fill in the cracks of any courses you are now teaching with chapters or parts of the *CFH*.

Your Students Have Difficulty Understanding the *Catechism*

Problem

- Do you want your students to be exposed to the full deposit of faith, but find that they have trouble reading the *Catechism*?

Solution

- Use the youth-friendly *CFH* to introduce your students to the teachings of the Catholic Church in a format that is easier to understand.

Your Students Have More Questions Than You Can Answer in Class

Problem

- Do your students have questions that are important but take time away from your curriculum?

Solution

- Send them home with a *CFH* and have them search it for the answers to their questions about Catholicism.

Students Enter Your Class with Different Levels of Basic Catholic Knowledge

Problem

- Do ninth graders come into your school without having heard of Jesus or with only a poor grasp of Christianity?

Solution

- Choose selections from the *CFH* and have the students read them on their own. Give their parents a copy as well, so that they can gain a sense of what will be presented over the four years of your curriculum.

You Do Not Have Time to Prepare a Lesson Plan for a Substitute Teacher

Problem

- Are you ever sick or away from your students for a conference or other school matter? Do you have to create lesson plans for substitutes and then grade numerous papers when you return?

Solution

- Create a short lesson plan around a portion of a chapter from the *CFH* that will supplement your course and that will keep you from having to grade countless papers after your day away.

You Need to Look at an Unexpected Current Event in Light of Church Teaching

Problem

- Do surprising issues require you to stop your curriculum and talk about the Catholic response to a situation?

Solution

- To begin pastoral discussions of subjects like war, death, the death penalty, and social justice, ask everyone to take out the *CFH* and refer to our Catholic beliefs on those subjects.

Broader Issues

Keeping those problems and solutions in mind, let's look at some ways that the *CFH* and this teaching activities manual can help you address specific issues.

Providing Quick Answers

Have a set of *CFHs* in your classroom so that when questions or topics like the following ones arise, you have quick and easy access to youth-friendly answers:

- What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit? (“Catholic Quick Facts”)
- What is the meaning of the Incarnation? (pt. A)
- What was going on in the Church when Columbus came to America? (the timeline)
- What are different types of personal prayer? (pt. D)
- What does the Church teach about conscience? (pt. C and the LIVE IT! article “Top Ten Ways for Forming Your Conscience,” on p. 234)
- What do service and social justice have to do with being Catholic? (chaps. 21–22)
- It is the feast of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. Who is she? What did she do? (the saintly profile on p. 167)
- What exactly is Lent? (chap. 14)

Preparing Your Students for a Specific Event

Use the *CFH* when you need to give your students extra pastoral support that is outside the curriculum or that covers a topic on which your students need to be refreshed:

- It is the first time your ninth graders will attend the Eucharist at the all-school Mass; you had better review what will be happening at the Mass and what kind of behavior you expect. See these resources in the *CFH*:
 - chapter 14, “Introduction to the Liturgy”
 - the section “Celebrating Liturgy,” on pages 143–144
 - chapter 18, “The Eucharist”
 Short on time? See the sections “An Outline for the Eucharist” and “Receiving the Eucharist,” on pages 178–182.
- You need to prepare your students for a Penance and Reconciliation service at school or on a class retreat. Check out these portions of the *CFH*:
- the section “A Short History of Penance and Reconciliation,” on pages 184–185
 - the section “The Effects of Penance and Reconciliation,” on pages 185–186
 - the LIVE IT! sidebar “How to Make a Good Confession,” on page 186
 - the section “Receiving Penance and Reconciliation,” on pages 186–188
 - the PRAY IT! sidebar “Examination of Conscience,” on page 210

- The bishop is coming to celebrate Mass with the school, and you want to review the role of the bishop. See these selections from the *CFH*:
 - the section “Bishops,” on pages 119–120
 - the section “Ministries of Ordained Ministers,” on pages 195–198
 Short on time? See the definition of the term *bishop* in the glossary.

Adding to Your Existing Curriculum

This teaching activities manual is designed to help you help your students better understand the Catholic faith. Connect the *CFH* to your current curriculum in lesson plans that you feel need a little something extra. For instance, you might include materials from the *CFH TAM* in plans that cover these main topics:

- *Catholicism*. In addressing Catholic prayer, expose your students to the experience of *lectio divina* using chapter 34, “Praying with the Scriptures.”
 - *Christian lifestyles*. Use the additional activity “Presenting and Respecting the Whole Person,” on pages 147–148, to help your students see the negative effect of valuing people simply for how they look.
 - *Christology*. Have your students reflect on the Crucifixion of Christ by exploring the Gospel accounts of his Passion and the possible charges levied against him, in the core activity “A Week That Shook the World,” on pages 51–52, and the additional activity “The Charges Against Jesus,” on page 53.
 - *Morality*. Guide your students in discovering what promoting a culture of life means according to Pope John Paul II; see chapter 26, “Respecting Life.”
 - *Sacraments*. Conduct the prayer service “The Beating Heart of the Community,” on page 218, to help the students see how they experience Christ in the Eucharist.
 - *The Scriptures*. Use the core activity “The Scriptures and Tradition,” on page 23, to help your students discover the scriptural roots of Catholic Tradition.
- Those are only a few of the countless connections that can be made between this teaching activities manual and your existing curriculum. In just a few minutes of looking and preparing, you can have new activities to help your students better experience the truths of the Catholic Church.

You Plant and Water the Seed

Sharing the truth and wisdom of the Catholic faith with young people is a wonderful and daunting ministry. Use the *CFH* and this teaching activities manual to challenge your students to explore and embrace the nurturing gift we have been given in the Tradition of the Church, and rest in the knowledge that you are not alone in your ministry. Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the founder of the Christian Brothers, recognized that each teacher is part of a larger picture, a great mission. As you embark on that mission anew with this resource, remember that Christ is your companion on the journey and, as De La Salle said:

Be convinced of what Saint Paul says, that you plant and water the seed, but it is God through Jesus Christ who makes it grow, and brings your work to fulfillment. (*Meditations*, p. 438)



Introduction

CHAPTER 1

Being Catholic: The “CliffsNotes” View

Core Activity



Resource 1

Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes

1. For this activity you will need a copy of resource 1, “Being Catholic: Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes,” on card stock and cut into cards; two or three rolls of masking tape; and a basket.

2. Place the cards from resource 1 in the basket, put the basket and the masking tape on a small table in the center of your classroom, and write these four headings at the top of separate columns on the board or on separate sheets of newsprint:

- Beliefs: The Things Catholics Believe
- Practices: The Ways Catholics Celebrate and Pray
- Attitudes: The Actions and Values Catholics Treasure
- We Have No Idea What This Is!

3. Divide the class into groups of two or three. Explain to the students that they will be exploring what it means to be Catholic, by looking at some items and categorizing them under the posted headings.

4. Share the following information with the students in your own words:

- The basket contains cards naming a variety of items concerning the beliefs, practices, and attitudes of the Catholic Church. The first three categories on the board are closely related: our beliefs cause us to act a certain way (engage in certain practices) and to see the world a certain way (adopt certain attitudes). Your challenge is to randomly select cards from the basket, one card for each group, and then tape it under the category it best fits. The goal is not to take a wild guess, but to think about the selection and to make a good decision. If you draw a blank regarding the material on the card, place the card in the fourth category, “We Have No Idea What This Is!”

5. Invite the groups to form two or three parallel lines facing the table where you have placed the basket of cards and the masking tape. Instruct the groups to take turns going to the table, selecting a card, taping it on the

board, and returning to the back of the line. Continue this process until all the cards have been allocated.

6. When all the cards have been placed, invite everyone to sit where they can clearly see the results of their work. Ask each group to look at the core Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes on pages 15–19 of the *CFH* and assess whether the cards are properly distributed. Conduct a large-group discussion of the small groups' assessments, focusing on each category separately.

Begin with the cards that ended up under the “We Have No Idea What This Is!” category, and ask the large group to decide where those cards should finally be placed. Then invite the class to look at the other three lists and to decide if every item in each of them is placed correctly. If the students decide to move a card, be sure they can articulate their reasons for doing so. Allow time for some discussion, especially if differences of opinion arise. Some of the terms could logically appear under multiple headings, so make sure you focus on a “both/and” approach rather than an “either/or” approach to assigning locations.

Core Activity Extension

Creative Beliefs

As homework or class work, have each student select one of the core Catholic beliefs from pages 15–16 of the *CFH* and create a poster with words, signs, and symbols reflecting that belief. Use the posters to decorate your room, and make them available to other teachers in the school for their rooms. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

Mary, the First Disciple

As homework or class work, direct your students to read the saintly profile “Mary, the First Disciple,” on page 17 of the *CFH*. Ask them to choose one of the following options to further their study of Mary:

- Find and bring to class copies of artistic depictions of Mary that reflect the unique devotion she receives through the Catholic faith.
- Find and bring to class several hymns or contemporary Christian songs that celebrate the special role Mary plays in the Catholic faith.
- Explore three of the following names given to Mary, and the attribute or experience of Mary that the name relates to; record the findings; and share the findings with the class:

- Mary, mother of God
- Our Lady of Fatima
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Our Lady of Lourdes
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Literature Connection: Catholic Attitudes

Before this class discussion, you may want to touch base with the English department to get an overview of the books the students are reading and to borrow copies of them. To open the discussion, ask your students to examine the literature they are reading, or have read over the previous school year, in their English classes. Invite them to determine whether any of the books reflect the Catholic attitudes discussed on pages 18–19 of the *CFH*. For books that do, discuss how those attitudes are present in them; for books that do not, discuss how the characters, themes, or plots would be different if those attitudes were present. Have the students provide specific examples of characters or situations, citing the literature they are critiquing. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

School Attitude! Cool Attitude!

Invite your students to choose one of the Catholic attitudes found on pages 18–19 of the *CFH*. Ask them to spend their time between now and the next class paying attention to examples of the attitudes they see in their classmates and teachers at school. Have them share their findings in the next class. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Catholics Around the World

The *CFH* presents some interesting information about the Catholic Church internationally in the section “Why Are All These People Catholic?” on pages 14–15. Assign each student to research Catholicism as it is practiced in another country. Allow the young people to choose their countries, but make sure that each has a different one. Challenge students who are studying foreign languages to research countries where those languages are primarily used.

Explain that the students can do an Internet search by typing, “[name of country] AND Catholicism.” Have each student give a one- to two-page presentation on aspects of Catholicism found in the search.

In a follow-up discussion, ask questions of this nature:

- Was this research challenging or easy? Why?
- Did you encounter terms that were unfamiliar? If so, what were they?
- What impressed you about Catholicism in this other country?
- Did anything surprise you in your research? If so, what?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)



Being Catholic: Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes



Beliefs

We are created for union with God.

Original sin deprived us of holiness and justice.

God established covenants as a sign of fidelity.

God sent Jesus as savior for the human race.

Jesus was both fully God and fully human.

Jesus was brought back to life in the Resurrection and offers salvation.

The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.

The Catholic Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

God's revealed truth is found in the sacred Tradition

and the sacred Scriptures.

All people are destined for eternal life after death.

Practices

The celebration of seven sacraments forms the basis of Catholic worship. Eucharistic celebrations, especially the Mass, are at the heart of the Church's life.

We keep the Sabbath holy.

We follow the liturgical year.

We are faithful to the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.

We defend the dignity of the human person.

We live out our Catholic social teachings.

We honor the Blessed Mother and the communion of saints.

We celebrate the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

We practice discernment.

Attitudes

God is present to, in, and through creation.

Creation is sacred and a potential source of God's grace.

We place trust in the essential goodness of the human person.

We are flawed by the effect of original sin.

We appreciate both faith and reason, religion and science.

We emphasize community life and communal worship.

We respect the diversity of cultures in the world.

We are committed to proclaiming Jesus' message to all people.

We embrace a wide variety of spiritualities and prayer forms.

(This resource is adapted from Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, *Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)

CHAPTER 2

Knowing God: Reason and Revelation

Core Activity

2

The Scriptures and Tradition

1. Invite your class to read the section “The Scriptures and Tradition,” on pages 23–24 of the *CFH*. Then open the class for discussion or questions. You may use questions such as these to start a discussion:

- What do you see as the connection between the Scriptures and Tradition?
- What Church teachings can you easily see are rooted in the Scriptures?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in the revelation of the Scriptures and Tradition?



Handout 1

2. Explain to the students that in this activity they are going to look at the interwoven nature of the Scriptures and Tradition in the Church. Divide the students into six small groups of equal size, and give each group a copy of handout 1, “The Scriptures and Tradition.”

3. Assign each small group one of the Church traditions listed on the handout. Issue the following instructions in your own words:

- Each group is to look up the Scripture verses listed under its assigned tradition, and determine if there is a connection revealing the roots of that tradition. You will be asked to explain how a verse is connected if you believe it is. Once you have looked up all the verses listed for your assigned tradition, search for additional scriptural connections using a Bible concordance, such as the *Saint Mary's Press™ Essential Bible Concordance: New Revised Standard Version*, edited by Brian Singer-Towns (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004).

4. Give the groups enough time to complete their tasks. Then bring the class back together and invite the small groups to share two or three of the scriptural connections they found.

5. Conclude by explaining and elaborating on the following point from the *CFH*:

- We speak of the Scriptures and Tradition as two modes of Revelation, but they are closely connected, and together form a single sacred deposit of truth under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They can never be in conflict, and each one helps us to understand the other. (P. 24)

Core Activity Extension

Vatican Council II Connection

Assign one of the following selections from the documents of Vatican Council II:

- *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, 1964)*, section 8.
 - *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum, 1965)*, section 2.
- Ask the students to read and reflect on their assigned selections. As part of the reflection, have them look up the scriptural footnotes for their sections.

Additional Activities

God Revealed in the Parables

1. Divide your students into groups of three. Provide each group with a sheet of poster board, markers, and a Bible.

2. Assign each group a parable from the Gospel of Mark. Ask the groups to read their assigned parables, decide together what Jesus is trying to teach in it, and create a poster illustrating the point of the parable. Allow about 10 minutes for this task.

3. When the groups have all completed their posters, invite them to come forward, one group at a time, and share their parables and explain their creations. Hang the posters for all to see.

4. After all the groups have presented their posters, ask the class questions like the ones that follow, for discussion:

- How do these parables reveal an understanding of God?
- Why is it sometimes hard to understand the parables?
- How might these parables be applied to our culture? How do they reveal God for us today?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Bibles, Bibles, Everywhere

A wide variety of translations of the Bible exist. Ask your students to research what translations are used by the Catholic Church and why. Also have your students look up and read portions of the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament (Tobit, Judith, First and Second Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, and Baruch). (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

A Favorite Scripture Passage

Ask your students each to identify and look up their favorite Scripture passage. You may need to help them find the specific verse in the Bible. This is a good opportunity to introduce them to a concordance. Once they have each found their favorite verse, ask them to reflect on what that verse reveals to them about God, how they are created, salvation, or other revelations it presents. Ask them to write a brief paper explaining the revelation. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The PRIMA Process

Have your students each use the PRIMA process, described in the LIVE IT! article on page 23 of the *CFH*, with their favorite Scripture verse from the previous activity. Assign this as homework and have the students report on the experience, or lead the class through the process and follow up the last step with a class discussion or journal activity on the experience.

Successors of the Apostles

The *CFH*, on page 24, references the unique nature of bishops as the successors of the Apostles. Obtain a copy of *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, volume 2, prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), and have your students read the parts of the rite for the ordination of bishops. In particular have them read the first two paragraphs of the suggested homily. Discuss with your students where in the rite it is clear that bishops are the successors to the Apostles. Ask your students to find the scriptural roots of this tradition.

The Scriptures and Tradition

The Eucharist

Exodus 16:4–7
Exodus 29:1–9
Matthew 14:13–21
John 6:54–56

Baptism

Joshua 3:14–17
Matthew 28:19
John 3:5
Acts of the Apostles 8:38

Healing

Mark 6:13
Mark 16:18
James 5:14–15

Confirmation

Isaiah 61:1–2
Matthew 3:16
John 14:16–17
Acts of the Apostles 2:1–13

The Teaching Authority of the Apostolate

Matthew 28:16–20
2 Thessalonians 2:15
1 Timothy 3:15

Jesus Christ: True God and True Man

Matthew 17:5
Luke 1:31–32
Philippians 2:9–11

Additional Scripture Connections



PART A

The Creed

CHAPTER 3

Faith

Core Activity



Resource 2

Creeds and the Apostles' Creed

1. Before you conduct this activity, make a copy of resource 2, "Statements from the Apostles' Creed," and cut apart the copy as scored.

2. Begin this activity by dividing the class into groups of four or five, and asking the members of each group to work together to create a list of things they all believe in. Have each group record its list of beliefs. The following focusing questions may be helpful:

- What do you set your heart on?
- What would you stand up for in the face of opposition?

After several minutes, have someone from each group share the group's list of beliefs.

3. Conduct a presentation on the faith and the Catholic Church, using summary points taken from chapter 3 of the *CFH*. If you have a recording of the song "Creed," by Rich Mullins, or "Profession of Faith," by Tom Booth, use it as part of the presentation. Invite the students to share their reactions to the song, including phrases that stand out and their sense of the performer's conviction.

4. Together with the students, read the Apostles' Creed aloud. Note that sometimes we can repeat words until they are meaningless or until we forget the significance of what we are saying. Emphasize that as Catholics, "we do not believe in formulas, but in those realities they express!" (*CCC*, no. 170).

5. Give each small group one or two sections of resource 2, one or two sheets of newsprint, and markers (if necessary, recombine the groups to ensure that all the sections of the creed are distributed). Tell the groups to write their assigned statements at the tops of separate newsprint sheets. Explain that they are to discuss the statements and put them into their own words, recording their rewritten versions on the corresponding newsprint sheets and adding any symbols or images that help convey the meanings of the phrases.

6. Invite each small group to share its work with the entire class, posting its statements where everyone can see them. The statements should be presented and posted in the order they appear in the text.

7. Display or distribute copies of the Nicene Creed, and either briefly explain the difference between it and the Apostles' Creed, or refer the students to the discussion of the Nicene Creed on page 38 of the *CFH*.

8. Suggest the students use the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed as an outline to explore their beliefs. Conclude with a prayerful reading of the students' rewritten passages.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Difficult Phrases

As homework or class work, urge each student to identify a section or phrase in the Apostles' or Nicene Creed that is difficult to understand. Invite the young people to work on gaining a better understanding by asking other people about the creed or by reading about the creed in the *CFH* and in other resources that are available in your setting. Consider providing the students with copies of the article "Connect the Creed to Your Life," by Michael J. Daley (order no. Y0395; available from St. Anthony Messenger Press, 800-488-0488, catalog.americancatholic.org). Have your students turn in a brief paper or journal entry that includes the section or phrase of the Apostles' or Nicene Creed that they have difficulty understanding, and two or three questions they would like answered concerning that part.

Additional Activities

"Faith Is . . ."

Have your students complete the sentence "Faith is . . ." in small groups or as individuals. Invite them to share the end of the sentence that they develop. Then have them read the section "The Characteristics of Faith," on pages 36–37 of the *CFH*. Compare their sentence endings to those in the *CFH*, and discuss the similarities and differences. Conclude by stressing that "faith is the human person's response to God's loving invitation to believe in him" (*CFH*, p. 36). (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The Good News About Being Catholic

As homework or class work, invite the students, individually or in small groups, to come up with one way the Catholic Church spreads the Good News—preferably a way they have personally experienced. Then ask them to create an advertisement for the Good News that uses the medium they have named. They could do one of the following projects, or come up with an alternative:

- Create a TV or newspaper ad.
- Design a highway billboard.
- Write new lyrics to a popular song.
- Create a Top 10 list.

Invite each individual or group to share the completed advertisement with the class. (This activity is adapted from Maryann Hakowski, *Getaways with God*, p. 125.)

Media Connection: Exploring Catholic Beliefs

Invite the students to visit www.disciplesnow.com, click on “It’s Catholic,” explore the Web site’s questions about the Church’s beliefs, and write a reflection paper on what they learn about a specific belief listed on the site. You might also have them explore a creed of another faith and write a paper comparing the beliefs it expresses with Catholic beliefs. As part of this alternative, have your students read the Looking Back article “Other Religions,” on page 36 of the *CFH*. One source for finding creeds of other Christian religions is the *World Religions* course page at the Saint Mary’s Press Web site, which can be accessed from www.smp.org/hscourses. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Logo Design

Invite the class to design a logo that professes Christian faith. If the students did the previous activity “The Good News About Being Catholic,” you might want to select one or two of their best ideas from it. This is an especially good activity if it corresponds with a genuine need for a logo to use on T-shirts, bandannas, banners, or advertisements to promote a school event such as a class retreat or Catholic Schools Week. Help the young people to develop the logo and to then make every effort to use it in a way that students will have occasion to observe it. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Local Outreach

Have your students read the section “Faith Is Our Response to God’s Love,” on pages 33–34 of the *CFH*. Lead the class in a discussion about living our faith. Identify various groups in your area that work to make sure people are treated with dignity, such as the Red Cross, foster families, or organizations that work to end domestic violence or shelter and feed the poor. Challenge everyone to find at least one way to contribute to the efforts of one of the groups. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Faith in the Liturgy

Distribute copies of the Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I from the *Sacramentary* (or another Eucharistic prayer from the *Sacramentary*), or display the prayer for the class. Encourage your students to find expression of the truths from the Apostles' Creed in the Eucharistic prayer. Have them look for the following specific points:

- God as creator
 - Jesus as atonement for sin
 - the power of the Holy Spirit
 - the resurrection of the body and life everlasting
- (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Statements from the Apostles' Creed



I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

I believe he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.

I believe Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell.

I believe on the third day Jesus rose again from the dead.

I believe Jesus ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the holy catholic Church.

I believe in the communion of saints.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

I believe in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

(This resource is adapted from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in the United States of America, pages 49–50. Copyright © 1994 by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission.)

CHAPTER 4

God Our Father

Core Activity

The Mystery of God

1. Conduct a forced-choice activity by posing the following questions and possible answers, and directing students who make the same choices to group together. After each question, give everyone a moment to group and to explain their reasons to at least one other person.

1. If you encountered something mysterious, what would you be more likely to do?
 - a. Go toward it.
 - b. Keep my distance.
2. If I said you were going to encounter something mysterious today, what would your reaction be?
 - a. curiosity
 - b. boredom
3. Think of some mysterious things. Which is a better image for them?
 - a. light
 - b. darkness
4. Which is more likely to be associated with a mystery?
 - a. a problem
 - b. a solution
5. Which holiday has more to do with mystery?
 - a. Halloween
 - b. Christmas

2. Ask the students to form pairs and define the word *mystery*. Invite a few volunteers to share their definitions with the class. Then ask the class to think about the question, “What is a mystery of faith?” Again ask for volunteers to respond.

3. Repeat the first two or three forced-choice questions from step 1. This time ask everyone to think of God as mystery when they consider their responses. After each question give everyone a moment to explain their choice to at least one other person. Also ask the students to indicate, by a show of hands, if they chose differently this time than last, and ask for volunteers to explain why or why not.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension



Handout 2

Images of God in the Scriptures

As homework or class work, give each student a copy of handout 2, “Images of God in the Scriptures.” Assign each student one Scripture passage from the list on the handout. Explain that the young people are to follow the directions on the the handout. Invite each student to share his or her creation with the class, or help the students create a display of their creations in the school. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

Gender Images of God

1. As homework or class work, ask the students to view paintings and sculptures of God from a variety of time periods and cultures; encourage them to search the Internet and in books for such images. Discuss the following questions with your students:

- When God is depicted in art, is God usually male or female?
- What are the physical characteristics that artists attribute to God?
- What impact do artistic representations of God have on the way we view women and men? people of various races and cultures?

2. Invite the students to select an image of God that is meaningful for or appealing to them. Have them write a reflection on why they chose that depiction of God, what they think the artist is saying about God, and what meaning that image of God has for them. If there is time, invite your students to share their reflections.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Proofs for the Existence of God

Discuss with your students the Did You Know? article “Proofs for the Existence of God,” on page 44 of the *CFH*. Have each student put together, from periodicals and other publications, a collage of images and words that are proofs of the existence of God for him or her. Invite the students to share with the class the reasons why they chose particular images and words, and how those elements relate to the five proofs of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Evidence of Good and Evil

Ask the students to find, from newspapers and other periodicals, articles that are evidence of good and evil in the world. Have each student write a short reflection on one of the articles, answering the following questions:

- What good or evil is depicted in the article?
- Is the good or evil a result of the choice someone made?
- Is the choice made by one person or by more than one person?
- If the good or evil is a result of someone's decision, what different choices might have produced a different outcome?
- What effects might the good or evil have in the future?
- Does the good or evil have the potential to affect whether others will choose good or evil?
- If the effect is evil, might something good come from it? If so, what?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Family Connection: An Image-of-God Interview

Invite the students to interview parents, grandparents, other older relatives, or older members of their parish to discover how images of God have changed or stayed the same over the years. Have the students report on what they learn in their interviews. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Images of God in the Scriptures

1. Circle the Scripture passage that your teacher assigns you in the following list:
 - “The LORD Is My Rock” (2 Samuel 22:1–4)
 - “God’s Wisdom” (Wisdom of Solomon 7:23—8:8)
 - “Loving Mother” (Isaiah 49:13–16)
 - “Bride and Bridegroom” (Isaiah 61:10)
 - “Master Potter” (Isaiah 64:8)
 - “A Parent’s Love” (Hosea 11:1–7)
 - “Lost and Found” (Luke 15:1–7 or Luke 15:8–10)
 - “Jesus the Good Shepherd” (John 10:1–18)
2. Reflect on your assigned Scripture passage using these questions:
 - What is the main point in this passage?
 - How does this Scripture passage correlate with my image of God and help me relate to God?
3. Use poetry, prose, painting, illustration, sculpture, or another medium to depict an image of God that is suggested by the Scripture passage.
4. Be prepared to share the key points of the Scripture passage and your depiction of God. If you will be displaying your work, make sure you include the referenced Scripture passage.

(This handout is adapted from Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, *Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)

CHAPTER 5

The Human Person

Core Activity

The Journey of Creation

1. Write the following statement on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead: “We believe that God speaks to us through creation.”

2. Instruct the students to go outside for 10 minutes. Ask them to refrain from talking with one another and to instead concentrate on observing their surroundings. (If going outside is not feasible, display visual images of creation, such as art depicting the whole earth, plants, water, and dirt. Include things that people had a hand in creating, such as a map that represents your city’s system of roads, a loaf of bread, or a telephone. Also invite the young people to focus on the things already present in the classroom.)

3. After 10 minutes invite the students to talk about their observations in groups of two or three. Mention that they should report what they saw, heard, touched, smelled, felt, thought, and so forth.

4. Explain that the statement written on the board expresses a belief at the heart of Catholicism. Urge the students to discuss that statement in their small groups and to answer the following questions:

- When is this statement easiest to believe?
- When is this statement hardest to believe?
- What does this belief tell us about God’s relationship with us?
- What does it tell us about our responsibility for creation?

Provide an opportunity for some large-group feedback.

5. Ask each small group to take three sheets of paper. Note that at the top of each sheet, they should write one of the following headings:

- Cooperation
- Lack of Cooperation
- Ambiguous

Explain that the students are to work in their small groups to come up with situations and events in the world that fit those categories as they are described in the following list, and to write those situations and events under the appropriate headings on the sheets of paper:

- stories that illustrate human cooperation with God’s creation and purposes
- stories that illustrate a lack of cooperation with God

- stories that are ambiguous, that is, that group members cannot place into either of the other categories

6. Invite each small group to share its findings with the class. Conclude by revisiting the notions that creation is journeying toward completion and that God calls us to be coworkers. Highlight some of the examples of human cooperation that surfaced during the discussion.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Sin and Evil

As homework or class work, invite the students to imagine what their world—or their city or town—would look like without sin. Ask them to create newspaper headlines that depict some of the events they imagine. If you are doing this in class, try to keep the students in the same small groups used for the core activity. Also have each student turn in a brief paper or report on her or his vision for a world without sin. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

The Games We Play

1. Brainstorm a list of games with the students. This list may include games from their childhood, board games, computer games, sports, TV game shows, and so on. Record the games on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead.

2. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Tell each group to select one game from the list. Distribute copies of handout 3, “Games,” and direct each group to discuss its chosen game using the questions on the handout.

3. Conclude by asking the students how this activity relates to our responsibility for caring for God’s creation. If necessary, to spur thinking, ask the students to consider the following questions:



Handout 3

- How does cooperation affect creation?
- What are some examples of competition that is negatively affecting our ability, as a society, to care for the earth?
- Describe a situation in which competition has had or could have a positive impact on creation.
- Do you think a strong competitive spirit is more a help or a hindrance in caring for God's creation? Why?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The Earth Is the Lord's

Have the students view and discuss the 13-minute film *The Earth Is the Lord's* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], no. 058-3, \$14.95; available from USCCB Publishing, 800-235-8722, www.usccb.org). Use the guide that accompanies the film to lead a discussion with the class. Be prepared to summarize the key themes presented in the core activity and in the film. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Stewardship

Invite the students to select an issue related to the work of creation and to learn more about it by searching the Internet and visiting the library. A sampling of issues to consider is hunger, global energy resources, labor practices, clean water, and healthy lifestyles. Invite them to write a research paper on the issue, identify an action related to the issue, and then perform the action. Encourage the students to share what they learn and to suggest specific ways their peers can help care for creation. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Sinners and Saints

Have each student select and research a saint or holy person who has had a dramatic conversion. Instruct the students to write a reflection paper on the person's struggle with good and evil and the person's life before and after conversion. Some suggestions are the historic saints Francis of Assisi, Augustine of Hippo, and Ignatius of Loyola, and the more contemporary holy people Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

"Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation"

Ask your class to read Pope John Paul II's 1990 World Day of Peace message "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation," on the Vatican Web site, at www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/. Use one of the following activities to help the students explore that message:

- Divide the class into five groups and assign each group one of the major sections from the message to read and present to the class.
- Assign each student two or three points from the message to read and summarize.
- As a class, discuss specific issues raised in the message.
- Ask your students each to write a brief reflection paper on what they learned from the message.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

What Do You Eat?

Direct your students to list the foods they have eaten over the past few days. Have them research a few of the foods on their lists and try to answer these questions:

- How, where, and by whom were the foods produced? [They might try getting information from their grocers and from the Internet.]
- Do the foods come to you through processes in which humans are taking care of creation and cooperating with God? Why or why not?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Games

1. What are the purpose and rules of the game?
2. What is success according to the game? What behaviors and values are rewarded?
3. What is success according to the Gospel? What behaviors and values are rewarded?
4. Create a metaphor by inserting the name of the game in the following statement: "Christian life is like _____." For example, "Christian life is like football."
5. Compare your answers to questions 2 and 3, and answer the following questions about the metaphor in question 4:
 - a. What, if anything, is true about the metaphor?
 - b. What, if anything, is false about the metaphor?

(This handout is adapted from Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, *Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)

CHAPTER 6

Jesus Christ: True God and True Man

Core Activity

Who Is Jesus?

1. Before the activity, write the following statements on the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead, highlighting the words in bold:

- Yes, I imagine Jesus this way.
- No, I do not usually think of Jesus this way.
- I haven't thought about Jesus in this way, but **this intrigues me**.
- I really **don't know** what this image or name means.

Also recruit one student to act as an observer, and review steps 3 and 4 with that person.

2. Introduce this activity by reading Luke 9:18–21. Explain that in this exercise, the students are to think about what they would say if Jesus asked them, “Who do you say that I am?”

3. Select and say one of the following titles, images, or descriptions of Jesus. Then read each of the four statements you have written on the board, and ask the students to raise their hands when they hear the statement that best describes their reaction to the title, image, or description of Jesus. Ask the observer to keep track of how many people raise their hands for each statement. After reading the statements, ask the students to discuss with one other person the reason they chose a particular response. Limit the discussions to 2 minutes. Repeat this process as time allows, trying to cover at least five titles, images, or descriptions.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • the Son of the living God | • a faithful Jewish man |
| • a good shepherd | • true God and true man |
| • the Messiah | • the Christ |
| • the light of the world | • the infant son of Mary and Joseph |
| • the bread of life | • the Savior |
| • the way, the truth, and the life | • a wise teacher |
| • a vine, with us as branches | • a friend |
| • the Lord | • the Word made flesh |

4. Ask the observer to share some general comments. For example, the observer could identify which images had the most youth responding, “Yes, I imagine Jesus this way,” or, “I haven't thought about Jesus in this way, but this intrigues me.” If the students demonstrate a preference for or a greater understanding of the more human images or the more divine images of Jesus, be sure

to note that. If some images stand out because a lot of students chose “I really don’t know what this image or name means,” try to address those images.

5. Brainstorm with the young people a list of human attributes, such as having feelings, being born, aging, dying, eating and drinking, learning and growing over time, experiencing frustration, expressing anger, questioning the meaning of life, and loving. Limit the brainstorming to 2 minutes.

On the board, on newsprint, or on an overhead, generate a list of divine attributes, such as perfect goodness, having love for all, always existing, never dying, and being powerful. Again, limit the brainstorming to 2 minutes.

6. Lead a discussion of questions like these:
- What happens if we overemphasize Jesus’ humanity?
 - What happens if we overemphasize Jesus’ divinity?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Jesus’ Names and Titles

1. As homework or class work, assign one of the following of Jesus’ names or titles to each student or a group of students: Jesus, Christ, Son of God, and Lord.

2. Instruct the students to read two things:

- the description of their assigned name or title on pages 59–60 of the *CFH*
- the following scriptural passage that uses their assigned title:
 - Jesus (Luke 1:26–31)
 - Christ (Mark 8:27–29)
 - Son of God (Mark 1:9–11)
 - Lord (John 20:24–29)

3. Invite the students to reflect on the meaning of their name or title as revealed in the *CFH* material and the scriptural passage. Have the students report back to the class or write a one-page reflection paper on what they learn.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

We Call Him

1. Assign this exercise as homework or class work. Each student will need a *CFH* and a Bible. Tell everyone to divide a sheet of paper into three equal columns, each headed by one of the following sentence starters:

- Others call him . . .
- He calls himself . . .
- I call him . . .

Explain the task as follows:

- Under the heading “Others call him . . .,” list the titles and names for Jesus found in the section “Titles of Jesus in the Bible,” on pages 59–60 of the *CFH*.
- Under the heading “He calls himself . . .,” list all the “I am . . .” titles that Jesus gives himself in John’s Gospel, chapters 6–15. An example is “I am the bread of life” (6:35).
- Under the heading “I call him . . .,” list other names and titles for Jesus that say who Jesus is for you. Some examples are “Holy Friend” and “Brother of the Poor.”

2. Have the students report their findings to the class and share their own titles for Jesus.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

God Is Love

Lead the students in prayer by reading the LIVE IT! article “One Solitary Life,” on page 77 of the *CFH*. Have one student read 1 John 4:7–12, and invite the class to offer Prayers of the Faithful, using “God is light and in him there is no darkness” (1 John 1:5) as a response. Conclude by praying a simple prayer in your own words or using the following words:

- Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gifts of life and love. Help us to live in your love and to share it with others in all we do. Amen.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Living Advent

Instruct the students to read the accounts of the events surrounding Jesus’ birth in Matt., chaps. 1–2, and Luke, chaps. 1–2. Have them discuss the following questions in class or write a brief paper on them:

- What is the same in both Gospels? What is different?
- What elements of Jesus’ birth are found only in the Gospel of Luke? What elements are found only in the Gospel of Matthew?
- What elements in each of the Gospels emphasize Jesus’ humanity?
- What elements in each of the Gospels emphasize Jesus’ divinity?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

The Incarnation in Art

Display images of Jesus’ Incarnation in painting and sculpture. Encourage the students to discuss the significance of the images, using questions such as these:

- Are the divinity and humanity of Jesus both represented?
- Is greater emphasis placed on Jesus’ divinity or on his humanity?

Ask each student to write a brief essay or journal entry on one of the depictions of Jesus, reflecting on who the artist says Jesus is and on the significance the image has for the student. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)