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An Introduction to *Celebrating Sacraments*

For Catholics, the seven sacraments are as precious as the Gospel, and indeed are the Gospel put in bodily language.

—Thomas Bokenkotter, *Essential Catholicism*

Celebrating Sacraments offers high school students an opportunity to explore the rich tradition of sacramental theology and practice that is fundamental to Catholicism. The course seeks to engage students in an encounter with this essential dimension of Catholic life so that they can better appreciate the meaning underlying the sacraments and the relationship between the sacraments and their own life.

The Theology of the Course

Presumptions of the Course

The student text and teaching manual for this course approach the sacraments with the following presumptions:

1. Catholic sacramental theology involves more than just the seven official sacraments. The text explores the concept of sacrament as a unique way of viewing all reality. Without appreciating this all-encompassing vision, students can lose sight of how the seven official sacraments are grounded in Jesus, in the church, and in the sacredness of God's creation.

2. Although in one sense all religions have "sacraments," and other Christians besides Catholics do celebrate some of the sacraments, Catholicism is essentially and particularly sacramental. For that reason its view of sacraments sets Catholicism apart even from other Christian traditions. In some courses we might use the words *Christian* and *Catholic* somewhat interchangeably; we might teach a course on "the Christian Scriptures" or on "Christian morality." Such a designation would be inaccurate if applied to sacramental theology because of its uniquely Catholic character.

3. Sacraments have a history. Therefore students need to comprehend something of the history of sacraments in general as well as the history of each specific sacrament if they are to appreciate the richness that is represented by the Catholic sacraments. In the history of the sacraments, the changes brought about by Vatican Council II are particularly significant, because the sacraments as the students now experience them reflect those changes. In most cases those changes were instituted to bring back or renew the original meaning of the sacraments as experienced in the early church.

4. Human lives are sacramental. That is, Catholic sacramental theology is not about otherworldly phenomena but rather earthy, concrete, personal experiences of God's grace available to all. During the course students will be on a journey to discover these God experiences that are already present in their life and in their communities. They will be encouraged to recognize how they can be vital and active recipients, as well as instruments, of God's grace.

5. The process of teaching about sacraments should reflect the spirit of the sacraments. Sacraments are personal, communal, experiential encounters with God in Christ. Reflecting this spirit of the sacraments, *Celebrating Sacraments* seeks to tap into and foster in students a sense of wonder, a concern for life, an appreciation of nature, a recognition of faith as a lifelong journey, a desire for encounters with God, and a sense of Christian community. Therefore the course is designed to provide students with activities leading to personal reflection and integration of cognitive material on sacraments into their everyday life.

A Renewed Spirit

Renewal within the church since the Second Vatican Council has led to both a broadening and a deepening of the Catholic understanding of sacraments. The understanding has broadened in the sense that clear, precise distinctions between what is a sacrament and what is not, as declared by the sixteenth-century Council of Trent, have been de-emphasized. The emphasis now is on discovering how human life itself is sacramental and how the rituals of the seven official sacraments celebrate God's presence in all of life. The understanding of sacraments has deepened in the sense that the externals of the official sacraments have been more closely associated with a personal experience of faith and of relationship with Jesus.

This change in thinking about the sacraments has been greeted with excitement and enthusiasm by those in the Catholic church who recognize that sacraments have always served as "doors to the sacred," in the words of church historian Joseph Martos. It has also opened up promising possibilities for those who teach young people about the sacraments.

The Catholic sacramental tradition affirms that God is to be found in the midst of life. Catholic tradition celebrates that the richness of the Earth and our personal experiences can speak powerfully of our relationship with God—through ritual bathings, shared meals, oil cleansings, touches and blessings, and lives shared and committed to serving others. Through the sacraments Catholic tradition has also kept burning the original fires of the Lord's Supper, the Resurrection, and Pentecost—connecting celebration and community with life in Christ.

Celebrating Sacraments seeks to reflect the renewed spirit of Catholic sacramental theology. That spirit can be examined in terms of five areas, which permeate the text itself: sacramental awareness, celebration, community, service, and life.

1. Sacramental awareness. Sacramental awareness refers to the grace to recognize God's loving presence in our life. This awareness can be nurtured through developing various skills, such as seeing, listening, and experiencing with a receptiveness to discovering what is beyond or behind the literal, obvious facts.

2. Celebration. As the title of the student text suggests, celebration is an important concept in this course. Naturally it is associated with specific ceremonies—holidays, birthdays, and so on. More than that, however, it refers to a way of living life. The course seeks to foster in students a spirit of celebration, of accepting God's gifts and rejoicing in them. For example, we can rightly speak of "celebrating the people in our life." By this we mean that we appreciate people and rejoice in them as expressions of God. Very often we celebrate the people and important events in our life with ritual and in a spirit of play, and the seven official sacraments are understood in that context.

3. Community. Before the changes of the Second Vatican Council, sacraments were seen primarily as things received by individuals. Since Vatican Council II, the church has emphasized the earlier, original understanding—that sacraments are celebrations of, by, and for the community. The context for celebrating sacraments is the community. This change of emphasis offers a particular challenge to those who teach about the sacraments—that is, how to communicate that the sacraments are both communally and individually experienced.

4. Service. The church does not simply celebrate sacramental rites; it also has a sacramental vocation, which is to make God visibly, tangibly present in the world. The church's emphasis on service since Vatican Council II has not left sacramental theology untouched. The church's members have a vocation to *be* sacraments by carrying on the work of Jesus, who modeled so clearly a life of service to others. The official sacraments are viewed as celebrations of this extension of Jesus' ministry through the life of the church.

5. Life. The seven sacraments can be understood as stepping-stones in the life journeys of individual Christians and in the continuing journey of the pilgrim church. Thus the sacraments serve as passageways to new life, celebrating the rhythm of the paschal mystery, the reality that life emerges from death and suffering.

The Contents of the Course

Objectives

The *Celebrating Sacraments* course aims at these objectives:

1. The students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of concepts underlying the Catholic sacramental vision: sacramental awareness, grace, symbols, rituals, and prayer.
2. The students will be able to describe the relationships between Jesus, the church, and the seven sacraments.
3. The students will be able to identify major developments in the history of the sacraments in general and of the seven sacraments in particular.
4. The students will be able to show understanding of what realities of human life are celebrated by each of the seven sacraments.
5. The students will be able to identify the major symbols used in each of the seven sacraments and the key aspects of each ritual.

Chapter Contents by Major Concepts

The student text for *Celebrating Sacraments* consists of two main sections: the first six chapters examine the general meaning of sacraments and how the seven Catholic sacraments have been rooted in the life of Jesus and the church; the next seven chapters focus on the seven sacraments themselves. In the latter section, the seven chapters are grouped as follows:

- *Sacraments of initiation.* Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist
- *Sacraments of healing.* Reconciliation (also known as Penance) and Anointing of the Sick
- *Sacraments at the service of Communion.* Matrimony and Holy Orders

Each of these chapters is organized into three major concepts: (1) what the sacrament celebrates, (2) the sacrament's symbolic actions and words, and (3) the sacrament's history. A conclusion offers direction to the students for applying the spirit of the Catholic sacramental vision to their own life.

The chapters of the student text and the teaching manual for this course are organized according to *major concepts*. These concepts are spelled out at the beginning of each chapter in this manual. Taken together, the major concepts form a summary of the contents of a given chapter.

In order to give you an overview of the course, the titles of the major concepts for the chapters are given here. This can function as an outline of the course content.

Chapter 1

Sacraments: Encountering the Sacred

- A. Sacramental Awareness
- B. Grace as God's Loving Presence in the World
- C. Receiving God's Offer of Friendship

Chapter 2

Symbols: Doorways to the Sacred

- A. Communicating Through Symbols
- B. Different Kinds of Symbols
- C. Literal Thinking Versus Symbolic Thinking
- D. Symbols and the Sacraments

Chapter 3

Rituals: Conveying Meaning Through Actions

- A. Rituals as Actions that Serve as Symbols
- B. Characteristics of Rituals
- C. Rituals and Worship

Chapter 4

Prayer: Worshiping in Word, in Act, and in Silence

- A. Finding Sacred Time and Space
- B. Paths to Intimacy with God
- C. Praying "All Ways"
- D. Being Rooted and Uprooted by Prayer

Chapter 5

Jesus Christ and the Church: Sacraments of God's Love for the World

- A. Jesus Christ as the Fullness of Divinity, the Fullness of Humanity
- B. The Church as the Sacrament of Christ to the World
- C. The Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church

Chapter 6

The Sacraments in History:

Changing Church, Changing Sacraments

- A. Change and Opportunities for Renewal
- B. Phase One, Before A.D. 400
- C. Phase Two, the Dark Ages
- D. Phase Three, the High Middle Ages
- E. Phase Four, After the Council of Trent
- F. Phase Five, the Twentieth Century

Chapter 7

Baptism: Celebrating Welcome and Rebirth

- A. What Does Baptism Celebrate?
- B. Baptism's Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. Baptism's History

Chapter 8

Confirmation: Celebrating Growth in the Spirit

- A. What Does Confirmation Celebrate?
- B. Confirmation's Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. Confirmation's History

Chapter 9**The Eucharist: Celebrating Christ's Saving Presence in Our Midst**

- A. What Does the Eucharist Celebrate?
- B. The Eucharist's Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. The Eucharist's History

Chapter 10**Reconciliation: Celebrating Forgiveness**

- A. What Does Reconciliation Celebrate?
- B. Reconciliation's Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. Reconciliation's History

Chapter 11**Anointing of the Sick: Celebrating God's Healing Love**

- A. What Does Anointing Celebrate?
- B. Anointing's Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. Anointing's History

Chapter 12**Matrimony: Celebrating the Covenant of Love**

- A. What Does Matrimony Celebrate?
- B. Matrimony's Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. Matrimony's History

Chapter 13**Holy Orders: Celebrating Ministry in Christ's Name**

- A. What Does Holy Orders Celebrate?
- B. Holy Orders' Symbolic Actions and Words
- C. Holy Orders' History

Conclusion**The Sacrament of You**

- A. The Sacrament of You

Where the Students Are

These five characteristics are common in the experience and background of adolescent Catholics today:

1. **"We've heard it already."** Perhaps more than any other topic in religious education, the topic of sacraments elicits from Catholic young people the response, "We've heard about that already." A teacher can only presume that most students have heard about the sacraments for a number of years. Several of the terms associated with the topic—and the names of the seven sacraments themselves—have a familiar ring to many Catholic students. Indeed, in the primary grades, key segments of their religious education probably centered on "sacramental preparation."

2. **An in-between stage.** A second characteristic influencing the students' attitude toward a sacraments course is that adolescence constitutes an in-between stage. The sacraments of initiation are completed (with the possible exception of Confirmation); the "adult" sacraments of Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick await the students in a distant future. The two sacraments available to them on an ongoing basis—the Eucharist and Reconciliation—are often regarded by young people with an air of routine and boredom.

3. **An interest in religion "in here," not "out there."** Many Catholics equate the sacraments with specific ceremonies, and adolescents are not immune to that impression. The sacraments are seen as making up the "cult" of Catholicism. Catholic teenagers, many of whom are questioning the culture they grew up in, naturally question the significance of sacraments in their life, because they associate sacraments so closely with the cult of Catholicism. The sacraments are often perceived as externals, as "out there." The developing teenager is becoming more and more concerned with what is going on "in here." Religion directed toward the adolescent requires a personal touch.

4. **A variety of faith stages.** A group of thirty sixteen-year-olds may contain a few who question everything, one or two for whom "the teacher is always right," many who go wherever the group leads them, and perhaps a few who are seriously trying to integrate the message of Jesus into their life. At the same time, an individual sixteen-year-old is often capable of making great strides in personal faith development over a short period of time. Adolescence is a period of intense growth and offers the potential for truly increasing one's appreciation of sacraments in one's life.

5. **Heirs to a vastly changed church.** Although the Second Vatican Council took place almost forty years ago, in the scheme of things, that is a very short time for its recommendations to have been integrated into Catholic life. Catholic students today are heirs to a vastly changed church, with sacramental celebrations that would probably barely be recognized by Catholics living just a few decades ago. The students' parents were also likely raised in a time of great ambiguity about the practice of the sacraments. Often the students' parents or grandparents speak about sacraments in one way, their teachers approach them in another way, and they themselves actually experience them in yet another way.

Addressing the Students Where They Are

Celebrating Sacraments addresses the preceding characteristics of adolescents' experience with sacraments in these ways:

1. **A fresh light.** There is wisdom in the saying, "In order to truly know a thing, we must see it as if for the first time." This course does not begin with the seven sacraments. Rather, it first examines the elements that make up the sacraments and treats the whole notion of *the sacred*, of which the seven sacraments are an expression, with great care. This focus on fundamentals about the meaning of sacraments offers students a fresh light for understanding what a sacrament is.

2. Respect for adolescent faith stages. Three activities of adolescent faith are incorporated into the process of the course: questioning, reflecting, and personalizing. Presenting sacraments in a new light, as described in the previous paragraph, assists the questioning process. The tone of the course is reflective, and numerous activities to promote personal reflection are given in the margins of the text. Growth does not occur, however, unless there is a new synthesis and affirmation of one's personal values. And further growth occurs when the young person can affirm his or her personal views while also accepting and appreciating those of others. The course offers opportunities for discussion and group sharing to assist this process.

3. A focus on inquiry. This course begins with God's sacramental presence in life and tries to awaken in students the far-reaching but fundamental question of how that presence can be recognized in its many manifestations throughout our life. This becomes the focus of inquiry offered to the students during the course.

4. An emphasis on the personal, here-and-now reality. If a course on the sacraments is to have meaning for adolescents, then the sacraments must be seen as personal and relevant to their life at the present moment, not simply at some past or future time. In this course, for instance, Baptism is presented as the experience of being welcomed into a community and taking on a new life and identity. The point is made that whether the actual ceremony occurred during infancy or more recently, Baptism as a sacramental reality encompasses and celebrates the experiences of welcome and transformation that are going on in the life of the developing adolescent. The other sacraments are treated similarly in that their relevance to young people is emphasized.

5. Historical perspective. Ongoing change will continue to mark the Catholic church in these decades after the Second Vatican Council, and students will need to continue looking at the changes through historically informed eyes. They need to understand where the church has been in order to have a sense of where it is going. If they can appreciate the reality of change throughout church history, they will be more open to the complexities of the contemporary church. In this course understandings and practices of the sacraments that evolved over time are not presented in a negative light but as natural developments that seemed to meet the needs of the various epochs.

Multiple Intelligence Theory and This Course

Most theology classes are composed of heterogeneous groups of learners. Students of varying academic abilities and achievements come together to learn and grow in their faith. In order to touch all students, multiple intelligence theory is an excellent tool for teachers to use in shaping classroom activities. This theory centers on Howard Gardner's belief that each person has a unique cognitive profile. In *Frames of Mind* (New York: Basic Books), his 1983 book about how we perceive and learn, Gardner, a Harvard psychologist, cites his scientific research that there are at least seven different types of intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical (the two traditional ones found in schools), bodily-kinesthetic, visual, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Moving Gardner's multiple intelligences theory into methodology and strategies for the classroom is a dynamic and exciting proposition. It seems to go hand in hand with Saint Paul's teaching in First Corinthians: "Now there

are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit" (12:4). Our students are gifted in different ways.

The activities suggested in this teaching manual—particularly those in each chapter under the heading "Additional Activities" (that is, additional to the activities provided in the student text)—appeal to the varied kinds of intelligences that students have. By using a variety of activities, you will be giving students the opportunity to learn in meaningful, interesting, and challenging ways. Most of all, they will have a better chance of learning in ways that are most effective for the type of learners they are. This affirms students and builds a positive and interactive classroom with a truly Christian climate.

Many of the additional activities in this manual are student-centered. They employ active learning strategies, which is another way of saying they engage students through the variety of intelligences. It has become solid educational practice to design lessons and assessments that challenge students in more than a lecture or "paper and pencil" format. Of course this approach has a place, and this manual employs it in places. But there are other ways to tap into the varied ways students know things. This philosophy, and consequently these methods, involves the whole person—head and heart—just as our faith does.

Tools for Teaching

During the brief explanation given here, you may find it helpful to glance at one of the chapters in the student text and its corresponding chapter in this manual, in order to see examples of the teaching tools described.

Chapter opening photos. The photos on the opening two-page spread of each chapter of the text are intended to draw the students into the material and stimulate their curiosity about what is to come in the chapter. The photos in the spread function as symbols of the chapter. Symbols can have many layers of meaning, none of which is the definitive, "correct" meaning. In this respect symbols are like poems, whose images can be understood in a variety of ways.

As you begin each chapter, have the students reflect quietly on the opening spread photos for a couple of minutes. Then ask them to volunteer any guesses they might have about how the photos relate to the chapter. As you go through your study of the chapter, keep returning to the opening photos to see how much more meaning the students can draw from them. Do not be concerned if the rationale for every photo cannot be explained precisely; remember, the photos are meant to be somewhat mysterious.

Chapter opening prayers. Also on the opening spread of each chapter in the text is a prayer that sets the tone and themes for the chapter. You can use this prayer to begin the first class or all your classes on that topic.

Chapter opening stories. Another feature at the beginning of each chapter of the student text is the use of a story or a set of examples to evoke student wonder and questioning and lead the students into a study of the chapter's themes. You might read aloud the story that begins the chapter, and then elicit from the students how they would respond to, interpret, or apply it.

Major concepts. As mentioned before, each chapter of the text and teaching manual is organized according to the major concepts of that chapter. (See pages 12–14 for a list of all the major concept titles for the course.) The major concepts for a given chapter of the text correspond roughly to the major headings within the chapter. Thus the major concepts are the organizing principle for teaching the material. In the chapters of the manual, these concepts are given as concise statements or summaries of the significant ideas conveyed by the chapter. Most chapters have three to five such major concepts, and these serve as a helpful tool for planning your schedule and organizing your teaching of the course.

The major concepts in a given chapter are listed at the beginning of that chapter in the teaching manual. Then each concept for the chapter is treated in turn. First, the major concept is repeated, with a reference to the related student text pages. Then questions, activities, and other materials on that concept are provided.

Review questions. The review questions that end each section of the chapter in the student text are repeated in the teaching manual, and a suggested answer is provided for each question. The intent of the review questions is simply to check whether the students have retained the basic information for a given concept. The questions do not require full comprehension or assimilation of the material, as more analytical or reflective kinds of questions would. Students who can accurately answer the review questions demonstrate basic comprehension. It is hoped that by using other course methods, they will go beyond that level to analysis, reflection, and application.

Student text activities. Lettered activities appear in the margins of the student text and are related to the text material near them. These activities are repeated for you in this manual. Your students will not be able to do all the activities in the span of a semester, the time normally allotted for this course. So you will need to select from these activities to fit the needs of your class. Even if you do not assign a given text activity, however, the students' reading of the activity along with the regular text material can have the positive effect of helping them see the text material in a new light—perhaps a more personalized light. The text activities should be viewed not as burdensome assignments but as intriguing reflection-starters that may be more fully explored through homework or in-class activities.

Many of the text activities require the students to respond in writing. You may decide not to require written work for some, or even all, of the activities, and you may tell the students that they can accomplish the activity in some way other than writing it.

However, a typical method of using text activities is to assign them as written homework or class work. This use of the activities as written assignments will work most effectively if it is combined with some other processing of the students' reflections or findings in class. Here are some ways of using these activities.

1. *Paired exchanges.* Have each student exchange her or his written reflections with another student (if you judge that the material generated by the activity is appropriate and that the students will be comfortable sharing it). Direct the students to read their partner's reflections and then to discuss them. Afterward, a whole-class discussion could draw insights from students who volunteer their thoughts from the paired discussions. However, caution the students that they should not bring up what their partner said unless the partner gives the okay.

2. *Quiet collection of thoughts, followed by a discussion.* Ask the students to think about the question or task presented in the activity for a few quiet minutes, rather than having them write their thoughts. Giving them a few moments to collect their thoughts before asking for class involvement in discussion often yields a more fruitful discussion than asking for off-the-cuff responses. The follow-up discussion to the quiet time could be done in pairs, in small groups, or with the whole class.

3. *Brainstorming.* Brainstorm the question in the text activity with the whole class. For example, an activity may call for the students to recall times when they have experienced something similar to what is in the student text. Sometimes the most effective way to generate examples like this is to have the students call them out to you without discussion as you write them on the chalkboard. Once the whole list is out, you can go back and ask for elaboration on the ones that you think would be most helpful to discuss. Always treat the students' own accounts with reverence, helping them see the sacredness of their own experience by the way you ask them clarifying questions or affirm them in your comments on what they have related.

4. *Skits or role-plays.* Some activities that call for examples from the students' experiences can be extended into skits or role-plays. Of course, to pull this off, you must have willing students who are comfortable with letting their experiences be the subject of dramatization. If you are portraying a dilemma or a "what would you do?" incident, either the student who offered the example or another student could play the principal role and try to resolve the situation. At times activities call for the students to write imaginary dialogues between two persons. These too could be read aloud by two students to heighten their impact.

5. *Extra credit.* Certain text activities—for instance, those that call for students to bring something from home, to do some research, or to interview someone—might be assigned to individuals or small groups for extra credit. Their results could be shared with the whole class in an oral report.

6. *Fishbowl discussions.* When a text activity calls for reflection on an issue that is likely to generate controversy or at least pro and con sentiment, an effective way to discuss the issue is in a "fishbowl" arrangement. In this type of discussion, a small group of students discuss a topic in a circle while the rest of the class watches from outside the circle.

Try to make sure that the small group is made up of students with a variety of opinions on the issue. Leave one chair in the circle empty and tell the rest of the class that if someone outside the circle wants to make a comment or a point, that person can occupy the chair briefly, make the comment, and then vacate the chair. This method can sustain interest in the discussion by enabling limited participation by potentially everyone in the class. But it also avoids the pitfalls of a controversial large-group discussion, which can get out of hand.

7. *Test questions.* Text activities can often check for deeper levels of comprehension than review questions can. (In many cases these activities require personal reflection, analysis, evaluation, application of the material to one's personal life, and so on.) Because of this you may choose to incorporate some of the text activities into your quizzes and tests as, for example, essay questions. In doing so, however, remember that these activities generally require subjective responses from the students, responses that cannot be as easily

judged for accuracy as can answers to review questions and objective test questions. (Sample test questions, both objective and essay, are given in appendix 3 of this manual.)

Additional activities. For each major concept, you will find one or more additional activities. These often employ intelligences other than the traditional ones of linguistic and logical-mathematical.

The additional activities occasionally require handouts that must be photocopied and distributed to the students. These handouts appear at the end of their respective chapter in the manual, and perforated photocopy masters of them are located at the end of the manual.

A Method of Planning and Scheduling

One attractive but potentially frustrating feature of this teaching manual is that, generally, more classroom strategies are offered than you can use in your teaching. Each chapter of this manual is set up like a smorgasbord from which you will need to select those activities that best meet the needs of your class. The need to make such decisions is a major reason for presenting here a method of planning and scheduling your teaching of the entire course. It is wise to do the planning at the beginning of the course and set realistic goals, but each school calendar is different and has its own set of variables.

1. Identify the total number of class periods available for this course.

If you are teaching the course within one full semester, you may have approximately eighteen weeks to work with, excluding vacation, holidays, special school functions, test days, and so on. Identify these and estimate how many weeks you have for the course. It may also be beneficial to estimate the number of class periods you have to teach during the semester. For example, if your classes meet in 50-minute periods, five times a week for sixteen weeks, you have eighty class periods to work with. With some schools using block periods, this may be altered because the longer periods typically are between 75 to 90 minutes and meet less often.

2. Assess for the entire course the approximate number of class periods needed for each major concept. To assist you in this step, the major concepts are listed and described at the beginning of each chapter of this manual. It may be immediately clear that some concepts will have to be treated briefly, perhaps in one class period or less. Other concepts may require several class periods.

If your school uses block scheduling, you will need to plan for 75- to 90-minute periods. When introducing new content in a block-schedule format, focus on depth as opposed to breadth. This is where the additional activities in the teaching manual can help you plan meaningful and interesting lessons for your students.

You may decide to skip certain major concepts or even whole chapters. All such preliminary decisions should be made at this stage of planning. The primary objective is to take a broad view of the course to ensure that you will cover all that you intend to cover. Consciously planning to eliminate parts of the student text from study is one thing; simply running out of time at the

end of the course is another. This step of the planning method should help you avoid such surprises.

3. Divide the course into approximately two-week blocks of time. In advance of each two-week block, make more specific decisions regarding which major concepts to present during that block. Determine how many and which class periods will be devoted to each of those concepts.

At this point in the process, you will be ready to begin more immediate plans for your teaching. Attempting to look ahead more than two weeks in your selection of specific concepts and teaching strategies would potentially reduce necessary flexibility. You will know what and how to teach a month from now based on your students' responses to material in the interim. The exception to this guideline is the selection in advance of audiovisuals. A number of additional activities in the manual suggest videotapes and music albums as teaching tools. You will need to arrange to rent movies at a video store or order tapes and albums ahead of time if you are relying on national distributors or a diocesan resource office.

4. For each major concept to be taught during a given two-week block, select the pages of the student text that you will cover and the teaching strategies from this manual that you will use, keeping in mind the number of class periods devoted to that concept.

You may encounter a situation in which you have two class periods available for teaching a major concept, but this manual and the student text offer enough material and strategies to fill several periods. How do you decide what to do?

In such cases always begin by considering these questions: What approaches have the students responded well to in the past? What kinds of strategies seem ineffective with them? How can you touch on all the different intelligences in the activities for this chapter? What are you comfortable doing in class? Which strategies feel right to you? How much time do you have? How much time is required by each available strategy?

5. After each class period, briefly evaluate for future reference your experience with the strategies selected. Ongoing evaluation may be one of the most talked about and least practiced virtues of effective teaching. We are usually so caught up with preparing for our next task that we simply do not take the time to look back on classes we have successfully completed—or maybe only survived! The task of ongoing evaluation can seem so tedious and time-consuming that we feel oppressed by it before even attempting it.

In this planning process, the step of evaluation is so simple that it can quickly and consistently be included in your teaching. For further explanation see point 6 of the next section.

A Lesson Planning Chart

On pages 23 and 24, you will find two copies of the lesson planning chart for this course, one of which includes examples of how the chart can be used. Another blank copy of the chart is provided with the handout masters at the end of this manual for use in your planning.

This is how to use the chart:

1. In the first column, write the number or date of the class period. That is, you may wish to number your class periods for the semester from, say, one to eighty. Or you may prefer to specify each session by the date on which you will teach it. (Note: You may want to complete the chart in pencil rather than pen, knowing that you will have to make at least minor adjustments, given the students' response to the material, missed class periods, and so on.)

2. In the second column, state the major concept to be taught during the class period. Use an abbreviation of the concept title listed in this manual.

3. Identify the relevant pages of the student text to be covered in class or assigned in advance as homework reading. List these in the third column. You may be teaching one concept for several class periods, so you will want to identify the specific pages of the student text for each of those periods. (This point may become clearer when you read point 5, below.)

4. Now you are ready to specify the teaching strategies, or activities, that you will use during the class. Note that all the activities in this manual are either lettered, for example, activity B, or titled, for example, "Hugh's Life, My Life." Use these letters and titles along with page references from this manual to complete the column headed "Activities." Also describe briefly any modifications or additions you made to a text activity. For instance, write "Activity B as brainstormed with whole class" or "Activity C descriptions in paired exchange, with whole-class discussion following."

5. In the column titled "Homework Assignment," specify the student text pages to be read, the text activities to be completed, or any other task that you want to assign as homework.

6. Finally, after teaching each class, briefly jot down in the last column your evaluation of the class, particularly concentrating on the strategies you identified in the fourth column. You will likely develop a shorthand of your own for this. Perhaps you might simply state "Effective as described in manual; repeat next time." In another case you might write "Too much material; drop activity D." These statements, brief as they are, may be all you need to refresh your memory when teaching the course in the future.

Lesson Planning Chart

Date, Class	Major Concept	Text Pages	Activities	Homework Assignment	Evaluation
Mon. 1/10	Chap 1: A Sacramental Awareness	8-12	Read opening story aloud; get reactions to it and opening photos. Go over course expectations.	Rd. pp. 8-12. Answer review questions on p. 11. Do activity A.	Loved "Jumping Mouse" story and opening photos.
Tues. 1/11	Chap 1: A Continued	8-12	Collect homework. Ask for volunteers to read activity A papers. Do "Recognizing God's Presence" (tm, pp. 29-30) and "Spirituality Action Plan" (tm, pp. 30-31).	Rd. pp. 13-15. Do activity B.	
Wed. 1/12	Chap 1: B Grace As God's Loving Presence in the World	13-15	Collect homework. Ask for volunteers to read their papers for activity B. Do activity D with whole class, then "Body Plays" (tm, p. 32).	Rd. pp. 15-21. Answer review questions on page 21.	Not enough time. Next time skip activity D.
Thurs. 1/13	Chap 1: C Receiving God's Offer of Friendship	15-21	Collect homework. Do "Want Ads for Friends" (tm, p. 35).	Do activity F or G.	Students were able to relate actions of friendship to actions of relating to God. Great connection.
Fri. 1/14	Chap 1: C Continued	15-21	Collect homework, have students pair up with someone who did same activity and share reflections. Do "Looking Back on My Life" (tm, pp. 34-35).	Rd. pp. 24-28. Answer review questions on p. 28.	Next time, assign handout 1-C as homework before doing "Looking Back on My Life" sharing in class. Takes time.

Lesson Planning Chart

Date, Class	Major Concept	Text Pages	Activities	Homework Assignment	Evaluation