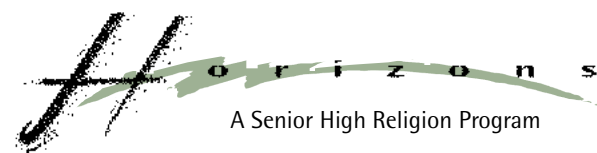


Exploring Catholicism

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A Senior High Religion Program

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To all those past, present, and yet to come who
pass on the flame of faith to the young people—
may the light that shines within you never dim
and may the sparks you begin in others be many.



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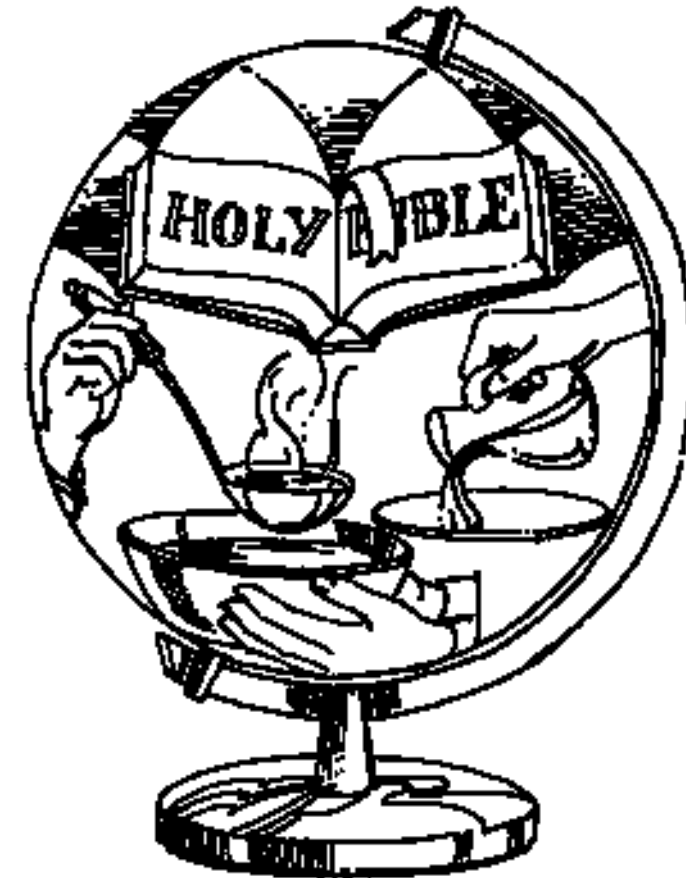
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Introduction



An Overview of This Course

Even a casual glance at the pages in this book would alert a reader familiar with the Horizons Program that this course is different from the other minicourses in the program. Indeed, much is different in *Exploring Catholicism*. Consider the following:

- Instead of the three 2-hour sessions typical of other Horizons minicourses, this course contains eleven optional strategies, which vary in length from 1 to 2 hours.
- Instead of presenting a fixed sequence of sessions, this course offers a multitude of alternatives. The strategies can be used alone or in combinations. Some of them can even be inte-

grated into other Horizons courses. And they can be readily customized to meet specific parish, cultural, and developmental needs.

- Instead of having one leader conduct all the sessions, this course suggests that the coordinator recruit a different leader for each strategy.
- Instead of being directed solely at the teacher, this manual is first addressed to you, the program coordinator, because you are the key to setting the schedule and recruiting teachers. The introduction is primarily for you. But strategies 1 to 11 are worded as instructions to the teachers.

We developed this unique resource because we recognized that some significant and interesting facets of our Catholic faith may be overlooked in

the other Horizons courses. Many of the more traditional elements of Catholicism, such as devotions, prayers, sacramentals, and the unique Catholic understanding of saints, did not seem to logically fit or naturally arise in the development of the rest of the curriculum.

Exploring Catholicism, when used with the other Horizons courses, helps complete the picture of what it means to be Catholic. It brings together many of the traditional and organizational elements of the Catholic church and faith, creating a usable program that both actively involves and properly educates the young people. *Exploring Catholicism* can be viewed as a course in the ABC's (About Being Catholic) that is designed to answer many of the whys of our faith and tradition.

The Adolescent and This Course

Young people frequently hear from the adults in the parish phrases like “We’ve always done it this way” and “When I was your age we had to. . . .” Adults who express such sentiments are trying to pass on, in their own sometimes awkward way, a specific tradition as well as a sense of history. Because people so often identify themselves with particular structures, beliefs, and practices, many adults feel an urgency to help the current generation of young people know their faith. This desire often has more to do with passing on a way of life than the objective meaning behind a tradition or practice.

Often the way a message is presented turns off the young people. For example, a teacher who uses straight lecturing can frustrate both the young people and himself or herself. By simply changing the teaching technique and using the energy and curiosity of young people, a teacher who presents the same message can meet with success. The young people will more likely not only hear the message but also assimilate it.

Exploring Catholicism uses strategies that can actively lead young people to a greater understanding of what it means to be Catholic. In fact it offers a tool—handout A, “*Exploring Catholicism* Interest Finder” (found at the end of the introduction)—that discerns the young people’s questions and curiosities in order to help you plan. This course also suggests how to channel the young people’s energy into helping educate their peers and younger members of the parish.

Implementing This Course

Getting Started

This course flows from the Horizons core course entitled *The Church: Its Wisdom, Works, and Worship*. It generally works best if the participants experience the core first. The core serves as the foundation for many of the specific strategies in *Exploring Catholicism*.

To get started you need to do three things: administer the interest finder, schedule the strategies, and recruit leaders. All this needs to be done with an eye toward the overall Horizons Program structure and how it is being implemented in your parish. That is why the introduction of this book addresses you, the program coordinator, rather than the teachers. The rest of the book, however, is addressed to the leaders of each strategy. But before you begin to schedule and recruit, read over the strategies to get a feel for the time, resources, and number of leaders required for each.

Administering the Interest Finder

The interest finder, which is on handout A at the end of this introduction, can help you plan to use *Exploring Catholicism* in a way that meets the needs of the young people, as well as the educational goals of your parish. As you begin planning how to present the strategies in this book, arrange with one of the Horizons teachers to administer the interest finder to the program participants. Preferably, it should be given during the last session of the core course *The Church: Its Wisdom, Works, and Worship*.

Use the results of the survey to help you decide which strategies to present. If you are unable to survey the young people during one of the other course sessions, select the first *Exploring Catholicism* strategy to be presented and administer the survey at the end of that session. Then use the results to help you finish your planning.

This interest finder asks the young people to prioritize ten topics, based on their level of interest in each of them. It then asks them to indicate on a five-point scale the level of their knowledge in each topic area.

To compile the results of the interest finder, total the points in the left-hand column for each topic.

Create a master priority list, listing the topic with the lowest total as the first priority, the topic with the second lowest total as the second priority, and so on.

To compile the results of the knowledge-level scale, total the numbers in the right-hand column for each topic and divide by the number of people who completed the interest finder. Doing this for each of the ten topics allows you to see the young people’s perceived knowledge of each topic.

How you choose to use this information is up to you. For example, if the average scores on the knowledge level for each topic are very close, then you could use the prioritized ratings to determine which topics were of more interest to the young people themselves.

Scheduling

Due to the unique and flexible nature of *Exploring Catholicism*, the eleven strategies can be scheduled in numerous ways. Note that the strategies need *not* be used in the order they appear in the book. Each strategy can stand by itself, though you may want to combine some or incorporate them into other courses.

Read through the strategies, determine which ones are most workable (and which ones, for whatever reason, simply are not feasible) for your situation, and review the results of the interest finder. Then consider the following scheduling options:

A three-session minicourse. Create a three-session minicourse for the young people, using the three strategies that correspond to the top three interests (based on the survey results).

A once-a-month session. Offer a strategy once a month to the participants in the Horizons Program, as a supplement to their regular courses.

A retreat. Use several of the strategies (e.g., “The Mass,” “A Church Tour,” “Sacramentals,” and “The Liturgical Year”) to create a daylong retreat.

Seasonal sessions. Connect a strategy to a particular season or feast. For example, offer the Mary session in May or the saints session on or near All Saints’ Day.

Combined sessions. Present related strategies together. For example, use the Mary and the saints sessions together, or the liturgical year and the Mass sessions.

Integrated courses. Use some of the strategies to enhance or expand on other courses in the Horizons Program. For example, the prayers and devotions strategy could be used with the course *Praying All Ways*. Or the Mass strategy could be used with the course *Sacraments*.

Recruiting Leaders

Once the strategies have been selected, you can begin recruiting leaders. This can be done in a number of ways.

- Recruit a different adult to lead each strategy. Ideally, the leaders should have an interest in or special knowledge of their assigned strategy’s theme. Using different leaders for each strategy ensures that no *one* person is overburdened.
- If a particular group of young people has just completed a course related to one of the strategies (e.g., the sacraments course is related to the Mass strategy in this book), ask that group to help lead some of its peers through that strategy.
- Call on different parish groups and committees to lead the strategies that are of interest to them. For example, if your parish has a rosary society, it might be interested in leading the prayers and devotions strategy or the Mary strategy.

As mentioned already, there are benefits to using multiple leaders. The young people get to know different people. Different adults get a chance to minister, and the adults get a firsthand look at how many different topics are being taught to the young people of the parish. But if it is not feasible to recruit multiple leaders, the course can still work with one leader.

Each leader that you recruit must then be adequately prepared and attuned to the learning needs and styles of young people. Instruct them in how to use the active and involving teaching techniques of the Horizons Program. Once you know how many strategies you will use and how many leaders you will recruit, purchase enough copies of this teaching manual. Depending on your schedule, one manual could be passed from teacher to teacher. Or you might need multiples copies.

Using This Manual

One of the differences between *Exploring Catholicism* and other courses in the Horizons Program is that while other courses usually provide a complete outline for the teacher to base his or her own presentation on, *Exploring Catholicism* avoids such extensive outlines and notes, except where absolutely needed.

Instead, thorough and current lists of resources are provided at the end of this introduction and at the end of strategies 1 to 10. As program coordinator, one of the most helpful things you can do for your teachers is to gather as many resources as you can for their use. Such reference books will provide the information your teachers need to supplement the active learning techniques emphasized in this book. One of the most effective techniques is learning centers.

Using Learning Centers

A learning center is an area of the room set up to help the participants learn about a theme, issue, or historical era in a way that *actively involves* the senses (touch, taste, sight, sound, smell). Five of the strategies in this book (numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8) use learning centers. Setting up learning centers takes substantial preparation, but doing so is worth the effort.

A learning center is most effective when it is facilitated by one or more people who are familiar with its topic. The learning center should be well stocked with the materials necessary to involve the young people in the learning process. This requires some creativity on the part of the facilitator, to assure that the young people who visit the learning center fully experience the topic.

For example, a learning center based on the liturgical season of the Triduum (Holy Week) might be set up with the colors of red and white (the season's liturgical colors). A solemn song (reflecting Good Friday) could be playing on a tape recorder. The table could have an arrangement including a bowl of water, a pitcher and a towel, a broken loaf of bread, a cup of wine (or grape juice), large nails, a wooden cross, a large rock, a pall, a monstrance, and chrism oil.

As the young people come to the learning center on the Triduum, the leader could begin by asking one of them to read the account of the Last Supper while the leader washes and dries everyone's hands

(or feet!). The leader could then say the blessing Jesus said that night, while the bread is broken and given to the people and the cup of juice is passed around. And then he or she could lead a discussion of what Holy Thursday is all about and what happens during and after its celebration. A similar process could be used to present Good Friday and Holy Saturday as the young people are invited to taste, touch, read, listen to, and smell the various symbols and objects that are present at the table.

In developing learning centers, the facilitator should give thought to how each symbol, prayer, or object could actively involve the young people.

Learning centers are suggested in the following strategies:

- Strategy 2, "Sacramentals"
- Strategy 3, "The Liturgical Year"
- Strategy 4, "The Mass"
- Strategy 5, "Prayers and Devotions"
- Strategy 8, "Church History"

Goals and Objectives in This Course

Why Use Goals and Objectives?

Curriculums take on greater clarity, direction, and purpose if they are described in terms of their goals and objectives. This observation is based on a commonsense principle: We have a difficult time getting somewhere if we do not know where we are going. Educators who design learning experiences must identify their destination as a first step in determining how to get there. The statement of goals and objectives is a practical way to identify the desired outcomes for a program.

In the Horizons Program, goals and objectives are used in the following ways:

Goals. Goals are broad statements of what we wish to accomplish—learning outcomes we hope to achieve. The coordinator's manual for the Horizons Program provides the goals for the entire curriculum. Each course within the total program also includes a statement of its goals. The goals often have an idealistic quality, inviting the teacher to reflect on how the course relates to the personal and faith development of the young people. At the same time, the course goals are realistic, measurable, and attainable. As a teacher, at the end of the course,

you should be able to look back and determine if you have in fact achieved the course goals.

Objectives. Objectives are statements that define how to get to the goals. They name the specific tasks that must be accomplished if the goals are to be achieved. Each course supplies a clear statement of objectives for each strategy in the course.

The Goals and Objectives of Exploring Catholicism

Goals

The three goals for this course are as follows:

- That the young people become exposed to the various structures, beliefs, and practices that make them uniquely Catholic
- That they are offered an opportunity to ask, and get answers to, the questions they have about what it means to be a Catholic and how Catholics practice and celebrate their faith tradition
- That they be given the opportunity to actively engage in the Catholic practices and traditions that are covered in this course

Objectives

Each strategy has its own objectives, which help realize the course goals. The objectives of *Exploring Catholicism* follow:

Strategy 1: "A Church Tour"

- To teach the young people about the history and meaning of the objects, structures, art, and areas of their Catholic church

Strategy 2: "Sacramentals"

- To expose the young people to the prayers, actions, and sacred objects that are known as sacramentals
- To help the young people understand the meaning of sacramentals and the place they hold in Catholic life

Strategy 3: "The Liturgical Year"

- To help the young people understand the six different liturgical seasons, along with the symbols, colors, feasts, and celebrations associated with each

Strategy 4: "The Mass"

- To introduce the young people to the four distinct parts of the Mass as well as the meaning and actions of each part
- To actively involve the young people in the celebration of a Mass
- To explain the actions and symbols of the Mass

Strategy 5: "Prayers and Devotions"

- To review the different types and forms of traditional prayers and devotions
- To help the young people develop and lead several of the devotions themselves

Strategy 6: "Mary"

- To introduce the young people to the tremendous effect Mary and Marian devotions have had on the church, by reviewing the various feasts and liturgical celebrations involving Mary
- To clarify for the young people the role that Mary holds in church tradition

Strategy 7: "Saints"

- To expose the young people to some of the various saints and their effect on people
- To explain the canonization process

Strategy 8: "Church History"

- To highlight the major developmental stages of the church's history, along with some of the specific issues, tensions, and people that made up each period

Strategy 9: "Church Structure"

- To review the hierarchical structure and decision-making process of the Catholic church
- To highlight the young people's unique and important role within that structure

Strategy 10: "Ecumenism"

- To expose the young people to the Protestant faith tradition in order to assess its similarities to and differences from the Catholic church
- To help promote unity among the two religious traditions

Strategy 11: "Catholic Jeopardy"

- To provide the young people with an opportunity to review the information learned during this course



Suggested Resources

In addition to the general resources listed here, other resources are listed at the end of strategies 1 to 10. Also, reference books such as encyclopedias and a dictionary can be useful in preparing some of the presentations and learning centers called for in this course.

Deedy, John. *The Catholic Fact Book*. Chicago: Thomas More Press, 1986.

Dues, Greg. *Catholic Customs and Traditions: A Popular Guide*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1992.

McBrien, Richard P. *Catholicism*. New edition. [San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994.

Saint Anthony Messenger Press. *Catholic Update Sourcebook* and *Youth Update Sourcebook*. Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1995.

Turpin, Joanne. *Catholic Treasures New and Old: Traditions, Customs and Practices*. Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1993.

STRATEGY 1

A Church Tour

Objective

- To teach the young people about the history and meaning of the objects, structures, art, and areas of their Catholic church

The young people in your group have probably spent a lot of time in their church, but that does not necessarily mean they are familiar with the history and meaning of the objects, structures, art, and areas of it. This activity is designed to increase the young people's awareness of the terminology for and meaning of the things they see each time they walk into church.

During this activity the participants are given a thorough tour of their church. Special attention is given to the history and symbolism of the church sanctuary, the sacristy, the assembly areas, and the related objects, art, clothing, and furnishings. Such a tour can take 1 to 2 hours, depending on the length of the tour guide's presentations and how long he or she lets the young people explore. The alternative approaches at the end of this chapter can be used to tailor the tour to the needs of your group.

Preparation



Materials Needed

- a handout listing the areas and topics to be covered in the tour, one for each person (optional)



Other Necessary Preparations

Prepare to lead this session by doing the following things and checking them off as you accomplish them:

- Decide what to include in the tour, referring to the suggested points of interest listed in the Procedure section.
- Decide who will be the tour guide. Possibilities include you, the pastor, the pastoral associate, the chairperson of the liturgy committee, the sacristan, and a member of the altar society. Consider enlisting the help of two or more people, to make up a tour team.
- Make an outline of the points to be covered and give a copy to the tour leader to help her or him prepare. Decide whether you want to give the young people a copy of the outline too. You might also want to provide the tour leader with some of the resources suggested at the end of the chapter, to help him or her with explanations on the history, functions, and meaning of the many objects and areas to be covered. Assure the tour leader that he or she need not know it all.
- Once you decide when to hold your tour and which areas to include, check the parish calendar for any time conflicts. If the rectory is to be included in the tour, check with the residents to make sure your group will be able to tour their home during the time you have set aside.
- If you will be the tour leader, familiarize yourself with where the linens, books, clothing, vessels,

and so on, are located. Decide whether to have the church set up as it would appear at a Sunday Mass, so that the young people can see the different objects in their proper places, or so that the young people can seek and find each object as it is named (be sure to check with the sacristan or parish staff about these ideas).

- Determine if you wish to change this strategy by using one or more of the alternative approaches at the end of the chapter.

Procedure

Suggested Points of Interest

Your tour will be unique to your church because of its special features, but you may want to roughly follow the sequence presented here. Or simply use the list as an aid in developing an outline for your tour.

Church history. Offer a brief history of your parish—when the church was built, how its name was chosen, the approximate number of families who are registered, and so on.

The outside architecture. Point out the outside architectural features of the church building. Explain things such as statues, bell towers, and special designs.

The vestibule. As the group enters the church, comment on the purpose of the following:

- sign-up tables
- bulletin boards or other information centers
- gathering and hospitality space

The nave, or assembly area. As the group enters the main body of the church, comment on the meaning and use of the following:

- the holy water fonts
- the baptistery, or baptismal font
- the pews or chairs for the congregation, and their arrangement; the kneelers, if they are present
- the choir area or loft, and the instruments
- the offertory table and the collection baskets

The sanctuary. As the group enters the sanctuary, comment on any of the following:

- the raised dimension of the sanctuary (which comes from *sanctus*, meaning “holy”)
- the altar
- the ambo, or pulpit
- the chairs for the presider and other ministers
- the credence table
- the candles, including the paschal candle and the altar candles
- the tabernacle
- the sanctuary lamp

Religious art. Comment on the significance of any of the following:

- the reredos—statues, paintings, or shrines that make up the back altar
- the side altars, including votive candles
- the stations of the cross
- the crucifix or the cross
- the stained glass
- the banners or other wall artwork

The sacristy. As the group enters the sacristy, comment briefly on some of the following items and explain how they are used. It may be tempting to dwell too long in this room, but keep the tour moving. The young people will have another chance to explore here if you do strategy 2, “Sacramentals.”

- the vestments, including the alb, the cincture, the surplice, the cassock, the stole, the chasuble, the dalmatic, and the amice
- the vessels, including the chalice; the plate, or paten; the ciborium and cruets
- the linens, including the altar cloth, the corporal, the burse, the purificator, the chalice veil, and the pall
- the liturgical objects, including the incense; the censer, or thurible; the incense boat; the bread; the wine; and the pyx
- the books, including the sacramentary and the lectionary
- the sacarium

Other areas. If your parish has any of the following areas, you may want to explain their presence and meaning:

- confessionals or a reconciliation room
- a eucharistic chapel, including the tabernacle and the sanctuary lamp
- the ambry, including the different sacred oils of chrism, catechumens, and the sick

Alternative Approaches

After reading through this strategy, you may choose to do some things differently or to make additions to it. Think about your time, resources, and needs and then consider these alternative approaches:

Give a parish tour. Expand your tour to include other parts of the parish complex. Point out the different staff offices and briefly explain the responsibilities of the staff.

Tour the parish meeting rooms and discuss some of the types of meetings and programs that take place in these areas. Point out the various storage rooms, and so on. If your parish has a school, give a quick tour of its space while discussing its history.

Tour the rectory and talk about the process the diocese uses to assign priests to parishes, as well as the difference between pastors and pastoral associates.

Combine strategies. Combine this strategy with strategy 2, “Sacramentals,” by doing strategy 2 after the tour of the sacristy. This approach may affect when you describe some of the objects, artwork, and liturgical vessels. Adjust your outline accordingly.

Follow up with a review game. Do a church tour review game as follows:

- a. Before the tour, select ten objects or places that will be covered in the tour and write the name of each object or place on a separate index card.
- b. Gather the group in or near the areas that you have toured. Divide the group into two smaller groups and divide the index cards into two stacks of equal difficulty. Give a pile of ten cards to each group and explain that when you say “Go,” the members of each group should divide the cards among themselves. Each person should go to the item or place named on his or her card and set the card by it.
- c. When the groups are finished, take one group at a time and ask each person to lead everyone to the sign or signs he or she placed. Award one point for a correct placement of the sign and take away one point for an incorrect placement. If the other team wants to try and correctly place the sign (one attempt only), they may do so and can score a point or lose a point in a similar manner.

- d. After all the signs have been reviewed by both groups, add up the total points and declare a winner. If the groups had difficulty placing the signs, reshuffle the cards and repeat the game.
- e. You may choose to add extra credit by having the group try to describe the specific meaning or symbolism of the objects or places labeled by its members. Award an extra point for a correct answer. Do not take away points for an incorrect answer.

Suggested Resources

Liguori Publications. *Persons, Places, and Practices in the Catholic Church*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1987. 18-minute video. Available from Liguori Publications, 1 Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057-9999; phone 800-325-9521. The first half of this video presents a good overview of the meaning of the various areas and objects inside a Catholic church.

Richstatter, Thomas. “Inside a Catholic Church: What’s There and Why.” *Youth Update*. Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1994.

———. “A Tour of a Catholic Church.” *Catholic Update*, Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1991. An excellent review of the meaning and history of different areas of the church.

Turpin, Joanne. *Catholic Treasures New and Old: Traditions, Customs and Practices*. Cincinnati, OH: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 1993. See especially chapter 1, “The House of the Church: Sacred Space.”

Notes

After the tour, evaluate how this strategy worked and make notes below that would help the next person who uses it.