

## Being Catholic Parent Resource:

### Overview:

The Being Catholic mini-course gives the students a broad sense of what it means to be a Catholic, from being an individual in the Catholic Church, to being part of the larger community, not only at the parish level, but the larger, world-wide Church. Each week will focus on key aspects of our faith, including community, sacraments, and common symbols used in the church.

### Things to Remember When Talking with Teens about the Church:

1. Honor your children's opinions, learning, and experiences.
2. Listen actively to them; make eye contact to show your interest.
3. Be fair towards their experiences of the faith. If your children feel you are picking on a certain experience they will resist and ultimately tune you out.
4. Do not make generalizations about their or their friends' experiences with being Catholic.
5. You may feel embarrassed about your experiences or knowledge about the faith (or perceived lack thereof), but do not let that limit your encouragement of your child exploring the Catholic faith.
6. Encourage inquiry and conversation about the faith.

It is entirely likely this class may bring up questions about our faith. Between the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church you can find the answer to most things. However, if you would like a different version of answers, I recommend the following texts:

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The How-To Book of the Mass        | Michael Dubriel                 | Our Sunday Visitor |
| 2. Do I Have To Go?                   | Matthew Pinto & Christ Stefanik | Ascension Press    |
| 3. Did Adam & Eve Have Belly Buttons? | Matthew Pinto                   | Ascension Press    |
| 4. Did Jesus Have a Last Name?        | Matthew Pinto                   | Ascension Press    |
| 5. I'm Glad You Asked!                | Fr. Mark Pierce                 | St. Mary's Press   |
| 6. The Confirmed Catholic's Companion |                                 | ACTA Publications  |

## Being Catholic:

### Week 1:

#### Topics covered:

- Our community story
- Our individuality and communal identity as Catholics
- The life story of the Church

#### Questions to ask:

1. How important is it to you to identify yourself as a Catholic?
2. What do you like most about being a Catholic?
3. What does being Catholic mean to you?
4. Who is one of the best Catholics you know?
5. Why did you choose this person?
6. What are some group experiences that have shaped you?
7. How can I become more involved in my parish?

#### Activities to do:

1. Draw a picture or make a symbol of what you can bring to the church through your own talents, interests, and personality.
2. Search 'stained glass windows' online and look at the different images. What do you like about them? What do they convey about the Church's story?
3. Pick either 'spiritual works of mercy' or 'corporal works of mercy' and do five minutes research online about them. Talk about what you found out.
4. Point out the Catholic items you have in your room (a cross, rosary, prayer book). What do these things mean to you?

#### Saints & Greats to learn about:

1. Saint Stephen (1<sup>st</sup> century), believed to be the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death by a mob encouraged by Saul (who later became Saint Paul after his conversion).
2. Saint Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274) was one of the greatest and most influential theologians of all time.
3. Saint Catherine of Alexandria () is the patroness of philosophers and preachers.

## Being Catholic: Characteristically Catholic

### Week 2:

#### Topics covered:

- What it means to be Catholic
- The Sacraments
- Symbols of the Church
- The Marks of the Church

#### Questions to ask:

1. What is the most important characteristic you attribute to the Catholic Church?
2. What do you remember most about your First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion?
3. Do any Church symbols speak powerfully to you?
4. Is there any artwork in your church that you especially like? Why?

#### Activities to do:

1. Visit another Catholic Church nearby and try to find similar symbols from your home parish. What is the same? What is different?
2. See if your parents have a copy of your baptismal record. If so – take it out and look at it. What does it say? Look at photos from the day you were baptized.
3. Find a nearby chapel or shrine to visit. Spend a few hours there, looking at the artwork, symbols, etc.

#### Saints and Greats

1. Saint John Berchmans is the patron of altar boys. He early on wanted to be a priest, and when thirteen became a servant in the household of one of the Cathedral canons at Malines, John Froymont.
2. Saint Maria Goretti (1890-1902) is the patroness of youth and for the victims of rape. A relic of St. Maria resides in the altar of our new church.
3. Saint John Vianney is the patron of priests. He heard confessions of people from all over the world for the sixteen hours each day. It is recorded that even the staunchest of sinners were converted at his mere word.

## Being Catholic: We Celebrate

### Week 3:

#### Topics covered:

- The Sacraments
- Symbols
- The Eucharist
- Celebrating Milestones

#### Questions to ask:

1. What is a ritual?
2. What is your favorite ritual in life? How do you feel when you celebrate it?
3. Can you remember the celebration of a particular sacrament that was particularly moving?
4. Why do you think people want to have their child baptized, even if they don't necessarily go to church often?

#### Activities to do:

1. The next time there is a baptism at your church, pay close attention to the words the priest uses and what he does. What strikes you the most?
2. Pay attention to your posture the next time you approach the Eucharist during Mass. Are you being reverential? Are you focusing on what is about to happen when you receive the Eucharist? Try to really bring yourself into the moment and think about what is going on.
3. Write a short prayer for your family to pray together every night for a week.

#### Saints and Greats

1. Saint Isidore the Farmer (1070-1113) is known as the patron of Madrid, Spain as well as Leon, Saragosa, and Seville. He is also considered the patron of farmers, peasants, day laborers, and rural communities. Lastly, he is the patron of the United States National Rural Life Conference.
2. Saint Jude was one of the 12 Apostles of Jesus. He is the patron saint of desperate cases and his feast day is October 28
3. Saint Martha was loved, along with her sister Mary and brother Lazarus, by Jesus. Martha is the patron saint of servants and cooks.

## Being Catholic: We Each Play a Part

### Week 4:

#### Topics covered:

Our part in a community  
Servant Leadership

#### Questions to ask:

1. What groups do you belong to?
2. How does each group differ? How are they similar?
3. What do you like best about attending Mass?
4. What are ways you could participate more in your parish?
5. If someone asked you what Catholic believe – what would you tell them?

#### Activities to do:

1. If #3 above was difficult for you to answer, next time you attend Mass try to find one phrase or action that you look forward to. Learn more about it and what it means.
2. List 3 things you could do, or want to do, instead of attending Mass on Sunday. Why is it so important to attend Mass weekly?
3. Read the chapter 1 of the gospel of John. What phrase struck you most?

#### Saints and Greats

1. Brigid of Ireland is the patron saint of dairy workers. One day she gave away a whole pail of milk, and then began to worry about what her mother would say. She prayed to the Lord to make up for what she had given away. When she got home, her pail was full!
2. Saint Paschal Baylon (1540-1592) was a Franciscan lay brother and mystic. According to accounts of his early life, Paschal labored as a shepherd for his father, performed miracles, and was distinguished for his austerity.
3. Saint Ignatius of Loyola was born in the family castle in Guipúzcoa, Spain, the youngest of 13 children. Many first hated St. Ignatius because of his humble Lifestyle. Despite this, he attracted several followers at the university, including St. Francis Xavier, and soon started his order called The Society of Jesus, or Jesuits