

Session #1

Share Your Faith With Your Family

- At the start of the new school year, we welcome you back to St. Patrick PSR. This year, we will share with you a weekly handout that will help you in the process of formation of your child in the faith. Some of the following points will be helpful
- The Church and the School have only 10% of an impact on children. The parents have 90%. If the faith does not come primarily from your prioritizing it in your life, it will have little or no effect on your children.
- You do not teach by using blackboard, chalk, Bic pens and legal pads. You teach by the things that excite you, obviously give you joy, and are so much part of your life that you look forward to them, and make up for them when you miss them. An example: I can find a child who can tell me the year, make and nationality of every car that comes down the road. No one taught that child a course in auto history. Some one at home is "into cars" and this transfers into a child. Again, no one ever taught a course on Christmas. But find a child who knows nothing about Christmas.
- There are certain things that are non-negotiable in your inter-action with your children: brushing their teeth, bathing, going to school, getting up in the morning. These come through to your child as IMPORTANT. Please note that if Mass attendance each week is not one of these, you will be teaching your child that brushing their teeth is more important than God. Watch what is non-negotiable. Watch what is not and monitor them regularly.
- There are certain "teachable moments" that are too precious to pass up as parents. One is prayer with your children prior to going to bed. Examination of some of the good things they've done during the day and thanking God for them is important.
- In teaching prayers. teach prayer as well as prayers. Prayer ultimately is talking to God. Get across to the kids that they are never alone. God is always within them. There is nothing that a person and God cannot handle together. Encourage and give the experience of each in the evening prayers.
- Among the vocal prayers are the following which will be helpful to pray and teach the meaning of at home. It is better to go through them with your child and then begin to pray them in rotation together with spontaneous prayers each evening.

Our Father

Our Father who are in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary full of Grace. the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death Amen.

Glory Be To the Father

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified died and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty whence he shall come to judge the living and the death. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sin, the Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting Amen.

When the child has all of the above prayers memorized he r she is in a position to recite the Rosary. since in point of fact, he or she already knows all of the prayers that are part of the rosary.

First in a Series

Remember, your child's appreciation of the faith will be what yours is. If it is important to you it will be important to him or her. If it is not important to you, there is little we can do to make it important in their lives. Help us help you help your child.

Session #2
Share Your Faith With Your Family

GOD

- What is important to you will be important to your children. Tell them:
 - Why you believe in God
 - What God means to you.
 - Believing in God helps you live life well because you know you will live forever
 - Right now Grandpa, Great Grandpa, relative, friend, has died.
 - Because you believe in God, you know they are with God and happy forever.
 - Some day, all of us, our whole family will be with God forever happy
 - Right now, we show love for God by the way we treat people
 - That's the way to get to heaven.
 - Tell them times in your life when you really experienced God's help
 - Tell them how often during the day you try to turn to God
 - Tell them sometimes it's hard to do what God wants - But it's always worth it.
 - Forever is a long time

- Share with your children several times in your life when God really pulled you out of a jam.

- Share with your children the way you first came to realize God's presence in your life.

- Share with them how your parents showed you how to love God.

- Share with them who God is:
 - The one who made everything on earth and every person
 - The one who always was and always will be
 - The one who knows our lives from beginning to end.
 - The one who has loved us from all eternity.

- Take them to see the church
 - Where you were baptized
 - Where you received 1st Communion, Confirmation
 - Where you were married

- Have them draw pictures of
 - Things God has made
 - The church where they learn about God
 - other...

- Share with them how we show love for God:
 - Obedience
 - Prayer - Tell them why you pray with them each evening
 - What the prayers mean
 - Why you feel it's important to say them.
 - Doing the things they are supposed to do at home, school and play
 - Help them form the habit of doing something nice for another each day.

O God help me to change the things that can be changed
Accept the things that cannot be changed
And know the difference between the two.

Session #3

Sharing Your Faith With Your Family

PRAY

Set up a schedule for teaching your young people the prayers that are part of our heritage:

Our Father Hail Mary Glory Be Apostles' Creed

Explain the meaning of each of the prayers to them. Then pray them with the children till they know them by heart. in the evening prior to going to bed. Move on to the next prayer.

Also, teach your children to talk to God in their own words. Tell God about their problems, hurts; tell them how they love God. Explain each of the verses of the prayers. At the beginning of the day, have them make the sign of the cross on rolling out of bed. Show and teach them that by this they dedicate their day to God - ask God's blessings.

For the little ones. In the evening kneel with them and look back on the day. On a sheet of paper indicating the days of the week, have them identify a good thing they have done. Put a star down for each. Then ask how often they have failed to do good or slipped and done something they wish they hadn't. If apologies were made the listing for the day remains intact. If there was no apology, a star gets erased. Consider having your child put this sheet folded up into the collection basket on Sunday. This will teach that we respond to God by all we do each day. On Sunday, we:

- Give God seven days of faithful service
- Gather and are supported by people who see life as we do - Gift of God who told us we're living forever.
- Experience God in the Word of God
- Experience God in Mass and Communion.

CHURCH

Take your child to the Church and explain the following:

- Holy Water Fount and Sign of the Cross with Holy Water to remind us of our baptism and commit our day to God - thinking and acting like Jesus
- Altar - Place where Mass is offered. Also back altar where Tabernacle is.
- Tabernacle: Gold cabinet where Jesus is present under appearances of bread and lives with us always
- Genuflecting. Touching the floor with our right knee as sign of reverence for Jesus present.
- Mass: We join our list of the good things we've done each day to the total gift of Self that Jesus offered at Mass. and thank God for the gift of life.
- Vestment Color Symbols: Red. Love. Green, Hope Purple Repentance White - Joy
- Advent: 4 weeks of preparation for the coming of Jesus on Christmas
- Christmas: Birth of Jesus
- Lent: Preparation for the celebration of Easter
- Easter: Celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus which will be what we will do also.
- Candle: Symbol of our lives. Candle gives light and is consumed in the process. We too give love to the world and are consumed in the process
- Stained Glass Windows: Explain the scene, person, each one depicts. When in doubt, call Fr. Mark.
- Stations of the cross: 14 steps of Jesus' journey to the cross out of love for us.
- Chalice: Golden cup into which wine is poured which becomes Blood of Christ at Mass
- Mass Books: Sacramentary: Book containing the prayers for the Mass
- Lectionary: Book containing the scripture readings for the Mass.
- Sanctuary Lamp: Symbol of the Community's constant love for Christ. Must be kept lit always.
- Palms: Sharing in Christ's joyful entry into Jerusalem.
- Ashes: Last year's Palms, reminding us of our failures and asking God's forgiveness.
- Marble scene under the main altar: Melchisedech offering bread and wine for Abraham, Father of the Jewish Community.
- Statues on High Altar: Upper Center: St. Patrick
 Lower Left: St. Peter - with keys of kingdom
 Lower Right: St. Paul who gave his life for God by the sword.

Session #4 Share Your Faith With Your Family

Parents: This handout is for you. You have 90% more impact on your children's growth and development more than we do. To share things with your children that are important, your solid backing of them by making them top priority in your life is absolutely essential. The following questions are ones that should be asked by parents of themselves:

- Do I see religion as a legacy I've been given that says the following to me:
- You were made to live forever with your God
- This life is where you establish your commitment consistently to see life this way
- How does this realization affect the judgments you make, the decisions you make, the goals you choose
- How will I share this with my children?
- This having been said, please reflect on the following:
 - Is attendance at Mass a non-negotiable in my house as is the kids' brushing their teeth:
 - Do I join my children in their prayers at the end of the day as a regular and cherished task?
 - Do I myself and with my children, try to have us operate on: What would Jesus do? "think?"
 - Do we celebrate the feast days of the kids' patron saints? Do we tell them of the stories of their lives?
 - Do we read Bible Stories to the Kids? There are many useful books available.
 - Do we sit down and explain the meaning of the holidays of Christmas and Easter to the children?
 - Do we frequently share with them the key moments of our own faith life – the churches we attended, the places where we received the sacraments for the first time, the place we were married, the place they lived when they were born, where we were working at the time and events that meant a great deal to them at that time.

In spelling out the life that is the faith, help them see the following by the way you live:

- We live in a less than perfect world – don't be surprised if things go wrong.
- We are on a pilgrim journey towards the life for which we were created. This does not mean that we will have a paradise on earth. They crucified Christ.
- They will find times when things are tough and yet they will have to put up with it.
- We have been called to be a special people by God.
- We have been called to know that we are all going to live forever,.
- We are called to qualify for that life by showing love, care for others.
- Teach them that people are more important than things
- We best show our love for God by the way we treat others.
- How well do we model this with our children?
- Help your children see: For the good we experience: Thank you Jesus. For the things that don't go as we would like them to go – Let's take them in stride since it's apparently not yet God's time for them to happen.
- We have been made to live with our God in a life of peace and joy forever. How well is this reflected in how we deal with disappointments in our home?

Share with the kids:

The time you felt closest to God.
The thing you did that you feel pleased God most
The day God felt most proud of you
The day you first decided that God was important to you.
The day God blessed you most profoundly>
How you felt on your first communion day.

As the kids grow older

How you felt on your confirmation day? Who was the Bishop who confirmed you?
Rent the video, DVD: Jesus of Nazareth, and The Ten Commandments.
See them with the kids and talk about them

- Teach them joy – look for the good things. They find what they look for.
- Tell them that before the world was made, God saw them, loved them, and because of their good points and in spite of their negative ones, God liked what he saw and gave them life.

The Holidays are Coming

Think about the Advent Candles as a Family Devotion in the Home.

Session #5 Sharing Your Faith With Your Family

Parents:

- You will transmit to your children life's most important lessons wordlessly.
- The ultimate religious question is : "What's it all about?"
- It could also be stated: Does life have any meaning? or What's really important.
- You have a legacy you want to share with your children.
- It's a way of looking at life that will help them deal with life's hurts, accept life's joys, share with others, know real meaning
- This is the most precious gift you give them - a chance to get their heads together. Unfortunately you have to model it.

We as Catholics differ radically from the world.

- The thinking of the world ends with death - We know that life only begins with death - We're to live forever. That's very different
- You have to model for your children how life's hurts are taken in stride. How unreliable are life's joys. How elusive what we want
- What are some of the ways you can show them what is really important:
The way we treat people We love God by the way we treat people. God sees things differently than we

Here's what one couple taught their kids - and they came up with it themselves.

Every time they went shopping, the kids wanted this intend game, this I - pod, this CD Player, etc. On being told they couldn't afford it, the kids' response was - put it on the credit card. They decided "This noise is going to stop."

How? Very simply. THEY BEGAN THE PROGRAM OF 'BILL NIGHT'.

Every other Wednesday, after dinner, the dishes went into the washer or the sink.

Each child - 3 boys - 9, 11, and 13 - was given a pen and paper.

Mom went to her purse and found \$7.50. Record it. Dad went to his wallet - found \$10 - Total it up.

Mom took out her check - Total it. Dad brought his check - Total it.

Then came the bills:

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| House payment | House insurance | Car Payment | Car Insurance | Car Payment #2 |
| Car Insurance #2 | Credit Card #1 | Credit Card #2 | Credit Card #3 | Heat |
| Light | Phone | Cable | Internet | |

And the money ran out. Kids had question posed to them: We haven't eaten yet. What do we do. After long searching, one of the kids noticed that a minimum payment on one of the credit cards would free up \$40 for food. Mom then said: "OK - now let me tell you what this means: No treats. No new clothes No extras No going out and a whole lot of Peanut Butter and Jelly for two weeks.

They did this three times and - wonder of wonders - the NOISE stopped.

But look at what happened. Any time you can change the attitudes of a 9, 11, and 13 year old boy in six weeks from seeing parents as source of unlimited funding for entertainment, to partners together in struggling to make ends meet with limited resources, you better learn to do it. They also made the connection in six weeks of money and working and living. Parents did this on their own. And you do many of the same incredible teaching. Talk over with other parents waiting for their PSR Kids some of the things that you've been able to do and get across to kids.

Show your kids by your attitudes, life, and daily routine that you

- Believe in an eternity where alone we will be perfectly happy with a God who loves us profoundly
- How you handle life's challenges without falling apart.
- How you know that you're never alone - God is always with you.
- What your parents taught you about life and what it's all about. Use stories - they'll never forget them.
- Get across to them that we think differently from others - we're going to live forever - there are a whole lot more ways in which we think differently, act differently from others - but do not judge them. Share with other parents how you learned what's important and what is of lesser importance and times when you were really able to get this across to the kids in ways that amazed even you.

The Serenity Prayer is one you may want to tell your kids about and pray it with them.

Lord - Help me change what can be changed. Help me Accept what can't be changed.
And help me know the difference between the two.

Session # 6
Sharing Your Faith With Your Family

*"In God we live and move and have our being."
"For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday which is past."*

- Religion is one possible way of putting meaning into life. It is worldview - a whole approach to life. The Catholic Christian world view sees life as gift of the creator God, who became one of us in Jesus. Jesus came to restore us to God and show us how life is to be lived, Christ also tells us that we are to live forever. Knowing this, we are able to deal with life's challenges We enjoy life's pluses with gratitude. We take life's negatives in stride, knowing we are to live eternally.
- To choose this as our way to see life, we need to know first, who God is.

WHO IS GOD? We are created in time. We live moment by moment. Time has a beginning and an end. Time is the measure of created motion, according to a BEFORE and an AFTER. The earth revolves on its axis once. This takes "X" amount of duration. We call X a DAY. 365 X is a year. 100 years a century, etc. The only time we live is this present moment and as soon as we say NOW - it's history. The present moment, once lost, cannot be recovered - or lived over.

HOWEVER GOD CREATED THE WORLD - UNIVERSE - OF WHICH TIME IS A PART. GOD HAS NO BEGINNING NO END: What we experience moment by moment, God has present as ONE ETERNAL NOW

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| Eternity for us is: | Unending successive duration. |
| Eternity for God is: | Total and simultaneous possession of unending life. |

God has all of time present to Himself as ONE ETERNAL NOW.

My life has been known to God, beginning to end from before the world was made
As long as God was God, I was totally known to God - my life before God – He saw it – liked it – decided to publish.

How long is eternity? Suppose one had a ball the size of the earth entirely composed of sand. And suppose a bird were to come once every thousand years and take one grain of sand and carry it off. By the time the entire ball would have been carted off in this fashion. eternity would be beginning.

As your child grows older and begins to see the many things that can distract us from what is important, you might begin contrasting time on earth of 80 years or so, with eternity. The image of a journey might help. On a trip, your whole trip is guided by where you are going. Life is a journey. The thing to remember is that Life goes beyond time to eternity. When we stand before God. WE LEAVE WHAT WE HAVE - WE BRING WHO WE ARE.

Another notion that is important: Creation is not a date on an ancient calendar. It is an ongoing process on which I depend moment by moment. If I were to hold a pencil aloft in my hand, it will remain aloft for as long as I support it. If I remove my fingers from holding it up for a fraction of a second, it falls to the floor. That's creation. It goes on all the time or we fall into nothing.

Share with your kids: How much difference it is to know that we are going to live for all eternity with God. Share that we are never alone. How one of the reasons we go to church weekly is to be with people who share our belief that we will live forever and will help us live it. A great reality check is: If I were to be looking at God in 10 minutes what decisions, priorities, concerns, necessities, and preferences would change immediately?

Session # 7

Share Your Faith With Your Family

Last week, we looked at God as the one in whom we live and move and have our being. What we experience moment by moment, God as present to God as NOW. We are very much loved by God. From before the world was made, God saw every day of our life - start to finish - and said YES. Many times share with your children that we are a family that lives for a time on earth but with God forever. Things are not perfect in this life, but when we come home to God, we will enjoy life forever. We don't have to be afraid then. We are never alone. And God loves you and always has.

This week, we look into Faith. Faith means believing what God has told us about life, its meaning, what is important, etc., even though we can't prove it. It is really two things:

1. It is believing the vision of life - it lasts forever - that Jesus shared with us
2. It is allowing this vision to shape the way we look at all of life.
3. It is knowing that not all people see life this way, and many that do see it this way, don't always live it.
4. It is also a trust that God will fulfill the promises that God's made to us - You're going to be with me always.
5. It also means that how we live on earth will be what qualifies us for eternity with God
6. It also means that we show gratitude and love for God by the way we treat people.

Work with your children to help them see that faith is a whole different way of looking at life. Life lasts forever. Jesus tells us this. Sometimes we forget and think we only live on earth. We have to remind ourselves that life is forever. One of the beautiful ways of doing this is keeping in touch with God by praying.

Teach your children:

- God is always with them
- God is always listening.
- God cares
- God wants to know everything that is important to them.
- God wants them to show love for God by sharing with and caring for others.

How about a Christian take on Halloween?

Historically, Halloween comes from "All Hallows Eve." Hallows is old English for Holy Ones or saints. Halloween was originally the celebration of the evening before the Feast of All Hallows (All Saints). There was an old legend that said that on the eve of All Saints, people who are now living with God were given permission to return to the places and people which were important to them on their earthly journey. In time this became a celebration of Casper the Ghost and other items that are part of Halloween today. Give your young people an appreciation of what Halloween is and perhaps after the Trick or Treating, gather the family for a short prayer and a time of sharing with them how much their grandparents whom they've never met appreciate them, love them, and want to know them when the children join them in their life with God.

What are some of the things that faith tells us that children need to know and remember:

- It is God who decided to send us to the families to which we belong.
- It is God who gave each of the particular personality, character, gifts and talents they have
- It is God who decided that they best be born in this 21st century, in this country, with this racial, ethnic background, with these brothers and sisters, Mom and Dad.
- It is God who is counting on them to be able to take good things with gratitude, bad things knowing we are going to live forever, and know that we don't need a lot of THINGS to be happy
- It is God who is counting on them to be caring people, grateful for what they have, not looking at what they don't have.

Share with the kids how you had people in your life who taught you life is gift of God which will last forever. Tell them stories of some of the saints that inspired you. Tell them of some of the things that made you grateful that you have the faith to guide you through life. The more you share your own faith stories with your children, the persons who loved you deeply and how they showed it in your life journey, the more they will bond both with you and with the faith. Also, remember the "teachable moments" in your child's life. One powerful one is prior to going to bed. Pray with them - Our Father, for example. Ask them what good things they've done for others today. Have them thank God for the chance to love God in others. Have them silently pray for someone they possibly could have treated better. Always remember, you are the best teachers. You have 90% more impact on kids than we have as school and church. And you're good at it. Our job is to remind you are good and help you get better.

Session #8 Share Your Faith With Your Family

God Wills the Salvation of All People

Parents: Before putting a religious interpretation on life, we must have an understanding of three things:

1. Who God is. This we reflected on. We live moment by moment. For God, all time is one Eternal Now.
2. What faith is: This we reflected on. Faith is accepting truth that cannot be proven by the senses.
3. God wills the salvation of all people. Our own faith must clearly understand how God speaks to all people. This we look at today.

In the plan of God for all people, God speaks:

- To each individual in the depth of his/her being - inviting acceptance, care and love from them.
- To each individual God also speaks in the Jewish Community - their life, love for God, people
- To each individual God speaks through Jesus.

While Christ, who is God become one of us, was on earth personally.

After the Ascension, through the lives of Christians who follow Christ's example & know we live forever.

For us as Catholics, we believe:

- God became one of us in Jesus. We are to live forever. Our lives are to remind people to take God and God's word seriously
- We respect the witness of the people of Israel, whose lives remind the world of God's love for all people.
- We respect all religions in their witness to God in ways they see valid
- We respect all those who live life honestly and well for others. even if they know no God.
- We respect the honest and authentic response of every person to LIFE ITSELF as an authentic response to its Creator.

It is important that, in light of the above, you teach your children in the home.

- God loved us so much that He became one of us in Jesus.
- Jesus shows us how someone He has chosen to be part of His special people is to live life. It is different from life of others.
- We are to remember every day that we are born to live forever. And this makes all the difference in the world.
- What other people fear - death - is just birth into the life for which we were created. It's like graduation.
- Tell them about people you knew and loved who are now awaiting your coming to eternity - parents, teachers, family friends.
- Point out to them that when they stand before God, they will leave what they have and take who they are.
- Because we live forever, we know this is a less than perfect world.
- We thank God for the good things we receive and we don't become greedy but share with others.
- When things get tough, we take things in stride because we know it's not all here.
- In this way, and in the reverence we show for God in our lives, we show others that life is not all here.
- We try to live for others so well that others will in their own way take God seriously.
- If we do live as Christ called us to live well, then perhaps some will even join us in preaching the Gospel with our lives.
- Point out to them we are never going to think as others in the world think.
- Point out it's difficult to live differently from others. You are never part of the in-group.
- Give the kids examples of how knowing you're going to live forever got you through some tough spots.
- Remind them that they show love for God by the way they treat others.
- Remind them that morning prayers are the way we refocus on what is really important - the God with whom we spend eternity.

Remember you teach by modeling:

What is important to you will be evident to them.

Watch your attitudes towards material things.

Watch the things that really turn you on - this will be important to them.

Carefully look at what is "normal" in your home.

Make sure that among the "normal" things that happen at your house, church, prayers, and God are put up there too.

The things that bother you, upset you, anger you - these are things that will be important to the children.

And a good Philosophy of Parenting is as follows:

- God alone changes the hearts and minds of people - children too.
- God does this in his own time and in his own way. We have no control.
- Take credit for nothing. If good things happen - thank you Jesus.
- If negative things happen - don't beat yourself up. It's not yet God's time

Session #9 Share Your Faith With Your Family

- Parents: The following items are important to remember about confession:
- Your attitudes toward confession will be those of your children. Check these out first.
 - We teach your children: "Confession is an apology (from us) and a hug (from God)
 - On an adult level, confession is periodic self inventory. Not to do it regularly is foolhardy.
 - When you get your new calendar, Easter is Spring; Memorial Day - Summer; Labor Day - Fall Christmas - Winter. Mark off the Saturday before which is "Reconciliation Day." Go to confession as a family. You lead the way.

Share the following with your children:

- Since their last confession they have done good things which far outweigh the negative. Remember these.
- Identify the things they need forgiveness for:

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| <p>Things they've done</p> <p>Apologize to the Lord in prayer and go to the confession area.</p> <p>Bless me, Father. My last confession was X weeks ago.</p> <p>I want the Lord to forgive me for:...</p> | <p>Things they should have done and haven't</p> <p>Then they will tell God in their own words: Thank you for the good I've been able to do. Sorry about the things that are wrong. Help me be the person you call me to be. The priest will tell them what penance they can do to make up for the wrong. They will then leave, go into the chapel, church, recite the penance, thank God and resume their faith journey</p> <p>It will be very important that you get across to them is that the one gift God never fails to be pleased with is our own sense of needing help, forgiveness, and His presence in our lives.</p> | <p>Ways they've done things.</p> |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
- Remind them that God does not expect us to be perfect - that's why he gave us confession - He knows we'll make mistakes. But God insists on honesty.
- Honestly share with them that we are our own judges and accusers. We apologize and ask forgiveness which always comes.
- It will be your task to remind them that when they've done something seriously wrong, they need confession before communion.
- Remind them also that things "make sense" on six different levels.
- Therefore if something makes sense, I still must ask on what level it makes sense. WWJD?. WWJT?

Guidelines for Decision-making

We receive data on right or wrong from six sources, each with guidelines of its own.

SOURCE

GUIDELINES

Emotion/Feeling

1. If it feels good - it is good.
2. If it is easier, it's better
3. If everyone's doing it - it's got to be OK!

Reason

1. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
2. If two adults agree on an action, and it harms no one, it's OK.

Media

1. If it's possible, it's permissible
2. To question this is to be bigoted and un-American

Peers

1. If one person can do it, others can
2. What's all right for one group is all right for all groups

Catholic Faith

1. Jesus' commandment: Love others as I've loved you.""
2. Great Commandment: "Love God above all and neighbor as self."
3. The Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor, etc..
4. The Works of Mercy: Matt. 25:31-46. Feed the hungry, etc..
5. Ten Commandments: (Revised--edited by Jesus)

Session #10 Share Your Faith With Your Family

THE BIBLE.

- * **Bible** Not a Book but a Library 72 Books 45 in Old Testament 27 in the New Testament
Old Testament O.T.: Jewish Scriptures - God speaks to all people in their hearts and in the witness of the Jewish People.
New Testament N.T.: Christian Scriptures - God speaks to all people in their hearts and also in the witness of Christians.
- * **Authors:** Many different human writers, ranging from highly learned people to swine-herders - Styles of writing different.
- * **Ancient:** 1st books - 1250 - 1200BC Most recent: Gospel of John - Final form: 120AD 1400 years to write. Newest 1900 yrs
- * **Languages:** O.T. - Hebrew, Aramaic, (7 books in Greek) N.T.
- * **Places:** Written in Holy Land, Egypt, Rome, Greece, Asia Minor
- * **Form of Writing** O.T. & N.T.: History (Few dates) Books of Teaching (Most books) Prophecy (Spokespersons of God)
- * **Oral Form** Most O.T. & N.T. Books in oral form first - then written
- * **Chronology:** Call of Abraham: 1900BC Israel in Egypt 1700 - 1300BC Moses led Israel out of Egypt: 1300 - 1200 BC
Saul, David, Solomon: 1020- 900BC Assyrian Captivity: 721BC Babylonian Captivity 587 - 532BC
Maccabees Revolt: 142 - 67BC Roman Rule: 67BC - 70 AD Birth of Jesus: 4BC
- * **Literary Forms** Very important. Shape way you read something. Note: In reading the newspaper, you shift gears six times. The following types require shifting of mindset: News Story Editorial Page Sports Page Horoscope Comic Page. Animals talking doesn't bother us on the comic page. It would on the News story
- * **Bible Literary Forms**
History: Not scientific. Broad sweeping strokes. e.g. Gettysburg Address = US History in one sentence
Stories: Telling of a truth in story form: The story was the Legal Pad of primitive peoples. It recorded their beliefs.
Poetry: Images and symbols to illustrate the wonderful celebration of God's deeds to our people
Law Codes: Guidelines impacting the behavior expected of God's people.
Prophecy: Not foretelling future. Prophets were spokespersons for God. At times spoke of future.
Parables: Stories intended to teach a particular point.
Apocalypse: An obsolete form of writing. Addressing the fears of a community, a tremendous, generic, upheaval is described which is of horrendous proportions. Evil appears to be overcoming good. But then God in the end triumphs. The message: "If God can handle a tragedy of this consequence, what you experience now is no problem." Most messages of the destruction of the world are misread since this form is not seen.

Inspiration: Inspiration is a technical term: The mystery of inspiration means: God so moved and inspired the sacred writer, in decision to write, selection of materials and sources, research, and actually putting pen to paper, that the author is not the human person but God. The author is the instrument uses to write. I am the author of my signature - not the pen.

Canonicity: Canon means "List." Canonicity addresses the question: Which books have been inspired by God in the Old & New Testament. As to the Old Testament, in Judaism there were 2 schools of thought. The Community in Jerusalem accepted as canonical only those books written originally in Hebrew. The Community of Jews in Alexandria, Egypt, who were more numerous, learned, and on top of the issue at the time of the early church also accepted as inspired by God 7 books which had a Greek original. Originally, the Christian Bible utilized the listing from the Alexandria Community for 1200 years. In Martin Luther's lifetime, he went back to the listing of the Jerusalem community. Hence Catholic O.T. = 45 Books; Protestant Bible = 39 books.

Writing the N.T.

Gospels: 1. The person of Jesus and some of His teachings were spoken by the apostles and disciples. They were eye-witnesses
2. As the stories were spoken, they took slightly different form in various communities
3. As eyewitnesses grew older, the stories came to be written down to preserve accuracy
4. The variations in oral form found their way into written form.

Epistles: 1. Paul, who wrote most of them, went from town to town using the same procedure. He spoke in synagogues. Some accepted, some rejected him. He would take his followers and to them were added those from the non-Jewish (Gentile) community. He would remain there, teaching, establishing leadership, and putting them on their feet. Then he would move on. The Epistles letters written to communities already established, responding to questions asked or addressing problems arisen.

Note that none of the books of the gospels, or of the epistles contain all the teachings of Jesus. Gospels give us Jesus the person. Epistles are for communities already baptized. The Book of Revelation - only prophetic book of the N.T. is apocalyptic in form.

Note that the Bible is not a blueprint to found a church.. The New Testament is the product of the Church . It was not until 393 at the Council of Hippo and 397 at the Council of Carthage, that from all the books available, the 27 books that are now part of the N.T. were so designated. The church existed couple of centuries before the NT as such came to be. Again we have no original copies of Bible Books as written by the author.

Scripture References. Matt. 5:7 means: Go to Matthew's Gospel. Chapter 5. Verse 7.

Session #11 Share Your Faith With Your Children

The Creation Stories of the Bible

Biblical Account of Creation Some preliminary facts need to be set forth:

- At the time of creation - apart from God - there was no one present.
- God wanted people to know that God is creator and sustainer of all life - our world - our universe.
- This is what God was sharing with the sacred author. The audience the writer addressed could not read..
- There were no books as we know them. Few could read. The form transmitting truth was the story.
- Stories of God's role as Creator of all things were told at campfires by night thereby being handed down from generation to generation. The stories were the vehicle for conveying the truths God wished to be known.
- Note that once these truths had been shared by God, the human author could draw from sources available to him to construct the stories he was charged to convey.
- In Genesis 1: 3, God is said to create light & dark. In Genesis 1:16, God is said to create the sun, which is the cause of light. From this we conclude that God was not giving Moses a scientific account of creation, which he'd not have understood anyhow, but a simple account, illustrated with details of the parts of creation, of the fact God made everything.
- Another important note must be made - there are two creation stories -one in Genesis, Chapter one, and one in Genesis, Chapter 2. In the first chapter, God creates people from nothing (1:27). In the second chapter, God creates people from the dust of the earth(2:7). Again, in the second creation story the additional fact that God created women and men equal in every way - she was from his very self. It is equality that is stressed not degree of importance or chronology.
- Moses took the fact of revelation, put it into story form, and taught it to the people. The story was the book which contained the truths. To obtain the truths, knowing the above facts, we look at the story and unearth the truths contained therein.

CREATION STORY (GENESIS)

MESSAGE CONTAINED

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Creation of the world in six days. God rested on the 7 th . Genesis: 1:1 - 2:3 | 1. God created everything in 6 days and rested on the 7 th . so are we to do likewise. |
| 2. "God saw it was good" is repeated each day in Genesis 1. | 2.. The universe, human beings are good. Creation is good. . |
| 3. People were to enjoy the Garden but not to eat of the tree in the center of the Garden. Gen. 2: 16-17 | 3. Man/woman were created with the power of choice and were held accountable. |
| 4. The serpent tempted Eve. Eve tempted Adam - Both disobeyed. perceived they were naked and hid from God. Gen. 3: 1-9. | 4. Man/woman disobeyed. One result was immediately perceived - a loss of "togetherness" within self. Sin enters into our world. |
| 5. Man/woman are driven out of the garden. Man - In sweat earn your bread. Woman - In pain you will bear children. Serpent - You will crawl on your belly. Gen. 3: 14-19 | 5. As a result of sin, things have changed in the world. Hereafter, the effort of work, the pain of child bearing, and the crawling of the serpent will serve as reminders of humanity's sin. |
| 6. A descendant of the woman will crush the head of the serpent and the serpent will lie in wait for her heel. Gen. 3: 15 | 6. One day, a descendant of the woman will enable people to turn things around, and enable people to move beyond the evil done. |
| 7. "God created man in the image of Himself, in the image of God He created him. Gen. 1/26-27 | 7. Human beings are in a mysterious way "God-like" More on this later. |
| 8. "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." Gen. 1: 28. and conquer it." | 8. Humanity is given charge of the management of the earth, Learning its powers and harnessing its forces is part of people's response to the creator God. |

In examining the diagram, some further reflection would be in order. The truth contained in this story is simply stated as: God created all things. The story-teller, to anchor this truth more vividly speaks of God creating sun, moon, stars, skies, etc.. The God spoken of is a being capable of instantaneous creation from nothing. Such a being doesn't need six days to do what is done in a flash. The author, in addition to spelling out the "all" also had another truth in mind: People are to work six days and "rest" on the seventh. If this is the way God did it in the story, people will more readily perceive this to be the model for human life: Work six days - rest on the seventh and give thanks to the God to whom we owe everything. Bible Creation stories are intended to tell us that the universe and all in it - including people - were created by God. As Catholics, we can subscribe to the evolution theory while affirming that God specially creates the immortal essence of the human person.

Session #12 Share Your Faith With Your Children

The Religious Worldview of the Bible

1. The world and all that is in it - humanity and the material world have their origin in the action of the Creator God.
2. All things are good - People are good
3. Human beings are: Specially created by God. They are:
God-like- "made in our image and likeness."
4. People's God-likeness must be viewed more profoundly:
 - a. Human beings can be viewed as "God-like" in that, like God, they have intelligence and the power of choice.
 - b. However, this is only a limited view of the term "God-like." It says nothing about the use of these qualities properly, since behavior too has something to do with being "God-like." After all even an Adolph Hitler, who was responsible for the death of six million persons in World War II is "God-like" in this sense.
 - c. To understand what it means to be "God-like" in a more dynamic way, consider the following:
 - i. A Creator is one who brings order, harmony, beauty out of chaos.
 - ii. To become God-like, we must take the chaos of our own lives, and create order, harmony, direction, beauty, peace.
 - d. God gives to each of us the "raw material" or "chaos" of:
 - i. Self - and calls me to create "Person"
 - ii. Relationship - and calls me to create "Love"
 - iii. My Life - and calls me to create direction, order, meaning, beauty, peace - take charge of my life.
 - e. Note further: This is my primary response to God
 - i. It takes place near no church
 - ii. It is something I do each moment of each day not one hour a week
 - iii. When I go to church on Sunday, I give God 7 days of faithful response to God.
5. A Note on Sin as viewed in the Biblical Story:

Sin is described in the Scripture Story as a disorder - lack of an order that should be present - Fragmentation

 - a. Within Self: Lack of "togetherness," "harmony" within self. Adam & Eve saw they were naked and hid from God
 - b. Within the Man - Woman Relationship On being confronted by God, each blamed the other
 - c. Within Family Relationships God accepted Abel's worthy sacrifice - rejected Cain, his brother's unworthy offering. Jealousy entered in and Cain killed his brother.
 - d. Within Society - Nations and God In pride all peoples gathered to build the Tower of Babel to reach the heavens on their own. Their efforts were thwarted. Communication became difficult among large groups.

SUMMARY - Things you can get across to your children:

1. Work with your children and over time help them see that faith in God is a legacy given us - a worldview - a whole different way of looking at life. Knowing we will live forever makes good things be received gratefully, and tough things be accepted knowing that we are to live forever. This means we're on earth for a time - but we're made to live with God forever.
2. Help them see that they are in the world but not of the world. God counts on them to remind all people they're made to live forever. They will do this by how they live and become peace-makers among people.
3. Show them that response to God is not an hour on Sunday. It is a challenge so to live that others know God loves all people.
4. Help them appreciate the trust God has placed in them to "preach" the Gospel of God's love by their lives.
5. Help them see they give glory to God by transforming self into person, relationships into love and taking responsibility for their own lives and creating in those lives beauty, order, harmony, and truth.
6. Help them see the connection between belief and behavior
7. Help them see sin as absence of an order or harmony that should be present, as outlined above.
8. Help them see that others count on experiencing God by the way the baptized Christian treats them. And they are baptized.

Session #13
Share Your Faith With Your Family
Jesus of Nazareth - New Testament as Resource

Parents. This handout will share the Person of Jesus - God become one of us. The primary sources are Scripture - the New Testament - and Tradition. These are the twin sources of revelation. About the N.T. note the following:

- No book of the New Testament, nor the combination of all the 27 books, contain all of teaching of Jesus. The Gospels are the written form of the preaching about Jesus in four sections of the Christian community. They give us how Jesus was perceived and something of His life and teaching. Acts is the history of the early Church. The Epistles are letters to communities already instructed in the faith, clarifying, correcting or encouraging. The Book of Revelation is written in "Apocalyptic Style." It portrays a God who triumphs over monumental evil and who can certainly move us beyond our present struggles.
- Go to the Prologue of John's Gospel (1:1-14) for a magnificent description of Jesus as "Word of God," Creator from the beginning, who became one of us in Christ. Jesus here is seen as identified with the creator God. He is seen as Word of God. He is seen as coming into the world He created and "His own received Him not." He is seen as the awaited one and Messiah who was promised. He was also seen as much more: The Creator God, become one of us in the person of Christ.
- Go to Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (1: 12-20) Here Jesus is seen as "image of the invisible God." He is seen as the one who redeemed us. He is the one who holds all things together. He is Head of His body which is the church.
- Jesus made His appearance in 4BC. The Christian calendar started in the year 756, not 752 of the Roman calendar.
- Mary is Mother of Jesus - Joseph - foster Father. The initiation of the birth of Jesus was the result of the action of the Spirit not ordinary sexual union. One childhood incident consisted in Jesus being found in the Temple after his parents found he was missing on the journey home. Jesus is then mentioned as returning to Nazareth and living with Joseph the Carpenter and Mary. He is said to be growing in "Wisdom, age, and grace, before God and people.
- Jesus makes his first public appearance at the wedding feast at Cana where He changed the water into wine. Following this, Jesus walked the streets where people were to be found and spoke in several ways - in words, in deeds and in His presence. Some listened and followed, shared deeply. Others turned away. He chose 12 to be close followers. One would betray Him.
- Each Gospel presents Jesus from a different perspective. From each we see Jesus from 4 areas of the First Century Community..
MARK: Earlier picture of Jesus. Almost eye-witness. Tradition ascribes it to Mark who wrote down Peter's preaching with a focus on the suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord.
MATTHEW This Gospel reflects the preaching of the community on Jesus to a Jewish audience with a focus on the sermons of Christ, beginning with the Sermon on the Mount and followed by another four other addresses.
LUKE This Gospel shares the preaching about Jesus to a Gentile or non-Jewish community. The outline of the Gospel is the Journey to Jerusalem where the momentous events of suffering, death, and resurrection. *The Gospel of Mathew Mark, and Luke are often called "Synoptic Gospels. They have a similar approach*
JOHN The record of how Jesus was perceived by the Christian Community at the end of the first century. This is the most theological of all the gospels reflecting John's writing as an elder of the Christ of his youth.

In the Gospels, we see Jesus as one who spoke of Himself and the Father (God) as one. We find one who forgave sin. He is pictured as having divine approbation on the occasion of the Baptism by John. He makes extraordinary statements: "Before Abraham came to be, I am." God speaks of Him at the transfiguration "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus calls all to repentance - that is a change of outlook. He speaks of a call to life that is eternal and spells out and models how this is to impact our living day to day. He calls people to a community that by its life speaks to the world of God's love for all

- We experience Christ in the Gospels:
 1. Through the words Jesus spoke.
 2. Through the stories - parables - Jesus taught
 3. Through the actions of Jesus - His attitudes, values,

SUMMARY: The early Christian Community saw Jesus as: God become one of us.; Fulfillment of the History of Promise that is Israel's experience; Visible sign of God's love, presence among us.; Endowed with a mission that transcended His own life time; Committed to fulfillment of that mission personally while among us and through the Church thereafter.

Parents: Our suggestion to you is that you use the three-fold process of experiencing Jesus listed just above the summary, come to know Christ personally, and introduce the God become one of us to your children as a Person you know.

Session #14 Share Your Faith With Your Child

God wills the Salvation of All People

Salvation refers to healing the break between God and our human family and its consequences.
These consequences are found on the front page of the daily paper.

If we were to shrink the population of the entire world to 100 people and maintain the percentages intact, thirty one out of the 100 people accept Christ as God become one of us. Seven tenths of the world go to God in other ways. To these, God speaks in the following ways:

1. To every human being, God speaks in the depths of their being, indicating that there is more to life than what appears to the senses. Any honest, authentic, sincere, response to life itself then, is an authentic response to God.
2. God also speaks to every person through the life and witness of the people of Israel. Their faithful response to God as they understand Him is an additional sign to those already spoken to by God that God has loved all people. Their witness to God – faithfully lived – challenges all others to take the God they perceive more seriously
3. In the fullness of time, God become one of us and in Christ reconciled the human race to God. Christ also showed us how to live, told us we are to live forever, and commissioned a community called Church to continue His presence in the world. Now the awareness of God's love for every human being was shown deep within the human person, thru the lived witness of the people of Israel, and also thru the lived witness of the Christian Church..

From the above we can conclude:

1. To be like God, every human being must respect the fact that God wills the salvation of all people.
2. Each must respect that fact that while it is true that God became one of us in Christ, God speaks to others in ways God Himself alone knows and chooses.
3. God speaks to every human being and informs them of God's existence and love for all.
4. The lived witness of the Jewish Community is an additional sign to all that God has loved all people.
5. The lived witness of those who accept Christ as God become one of us also tells all the world that God has loved all people.
6. Consequently, each human being must accept the fact that every authentic response to life itself is an authentic response to the Creator God.

Jesus Speaks of Church as Leaven, light, and salt.

1. Leaven: (Yeast)

1. Church is small by comparison to world - very small.
2. Church is spread throughout the world.
3. Church is radically different from world - its presence invites a new outlook.
4. The object of the church's presence is not to add new members to church (create new leaven), but to cause growth - in the awareness of others of God's love and the invitation of each person to serve God.
5. The church is to have the same effect on the world as yeast has in bread.

2. Salt:

1. Church is very small by comparison to world.
2. By her presence, the Church tries to bring awareness of God's love and compassion that is already within them.
3. As salt draws out flavor already within the food, Church draws awareness of God's love already within our hearts.

3. Light:

To the world, Church, as light brings:

1. The possibility of seeing life more clearly, perceiving its beauty more fully.
2. The ability to find meaning, direction, harmony and peace.
3. The ability to see the way life is to be lived.

All of these things must be kept in mind as we ask the question: What are the implications of being church for the individual and for the community. From an examination of these images one might conclude the following about the church and its members:

1. The vision of Church, of Jesus, will differ radically from that of the world. One must not look for support of the world for the vision of Jesus in the "wisdom" of any age.
2. Church is to live the ideals of Christ, knowing that these will often be opposed to "wisdom" of the world.
3. The role of Church is to critique the ideals, values, goals of the world in light of the gospel.
4. The living of this vision in deed will be costly in terms of criticism, ridicule. This is part of the tough love which Jesus lived to crucifixion.

John the Evangelist tells us that the world does not know us because it did not know Christ. We will ever be in the world – not of the world. And the words of Augustine will ever be true: You have made us for Yourself, Lord and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee.

ADULT ED SESSION #15

Share Your Faith With Your Family

The New Testament (Col. 1:12-20) reveals the following picture of Christ

- The early Christians were grateful for the call to be Christian Community.
- The community believed that through Jesus we are "redeemed" i.e. empowered to move beyond sin.
- Jesus is the image of the invisible God," Alpha and the Omega - creation's origin and end.
- Jesus is further the one who "holds all things together."
- Jesus is the head and Church is the body. Church is seen as linked with Jesus throughout all time.
- Jesus is "firstborn from the dead," the trail-blazer whom we are privileged to follow.
- Jesus is the fullness of God. God wills to reconcile all things to himself through Christ..

The Life of Jesus as the Gospels Present Christ

- Jesus appeared in 4 BC, (the starting point of the Christian Calendar erred by 4 years).
- Luke indicates Mary as Mother of Jesus, and Joseph, his foster father. His conception was brought about by God's spirit. Mary and Joseph were of the family of David, which placed Jesus in the family from which the promised one was to come. Jesus' birth was in Bethlehem, in a stable.
- There is one childhood incident mentioned in which Jesus is lost on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The 12 year old Jesus was found in the Temple discussing with the leadership of Israel whom he astounds by his knowledge of the Scriptures, Jesus then grew in "age, wisdom, and grace.
- Next, Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist and identified as the one to come by John.
- Jesus opens the next segment of his life, traveling the land preaching the "good news" and calling people to change their lives (repent).
- Jesus then appears at the Wedding Feast at Cana, where, in response to Mary's request, Jesus works His first miracle in changing water to wine to prevent the embarrassment of a young couple.
- During the public life of Jesus, Christ associated with the lowly, healing the sick, spreading hope. Jesus walked the streets of Israel, going where people were: home, marketplace, temple. Jesus spoke - in words, in deeds, and by his very presence. People listened. Some changed. Some turned away from him. He chose twelve - spent time with them and nurtured them. Of these one would betray him - the rest would run off when Jesus needed them most. But Jesus taught forgiveness. Having forgiven them, Christ entrusted to them the task of carrying out his Mission - be present to human beings for all time.
- Each of the gospels presents the person of Jesus from a different perspective - from each we gain a picture of Jesus as seen in the Christian community of the first century.

MARK presents the earlier picture of Jesus - the writing down of Peter's teachings with a focus on the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord.

MATTHEW is the gospel which also reflects Jesus preached to a Jewish audience but with a focus on the great sermons which the sacred author numbers as five and makes them outline of his writing

LUKE gives us the preaching about Jesus to a Gentile or non-Jewish audience. The sacred author tells us of a Jesus whose life unfolds as he gradually makes his way to Jerusalem where the journey climaxes in the suffering, death, and resurrection.

JOHN contains the record of how Jesus was understood by the Christian community at the end of the first century. The gospel is presented by the sacred author in the context of his world at that time.

- In the gospels, Jesus spoke of himself and the Father (God) as one. One who "forgave sin," something only God can do. He said "Before Abraham came to be - I am." He receives divine approval at baptism by John. This is repeated at the Transfiguration. "This is my beloved Son. "Listen to Him."
- In the gospels, one can LISTEN to Jesus on three levels:
 - a. An examination of the words Jesus spoke,
 - b. An examination of the stories Jesus told.
 - c. A viewing of the things Jesus did. .

SESSION #16 - SHARE YOUR FAITH WITH YOUR FAMILY

PHASE ONE – THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY – A HISTORY FROM PENTECOST TO THE REFORMATION

1. Easter to Pentecost

After the Passion and resurrection of Jesus, the apostles were bewildered. As they experienced the Ascension, they gathered on the first Pentecost. With the coming of the Spirit, a transformation took place. Peter Spoke to the People of the day fearlessly and each understood in his own language.

2. The Lord Will Return -- Very Soon

In the early community, there was a sense that Christ's second coming was just around the corner. That it would be more distant they only realized later.

3. In Becoming a Christian, Must a Pagan First Become a Jew?

Following the death of Stephen, a persecution broke out, driving many apostles outside of Israel. On leaving Israel, the followers of Jesus went to Jewish communities in other cities. To them Jesus would be preached. Some joined them. They also met Gentiles who wanted to follow Jesus. A very practical question arose - "Did one have to become Jewish before becoming Christian?"

4. The Council of Jerusalem: Deeper Understanding of the Message of Jesus

The apostles and disciples gathered as the Council of Jerusalem to discuss the issue. After prayer and reflection, they saw as the "Lord's will" that converts from paganism be received directly into the Church.

5. Church Headquarters Move to Rome

Paul on his missionary journeys covered the Mediterranean world. Peter, found his way to Antioch where he continued as head of the church, and then he moved to Rome. Paul would eventually find his way to Rome as well. Paul's process was simple. He would go to the Jewish Community first. While some accepted Christ, others would reject him. He would then go to the pagan community, presenting Jesus. Some would accept him and others would walk away. Paul remained and instructed them. He would appoint overseers (Bishops), and elders (priests). He would then go to a new town and repeat the process. Some of the epistles he wrote were responses to letters from communities he had founded. Some were self-initiated. At times, they contained admonitions, clarifications.

6. The Fathers of the Church: Early Christian Writers

During these early days, there were many holy people, leaders who by their writings preserved the traditions of the early community. These are "Fathers of the Church." Among them are: St. Gregory, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Basil ..

7. The Formation of Scripture

This important happening took place at the Council of Hippo in 393AD and at the Council of Carthage in 397. In both Councils, the books of the New and Old Testaments were identified and formally declared part of Sacred Scripture. Alongside them, the works of the Fathers are important since their works help us appreciate the faith life of the community of their day. They appear both in the Eastern and Western Church and extend from the 1st to 4th centuries.

8. Councils, Heresies, and Organization

During the second to the fourth centuries, many councils of bishops were held. These covered such issues as heresies (faulty formulations of belief) or clarification of belief.

9. Early Years of the Church...Persecution, Catacombs, Liberation

Under several Emperors, the Church was persecuted. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the faith," Worship came to be located in the catacombs, underground tunnels which became worship sites and burial places. This came to an end in the year 313 AD when the Emperor Constantine made Christianity a legal religion.

10. Constantine

Constantine moved the seat of the empire from Rome to Byzantium in the East. A cultural and political division between East and West would result in a split in Christianity.

11. The Language of Worship of the Community

In the East prayers were in Greek. In the West, from the 4th to the 20th century the liturgical language was Latin.

12. The Rise and Spread of Monasticism: Anthony, Benedict and Scholastica

Groups of men living with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience – rose in the 3rd and 4th century. St. Benedict, St. Anthony, and St. Basil were some leaders. Soon thereafter, groups of women with the same vows were formed.

13. Causes for Concern - 8th to 11th centuries

In 754, the Papal States were formed. Secular rulers and benefactors donated to the Church territory to the Popes. Popes became secular rulers, Bishoprics became positions which were accorded as political favors and the individuals appointed led lives of splendor, ease and sensuality rather than holiness and love. In 1054 a split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church occurred which has lasted to the present time.

14. The Eleventh Through Fourteenth Centuries: Activity, Reform, New Ideas

Universities, new religious orders and women, great theologians like Thomas Aquinas marked this period. However, it was also the time of the Crusades, attempts to liberate the Holy Land from Turkish rule, and the time of the Inquisition, which with punitive power "watched over" the faith and practice of the people. Reforms were made and there was a new interest in Greek and Roman Culture.

15. The Other Side of the Picture: The Wounds in the Body of Christ

Reform was a grave need of the Church at this time. Greed, power, and wealth were more prevalent than love for God. The tragic practice of according the title to the oldest son, the military position to the second son and a church appointment to the third son made for Bishops with little interest in the faith or living it and things got very bad indeed. The papacy itself was fought over by noble families and the combination of abuses made these times lowest point in the history of the Church.

16. The Papacy Is Moved to Avignon in France, The Western Schism

In 1308 began a period the papacy was dominated over and relocated by the French kings to Avignon in France - an "exile" which was to last 70 years. St. Catherine of Siena was the one who got the papacy back to Rome. This was also the time of the "Black Plague" which began in 1347 and lasted over 50 years, wiping out one third of the population.

17. The Great Western Schism (1347 – 1417)

This move caused much confusion as different popes were elected each excommunicating the other. At one time there were three popes. The schism was finally over in 1417 when the Council of Constance resolved the problem Pope Martin V's election brought this sad period to a close.

SESSION #17: SHARE YOUR FAITH WITH YOUR FAMILY
Church History: Phase II – Reformation to Present

18. The Reformation: Christianity Divided

By the 16th century, problems within the Church were grave. Leadership was weakened by the interference in appointing bishops, Struggles to control the papacy to access greater numbers of positions – cried out for reform. One of these was Martin Luther who posted 95 Theses or problems with the Church on October 31st, 1517. At this point a serious mistake was made. Martin Luther and the others raised the MORAL ISSUE: The Church is not living up to her mandate to be Body of Christ. Church leadership, instead of addressing the moral issue, made it a DOCTRINAL ISSUE - You are attacking the Church of Christ. Faced with this impasse - a call to reform not heeded - the Reformers left the Church and the split in Christianity took place. The implications of a divided Christianity posed problems. Many political, economic, cultural and social factors were also involved. It was not until the Council of Trent, called in 1545 and meeting till 1563 that effective and lasting reforms took place in the Church.

18. A Pause - A Reflection

The Second Vatican Council (1962 - 1965) provides useful insights to put the Reformation into a broader perspective

1. A recognition by the Catholic Church that the split in Christianity was at least "permitted" by God.
2. Recognition that the cause for the split was the Church's lack of faithfulness in living out the message of Jesus.
3. Realization that since the Reformation, hosts of people came to know love and serve Jesus in other Christian communities.
4. Recognition that if the various Christian bodies live out faithfully their own understanding of what Christ asks, the Christ who permitted the split because of lack of faithfulness will, because of the faithfulness existing now, bring us together in His own time and in His own way.
5. Faithfulness then is the problem of the churches. Christian Unity is God's problem to be resolved to His liking once the cancer is removed.

THE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT

- The period beyond the Reformation was one of religious wars and competitiveness.
- It was a time of discovery as new worlds were discovered, explored and settled. Back home in Europe.
- The work of the Inquisition was complicating the lives of people and their journey to God.
- Anti Semitism was rampant as well.
- The American Revolution followed by the French revolution ushered in new and secular ways of seeing life that challenged the religious sector of society. With the secularization and collapse of the old regime of which the Church was a part, came also persecution.
- The industrial revolution with its summons of people to the cities to staff the factories would change the life-styles of many not for the better.
- Exploitation of the worker, problems with housing, long hours minimal wages and job insecurity made for a society tense in posture.
- In the latter part of the 19th century came the First Vatican Council which defined papal infallibility and then was terminated without closure with the rise of nationalism in Italy, and the loss of the Papal States.
- At the close of the Second World War, came the ushering in of the atomic age with nuclear weapons being exploded at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and ushering in many moral issues yet to be solved.
- The 20th Century was the time of two major world wars which complicated the lives of many and cost the lives of more.
- Between the two wars was a depression that shattered the savings of many and wrought a major economic crisis.
- Following World War II came the Communication and Transportation Explosions and the ushering in of the computer age which has impacted our lives today in ways many have yet to sort out.

II VATICAN COUNCIL – (1962 – 1965) Broad and Sweeping Changes impacting all in the pews.

- The language of the Mass – Latin for 1500 years, became language of the people. Mass & Sacraments were now in English
- The altar faced the congregation and the priest the people
- Men & Women distribute communion in both species to all. Lay persons read the scriptures at Mass. Communion is received in the hand.
- Priests now concelebrate at a single Mass.
- The Office of Permanent and Married Diaconate is restored.
- Liturgical texts are translated into English. Sunday Masses prioritized over saints. Requiem Masses minimized.
- Greater stress on centrality of Jesus – focus on communion.
- Mass becomes more community celebration – with hymns and responses together.
- Rite of Burial more focused on resurrection.
- A more positive posture towards other Christian religions, other religions, particularly the Jewish religion, and even those with no religion.
- More visibly, elimination of the Friday Abstinence, mitigation of the fasting during Lent.
- Grounds for Annulment of Marriages now include psychological grounds.
- A recognition of the call to ministry as a call stemming from Baptism and issued to all the baptized not just religious and ordained.
- A consequent empowerment of the laity to assume responsibility for the management of their own faith lives in sincerity and truth.

CONTEMPORARY SCENE

- A period of maturation for Catholics and a call for a maturity to discern the importance of BEING as opposed to DOING in the attempt to be a leaven community which by its presence catalyzes the world into an awareness of God's love for all people.
- A challenge to prioritize God - see things as God sees them – in a world of many multimedia distractions on a multi-sensory basis
- A deeper appreciation of the tough love which enables us to be "in the world" but not "of the world."

There is one thing God asks of you – this alone: Act Justly Love Tenderly and Walk Humbly with Your God

Session #18
Share Your Faith With Your Family

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

It should be noted that from the perspective of a Roman Catholic, the history of Christianity from the time of Jesus to the present is the history of the Catholic Church. It is a history which has had its high points and its low points. We live in hope, conscious of Christ's words: "Behold I am with you always even to the end of the earth." We turn now to the question of who we are as Catholic Church in a world of religious and secular pluralism.

Members of the Catholic Community share the following faith vision:

- The Creator God became one of us in Jesus. In looking at Jesus, we look at God Himself.
- This calls for realization that we have received from Christ a whole different way of looking at the world, life, and its meaning.
- In becoming one of us, God modeled how we are to live life - selflessly for others. Rising, Jesus also showed us life never ends..
- Jesus summed up His life by giving His all - life itself - for others, many of whom rejected Him.
- Christ's Call was to be God's presence in our world. Leaving the world, Jesus left a community to continue God's Presence.
- To Church, Jesus said: "As the Father sent me, so I send you." Since Jesus was the sign of God's presence, the Church was commissioned to continue God's presence and love in the world after the Ascension.
- To the Community, Jesus said: "Take this bread and eat..." This is my body." "This is the cup of my blood. Drink of it." "Do this in memory of me."
- For the Community, Mass and Eucharist are the central sacrifice and sacrament which define who we are as Church.
- As Catholics we believe:
 - a. The Mass is the "re-presentation" to God of the tremendous act of love - the Lord's gift of self on Calvary.
 - b. The Real Presence of the Risen Christ under the appearances of bread and wine in Eucharist.
 - c. We receive Christ in Communion to become Christ for the world in every age.
 - d. Jesus is present to the community and its members in each dimension of our lives through seven sacraments:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Birth - BAPTISM | Growth - CONFIRMATION | Nourishment: EUCHARIST |
| Failures: RECONCILIATION | Our Sickness - ANOINTING | |
| Our Loves | - MARRIAGE | Thru another person |
| - HOLY ORDERS - Thru the Community | | |

Experiencing the presence of Christ, members of the community individually and together become Christ for others.

- We believe Church is: "Leaven," "Light," and "Salt," to the world and an additional sign that God is present our midst.
- We believe Jesus speaks to the people of God through the Church which is to teach, govern, and sanctify and serve all.
- We believe in the power of forgiveness in the sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession and the Gift that it is.
- We believe in twin sources of revelation - both scripture and tradition.
- We believe that the Lord commissioned the apostles to preach. Knowing the importance of the lived witness of the community
- We see the Scriptures as products of the faith communities of Israel and Christianity - not blueprints from which to form church.
- We reverence Mary as the human being who most fully responded to God and was chosen to be Mother of Jesus.
- We pray to and reverence the saints as friends of God - our heroes, models, intercessors.
- We have a tradition of prayer for the deceased knowing we will one day join them with our God forever..
- We have a tradition of spirituality, both communal and individual whereby we hope more genuinely to reflect Christ in our world.
- An ethical code stemming from the community's living tradition which places Christians "in the world" but not "of it."
- We are part of a highly visible, international. organization world-wide with the Pope seen as the successor to the authority of Peter, and the Bishops each in their respective territories as the successors of the Apostles.
- We have a tradition of religious men, religious women living in communities bonded by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and committed to one of several forms of service to God's people.
- We take joy in a glorious history of church music in the Gregorian Chant and in works by artists for liturgical worship, particularly the Mass and the Divine Office or official prayer of the church.
- We have a tradition of a celibate clergy who also pray daily the Divine Office, the Church's official prayer for us. We see their witness as a lived reminder to the people of God that we are on a pilgrim journey to the life with God which will last forever.
- After the Ascension, we see Christ's presence in the world in the Church which as leaven, light, and salt, will by its presence be "Presence of God" and bring people to Christ. Such is God's Saving Plan - and there is no "Plan B."
- We also have many customs, traditions, blessings, and practices - all of which are geared to reminding us of the object of all religious education - *THE WORLD ITSELF AS SEEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GOD WHO BECAME ONE OF US.*

This overview will serve to describe in broad outline how we see ourselves as Church, chosen and commissioned, to preach the Gospel by our very different posture towards the world in which we live

Adult Education #19
Share Your Faith With Your Family

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY'S BELIEFS – THE APOSTLES' CREED

In this one short prayer are found the summation of the beliefs of the Church and the Vision whereby it seeks to live its life as the Community, founded by Christ to catalyze awareness of God's love for all people by the quality of its life.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin, Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
Thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, The holy Catholic Church,
The Communion of Saints, The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, And life everlasting. Amen.

- The Creator God - Source of All Life God made heavens and earth and all that is in it. God saw it was good.
- God is creator of the universe and all that is contained in it. Totally above us, God is ever mystery.
- Creation is a process - God's creation is required each moment or all creation would fall into nothing .
- This God has made human beings in his own likeness. We are free and accountable for our actions.
- God wills the salvation of all people. Speaks to each person in his own way and thru Church.
- God as Mystery - Three in One God is Father, Son, and Spirit. When God acts outside Self, all three act.
- We attribute some acts to the Father – some to the Son – some to the spirit – better to understand.
- Jesus: God Become One of Us possessed both a divine and human nature in one divine person.
- Jesus atoned for our sin, showed us how to live and told us will live forever, love God by loving people.
- Jesus was born of the Virgin, Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
- Jesus descended to the dead – these signify Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, were for people of all time.
- He ascended into heaven and empowered the Church to continue His caring presence till He came again.
- He is seated at the right hand of the Father – an affirmation of the equality of Jesus with the Father.
- He shall come to judge the living and the dead. The Final Judgment after the re-joining of body and soul of each
- The death of the individual entails the "Particular Judgment" immediately after death
- At this time, the person's entire life is reviewed with three potential outcomes: heaven, hell, or purgatory.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit 3rd person of the Trinity – co-equal, co-eternal.
- The Holy Catholic Church as the continuing presence of Jesus from apostles to present
- The Communion of the Saints – the bonding between Church on earth, heaven, and Purgatory whereby each can be of assistance to the other.
- The Forgiveness of Sin.
- The resurrection of the Body, prior to the General Judgment
- And life everlasting
- The Biblical Models of Leaven, Light, and Salt give us outlines of the role of Church in the world
- Jesus' speaking of the Church as One, Holy, Catholic point out the challenges to the Church in every age to: Be one...Be holy...Be catholic...Be apostolic.
- Church as People of God. This useful model highlights the continuity between the Community of Israel and the Community of Jesus and enables us to relate to all of God's dealings with the human race.
- Community of Disciples stresses the call to ministry by reason of baptism which is the task of the baptized.
- Sign to the Nations/Sacrament. This model highlights the Church as "presence of Jesus in the world."
- Mystical Body of Christ: This model, highlights the interdependence of the witness of each Christian with the witness of the whole Community of God's people.

Adult Education #20
Share Your Faith With Your Family

FOUNDATIONS FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Parents: The object of this week's handout is to help form a child's total approach to life. Our faith is not a badge to be worn but a pair of binoculars through which we see everything. Binoculars bring distant objects immediately before us. The faith brings a whole new way of looking at things – from the perspective of the *WISDOM OF GOD*. Another helpful image is the Legacy something which is handed on to your children from you – their parents. The song "Look to the Rainbow" describes it well. "On the day I was born, said my father, said he. "I've an elegant legacy waitin' for ye. "T' is a rhyme for your lips and a song for your heart to sing it whenever your world falls apart." The legacy is the gift of the creator God of a life that begins in time and blossoms into an eternity of happiness with our God. In the light of this legacy, we accept the good with gratitude, know that we live in a less than perfect world, and know that it is but the entrance-way to an eternal life with our God." This is the legacy you are charge to model for your children. Today we look at how that happens.

- Jesus spoke of His followers as "Leaven," Light," and "Salt," Leaven and salt tell us that we are a minority – that we are charged by the difference of our lives – our togetherness – to show the world (Light) how life is to be lived.
- Others, in managing their lives, do so by a combination of guidelines from Emotion-Feeling, Reason, Media, Civil Law, Peers and the way they see life as calling to them.
- As Christians, we are called to live a life that is based on the vision of life shared with us by Christ (WWJD & WWJT):
It is a life which is based on:
 - The Commandment of Jesus
 - The Great Commandment of Israel
 - The Beatitudes
 - The Works of Mercy – Bodily and Spiritual
 - The Ten Commandments as revised and edited by Jesus
Particularly in the Sermon on the Mount.

THE COMMANDMENT OF JESUS

"Love one another as I have loved you." Unconditional love – even if it kills you. It is not guideline, suggestion – It's a commandment

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

"Love the Lord, Your God, with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.

THE BEATITUDES – Blessed are the:

POOR IN SPIRIT: Need little. Treasure is in heaven.
THOSE WHO MOURN: Christ showed suffering as discipline
MERCIFUL: They forgive whether it's deserved or not.
ACCUSED FOR GOSPEL'S SAKE: Consistent when it costs.

GENTLE: Anyone can be macho – Gentle takes strength
PURE OF HEART: Those who know life is everlasting – go for it
PEACE-MAKERS – Knowing that without forgiving – no peace.
HUNGER THIRST FOR JUSTICE: Work for it – not just approve

WORKS OF MERCY

Corporal: Feed the hungry. Drink to the thirsty. Clothe the naked
Shelter the Homeless. Visit the Sick. Visit the jailed.
Bury the Dead

Spiritual Help the Sinner. Teach the ignorant. Counsel
The doubtful. Comfort the sorrowing. Bear
wrongs patiently. Forgive injuries. Pray for
Living and dead.

COMMANDMENTS

I am the Lord your God. No strange gods before me.
Keep Holy the Lord's Day
You shall not kill
You shall not steal.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife

Don't take name of Lord in vain
Honor your father and mother.
You shall not commit adultery
You shall not bear false witness
You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Our Legacy is priceless – Eternal Life . The Path is difficult – It cost Christ His Life. But then Resurrection Follows – and it's worth it!

Adult Education #21
Share Your Faith With Your Family

- Parents:** This week we enter into the Season of Lent. Lent is a season of preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection. It is also the time of repentance – a time when we seek to focus on what is of lasting value in life and examine where we are on our individual pilgrim journey to God. It is a time when we look once more at what it means to be church and examine how well we are living it.
- Lenten Theme** Our Theme for Lent 2006 is – FAITHFUL GOD – WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF YOUR COVENANT. This is a follow up to our Advent Theme – FAITHFUL GOD –YOU ARE THE POTTER – WE ARE THE CLAY. Formed by God, commissioned as God’s people, we become People of the Covenant. Jesus counts on me to give to people of my generation the experience of God’s love for all people. How good am I at it? My covenant (agreement) with God is to continue Christ’s presence till Christ comes once more.
- Think Abouts** Jesus did the right thing – even when it would cost Him His life. Do I do the right thing, even when it’s hard to do? Jesus left heaven, omnipotence to become dependent, out of love for us – to restore us to friendship with God. How good am I at doing good for others even when it costs me to do so. Lent is the time when I look at what God means to me. Do I think of God? Pray to God? Listen to God? What is there in my life that needs changing if I am to respond to You more fully at present? Lent is the time when we bring discipline into our lives so that when it’s needed to do what is right, we can do it. It’s practice for the piano player. It’s training for the baseball player. It’s “boot camp” for the soldier. What do I feel called to do during my Lenten days that will help me be a better person and help me do what is right even when it’s hard to do it? What do I need to discipline to be on the same wave length as God? To see as Jesus does? To live as Jesus does?
- Ash Wednesday** The color of the Mass Vestments is purple beginning today and all through Lent. It is the sign of repentance – turning back to God. At the Parish Mass the Priest and ministers come out in silence and place the palms from last year into the gold chalice in front of the altar. The priest lights the fire and while the palms are burning, the first reading from the prophet Joel is read. Then the Ashes are blessed and the congregation comes up receive them. As the ashes are placed on people’s foreheads, the words are said: “Turn to the Lord with all your heart – Hear the Gospel.” Last year’s palms become reminders to us of our brokenness and failings. We give God the gift of a contrite heart.
- Fasting** As Wednesday and Good Friday are days of Fast and Abstinence. Fasting means having only one full meal a day. One may have two other meatless meals not equaling a full meal in addition. Basically, it means not eating between meals.
- Abstinence** Abstinence means not eating meat. All the Fridays of Lent are days of Abstinence. One may not eat meat on these days.
- Confession**
- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Tuesday, St. Malachi | March 28 th | 7pm |
| Sunday St. Wendelin | April 2 nd | 2pm |
| Palm Sunday St. Patrick | April 9 th | 2pm |
| Every Saturday | | 3 – 3:30pm |
- Lenten Growth:**
1. Reflection Booklet: “God Loves Me,” Prayers and Reflections for Lent .
 2. Daily Lenten Readings Listed in Sunday Bulletin
 3. Stations of the Cross on Wednesday at 5pm followed by Mass in Church
- Holy Week** Parents: The Triduum Liturgies are the High Holy Days of our faith. Consider sharing them with the kids.
- Palm Sunday:** Parish Mass at 11am. Palms blessed at the Club. Procession to the Church.
- Holy Thursday:** Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 8pm. Washing of the Feet after homily. Silent Departure after Mass.
- Good Friday:** 3pm. Enter in silence. Prostration. 1. Readings 2, Homily 3. Solemn Prayers 4. Procession with Cross and veneration of the Cross. 5. Communion Service 6. Departure in silence.
- Holy Saturday:** 1. Blessing of Fire outside church doors. 2. Procession with Paschal Candle. 3. Easter Hymn. 4. Readings, 5. Homily. 6. Blessing of Water, Renewal of Baptismal Promises, and Signing with Holy Water. 7. Reception into Church thru Profession of Faith. 8. Confirmation. 9. Easter Mass.

Session #22
Share Your Faith With Your Family

SACRAMENTS SIGNS OF GOD'S PRESENCE – ACTION IN OUR WORLD

- **God speaks with deeds - we speak with words. In becoming one of us in Jesus, God said: “The most eloquent expression of God in your world is person. Otherwise I would not have come as one of you.”**
- **A Sacrament is a visible sign of God’s presence and action in our world.**
- Jesus is the PRIME SACRAMENT. Of God’s Presence and Action in the World.
- To be with God's people after returning to the Father at the Ascension, Jesus founded Church.
- Jesus entrusted the same role He possessed: Be sacrament: visible sign of God's presence/action in our world.
- Church then is SACRAMENT.

To empower Church to be sacrament, Jesus makes Himself present to individuals in the Church at significant points in their lives, so that receiving Christ, they can become Christ and continue the sacramental role of Christ.\

JESUS

God Among Us Visible Sign of God's
Presence and Assistance

CHURCH

Founded by Jesus
Role: Continue Presence of Jesus

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

Christ is present to Church Members In every aspect of their lives

| | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Birth</u> | Baptism | The Life Giving Christ | <u>Illness</u> | Anointing – The Healing Jesus |
| <u>Growth</u> | Confirmation | The Maturing Jesus | <u>Failings</u> | Reconciliation – The Forgiving Jesus |
| <u>Nourishment</u> | Eucharist | The Nurturing Jesus | | |

Our Experience of Loving

Holy Orders Thru Community

Marriage Thru Another Person

Experiencing Jesus in these seven special ways in every aspect of their life experience, those called to be church both individually and as community, are empowered to become sacrament - visible sign of God's presence and action in our world till the Lord comes once more.

Parents – This is the simplest overall explanation of sacraments for our children of every age. Presence is more powerful than doing. Work with your children giving examples of how wonderful it is to have people we love present to us. Their presence is precious both to God and to others. Share with other parents on how well this makes sense to them.

Session #23
Share Your Faith With Your Children

THE CONFESSION OF ST. PATRICK

sinner, I was taken to Ireland in captivity with many men, because we departed from God, and we
e. When I was sixteen years of age. I did not know the true God. I was taken to Ireland in captivity with many men, because we departed from God, and we
precepts. And the Lord dispersed us among the nations, to the ends of the earth. And there the Lord opened to me the sense of my unbelief, that, I might
my sins, and return with my whole heart to my God, who pitied my youth and took care of me before I knew Him. He helped me discern between good and evil;
and me as a father does a son.

concerning such great favor the Lord has shown me in the Land of my captivity. It is only right that after our knowledge of God, we should exalt and
wonderful works before every nation which is under heaven. Be astonished therefore, both great and small who fear God. And you who do not know the
and examine: God aroused me from the midst of those who appear to be wise and has inspired me beyond others on condition that with fear and reverence
plaining, I should faithfully serve the nation - to which the love of Christ has transferred me, and given me for my life. That if I should be worthy - I should
with humility and truth.

who bear God, who shall receive this writing, which Patrick the sinner, has written in Ireland, that no one may ever say, it was I who did it. But let it be most
d, that what has been done has been the gift of God. And this is my confession before I die.

PATRICK OF IRELAND

ST. PATRICK CHURCH, BRIDGE AVENUE

Church, Bridge Avenue, Mother Church of the Irish Catholic Community of Cleveland was founded in 1853 by Bishop Amadeus Rappe/ At the time of its
three other churches existed - St. Mary of Flats on Columbus Road, St. John Cathedral, St. Mary's French Church on the present site of the West Side Market.
be created the German Parish - St. Peter on Superior, and the Irish Parish, St. Patrick Bridge - each to meet the spiritual needs of their respective

beginning, the faith, education, and care for the poor were the characteristic qualities of the community and these have continued down to the present day. St.
the first parish church to obtain a charter for a parish St. Vincent de Paul Society and it has been active with immigrants old and new for a century and a half.
Landmark, St. Patrick Church, Bridge, is center of worship for a community proud to continue its long ministry of loving God and serving the people of the
of which we have so long been a part.

ST. PATRICK

our patron saint, is a marvelous model for all of us as we take up the baton to continue our lap of the race of life until time comes to pass it on to the next
Patrick was a native of Europe, captured and brought across the seas to servitude in Ireland. In long nights of captivity, Patrick came to develop a profound
with his God. His commitment to God was one which took over his whole life and his whole approach to its meaning. Escaping and going back to the land of
committed himself to a life dedicated to the service of God and to the people he had come to love in the place of his captivity. Returning to Ireland as Bishop,
e power of his life commanded respect for the Gospel by the way he lived. He did not have to "preach the gospel." His life did that for him.

and reverence Patrick for many things> As parents we invite you to share these qualities with your children. Patrick loved God in good times and in tough times.
eone God could count on. He so lived that gospel was so forgiving and so consistently walking with God that people found that he touched their own lives
and soon became his followers.

tough on himself, gentle with others. He walked through a passing world with heart set on a world that will never end. He never gave into all the attractions of a
ing world in his day and helps his followers focus on what is of lasting value.

orate the feast of St. Patrick we pray we may remember that the highest form of praise is imitation.

Session #24
Share Your Faith With Your Family

SACRAMENTS

- The Sherlock Holmes Approach
Sherlock Holmes is the famous detective. Detectives focus on facts. The Sherlock Holmes Approach to the sacraments focuses on what is the sacrament? Who is its minister? What are the requirements to receive it? What are the effects? This is the first level of appreciating the sacraments - the "bare bones."
- The Walt Disney Approach
Walt Disney is the Master Storyteller - the one who deals with signs and symbols. On this level we have an appreciation of sacraments that moves beyond the rudiments to an appreciation of the sign and symbol – the meaning and significance of sacraments.
- The Knute Rockne Approach
Knute Rockne was the legendary football coach at Notre Dame University. His name is synonymous with team-work or community. This level of understanding of the sacraments concentrates on their role in community's witness and life.
- The Thomas Dooley Approach
Tom Dooley, a young doctor, won the hearts of all in the sixties. He bypassed a promising career in order to meet the medical needs of the natives of French Indochina, (Vietnam). In the course of his work, he contracted a fatal disease and died in their midst. This young man embodied the idealism of an entire age and perhaps he might give his name to the most profound level of appreciation of sacrament - that of the visionary - in other words - the finest expression of sacrament is to receive sacrament in order, by one's life, to become sacrament for others.

Note that as a person grows to a more profound appreciation of the sacraments and more of an intense living out of the experience of sacrament, an increasingly deeper mode of understanding takes place:

1. An appreciation of the what's, why's, and wherefore's of the sacraments. (Sherlock Holmes)
2. A greater understanding of the concept of sacramental signification/symbol. (Walt Disney)
3. Deeper insight into the role of the community in the reception and in the living out of the Christian life. (Knute Rockne)
4. Recognition that to receive the sacraments implies the responsibility to become "Sacrament" for others. (Tom Dooley)

In this way, sacraments become vital ways in which Jesus becomes present to God's people, bonding them to self and to one another, and through them becoming present to all to the end of time through the People of God.

In the sacraments we receive Christ in many ways:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|
| The Life Giving Christ – | Baptism | The Healing Christ: Anointing of the Sick |
| The Maturing Christ - | Confirmation | The Forgiving Christ - Reconciliation |
| The Nurturing Christ: | Eucharist | The Loving Christ: Holy Orders - Marriage |

Session #25 Share Your Faith With Your Family

BAPTISM

The Sherlock Holmes Dimension of Baptism (The Who, What, Why, Where of Sacraments.)

- Baptism is the first of the sacraments we receive.
- It is a sacrament of initiation - with confirmation and Eucharist
- It is part of the process of entering the community.
- In Baptism, the minister pours water over the head of the child while reciting "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- In the ancient form the candidate descended into the water, ascending as the minister recites the form.
- The Ordinary Minister of Baptism is the Priest or Deacon. In danger of death, anyone can baptize with the intention of doing what the church does, and pouring the water while reciting the words of the form.
- The effect of baptism is to remove all sin, make a person a member of the Leaven Community, and commission them to preach the gospel by the quality of their lives.
- Infant Baptism is usually within a few weeks of birth with parents requesting baptism and professing faith for the child.
- A sponsor is a model and mentor to the candidate .
- Hence, sponsors for baptism are asked to be fully initiated members of the Catholic community. They attend Mass regularly and receive the sacraments and are in weekly attendance at Mass. If married, they are to be married in the Catholic Church. All of these things are to ensure that the godparents will serve as an example to the child of how the faith is to be lived.
- If a child is old enough to understand, that child must receive instructions in the faith prior to being baptized.
- In Baptism, the child is anointed with the Oil of Catechumens once, and then further with the Oil of Chrism

The Walt Disney Dimension of Baptism (The Sign and Symbol – of Sacraments)

The sign of baptism is most adequately perceived in the "going down into the water" and "Coming out of the water –The descent into the waters is a sign of descent into the tomb - death. Rising from the pond is a sign of rising to new life. In the present and more common format, water is poured over the child's head while the words of baptism are being pronounced. The sign here is purification, cleansing, freedom from sinfulness and incorporation into the community of God's people.

New members of the faith community will find themselves leading lives that are radically different from those of others. "My ways are not your ways," says the Lord. "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are from above.

In the sacraments, what is signified takes place. We are in fact "given new life" and purified of sinfulness, and set free

The Knute Rockne Dimension of Baptism (The Community and Sacraments)

Baptism incorporates candidates into the Catholic community. The community is one which was compared to leaven, light, and salt, by the Lord. Belonging to that community makes a person a sharer in the call to be light - that is, by one's life to show others how life is to be lived. By his-her presence in the Community, the individual is commissioned to be the presence of Christ in our post Ascension and thereby assist them community at large to fulfill this similar role through each of its members. And there is no "Plan B." If Christ is present – it is through our love.

The Tom Dooley Dimension of Baptism

Experiencing the person, the care and love of the Lord, the Catholic is challenged to become the person of Christ for others. Each one of us in the plan of God is an essential part of God's plan to save certain people by touching their lives. We experience Jesus in the sacrament to become Jesus.

In every age, God raises up individuals from every walk of life who by their lives, "command the attention" of a generation and are uniquely apt instruments for God. Community members are called to recognize that there are people "yet to be born" who will never appreciate God's love - but for "my" becoming one of these persons.

Session #26
Share Your Faith With Your Family

HOLY WEEK

Parents: Holy Week begins the celebration of our High Holy Days the suffering death and resurrection of Jesus for all of us. The ceremonies for each service are powerful in their symbolism and their capturing the attention of children. With the input we provide here, please consider involving them in attending this year.

PALM SUNDAY: Services start at the Club. Palms are blessed on the front steps. Gathered congregation processes to Church. This part of the service commemorates the solemn entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem while people spread their cloaks and palms before Him. The service proceeds as usual. The Gospel is the Passion according to Mark. St. Patrick Parish Palm Sunday Liturgy is Sunday at 11am.

HOLY THURSDAY:

MASS of the Lord's Supper This celebration begins at 8pm and commemorates the offering of the first Mass in anticipation of the events of Calvary the next day. It celebrates also ordination to the priesthood. Enough hosts are placed on the altar so that those attending Good Friday services can receive Communion on that day. The readings are specially chosen and after the Homily, the priest takes a pan of water and washes the feet of 12 people who have been appointed to represent the community. After this the Mass proceeds as usual till the offering of communion. After Communion, the gold cup that holds the hosts is left on the altar. After Mass, there is a procession from the main altar, down the center aisle, across the rear to the east side of the church, back up to the front. Here the music group joins the procession which goes to the Mary Altar. The golden cup is placed in the tabernacle on the Mary Altar, and all in the procession go into the pews and remain there for a time in prayer. After five minutes, the priest and ministers go up to the altar and remove the cloths that are on it and the books. The tabernacle on the main altar is left open. The church is left open for private prayer till 9:30pm.

GOOD FRIDAY:

Celebration of the Lord's Passion. As parishioners enter the church, they are given a cross on a string. At 3pm, the moment the Lord surrendered his life in the total gift of self for us, the ministers enter the church in silence. They kneel and then lay prostrate on the altar for a full minute. This is the most solemn moment in the Church Year – the sacrifice is complete. The celebrant arises and he and ministers proceed to the chairs. Here the specially chosen readings are heard. After this, the Passion of the Lord (Suffering, Death, of Jesus) according to John is heard. Next is the homily. Following the Homily, the priest begins the Prayers of Intercession for all peoples, alternating with the choir and the congregation.

Next, the Priest and ministers go down to the rear of the church where a cross has been left standing, draped with a purple cloth. The deacon picks up the cross and begins up the aisle towards the altar. At the start, half way up the aisle, and at the front of the church, he pauses, elevates the cross and the choir sings a verse. After this, two servers or ministers hold the arms of the cross while the priest, deacon, ministers, and finally the congregation come forward and reverence the cross, placing his/her own small cross on the larger one. When all have placed their crosses on that of Christ, the cross is propped up in the center of the altar.

The deacon then with the ministers, goes to the Mary altar and brings the Eucharist to the Main Altar. A short prayer is said and then communion is shared under one species – the host.

After all have received, the deacon brings the Eucharist to the sacristy and returns. All reverence the altar and leave in silence. There are confession times available at this point for any who might wish.

HOLY SATURDAY:

The Easter Vigil Service welcomes newcomers to the Church and celebrates our own Baptismal Commitment. Services begin in a darkened church or on Bridge Avenue. A fire is lit and blessed. Incense is lit, the Paschal Candle blessed and a procession starts to the front of the Church. Three times, the deacon halts and raises the candle. Choir sings: "Light of Christ." The Candle is placed on the altar and the Easter hymn is sung. Then comes the reading of the word of God, going back to the dawn of creation. After the several readings, there is a solemn singing of the Alleluia which has not been heard since the start of Lent. The homily concludes the Liturgy of the Word. After the homily comes the Liturgy of Baptism. Water is blessed and people renew their baptismal commitment, at which point those already Baptized are received into the Catholic Community. Then all the baptized bless themselves with the new Easter water. The catechumens are at this point received into the church through Baptism. Finally, all adults receive the fullness of initiation into the Community of Faith through Confirmation. The Liturgy of the Eucharist solemnly celebrates the Resurrection of the Lord and is cause of our joy and that on which all life hinges.

Session #27
Share Your Faith With Your Family

EASTER SUNDAY

PARENTS: This challenging article appeared as an article in AMERICA Magazine written by John F. Kavanaugh SJ.

The postmodern world has problems with resurrection. It has problems with anything transcendent. This life is all there is. You only go around once. Grab all the gusto. "It doesn't get any better than this."

Bound by immediate distraction, enthralled by skills of indulgence, we are jarred by talk of heaven. It is inappropriate. Discomfort with transcendence churns in us Christians as well. We want to "make good sense" of our faith, especially to those who think our beliefs a bit outdated.

Our own discourse becomes less a matter of heaven and hell, forgiveness and redemption, than of self-fulfillment, illness and recovery, and how to be our own best friends. There even sometimes seems to be a hidden assumption lurking in our theology and ritual: This life is all there is. And--although more rarely--complaints can still be heard from pre-modern survivors that they rarely hear homilies and sermons about the "Four Last Things."

We are very much a people of "this age," the here and now. But to the extent that we partake of postmodern sensibility we are on a collision course with the content of our worship. In fact, if we ever thought for a minute about the reality we claim is taking place in our Eucharist's, we might run for cover. Or cover it up.

Do we speak much to each other about the fact that there is something much more astounding than warm fellowship happening in our churches? Do we expend much energy over a sacramental reality that is more stirring than music and crafted homilies? Do we admit that the ACT of our liturgy is more significant than its style and decor?

The Eucharist is about our salvation and our destiny, or it is nothing. It is the pledge of eternal forgiveness. And Communion is not a mere bread for earthly flesh. Quite the contrary, it is nutrition for transformed bodies. It is the sustenance of wayfarers on their way beyond this life. It is the bread of angels, the food of heaven.

Easter is Eucharistic because it is the promise of an eternal banquet. Christ, having entered into the depths of our humanity, even to the extent of dying its death, is claimed as risen.

Of course there are people who say that this cannot have happened. It was projection, a fabrication, a corporate wish-fulfillment. But the accounts of his followers seem quite otherwise. Something most real had happened to them. They said that their master had appeared to them bodily.

It is their witness which is at the origins of our faith. If we take soberly enough the passion and death of our own lives, of humanity itself, and of Jesus who is the eternal Word made flesh, we will more fully appreciate the radical nature of our faith, especially at Easter-time.

We believe there is more than meets the eye. There is more than the earth in all its might, more than our projects and exploits in all their splendor.

"We believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come." Say "Amen," somebody!!!

EASTER IS NOT A DATE ON A CALENDAR. IT IS A PROCESS IN WHICH WE RE-ENGAGE EACH DAY.

Perhaps the best way to celebrate Easter is to Live the Peace Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury – pardon. Where there is doubt – faith. Where there is despair – hope. Where there is darkness – light Where there is sadness – joy.

O Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled As to console. To be understood as to understand. To Be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive. Pardoning that we are pardoned. And in dying that we are born to eternal life.

HAPPY EASTER

Session #28
Share Your Faith With Your Family

WISDOM OF GOD

Parents: One of the crucially important things you need to impart to your young people is a critical posture towards the Wisdom of World and its relationship to Wisdom of God. It is very easy to slip gears. Only you can accomplish this well, since you have 90% more impact on your children than either School or Church. Wisdom of God raises issues like:
WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? WHAT WOULD JESUS THINK?
Reflect on the following and share with your children:

- Do I see life as a gift – acknowledge that I have no right to terminate it?
- Do I see the commandments as an imposition on my freedom or as guidelines to happiness?
- Do I obey God's laws even though it costs me and makes no sense to the world?
- Am I God's fair weather friend or do I remain faithful whatever?
- Do I see abortion as sin or legal?
- Do I see infidelity as betrayal or a human weakness clause?
- Do I see premarital sex as wrong or rite of passage?
- Do I see violence as inappropriate or strategic maneuver?
- Do I see Sunday Mass attendance as opportunity to give God 7 days of faithful service or negotiable?
- Do I teach my children that "If it makes sense to you – go for it" is not a good norm since things make sense of many levels?
- Do I realize that it is genetically possible to have a child if you live in an apartment?
- Do I recognize that it is preferable to support two apartments than to live together prior to marriage?
- Do I realize that consensus does not necessarily make for a guide to good morals?
- Do I realize there is a difference between what is legal and what is moral?
- Do I realize that I make statements by my actions that may contradict my words or beliefs?
- Do I realize that when society endorses something, I need to take another and deeper look?

Jesus spoke the language of total unconditional love. Jesus spoke a language that was tough love

- How well do we treat those who snub us -put us down?
- How well do we treat those who prefer others to us?
- How well do we treat those who are openly hostile to us?
- How do we treat those who look different, think differently, act differently, do things I think are inappropriate?
- Jesus dealt with individuals not groups
- Jesus did not operate on standards of efficiency as does the world
- Jesus did not court people of influence, power and prestige
- Jesus did not indulge in name-dropping
- Jesus had it but didn't flaunt it
- Jesus looked out for the underdogs
- Jesus prioritized the sick, lonely, estranged, oppressed, handicapped, lepers
- Jesus did not judge the poor but helped them
- Jesus didn't stereotype people and condemn them
- Jesus did his best to see people as God sees them rather than as the world sees them
- Jesus forgave those who did not deserve it.
- Jesus spoke of taking up one's cross not of having a hassle-free existence
- Jesus did not speak of taking away suffering but of giving it meaning
- Jesus came to give us happiness that is achieved in its fullness only in eternity. Do I seek it in time?
- Jesus commissioned me to change the world by acting as Jesus did.
- How well do I speak the language of love?

These are a few of the think-about's. You are better teachers of your children than I. Maybe next year, we can meet during PSR Time and talk about some more effective ways of reaching our young people with the faith we've all been given as a legacy

