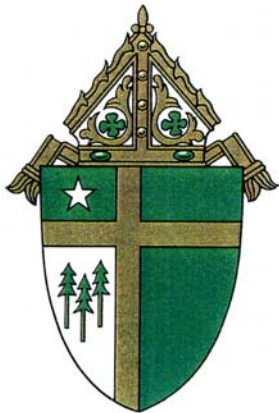
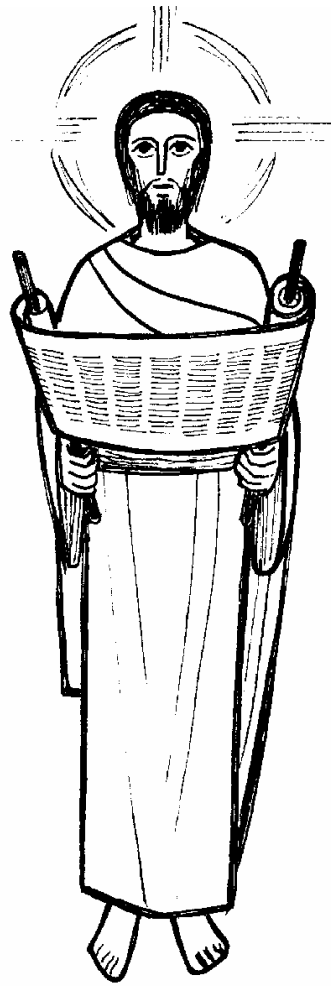
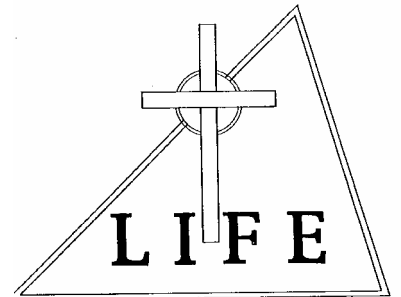


August, 2010

A Catechesis on the Sixteen Goals for Christian Discipleship



Diocese of Tyler
Office of Faith Formation
August, 2010



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Additional Information- Format for each session:

Time for each session varies depending on the size of the group, facilitator, and facilities. Each goal is divided into ‘sessions’ which includes five movements. Each session should take about **45 minutes depending on your group for a total of 30 contact hours.**

1. Read the Goal and the Rationales
2. Questions for discussion – focus on life experience
3. Story and Vision of the Church – presentation of doctrinal elements
4. Applications – connecting life and faith
5. Prayers – close each session with a prayer

Credits toward LIFE certificates may be submitted to the Office of Faith Formation upon the completion of the entire course. A form for submission is included with assignments for various levels.

August, 2010



Office of the Bishop

August 7, 2010

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

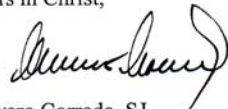
In the Diocese of Tyler I have established three processes of formation in Faith: Christian Initiation, The Call to Holiness and Discipleship, and the Liturgical Renewal, to help all the faithful in this diocese to respond to our baptismal commitment and to become Christian disciples. As our communities mature in these processes, they will become better prepared for the opportunities to grow through the event of the New Evangelization, which is the encounter with Jesus Christ.

Our diocese will continue to build the kingdom of God here in this part of East Texas only if individuals are committed to personal faith formation as adults. Ongoing lifelong faith formation enables us to connect our life experiences with the story and vision of the Church's teachings.

I have established as a curriculum of formation for the Diocese of Tyler, *The Fifteen Goals and Goal Sixteen as an Appendix in Mariology*. I wish that these goals be taught at all levels: children and adults, Catholics and those in the process of Christian Initiation. For this reason, with great joy in my heart, I present to all of you this material that the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation has created to assist in the task of catechesis entitled: "A Catechesis on the 16 Goals for Christian Discipleship."

As your bishop, and successor of the Apostles, I sincerely thank you all for your efforts and join you in prayer so that every parish and mission may continue to form Christian Disciples.

Yours in Christ,

+ 

+Alvaro Corrada, SJ
Bishop of Tyler

Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler

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Introduction

The Goals of Catechesis for the Diocese of Tyler have been established as the foundation for all catechesis for all ages, Catholic and non Catholic. Curriculum guides for all areas of formation have been produced by the diocese to incorporate age appropriate and developmentally appropriate material for each stage of faith development.

The material in this resource is targeted at Level VII, that is, adults age eighteen and older. Fifteen of the goals were first approved for instruction in 2001 and revised in 2003. A sixteenth goal was added in 2009. This manual includes catechesis for adults for all 16 goals.

The goals are tenets of the faith which provide an overview of the basic teachings of the Catholic Church. As individuals grow in maturity, experience, and knowledge through a systematic formation in faith, they will be able to more effectively live the Christian life in their community and to grow in holiness and discipleship.

The Office of Faith Formation provides this resource as *A Catechesis on the Sixteen Goals for Christian Discipleship* to provide opportunities for individual faith enrichment through study and prayer.

Individuals who continue to grow in their own faith formation enrich the particular apostolate work in which they have chosen to participate.

The format is designed for groups to participate together to share both their life and faith experiences and through Shared Christian Praxis will be more successful in integrating the teachings of the Church into those experiences.

The doctrinal elements for this resource were taken from five major resources:

1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994
2. *Declaration on Dominus Jesus, on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, JPII June, 2000
3. *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, USCCB, 2006
4. *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living*, USCCB, 2008
6. *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework of Catechetical Materials for Youth of High School Age*, USCCB 2010



Goal # 1 – Recognize God as Trinity

Rationale:

CCC 234: The Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the Ahierarchy of the truths of faith.

CCC 240: Jesus revealed that God is Father. He is eternally Father in relation to His only Son. The Holy Spirit is sent to the Apostles and to the Church both by the Father in the nature of the Son, and by the Son in person.

CCC 244: The sending of the person of the Spirit after Jesus= glorification reveals in its fullness the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

DJ 5: In fact, it must be firmly believed that, in the mystery of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God who is the way the truth and the life, the full revelation of divine truth is given.

Session I – Goal # 1 **Definition – Central Mystery of Faith**

Prayer

God, we praise you; Father all powerful, Christ Lord and Savior, Spirit of love. You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share your life and your love. One God, three Persons, be near to the people formed in your image, close to the world your love brings to life. We ask this Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, true and living, for ever and ever. Amen.

Questions for Discussion

1. What do think people believe about the Mystery of the Holy Trinity?
2. What is your understanding of God as Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

Story and Vision -

1. The mystery of the Holy Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian faith and of Christian life. CCC. 261
2. Jesus revealed God as Father in a new sense. God is Father in his relation to Jesus, his only begotten Son. At the Last Supper, Jesus calls God “Father” forty-five times (cf. Jn 13-17). The Son is divine, as is the Father (cf. Mt. 11:27).
3. Before the Passion, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit as teacher, guide, and consoler. The Spirit’s appearance at Pentecost and at other

events in the New Testament gives ample evidence of the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity.

4. God reveals himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity includes three truths of faith.
 - a. The Trinity is One. We do not speak of three gods. Each person is fully God.
 - b. The Divine Persons are distinct from one another. The Divine Persons are not three appearances or modes but identifiable persons, each fully God in a way distinct from the others.
 - c. The Divine Persons are in relation to each other. The distinction is understood in reference to the others.
5. All Christians are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity enlightens all the other mysteries of faith.
6. Revelation is the self-disclosure of the living God and his plan to save us. Revelation shows us that God desires to have an intimate and loving relationship with everyone.
7. The process of Revelation took centuries to unfold. God gradually communicated the divine mystery by word and deeds.
8. Through the use of reason, we can learn much about God from both creation and conscience, since Revelation enables us to learn about God's inner life and his loving plan to save us from sin and share in his divine life.
9. God's Revelation unfolded gradually throughout history. God can be known with certainty from his works in creation and from the spiritual nature of the human person by the light of natural reason.
10. While we can come to know something about God by our natural power of reason, there is a deeper knowledge of God that comes to us through Divine Revelation.
11. There are three paths through which every person can come to God: creation, the human person, and Revelation.

Application

1. How did God progressively reveal his mystery as a unity of three Persons?
2. How would you teach the doctrine about God to others?

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Prayer Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe all these truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Session II – Goal # 1
Origin of the Church and Our Salvation

Prayer:

Praised be to you, Lord, for your holy Church founded on the apostles, where we are gathered together into your community. Praise be to you, Lord, for the cleansing power of Baptism and Penance that you have entrusted to your apostles, through which we are cleansed of our sins. (Liturgy of the Hours)

Story and Vision

1. The Holy Spirit is the last of the Persons of the Trinity to be revealed. St. Gregory Nazianzus gives us an excellent picture of God's teaching method, slowly unfolding the truth about the Trinity. Scripture reveals the truth about the Trinity in three stages.
2. The Old Testament proclaimed the Father clearly, but the Son more obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son and gave us a glimpse of the divinity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit dwells among us and grants us a clearer vision of himself.
3. Even though the Holy Spirit is the last Person to be revealed we must understand that from the beginning he is a part of the loving plan of our salvation from sin and of the offer of divine life. He has the same mission as the Son in the cause of our salvation.
4. When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. In their joint mission, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable. (CCC 689). The divine plan of salvation is disclosed in salvation history. *Curriculum Framework for Young People (USCCB)*
5. The Church has her origin in the Holy Trinity, and that is the source of her holiness. In his plan for salvation of humanity, God the Father willed the existence of the Church. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, established a community of disciples and died on the Cross for the forgiveness of sins. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, works within the Church to keep her members faithful to the Gospel.

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The Church is holy in her Founder, in her saints, and in her means of salvation.

Application

1. The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier who calls us to holiness. When you hear about being called to be holy, what thoughts arise in your mind?
2. What would you need to do to be more holy?

Prayer:

Praised be to you, Lord, for your holy Church founded on the apostles, where we are gathered together into your community. Praise be to you, Lord, for the cleansing power of Baptism and Penance that you have entrusted to your apostles, through which we are cleansed of our sins. (Liturgy of the Hours)

Session III– Goal # 1
Christian Family as Model of the Trinity

Question for Discussion

How would you describe a healthy, holy family?

Story and Vision –

1. The Christian family is called to be a community of faith, hope, and love in an environment of prayer.
2. Aided by a number of other virtues, such as prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, the family that practices them begins to actualize its spiritual calling as a domestic church.
3. When a family becomes a school of virtue and a community of love, it is an image of the loving communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is then an icon of the Trinity.
4. The marriage act, while deepening spousal love, is meant to overflow into new life. Families are images of the ever-creative power and life of the Holy Trinity and the fruitfulness of the relationship between Christ and his Church.

Application

How can individuals and families promote respect for life and the value of life in the world today?

Prayer

Father, inexhaustible source of life and author of all good, we bless and we thank you for brightening our communion of love by your gift of all

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children. Grant that all children will find in the lives of their families such inspiration that they will strive always for what is right and good and one day, by your grace, reach their home in heaven. Amen. (Book of Blessings)

Goal # 2 - Present an understanding of the human need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ based on revelation and faith.



Rationale:

CCC 27: The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to Himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.

DJ 14: It must be firmly believed as a truth of Catholic faith that the universal salvific will of the One and Triune God is offered and accomplished once for all in the mystery of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God.

Essential concepts for understanding and teaching this goal.

CCC 396 Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom.

CCC 397 Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart, and abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command.

CCC 398 Man chose himself over God against the requirements of his creaturely status and against his own good.

CCC 405 **Original sin** is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin- an inclination to evil that is called **Concupiscence**.

CCC 407-409 The dramatic situation of the world makes the life of every man and woman a battle to go to heaven.

CCC 1996-2005 **Grace** is participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his body.

CCC 1849-1869 **Sin** is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. The gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners.

CCC 385-395 **The Fall** is the biblical revelation about the reality of sin in human

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history. It is a fall from God=s friendship and grace which the first human beings had received not only for themselves but for the whole human race.

CCC 387, 1730-1742 **Freedom & Sin:** Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one=s own responsibility. By free will one shapes one=s own life. Only in the knowledge of God=s plan for man can we grasp that sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another.

CCC 1821, 2794 - 2796 **Heaven** is the full union of the human person with God and of all persons in God. Heaven is the perfect happiness that comes from sharing in God=s divine life.

CCC 1030-1032 **Purgatory** is the process through which we are cleansed or purged of the selfishness that keeps us even minimally separated from God.

CCC 1030-1037 **Hell** is the experience of final alienation and estrangement from God, isolation and separation from all that is good. Hell is the experience of eternal punishment for grave and unrepented sin.

Session I – Goal # 2

God’s Reveals his Loving Plan to Save Us

Prayer

Your word, Lord, stands forever; it is firm as the heavens. Through all generations your truth endures; fixed to stand firm like the earth. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path. (Psalm 119, 105)

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you describe your relationship with Jesus Christ? Has it changed over the years?
2. What do you know about Jesus?

Story and Vision:

1. Revelation is the self-disclosure of the living God. God shows himself by both great deeds, as narrated for us in Scripture, and by the words that illumine the meaning of these deeds.
2. In Revelation, the tremendous gulf between God and the human race is bridged. More profoundly God desires to have an intimate relationship with all his people.
3. The process of Revelation, which took centuries to unfold, reached its

magnificent fulfillment in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

4. Revelation is the act by which God speaks to and forms a covenant with his people.
5. It requires faith to respond to God's revealing word and to perceive the divine action in history.
6. There are those who do not have faith or who consciously reject living in faith.
7. Because the Christian covenant is definitive, there will be no new Revelation until the final glorious manifestations of Jesus Christ at the end days.
8. All that is needed for salvation has already been revealed.
9. From the Beginning, God established a personal relationship with our first parents. After the Fall, he encouraged them with the hope of Salvation by promising them Redemption.
10. Revelation is an act by which God speaks to and forms a covenant people beginning with Abraham. He then chose Moses through whom the divine law was given to the covenant people.
11. In the Incarnation, we behold the mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of God's Son. Jesus had both human knowledge and a human will and divine knowledge and a divine will.
12. The mysteries of Christ's infancy and hidden life invite us to identify with Christ's obedience to Mary and Joseph as well as the example of his holiness in the daily work of family and work in the long years at Nazareth.

Application

When friends and family members converse with one another, what do they reveal about themselves? What does God reveal of himself to us in treating us as friends and family members? How does God's Revelation give meaning to our lives?

Prayer

Your word, Lord, stands forever; it is firm as the heavens. Through all generations your truth endures; fixed to stand firm like the earth. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path. (Psalm 119, 105)

Session II – Goal # 2
Man and Woman in the Beginning

Prayer

Now that we have seen the resurrection of Christ, let us adore the all-holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We bow in worship before your cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify your resurrection, for You are God, and we have no other, and we magnify your name. All you faithful, come: let us adore the holy resurrection of Christ, for behold the cross joy has come to the world! Let us always bless the Lord, let us sing his resurrection, for by enduring for us the pain of the cross, He has crushed death by his death. (*Hymn from Easter Sunday, Byzantine Daily worship*)

Question for Discussion

1. What is true freedom?
2. Was our human nature changed after the fall of Adam and Eve?

Story and Vision:

1. God created man and woman in his image as his creatures called to love and to serve him and to care for creation.
2. Each person is a unity of body and soul. God directly creates the immortal soul of each human being.
3. Because of its common origin *the human race forms a unity for from one ancestor* (God) made all nations to inhabit the whole earth.
4. Revelation teaches about the state of original holiness and justice of man and woman before sin. Their happiness flowed from the friendship with God.
5. Tempted by the Evil One, man and woman abused their freedom. They opposed God and separated themselves from him.
6. By his sin Adam, as the first man, lost the original holiness and justice he had received from God, not only for himself, but for all human beings.
7. Adam and Eve transmitted to all future generations a human nature wounded by their sin and deprived of original holiness and justice. This deprivation is called Original Sin.
8. Because of Original Sin, human nature is subject to ignorance, suffering, death, disorder in our appetites, and an inclination to sin- an inclination called concupiscence.

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9. But the victory over sin that Jesus accomplished has provided greater blessings than those taken away. Where sin increased grace abounded all the more. Baptism delivers us from Original Sin.
10. Because every human being is made in the image of God, each one has a desire for union with God. Humanity has been reconciled to God by the redemptive death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Application

1. How would you help people come to faith in the Resurrection of Christ? Why is it so central to your faith?
2. How could you come to understand or experience the need for a Savior. Why are the Cross and Resurrection bound together in the Paschal Mystery?

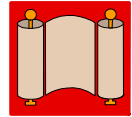
Prayer

Now that we have seen the resurrection of Christ, let us adore the all-holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We bow in worship before your cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify your resurrection, for You are God, and we have no other, and we magnify your name. All you faithful, come: let us adore the holy resurrection of Christ, for behold the cross joy has come to the world! Let us always bless the Lord, let us sing his resurrection, for by enduring for us the pain of the cross, He has crushed death by his death. *(Hymn from Easter Sunday, Byzantine Daily worship)*

Goal #3: Illustrate a basic understanding of doctrine and dogma in light of the creed.

Rationale:

CCC 90: The mutual connections between dogmas and their coherence can be found in the whole of the Revelation of the mystery of Christ. In Catholic doctrine there exists an order of Ahierarchy@ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of Christian faith.



DJ 1: The Church=s universal mission is born from the command of Jesus Christ and is fulfilled in the course of the centuries in the proclamation of the mystery of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the mystery of the incarnation of the Son, as saving event for all of humanity.

DJ 5: It must be firmly believed that, in the mystery of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, who is the way, the truth, and the life, the full revelation of divine truth is given.

Session I – Goal # 3
Fullness of Revelation

Prayer

Your word, Lord, stands forever; it is firm as the heavens. Through all generations your truth endures; fixed to stand firm like the earth. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path. (*Psalms 119*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you explain the difference between **dogma and doctrine** based on what you know today?
2. Can you share how your faith journey started?

Story and Vision:

1. Dogma and Doctrine: The name given to divinely revealed truths proclaimed or taught by the Church’s Magisterium; the faithful are obliged to believe these truths.
2. Jesus Christ, the fullness of Revelation, entrusted his mission to the Apostles. They transmitted Christ’s Gospel through their witness, preaching, and writing- under the guidance of the Holy Spirit- meant for all peoples until Christ comes in glory.
3. Divine Revelation is transmitted through Apostolic Tradition and Sacred Scripture, which flow from the same divine wellspring and work together in unity toward the same goal.

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4. The Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes. This is what is meant by the term Tradition.
5. The teaching office of the Church, the Magisterium- that is, the pope and the bishops in communion with him- has the task of authoritatively interpreting the Word of God, contained in Sacred Scripture and transmitted by Sacred Tradition.

Application

1. How is Apostolic Tradition linked to Apostolic Succession?
2. Why might you say it makes perfect sense for Jesus to commission followers to carry on his saving vision? How do leaders of the Catholic Church continue the vision of Jesus in our times?
3. In what ways do you find it difficult to be open about your faith in public situations? How have you been able to apply your faith in family issues, community development, and political decisions?

Prayer

Your word, Lord, stands forever; it is firm as the heavens. Through all generations your truth endures; fixed to stand firm like the earth. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path. (*Psalms 119*)

Session II – Goal # 3 **Doctrine, Prayer, Magisterium**

Prayer – Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Question for Discussion

Can you explain the difference between dogma and doctrine? What is the role of the Magisterium in the ordering of the Church?

Story and Vision:

1. Belief in Catholic doctrine draws us to prayer and to a divine reassurance about the validity of these revealed truths of God to which we have responded in faith. We give ourselves to prayer to deepen our personal relationship with God in a loving communion.

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2. Experiencing God in prayer shows us the vitality of the truthfulness of doctrine and puts energy into our spiritual and moral witness.
3. If we treat doctrine simply as an academic study, we will have a tendency to miss its connection with our union with God. Jesus said “I am the truth.” He also said: “Whoever loves me will keep my word.” Jesus never divorced his teaching from his person.
4. Likewise, doctrine and prayer go together. The heart is the shrine of the Word and the of Love. The heart links these gifts into one satisfying unity.
5. The teaching authority of the Church is the Magisterium. The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone.
6. In some cases, these doctrines have been explicitly defined; in others, they are universally considered to be an essential and irreformable element of the one Catholic faith.
7. The faith of the Church is found in its Creed and in its ordinary teaching, as articulated by its shepherds, the pope, and the bishops in communion with him.
8. In the Church, when we deal with matters of faith and morals, the authoritative voice of Christ is exercised by the pope and bishops, successors of Peter and the Apostles who form the Magisterium. They are guided by the Holy Spirit, who abides with the Church to lead us into all truth.

Application

1. You are called to faithful assent to the Church’s teachings on faith and morals. What challenges do you experience? How do you handle them? What motivates you to be a morally good person?
2. How do you find that acts of faith, hope, and love bring you closer to God and make your behavior an act of praise to the Lord?

Prayer – Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Session III – Goal # 3

The Creed – Our Eternal Destiny

Prayer

May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion, with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, with Joseph and all the angels and saints. . . .
May you return to your Creator, who formed you from the dust of the earth. . . .
May you see your Redeemer face to face.. (*Prayer of Commendation Order of Christian funerals*)

Question for Discussion

Where do our Creeds come from historically?

Story and Vision:

1. The Communion of Saints includes the faithful on earth, the souls in Purgatory, and the blessed in heaven. In this Communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always attentive to our prayers for one another here and for the souls of the faithful departed.
2. The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and in the hope of the Resurrection.
3. Immediately after death, each person comes before God and is judged individually (the particular judgment) and enters heaven, Purgatory, or hell. Yet at the end of time, a final judgment will occur when all are assembled before God and their relationship to God is made public (the general judgment).
4. The traditional designation of the four ‘Last Things’ refers to death, judgment, heaven, and hell.
5. The soul is immortal; it does not perish when it separates from the body at death. At the final resurrection, it will be reunited with the body.
6. Those who die in the state of grace and friendship with God but who are not fully purified are assured of their eternal salvation. They must undergo a purification to attain the holiness needed to enter heaven. This process is called *Purgatory*. We pray for those in Purgatory, that they may soon be with God in heaven.
7. The Church warns the faithful of the sad reality of eternal death, also called, hell, which is brought about by a person’s free and permanent rejection of God and his love.
8. The “Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory. . . . The Last Judgment will reveal that God’s justice triumphs over all the injustices committed by his creatures and that God’s love is stronger than death.”

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Application

1. What experiences have you had that bring you to think about death?
2. How does the Church's teachings about eternal life help shape your thinking about death?

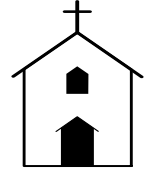
Meditation (Gaudium et Spes Number 18)

It is in regard to death that man's condition is most shrouded in doubt. Man is tormented not only by pain and by the gradual breaking-up of his body but also, and even more, by the dread of forever ceasing to be. But a deep instinct leads him rightly to shrink from and to reject the utter ruin and total loss of his personality. Because he bears in himself the seed of eternity, which cannot be reduced to mere matter, he rebels against death. The Church, taught by divine Revelation, declares that God has created man in view of a blessed destiny that lies beyond the limits of his sad state on earth.

Prayer

May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion, with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, with Joseph and all the angels and saints. . .
May you return to your Creator, who formed you from the dust of the earth. . .
May you see your Redeemer face to face.. (*Prayer of Commendation Order of Christian funerals*)

Goal #4. Illustrate a basic understanding of Church.



Rationale:

CCC 737: The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

DJ 13: The truth of the Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lord and only Savior, who through the event of his incarnation, death and resurrection has brought the history of salvation to fulfillment, and which has in him its fullness and center, must be firmly believed as a constant element of the Church=s faith.

DJ 16: The Lord Jesus, the only Savior, did not only establish a simple community of disciples, but constituted the Church as a salvific mystery: he himself is in the Church and the Church is in him.

Session I – Goal # 4

The Church Reflecting the Light of Christ

Prayer

Father, you called your people to be your Church. As we gather together in your name, may we love, honor, and follow you to eternal life in the kingdom you promise. (*Prayer for the Dedication of a Church, liturgy of the Hours*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. When you hear the word ‘CHURCH’ what images or understandings come to mind?
2. Think of your parish community, what elements in your community nurture your faith? What could be improved?

Story and Vision:

1. The word *Church* is based on both the Greek word *ekklesia* and the Hebrew word *gahal*, which mean the gathering of the community. It was first applied tot eh people of Israel, whom God called into existence. The church was planned and formed by God, who called together into one those who accepted the Gospel.
2. The Father prepared the Church through a series of covenant events described in the Old Testament. Jesus fulfilled the divine plan for the Church through his saving death and Resurrection. The Holy Spirit manifested the Church as a mystery of salvation.

3. The Church is a visible society and a spiritual community; she is a hierarchical institution and the Body of Christ; she is an earthly Church and one filled with heavenly treasures. Hence the Church is a complex reality that has human and divine elements.
4. The Church is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and instrument of our communion with God.
5. The Church is the People of God.
6. The Church is the Body of Christ. Christ is the head, and we are the members. In the unity of this Body, there is a diversity of members and roles, yet everyone is linked together by Christ's love and grace especially the poor, the suffering, and the persecuted.
7. The Church is a Temple of the Holy Spirit.
8. The Church is a communion. The starting point is our union with Jesus Christ. This gives us a share in the communion of the persons of the Trinity and also leads to a communion among men and women.

Application

1. How does the understanding of the Church as Body of Christ shape your faith?
2. Why is the link between the Holy Spirit and the Church so vital?

Prayer

Father, you called your people to be your Church. As we gather together in your name, may we love, honor, and follow you to eternal life in the kingdom you promise. (*Prayer for the Dedication of a Church, liturgy of the Hours*)

Session II – Goal # 4

The Four Marks of the Church – Reflecting the Light of Christ

Prayer

Praise be to you, Lord, for your holy Church founded on the apostles, where we are gathered together into your community. Praise be to you, Lord, for the cleansing power of Baptism and Penance that you have entrusted to your apostles, through which we are cleansed of our sins. (*Intercessions from Common of Apostles, Liturgy of the Hours*)

Question for Discussion

Name and explain the four marks of the Church

Story and Vision:

1. The four Marks of the Church – that she is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic- are inseparably linked to each other, and all are essential to the Church’s mission and pursuit of holiness.
2. The church is one: She professes ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ This unity, sustained, by the Holy Spirit, includes a diversity of gifts, talents, cultures, and rites.
3. The Church is holy. Jesus, the founder, is holy and makes his holiness available through his death and Resurrection. The Holy Spirit imparts holiness to us, especially through the Sacraments. The Church’s holiness shines in the saints, and most especially in the Blessed Virgin Mary.
4. The Church is catholic. The word *catholic* means universal. All the means of salvation are found in the Church. The Church has the fullness of the faith, the Sacraments, and apostolic succession.
5. The Church is apostolic. Jesus willed to build the Church on the foundation of the Apostles. The Church hands on the teaching of the Apostles through all generations. Christ shepherds the Church through Peter and the other Apostles, whose successors are the Pope and the college of bishops.
6. Helped by the priests and deacons, the bishops teach the faith; celebrate the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and guide the Church. God calls lay people to witness and share their faith in the midst of the world. By their Baptism they share in Christ’s priesthood and are sealed by the Spirit. They are thus called to holiness, to a prophetic witness in the world, and to a kingly resolve to sanctify the world by their words and deeds.
7. Those who live a life consecrated to God profess the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a stable state of life recognized by the Church. They solemnly promise to surrender themselves to God with an undivided heart, thus liberating themselves to serve God, the Church, and the needs of others.

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Application

1. How do the Church's four marks strengthen your Catholic identity?
2. How can we lessen mistrust and the misunderstandings that exist among the various Christian denominations in our community?

Prayer

Praise be to you, Lord, for your holy Church founded on the apostles, where we are gathered together into your community. Praise be to you, Lord, for the cleansing power of Baptism and Penance that you have entrusted to your apostles, through which we are cleansed of our sins.
(Intercessions form Common of Apostles, Liturgy of the Hours)

Goal #5: Read, understand, interpret and apply Scripture to life.



Rationale:

CCC 97: Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, in which, as in a mirror, the pilgrim Church contemplates God, the source of all her riches.

Session I – Goal # 5
Christ Unique Word of Sacred Scripture

Prayer

Let your scriptures be my chaste delight. . . O Lord, perfect me and reveal those pages to me! See, your voice is my joy. Give me what I love. . . May the inner secrets of your words be laid open to me when I knock. This I beg by our Lord Jesus Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These are the treasures I see in your books. *(St. Augustine, The Confessions)*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does the Bible have a place in your faith life at this time? Do you see a need to study the Scriptures?
2. Share what you know about the Bible with one other person in the group.

Story and Vision:

1. The Church in her doctrine life and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is all that she believes (DV 8)
2. Thanks to its supernatural sense of faith, the People of God as a whole never ceases to welcome, to penetrate more fully from the gift of divine Revelation. (CCC 99)
3. The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him. (CCC 100)
4. In order to reveal himself to men, in the condescension of his goodness God speaks to them in human words: “Indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men.” (CCC 101)

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5. For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. (CCC 103)
6. In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, but as what it really is the word of God. In the sacred books the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them. (CCC 104)

Application

1. How does the Church help you to understand the Bible?
2. How do the bishops in communion with the pope ensure that the full and living Gospel will always be preserved in the Church?

Prayer

Let your scriptures be my chaste delight. . . O Lord, perfect me and reveal those pages to me! See, your voice is my joy. Give me what I love. . . May the inner secrets of your words be laid open to me when I knock. This I beg by our Lord Jesus Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These are the treasures I see in your books. *(St. Augustine, The Confessions)*

Session II – Goal # 5

Interpretation and Truth of Sacred Scripture

Question for Discussion

How did the Scriptures come to exist? Who wrote them? In what types of literary form are they written? When were they written?

Story and Vision:

1. Sacred Scripture is inspired by God and truly contains the word of God. This action is referred to as Inspiration.
2. God is the author of Sacred Scripture, inspiring the human authors, acting in and through them. Thus God ensured that the authors taught divine and saving truth without error.
3. The Catholic Church accepts and venerates as inspired the forty-six books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. The unity of the Old and New testaments flows from the revealed unity of God's loving plan to save us.
4. Our response to God's Revelation is faith, by which we surrender our whole selves to him. \

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Application

Where is the Bible in your faith journey? Do you read the Bible? How often? Do you study the Bible either in a class with others, or through individual resources?

Prayer

Hold fast to the traditions you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours. (2 Thes.2:15)

Goal #6: Exercise responsibility as caretakers of creation as an expression of our relationship with Jesus Christ.



Rationale:

CCC 307: To human beings God even gives the power of freely sharing in His providence by entrusting them with the responsibility of subduing the earth and having dominion over it. God thus enables men to be intelligent and free causes in order to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony for their own good and that of their neighbor.

Session I – Goal # 6
Stewards and Disciples of Creation

Prayer

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day, and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful. *(from St. Francis of Assisi- Canticle of the Sun)*

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think about being ‘stewards of creation?’
2. What are your habits about recycling, caring for the environment, etc?

Story and Vision: As Jesus calls us to be disciples this has tremendous implications.

1. Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus no matter what the cost.
2. Christian disciples experience conversion – life-shaping changes of mind and heart – and commit themselves to the Lord.
3. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.
4. Jesus’ disciples, as Christian stewards, recognize God as the origin of life, the given of freedom, and the source of all things.
5. Caring for and cultivating the world involves the joyful appreciation for the God-given beauty and wonder of nature
6. Caring for and cultivating the world involves protecting and

preserving the environment, which is the stewardship of ecological concern.

7. Caring for and cultivating the world involves respect for human life, shielding life from threat and assault and doing everything that can be done to enhance this gift and make life flourish
8. Caring for and cultivating the world involves development of this world through noble human effort – physical labor, the trades and professions, the arts and sciences. We call such effort “work.” Work is a fulfilling human vocation.

Session II – Goal # 6 **Stewards of Vocation and of the Church**

Question for discussion:

What do you need to do as a Christian steward?

Story and Vision:

1. Jesus calls us as his disciples to a new way of life- the Christian way of life- of which stewardship is a part. Christian vocation entails the practice of stewardship. In addition Christ calls each of us to be stewards of our personal vocations, which we receive from God.
2. We are obliged to be stewards of the Church, collaborators and cooperators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church’s essential mission.

Application

While it is necessary to acquire earthly goods for the care and well-being of our families, there are forces that motivate us to become overly attached to wealth. How does the media contribute to this? What role does envy play in this drive toward the love of money?

Prayer

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day , and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful. *(from St. Francis of Assisi- Canticle of the Sun)*

CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

Goal #7: Demonstrate the importance of sacraments, with an emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist, in the life of Catholics.



Rationale:

CCC 1129: The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation.

CCC 1324: The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.

Session I – Goal # 7

The Sacraments: The Faith Celebrated – Sacraments of Initiation

Prayer

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life. Amen. (*Prayer for Anointing with Chrism, Rite of Baptism*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Think about a time when you celebrated one of the Sacraments? What do you remember? What did you see at the celebration? How did you feel?
2. Can you list all the 7 Sacraments of the Catholic Church and share a brief definition of each one?

Story and Vision:

1. The Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. (CCC 1131)
2. The Church celebrates the Sacraments as an assembly of all the baptized, led by the ordained, each having a special role to play in the sacramental celebrations.
3. The Holy Spirit prepares the faithful for the Sacraments by helping them to welcome the Word of God in faith.
4. The Sacraments communicate to each person a participation in God's life and a growth of love and witness in the Church. This is grace, the result of God's favor and initiative
5. A liturgical Celebration uses signs and symbols drawn from creation, human, life, and the history of salvation. Integrated into faith, the signs

become bearers of the sanctifying action of Christ.

6. Sacred song and music, closely linked to the celebration, should lead to prayer, invite the participation of all the assembly, and reflect the sacred character of the Sacrament.
7. Baptism gives a person birth into new life. It is necessary for salvation and for entry into the Church. Original and personal sin are removed.
8. Infants have been baptized since apostolic times, for this is a gift from God and does not presuppose human merit. Children are baptized into the faith of the Church.
9. The candidate for Confirmation in the Latin Church should be in the state of grace, be well prepared by prayer and catechesis, and is administered after the age of reason is attained, signifying one's bond with the Church and its apostolic origin.
10. The Eucharist is the font and summit of our Christian life, and the memorial of Christ's saving life, death and resurrection, made present for our salvation by the action of the liturgy.

Application

1. Why do we refer to Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as the Sacraments of Initiation? (You should have a good explanation of each Sacrament for your own understanding. You may want to refer to the Catechism)
2. Are Catholics born again? How would explain this?

Prayer

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life. Amen. (*Prayer for Anointing with Chrism, Rite of Baptism*)

Session II – Goal # 7

Sacraments of Healing and Forgiveness: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you chose to share our human nature, to redeem all people, and to heal the sick. Look with compassion upon your servants whom we have anointed in your name with this holy oil for the healing of

their body and spirit. Support them with your power, comfort them with your protection, and give them the strength to fight against evil. Since you have given them a share in your own passion, help them to find hope in suffering, for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen. (From *Pastoral Care of the Sick*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is your attitude toward confession today? How would you explain the Sacrament of Reconciliation to people of other faiths?
2. Why do you think that people need to have the burden of sin and guilt lifted from their hearts?

Story and Vision:

1. The Creed links the forgiveness of sins with its profession of faith in the Holy Spirit, for the risen Christ entrusted to the apostles the power to forgive sins when he gave them the Holy Spirit (CCC 984)
2. Sin wounds our relationship with God and others and our human dignity. Faith reveals to us the destructive force of sin in our lives and in our world.
3. The return to God includes sorrow for sin and the resolve to sin no more.
4. Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin, for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory (CCC 1498)
5. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is for those who are seriously ill or in danger of death or suffering the difficulties of old age.
6. The Sacrament of the Anointing includes uniting the sick person with Christ's Passion, for the person's well-being and that of the Church; strength to endure patiently the sufferings of illness and old age; the forgiveness of sins if the person was unable to receive the Sacrament of Penance; and preparation for the passage to eternal life.

Application

1. If God knows whether we will sin or not does that not take away our free will?
2. How does reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation anticipate a person's judgment before God?
3. From a faith perspective, what value does an experience of illness have for an individual and for the parish community to which he or she belongs? Why is it important to acknowledge and incorporate those who are sick and dying into the faith community?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you chose to share our human nature, to redeem all people, and to heal the sick. Look with compassion upon your servants whom we have anointed in your name with this holy oil for the healing of their body and spirit. Support them with your power, comfort them with your protection, and give them the strength to fight against evil. Since you have given them a share in your own passion, help them to find hope in suffering, for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen. (From *Pastoral Care of the Sick*)

Session III – Goal # 7

Sacraments at the Service of Communion

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God, your fatherly tenderness never ceases to provide for our needs. We ask you to bestow on this family and this home the riches of your blessing. With the gift of grace, sanctify those who live here, so that, faithful to your commandments, they will care for each other, ennoble this world by their lives, and reach the home you have prepared for them in heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

(Blessing of Families, *Book of Blessings*)

Questions for Discussion

1. Sacraments at the Service of Communion – Mt 19:3-6; Mk 10:6-9; Jn 2:1-11; 17:9-17; Acts 8:14-17; 1 Timothy 3:1-7. (use your bibles to discuss within your group or with another individual.)
2. Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults - Mt 26:26-28; 28:18-19; Mk 14:22-23; Jn 14:16-17; Acts 2:1-4; 37-38; 8:14-17.

Story and Vision:

1. Through Baptism all the members of the Church share in the priesthood of Christ. This is known as the “common priesthood” of the faithful.
2. Through Holy Orders the ministerial priesthood is another participation in the priesthood of Christ. This differs in essence from the common priesthood because it confers a sacred power for the service of all the faithful. (deacon, priest, bishop)
3. With the bishop the priests form a presbyteral (priestly) community and assume with him the pastoral mission for a particular parish.
4. God is the author of marriage. The matrimonial covenant by which a man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses

and the procreation of and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament..

5. The free consent of the couple is at the heart of the marriage celebration.
6. Unity, permanent lifelong commitment, and openness to having and caring for children are essential to marriage.
7. The Christian home is the place where the children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family is rightly called the 'domestic church' a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity. (CCC 1666)

Application

1. How does the modern, secular view of marriage and the family affect your own family relationships? How do you resist forces that can weaken marriage?
2. What qualities of a priest serve to draw people to them? What are a number of ways that the lay faithful and priests support each other for the good of families and the mission of the Church?

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God, your fatherly tenderness never ceases to provide for our needs. We ask you to bestow on this family and this home the riches of your blessing. With the gift of grace, sanctify those who live here, so that, faithful to your commandments, they will care for each other, ennoble this world by their lives, and reach the home you have prepared for them in heaven. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

(Blessing of Families, *Book of Blessings*)

Session IV – Goal # 7

Liturgy, Sacraments, and Virtues

Prayer

Glory 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.

Question for Discussion

What is liturgy? What is a Sacrament? What are the Virtues?

Story and Vision

1. Liturgy is centered on the Holy Trinity. At every liturgy the action of worship is directed to the Father, from whom all blessings come,

through the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Liturgy is the work of Christ on behalf of the people of God.

2. We praise the Father who first called us to be his people by sending us his Son as our Redeemer and giving us the Holy Spirit so that we can continue to gather, to remember what God has done for us, and to share in the blessings of salvation.
3. The Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. (CCC, 1131. cf. 774)
4. The Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity are those virtues that relate directly to God. These are not acquired through human effort but beginning with Baptism, they are infused within us as gifts from God. They dispose us to live in relationship with the Holy Trinity. Faith, hope, and charity influence human virtues by increasing their stability and strength for our lives.
5. All of the Commandments call us to practice certain virtues and forbid a number of immoral behaviors. The positive invitation of the First Commandment calls us to practice the Theological Virtues of faith, hope and charity by believing in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, placing all our hope in them, and loving them with our whole heart and mind.

Application

1. Most people in our culture say they believe in the existence of God. What causes the disconnection between that belief and the behavior of many?
2. How might you participate more fully, more consciously, more actively in the Sunday Mass? In a culture that is centered on the 'weekend' what can people do to observe Sunday as a day dedicated to God?

Prayer (Doxology)

Praise God from all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above you heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Goal #8: Demonstrate an understanding of the faith community as a sharing in the Paschal Mystery of Christ.



Rationale:

CCC 949: In the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples devoted themselves to the apostles= teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.

Session I – Goal # 8
Communion in Spiritual Goods

Prayer

Father, you called your people to be your Church. As we gather together in your name, may we love, honor and follow you to eternal life in the kingdom you promise. (*Prayer for the Dedication of a Church, Liturgy of the Hours, Vol. III, 1596.*)

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you know about the “communion of saints?” How would you explain this teaching?
2. Have you any understanding of the “communion of the Church of Heaven and Earth?”

Story and Vision

1. After confession “the holy catholic Church” the Apostles’ Creed adds “the communion of saints.” In a certain sense this article is a further explanation of the preceding: What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints? The communion of saints is the Church. (CCC 946)
2. Since all the faithful form one body, the good of each is communicated to the others. We must therefore believe that there exists of a communion of goods in the Church. But the most important member is Christ, sine he is the head. . .Therefore, the riches of Christ are communicated to all members, through the sacraments. As this Church is governed by one and the same Spirit, all the goods she has received necessarily become a common fund. (*St. Thomas Aquinas, Symb. 10*)
3. The term “communion of saints”: therefore has two closely linked meanings: communion in holy things (*sancta*), and among holy persons (*sancti*). (CCC 948)

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- 4 The faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the Apostles. Faith is a treasure of life which is enriched by being shared. (CCC 949)
- 5 The fruit of all the sacraments belongs to all the faithful. All the sacraments are sacred links uniting the faithful with one another and binding them to Jesus Christ, and above all Baptism.
- 6 Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy. . . and of their neighbors in want. (Cf. Lk 16:1,3)
- 7 In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion. (CCC 953)

Application

1. Why is the image of the Church as People of God important?
2. Read Acts: 3: 42-47. How does this image of the community similar to your parish?

Prayer

Father, you called your people to be your Church. As we gather together in your name, may we love, honor and follow you to eternal life in the kingdom you promise. (*Prayer for the Dedication of a Church, Liturgy of the Hours, Vol. III, 1596.*)

Session II – Goal # 8

The Communion of the Church of Heaven and Earth

Prayer

May you live in peace this day may your home be with God in Zion., with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, with Joseph and all the angels and saints. . . May you return to your Creator, who formed you from the dust of the earth. . . May you see your Redeemer face to face. (*Prayer of Commendation, Order of Christian Funerals*)

Question for discussion

1. Why do we pray through the intercession of the saints?
2. Is there a saint you have a particular devotion to and why?

Story and Vision

1. When the Lord comes in glory, and all his angels with him, death will be more and all things will be subject to him. But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is. (Lumen Gentium 49, cf. Mt 25-31; 1 Cor 15;26-27, Council of Florence 1439.)
2. All of us however in varying degrees and in different ways share in the same charity towards God and our neighbors, and we all sing the one hymn of glory. (LG 49, cf. Eph 4:16)
3. Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness. . . They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus. . . So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped. (LG 49, cf 1 Tim 2:5)
4. It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened. (LG 50, cf Eph 4;1-6)
5. In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the earliest days of the Christian religion has honored with great respect and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' she offers her suffrages for them. (LG 50, cf 2 Macc 12:45)

Application

Why then do we pray for those who have died?

Prayer

May you live in peace this day may your home be with God in Zion., with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, with Joseph and all the angels and saints. . . May you return to your Creator, who formed you from the dust of the earth. . . May you see your Redeemer face to face. (*Prayer of Commendation, Order of Christian Funerals*)

LIFE IN CHRIST

Goal #9: Acknowledge and affirm the dignity of the human person and community.



Rationale:

CCC 1700: The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God.

Session I – Goal # 9 **Promoting a Culture of Life**

Prayer

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; and where there is sadness, joy. 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, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (*St. Francis of Assisi*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. How can families and individuals promote respect for life and the value of life in the world today?
2. How can Catholics promote peace and understanding in the face of terrorism and violence in the world today?

Story and Vision

1. God's creative action is present to every human life and is thus the source of its sacred value. Each human life remains in a relationship with God, who is the final goal of every man and woman. God alone is the Lord of human life from its beginning to its end.
2. The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. (CCC 2261)
3. The prohibition of murder does not abrogate the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. (CCC 2321)
4. Direct abortion is the intended destruction of an unborn child and is an act gravely contrary to the moral law and the holiness of the creator.
5. Euthanasia consists in putting to death the sick, the disabled, or the dying. Regardless of the motives or means, it is never morally

permissible.

6. Physician-assisted suicide is suicide performed with the aid of a doctor. The emergence of physician –assisted suicide, popularized the right to die movement, seeks to legalize what is an immoral act. Suicide is wrong whether committed alone or aided by a doctor.
7. The human embryo from the moment of conception has the entire genetic makeup of a unique human life. The growing child must be treated as completely and fully human. He or she needs only time to grow and develop. Killing the embryo is killing human life, an act contrary to God’s law and Church teaching.
8. While every possible means must be taken to avoid war, there are times when legitimate defense of one’s own homeland by military force may be taken under the strictest conditions.
9. In addition to the respect for bodily life, there must also be reverence for the souls of others. One must always avoid scandal, which is a grave offense when, by deed or omission, one leads another to sin gravely. (CCC 2284-2287)

Application:

What are the root causes of the culture of death?? How can we promote the value of human life in all stages in contrast to abortion, euthanasia, and capital punishment?

Prayer:

I have set before life and death...Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live. (*Dt. 30:19*)

Session II – Goal # 9

Respect for Human Sexuality through Matrimony

Prayer:

Father, to reveal the plan of your love, you made the union of husband and wife an image of the covenant between you and your people. In the fulfillment of this sacrament, the marriage of Christian man and woman is a sign of the marriage between Christ and the Church. (*from the Nuptial Blessing*)

Questions for Discussion

How can we show respect for human sexuality in the light of a culture that demeans it? What are the ways of reversing the degradation of sexuality?

Story and Vision

1. God is the author of marriage and the family. The Sacrament of Marriage, along with the 4th, 6th, and 9th commandments illustrate the principal ways in which God's plan for marriage and the family is to be lived.
2. The Sixth Commandment summons the spouses to practice permanent and exclusive fidelity to one another. God established marriage as a reflection of his fidelity to us.
3. The Sixth Commandment forbids adultery, which sexual relations between a married person and someone other than one's spouse.
4. Chastity integrates bodily sexuality with the broader human reality. It approaches sexuality as related to our spiritual natures so that sexuality is seen as more than a physical act. Sexuality affects the whole person because of the unity of body and soul. Jesus is the model of chastity. Every person is called to chastity according to one's state in life.
5. Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices (CCC 2396)
6. God calls the married couple to be open to children. In this way they share the creative power and fatherhood of God. In giving birth to children and educating and forming them, they cooperate with the love of God as Creator. (CCC 2367)

Application

Why is marital fidelity so important for the stability of the family and society? What spiritual means does the Church offer to strengthen marriages or rebuild troubled marriages?

Prayer

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. I will bless the Lord at all times. I seek Yahweh, and he answers me and frees me from all my fears. Every face turned to him grows brighter and is never ashamed. Happy the man who takes shelter in him.

Goal #10: Develop a moral conscience grounded in the truth of Jesus Christ.

Rationale:

CCC 1783: Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator.



Session I – Goal # 10
Foundations in Christian Morality

Prayer

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest all my sins, because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who are all good and worthy of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Question for discussion

What are the ways or means by which a person forms his or her conscience? What is the role of the Church in conscience formation? Are we born with a conscience?

Story and Vision

1. Every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God. The Creator has given us an immortal soul and enables us to understand the order of things established by him. God has given us a free will to seek and to love what is true, good, and beautiful.
2. Because of the Fall, we also suffer the impact of Original Sin, which darkens our minds, weakens our wills, and inclines us to sin. Baptism delivers us from Original Sin, but not from its effects – especially our inclination to sin, concupiscence.
3. The imputability or responsibility for an action can be diminished or nullified by ignorance, duress, fear, and other psychological and social factors. (CCC 1746)
4. The best way to have more freedom is to perform good acts. Good deeds make us free. The road to freedom is through evil acts. Sin makes us slaves of evil and reduces our capacity to be free.

5. Every moral act has three elements: objective act (what we do), the subjective goal (why we do the act), and the concrete situation or circumstances in which we perform the act (where, when, how, with whom, the consequences, etc.) All three elements must be good for the act to be morally acceptable.
6. Moral law assists us in determining what is good or bad. Some acts are always wrong, that is intrinsically evil and may never be done, no matter what the intention or the circumstances.
7. Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. (CCC 1796)
8. A good conscience requires lifelong formation. The Word of God is a principal shaper of conscience when assimilated by study, prayer, and practice. The authoritative teaching of the Church is an essential element in our conscience formation.
9. An effective moral life demands the practice of human and Theological Virtues. Such virtues train the soul with the habits of mind and will that support moral behavior, control passions, and avoid sin.
10. Virtues guide our conduct according to the dictates of faith and reason. We group these around the Cardinal Virtues of temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence..
11. The Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity, are infused at Baptism by God through his grace.

Application

1. Why is happiness a motivation to be moral?
2. You are called to faithful assent to the Church's teaching on faith and morals. What challenges do you experience? How do you handle them? What motivates you to be a morally good person?

Prayer

O my God, relying on your infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

Session II – Goal # 10
Principles of the Christian Moral Life

Prayer

You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (*Mt 22: 37-39*)

Question for Discussion

How are we created in the image of God? What does that mean?

Story and Vision

1. God's divine law establishes our final destiny and the path to reach it. God has planted within each of us the natural law that is a reflection of his divine law.
2. The natural law is our rational apprehension of the created moral order, an ability we have because we are made in God's image. It expresses our human dignity and forms the basis of our basic rights and duties.
3. Divine wisdom leads us through various types of law (divine law, natural law, civil law, ecclesiastical [Church] law) designed to guide us to the very goals that will answer our deepest human aspirations.
4. Revealed law is seen in the Old Testament when God communicated the Ten Commandments to Moses. The Commandments, along with the teaching of the Prophets and other revealed law, prepared the world for the Gospel.
5. Justification is both the Spirit's work in bringing us forgiveness of sins and our acceptance or reception into the holiness of God, which we call sanctification through participation in divine life.
6. Sanctifying grace is a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God, to act by his love. Habitual grace, the permanent disposition to live and act in keeping with God's call, is distinguished from actual graces, which refer to God's interventions, whether at the beginning of conversion or in the course of the work of sanctification. (CCC 2000)
7. Sanctifying grace is the gratuitous gift of his life that God

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makes to us; it is infused by the Holy Spirit into the soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. (CCC 2023)

8. The Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, with the help of the works of theologians and spiritual authors. (CCC 2033)

Application

What is the source of the love needed for the moral life? What is freedom? How do the virtues help us to lead a morally good life?

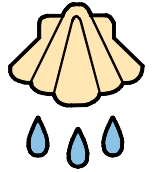
Prayer

Turn your ear, O Lord, and give answer for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am faithful: save the servant who trusts in you. You are my God; have mercy on me, Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. Give joy to your servant, O Lord, for to you I lift up my soul. Show me, Lord, your way so that I may walk in your truth. Guide my heart to fear your name. Amen.

Goal #11: Examine a variety of Christian vocations as a response to the baptismal call.

Rationale:

CCC 1694: Incorporated into Christ into Baptism, Christians are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord.



Session I – Goal # 11
My Soul Longs for You O God

Prayer

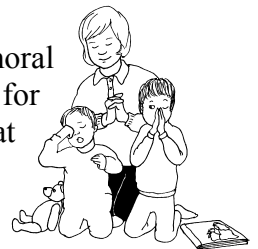
As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God? My tears have been my food day and night, as they ask daily, ‘Where is your God?’ Those times I recall as I pour out my soul.

Questions for Discussion

1. As a seeker, how do you look for truth? What are your goals and ideals? How do God and the Church play a part in what you are seeking? How is your life a journey toward God?
2. How does Jesus model discipleship for us?

Story and Vision

1. By our openness to goodness and truth, our experience, our sense of moral goodness, our listening to the voice of conscience, and our desire for happiness, we can discern our spiritual soul and can come to see that this could only have its origin in God.
2. The Lord Jesus asks us to be his disciples and shape our lives by faith. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that ‘the disciple is bound by a grave obligation toward Christ...to understand the truth received from him, faithfully to proclaim it, and vigorously defend it. (*Declaration on Religious Liberty [Dignitatis Humanae].*)
3. In the Christian Initiation Process individuals are formed into the fullness of the Christian life and to become disciples of Jesus, their teacher. This includes an initiation into the mystery of salvation, the practice of faith, hope, and love, and other virtues in a succession of liturgical rites.
4. Living out one’s Baptism is a lifelong responsibility. Growing in holiness and discipleship involves a willingness to continue to learn throughout one’s whole life about the faith and how to live it. It also involves a willingness to support and encourage others who share the faith and who have committed themselves to the ongoing process of conversion of heart and mind to God, which results in the holiness to which it is called.



Application

How would articulate the Christian Initiation Process in your parish? What do you see as the two goals of this process according to the bishop's vision? Can this process be articulated in some way in your own life even if you are already Catholic? Explain.

Prayer

May the God of peace who brought you up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the new covenant, Jesus our Lord, furnish you with all that is good, that you may do his will. May he carry out in you what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (*Heb 13:20-21*)

Session II – Goal # 11
Discipleship and the Beatitudes

Prayer

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Question for discussion

Why are the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and other rules needed for us to be moral? What happens when we rely on them without love? Can you name someone who models the beatitudes in real life in a loving way?

Story and Vision

1. Someone approached Jesus and asked 'teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?' Jesus answered him 'if you wish to be perfect you must go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me. When the young man heard this, even though he had followed all the commandments, he went away sad for he had many possessions.
2. Jesus reiterates the fundamental importance of the commandments for a moral life. He goes beyond them and calls for a radical detachment from material goods and their distribution to the poor.

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3. The attainments of fullness of life and happiness require fundamental attitudes and virtues such as the one that Jesus recommends to the young man and others underlying the keeping of the commandments for true disciples.
4. These Beatitudes refers to a state of deep happiness and joy. These are taught by Jesus as the foundations for a life of authentic Christian discipleship and the attainment of ultimate happiness. They give spirit to the law and the commandments and bring perfection to the moral life. That spirit is ultimately the spirit of love.
5. Jesus taught that the spirit of love is at the heart of all law.
6. Jesus calls us as his disciples to a new way of life – the Christian way of life- of which stewardship is a part. Each of us, clergy, religious, laity has a personal vocation. God intends that each one of us to play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan. The challenge is to understand our role and to respond generously to this call from God. Christ calls each of us to be stewards of our personal vocations, which we receive from God.

Application

1. How can we be free of exaggerated dependence on material goods?
2. What do you need to do as a Christian steward?

Prayer

Blessed are the clean of heart (or pure of heart), for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven. (*Mt. 5*)

Goal #12: Apply Catholic principles to interpersonal relations.

Rationale:

CCC 1822: Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

Session I – Goal # 12
Charity and Relationships

Prayer – Act of Love

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the effects of Holy Communion?
2. What is the link between God's love and the Commandments
3. How is it possible to obey God's commands?

Story and Vision

1. Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. (CCC 1822)
2. Jesus makes charity the *new commandment*. By loving his own to the end, he makes manifest the Fathers' love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. (CCC 1823)
3. Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God and his Christ. (CCC 1824)
4. I have not charity, I am nothing. Whatever privilege, service, or even virtue, if I have not charity I gain nothing. Charity is superior to all the virtues. The greatest of virtues is charity. (CCC 1826)
5. The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of the children of God. (CCC 1828)

6. God has given us the gift of love, the very love that he has for us. We sin against this call to love by indifference, ingratitude, lukewarmness, spiritual sloth, and hatred of God. (CCC 2094)
7. Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God's law; it turns man away from God, by preferring an inferior good to him. Venial sin allows charity to subsist, even though it offends and wounds it.
8. The Word of God, the liturgy of the Church, and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are the sources of prayer. (CCC 2662)

Application

1. How do you find that the acts of faith, hope, and love bring you closer to God and make your behavior an act of praise to the Lord?
2. How can we discover the presence of God in our lives? How can we share an awareness of this reality with others?

Prayer – Soul of Christ (Anima Christi)

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification.
Body of Christ, be my salvation.
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins.
Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains.
Passion of Christ, my comfort be.
O good Jesus, listen to me.
In Thy wounds I fain would hide.
N'er to be parted from Thy side,
Guard me, should the foe assail me.
Call me when my life shall fail me.
Bid me come to Thee above,
With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
World without end. Amen.

Session II – Goal # 12

Theology of the Body

Prayer

Lord set aflame my heart and my entire being with the fire of the Holy Spirit that I may serve you with a chaste body and pure mind, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the link between chastity and charity?
2. What is it about your household that matters most to you? How well do your family or household members share themselves with each other? What choices can be made to improve your family or household as a faith community?

Story and Vision –

1. God created human beings to love another. Since God is a communion of persons, it makes sense that we, being made in his image, would reach out to love others, forming our own communion of persons. Marital love witnesses the total self-giving of man and woman. The miracle is that in the act of self-giving, each spouse gains a greater sense of self enriching the other spouse.
2. Being created in God’s image also enables human beings to share in Trinitarian love, and to express love in marriage through the generation of new life through self-donation. This call to communion is revealed in the complementarity of the bodies of men and women, which are capable of becoming “one flesh” and expressing the mutual gift of self that marriage ought to be. (GS 49; CCC 27, 371,-372. 2331-2334) (Theology of the Body 45, 47) *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living*.
3. To accomplish our redemption, God the Father sent his son, Jesus Christ, true God and true man to give us the Holy Spirit. CCC 461
4. Not only did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, redeem us, he also taught us how to live and gave us the gift of new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Veritatis Splendor 15-18) *Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living*.
5. It is not easy for man, wounded by sin, to maintain moral balance. Christ’s gift of salvation offers us the grace to persevere in the pursuit of the virtues. Everybody should also ask for this grace of light and strength, frequent the sacraments, cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and follow his call to seek what is good and avoid evil. If we are united with the Lord, we will reach fulfillment in the glory of heaven. (CCC. 1709, 1715, 1811.)

Application

1. What are modesty and purity of heart? What are ways you have found to help you acquire these virtues.
2. Why is it important to be vigilant about our interior attitudes toward sexuality as we are about external acts? What other examples can you cite about the link between inner attitudes and external behavior?

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Prayer

Lord set aflame my heart and my entire being with the fire of the Holy Spirit that I may serve you with a chaste body and pure mind, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Goal #13: Know, critique and apply social justice principles to personal and societal situations.

Rationale:

CCC 1932: The duty of making oneself a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be. AAs you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it to me.



Session I – Goal # 13
Catholic Social Teachings of the Church

Prayer

Father, we honor the heart of your Son, broken by our cruelty, yet symbol of love's triumph, pledge of all that we are called to be. Teach us to see Christ in the lives we touch and to offer him living worship by love-filled service to our brothers and sisters. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. (*Concluding Prayer, Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*)

Question for Discussion

1. What should be the attitude of business toward the environment
2. Who should have access to employment and professions?
3. When is a strike permissible?

Story and Vision

1. The Catholic Church proclaims that **human life is sacred** and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision of society. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
2. The person is not only sacred, but also **social**. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and the vulnerable.
3. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these **rights are duties and responsibilities** – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.
4. A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In society there are deep divisions between the rich and the **poor**.
5. The **dignity of work** must be protected. The basic rights of

workers must be respected including right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

6. We must practice the virtue of **solidarity** whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological differences. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.
7. We show respect for our Creator by our **stewardship of our environment**.

Application

Why is it important to realize that you are more than an individual, that you are a social being meant to be in solidarity with others? What social justice issues have caught your attention lately? What can you do about them?

Prayer

Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God.

Session II – Goal # 13

Prayer

Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner.
Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner.
Lord Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner.

Question for Discussion

1. How can we acquire poverty of spirit? (Refer to CCC 2547)
2. What are some obstacles to stewardship?
3. What two attitudes does the Tenth Commandment forbid? (refer to CCC 2536 and 2538)

Story and Vision

1. The seventh commandment tells us not to steal – to act justly. To keep this commandment we must acquire the virtues of moderation in our possessions, justice in our treatment of others, respect for their human dignity, and solidarity with all peoples.
2. Moderation curbs our attachment to worldly goods and restrains our appetite for consumerism. Justice helps us respect our neighbor's rights and be interested in their well-being.
3. We should not steal from each other, pay unfair salaries, cheat

in business, or exploit people's weaknesses to make money. Promises should be kept and contracts honored to the extent that the issues are morally just.

4. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.
5. Church teaching also speaks to the need of business enterprises to consider the good of the employees, not just the profit motive. Wage earners should be able to represent their needs and grievances when necessary.
6. The moral law forbids acts which, for commercial or totalitarian purposes, lead to the enslavement of human beings, or to their being bought, sold or exchanged like merchandise. (CCC 2455)
7. True social and economic development is concerned with the whole person and with increasing each person's ability to respond to God's call.

Application

What insights have you gained from reflecting on the U.S. bishops' statement of themes related to Catholic social teaching? What are some stories you could share about people you admire who have helped you to acquire a social conscience?

Prayer

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

Goal #14: Engage in service to the community (e.g., family, parish, local, national and global) in response to the Gospel call.

Rationale:

CCC 1270: AReborn as sons of God {the baptized} must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church@ and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God.



Session I – Goal # 15
Christian Service

Prayer – Morning Offering

Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your most Sacred Heart. In union with the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all, and in particular for the holy Father’s intentions.

Question for Discussion

What habits have you developed to help you have a healthy detachment from worldly goods? How would generosity counter the tendency to be attached to material goods?

Story and Vision

1. The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.
2. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently.
3. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead.
4. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.
5. In its various forms – material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death – human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need

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for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin.

6. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere. (CCC 2448)

Application

Identify some practical ways you can perform the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Prayer

Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found.
Brought here together by Christ's love by love are we thus bound.
Forgive we now each others faults as we our faults confess.
And let us love each other well in Christian holiness.

CHRISTIAN PRAYER

Goal #15: Know and participate in the Catholic tradition of prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.



Rationale:

CCC 2663: In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to its faithful, according to its historic, social, and cultural context, a language for prayer: words, melodies, gestures, iconography to God. The Magisterium of the Church has the task of discerning the fidelity of these ways of praying to the tradition of the apostolic faith, always in relation to Jesus Christ.

Session I – Goal # 15 **Pray with a Pure Heart**

Prayer

As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God. My being thirsts for God, the living God. When can I go and see the face of God?

Question for Discussion

1. What should we remember when our prayers seem unanswered?
2. Why do you pray? When do you pray? How do you pray?

Story and Vision

1. Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God and the requesting of good things from him. It is an act by which one into an awareness of a loving communion with God.
2. Scripture reveals the relationship between God and people as a dialogue of prayer. God constantly searches for us. Our restless hearts seek him, though often masks and frustrates this desire.
3. Jesus taught his disciples to pray with a purified heart, with lively and persevering faith, with filial boldness.
4. Christian prayer is always Trinitarian. The Church invites us to invoke the Holy Spirit as the interior teacher of Christian prayer.
5. The first teachers of prayer are parents or other members of the family, the domestic church.
6. Our guides for prayer within the Church include ordained ministers, those in consecrated life, catechists, and spiritual directors.
7. There are three kinds of prayer: vocal, meditative, and

contemplative.

8. The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday Eucharist, the feasts of the liturgical year. (CCC 2720)

Application

1. How is prayer connected to Christian life?
2. What are you doing to deepen your prayer life? What are you learning from spiritual reading to help you with your prayer?

Prayer

I raise my eyes toward the mountains, from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. God will not allow your foot to slip; your guardian does not sleep. Truly, the guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. By day the sun cannot harm you, nor the moon by night. The Lord will guard you from evil. He will always guard your life. The Lord will guard your coming and going both now and forever. (*Psalm 121*)

Session II – Goal # 15 **Jesus Teaches us to Pray**

Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. Enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they will be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you have taught the hearts of the faithful. In the same Spirit, help to us relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this Christ our Lord. Amen.

Question for Discussion

What is the link between belief and prayer? How do the teachings of Christ and his Church enrich our prayer?

Story and Vision

1. The Lord's prayer is the most perfect of prayers. . .in it we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. (CCC 2763 – citing St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae)

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2. The communal praying of the Lord's Prayer at Mass gathers up the intercessions that accompany the consecration of the bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood and prepares the worshippers for Holy Communion.
3. The divine mystery is beyond our understanding and imagining. We call God "Father" only because Jesus, the Son of God made man, revealed him as such.
4. Prayer to the Father inclines us to be like him and to acquire a humble and trusting heart. (CCC 2800)
5. Who art in heaven does not refer to a place but to God's majesty and his presence in the hearts of the just. Heaven, the Father's house, is the true homeland toward which we are heading and to which, already, we belong. (CCC 2802)
6. In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: sanctification of his name, the coming of the kingdom and the fulfillment of his will. The other four present our wants to him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil. (CCC 2857)

Application

What is the importance of the heart in prayer? How might one balance the intellectual and the intuitive approaches to God in prayer? How could help others be open to the prayer of the heart?

Prayer

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength honor and glory and blessing. . . To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever. (Rev 5:12-13)

APPENDIX

Goal # 16 – Holy Mary, Virgin and Mother



Rationale:

CCC: 490: to become the mother of the Savior, Mary was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role. The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as ‘full of grace.’ In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God’s grace.

CCC 491: Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, full of grace, through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: *The most Blessed Virgin Mary was from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.*

CCC 495: Called in the Gospels the mother of Jesus, Mary is acclaimed by Elizabeth, at the prompting of the Spirit and even before the birth of her son, as “the mother of my Lord.” In fact the One whom she conceived as man by the Holy Spirit, who truly became her Son according to the flesh, was none other than the Father’s eternal Son, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity. Hence, the Church confesses that Mary is truly “Mother of God.” (Theotokos)

CCC 499: The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary’s real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man. In fact Christ’s birth, ‘did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it.’ And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as Aeiparthenos, the “Ever-virgin.”

CCC 966: Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of Lords and conqueror of sin and death. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son’s Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians.

Session I – Goal # 16
Mary, The First Disciple

Prayer

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

Question for Discussion

1. How has your image of Mary changed over time?
2. What is the role of Mary's faith in the plan of salvation?

Story and Vision

1. An essential part of God's saving plan for the mother of his Son was that she be conceived free of Original Sin. Through the centuries the Church became ever more aware that Mary, full of grace through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. (CCC 491) This is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.
2. At the Annunciation, Mary responded to the angel Gabriel with these words: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word. This was her consent to the Incarnation.
3. Mary is truly the Mother of God since she is the mother of the Son of God made man. In the Eastern Churches Mary is honored as the Theotokos or Birth-giver of God.
4. Mary was always a virgin, in conceiving Jesus, in giving birth to him, and for the rest of her life.
5. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven where she already shares in the glory of her Son's resurrection, anticipating the resurrection of all members of his Body. (CCC, 974)

Application

1. How would you explain to others the connection between Mary as the Mother of God and the other three dogmas: The Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, and the Assumption? Why is it important to understand that Mary, too, needed to be redeemed?
2. Mary was the greatest disciple of her Son. How are you growing in your call to discipleship?

Prayer

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your

intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, we fly unto you, O virgin of virgins, our mother. To you do we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Session II – Goal # 16 **Hail Holy Queen**

Prayer

Hail Holy Queen, mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Questions for Discussion

In what ways can you identify with Mary's yes to God at the Annunciation? If Mary's life serves as an example for us of an undecided heart in response to the love of God, how are you able to daily demonstrate your love for God?

Story and Vision

1. There are only three Marian **apparitions** recognized and approved by Holy Mother Church universally. A point should be made here that other apparitions exist with approval by local bishops that have not received universal approval by the Church. (for example: Our Lady of Knock, the Virgin of Mount Carmel, the Virgin of Chiquinquirá, the Virgin of Cobre, etc). There are also 'alleged apparitions' not approved by the Church, like Medjugorje. And there are a few "alleged apparitions" that are specifically denied by the Church, like Bayside. The three approved by the Church universal: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima.
2. Popular religiosity and devotions are determined by five elements:
 - a. devotion of Mendicants toward Mary
 - b. wars and unrest in the country
 - c. church councils
 - d. personal needs
3. The theology of Mary is that she always point us toward Christ. Christ is the light and Mary is the lamp.

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4. There are many titles of Mary which are representative of specific countries, personal needs, etc. which developed over time and history. But there is only one Mary, one Mother of God.

Application

1. Does Mary intercede on our behalf?
2. How does the Church honor Mary?

Prayer – Regina Coeli

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

For he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia.

Has risen as he said, alleluia.

Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray: O God, who by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, granted joy to the whole world; grant, we beg you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Form for Submitting Credits for LIFE

Attendance at all sessions is required before credits can be submitted.

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Parish:

Today's Date:

After completion of the 30 hour course on *A Catechesis on the 16 Goals for Christian Discipleship*, the individual may apply for the following credits by choosing either Option 1 or Option 2 for credits. Submit all paperwork at one time for total number of credits to Office of Faith Formation, 1015 ESE Loop 323 Tyler Texas 75701. Submit \$10 with the completed assignments.

I hereby attest that I have attended all 36 sessions for a total of 30 hours provided through the course "*A Catechesis on the 16 Goals for Christian Discipleship.*"

Signature of applicant

Circle which option you are requesting.

Option 1

Submit a one page double spaced written reflection on the progression of the goals as part of your faith journey. How are the goals related? How do they flow? How does this formation provide an integrated approach to discipleship?

Foundation LIFE Credit = 12 hours

Basic Scripture = Old Testament 3 hours; New Testament 3 hours

Basic Theology = Church – 6 hours; Sacraments – 6 hours

Total: 30 credits

Option 2:

For Intermediate LIFE review the specific questions listed after selected goals. Each question is to be answered in a one page double spaced typed response. Each assignment is worth 3 credits toward either Intermediate Theology or Intermediate Scripture which is specified.

IS = 15 and IT = 15; total available 30 credits

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Option 2

A Catechesis on the 16 Goals for Christian Discipleship

Assignments for Intermediate LIFE or PRE Credit

Goal # 1 – Trinity

IS = 3 credits

Identify some scripture passages which describe different images of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Describe how you would explain the Trinity to a non-Catholic based on your formation of doctrine in these sessions.

Goal # 2 – Relationship with God

IT = 3 credits

How do we come to know God? How does God communicate to us? How do you handle the doubts in your faith life?

Goal # 3 – Faith

IT = 3 credits

Why is the resurrection of our bodies important? In speaking of heaven or hell, why do we explain them in terms of our relationship with God?

Goal # 4 – Church

IT = 3 credits

Read Chapter V – The Call to Holiness from the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* from Vatican II. Write a concise paragraph on the nature and mission of the Church as articulated in this chapter.

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Goal # 5 – Scripture

IS = 3 credits

Read the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, (Dei Verbum)* from Vatican II (about 15 pages). **Answer the following questions following your reading.** What is tradition? What is the relation of tradition to Church in the formation of the Gospels?

Goal # 7 – Sacraments

IT = 3 credits

St. Paul tells us that in Baptism we die and rise with Christ. Why is it necessary to remember the “dying” part? If you were to do a survey of what Baptism means to people, what answers do you think you would hear? Why?

Goal # 8 – Community of Believers

IS = 3 credits

Read Acts Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4. Write a description of the early church in the first century how it compares with our church today.

Goal # 10- Moral Conscience

IT = 3 credits

How would you explain to a non Catholic who is interested in becoming a Catholic the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Include the need for frequent confession, formation of conscience, clarification of sin, Purgatory, particular and final judgment, temporal punishment.

Goal # 16 – Mariology

IS = 3 credits

List several Scriptural references in the New Testament regarding Mary. Explain how the four dogmas can be supported by Scripture.

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