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The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth Teacher Guide

This teacher guide has been developed in response to the expressed needs of those wishing to use the content in *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)* as the basis for a Catholic overview course. Using the material in the CFH, this guide provides engaging, meaningful, and easy-to-use lesson plans and learning experiences that have been developed with the needs and everyday realities of youth in mind. This material could serve as a semester-long course that is a natural prerequisite and foundation for all other high-school-level theology courses that follow the bishops’ curriculum framework.

After covering the material in the CFH using the approach and structure provided in this teacher guide, students will understand core concepts across the spectrum of Catholic beliefs and practices. They will be better prepared to enter further study of Catholic teaching at more advanced levels. This guide, combined with the experience and expertise of the teacher, will serve as a road map for a successful and exciting overview course of the Catholic faith.

The Teacher Guide Format

This teacher guide has a different look and feel from traditional high school theology teaching manuals.

- **The teacher guide, rather than the student book, provides the scope and sequence for the course.** The teacher guide follows the content in the CFH sequentially, from chapter 1 through chapter 39. However, there are a few cases where the material within a specific chapter is covered in a slightly different order, depending on the specific learning outcomes that are desired and the particular learning experiences that are used.

- **The teacher guide provides you with focused learning experiences that utilize the student book, the Bible, and additional handouts.** This guide serves as a command center for the course, providing ways for you to teach key concepts to the students by utilizing and incorporating a wide variety of available resources. You can also supplement the learning experiences within this guide by accessing corresponding online support resources. These resources were designed to complement and provide additional options for teaching the content. This material is available at catholicfaithhandbook.smp.org.

- **The teacher guide invites you to incorporate your own expertise to facilitate learning.** This guide understands that you are the expert when it comes to the students in your class. You can discern how they learn best and lead them to understand the main concepts in a way that speaks to their lived experiences. The purpose of this guide is to provide a resource that supports you and can be combined with your own experience in a manner that best serves the learning needs of the students.

- **The teacher guide provides learning experiences that invite the students to become more engaged in their own learning.** The learning experiences presented in this guide encourage the students to become involved in their own learning process. The material also challenges the students to
incorporate their understandings and to practice what it means to be mature Catholics who apply Scripture and Church teaching to their everyday lives.


The course outlined in this teacher guide incorporates all of the content in the *CFH* within six units, which follow the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The concepts presented represent key doctrinal elements and practices that students should know about the Catholic faith. The six units are as follows:

- Unit 1: Introduction
- Unit 2: The Creed – Part I
- Unit 3: The Creed – Part II
- Unit 4: Liturgy and Sacraments
- Unit 5: Christian Morality
- Unit 6: Christian Prayer

**The Structure of Each Unit in This Teacher Guide**

This teacher guide offers a path through each unit with the goal of leading the students to comprehend four key understandings and acquire all related knowledge and skills. This curriculum allows for the adjustment of teaching depending on the needs and capabilities of the students in any particular class. You do not have to complete every learning experience provided, and you are encouraged to substitute your own ideas for those in the guide when necessary.

Each unit has three basic parts: the Overview, the Learning Experiences, and handouts.

**The Overview**

The Overview is a snapshot of the whole unit. It provides the following information:

- the key understandings and questions for the unit
- a summary of the learning experience steps
- a list of student book chapters that are covered in the unit
- a list of Scripture passages that are utilized in the learning experiences
- a list of vocabulary terms that come from the student book and from the learning experiences in the teacher guide

**Learning Experiences**

Instruction occurs through the learning experiences that are presented in each unit. These learning experiences are subdivided into ten to fifteen consecutive steps. Each unit contains a similar general process for instruction within these steps, which is detailed below.
Preassess Student Knowledge of the Concepts

Each unit opens with one or more options for preassessing what the students already know about a topic. It is useful to gain this information as you prepare to present new material.

Preassessing the students' knowledge can help you determine how to use your time effectively throughout the unit. Because students learn most effectively when new concepts build on prior knowledge, the preassessment of each unit can help you avoid teaching the students what they already know or teaching far above their level of comprehension. You will often find that you have a mixed group in terms of prior knowledge. This can help you to better tailor lessons as well as provide opportunities for students to help one another while learning.

In addition to the preassessment offered for each unit regarding the content that will be covered, unit 1 offers a comprehensive questionnaire to help you see where the students are coming from in terms of general Catholic knowledge and belief. This comprehensive preassessment will help you make choices throughout all of the units. Based on what you learn in this comprehensive preassessment, you may decide to spend more or less time on certain topics.

Present the Final Performance Tasks and Rubric to the Students

In addition to providing a unit quiz and a unit test, you can assess student comprehension of the four key understandings in each unit by assigning one of the short projects called final performance tasks. These projects provide the students with creative and varied ways to demonstrate their understanding of the main concepts of the unit.

For the performance tasks in each unit, there is a corresponding rubric. A rubric is a tool that assists you and the students in more clearly assessing and evaluating their work. Rubrics provide a set of criteria that define what excellent, good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory completed performance tasks will look like for a particular unit. Understanding the rubric for each unit can help the students identify the specific expectations for their final performance tasks.

It is suggested that you explain the performance task options and corresponding rubric early in the unit so the students can focus on the knowledge and skills that will be necessary for the final performance task they choose. This will help the students understand where they are headed in each unit and how they will get there.

If you are not familiar with final performance tasks and would like to learn more about their function and role in the learning process, you may find the following resources to be helpful:


Provide Learning Experiences for the Students to Deepen Their Understanding of the Main Concepts

This teacher guide uses the term learning experiences rather than activities to emphasize the fact that each step is intentionally designed to contribute to student learning in some way. Every step leads the students toward a deeper level of comprehension of the four key understandings of the unit. At certain times learning experiences are grouped into a single step because they work toward the same goal. At other times a step includes only one learning experience. You are encouraged to introduce your own learning experiences to address any specific learning needs of the students in your class. However, if new vocabulary or content is introduced in a step you have chosen to skip or alter, you may want to cover that material in some way or remove that material from the unit quiz and test.

The goal of this course is for the students to gain a deeper understanding of the material, and the understanding that students should gain is not one-dimensional but rather multifaceted. Therefore, when relevant, all of the facets of understanding are addressed in each unit in this teacher guide. These facets of understanding are outlined by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins in their book Understanding by Design:

We have developed a multifaceted view of what makes up a mature understanding, a six-sided view of the concept. When we truly understand we

- **Can explain**—via generalizations or principles, providing justified and systematic accounts of phenomena, facts, and data; make insightful connections and provide illuminating examples or illustrations.

- **Can interpret**—tell meaningful stories; offer apt translations; provide a revealing or personal historical dimension to ideas and events; make the object of understanding personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models.

- **Can apply**—effectively use and adapt what we know in diverse and real contexts—we can “do” the subject.

- **Have perspective**—see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.

- **Can empathize**—find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitively on the basis of prior direct experience.

- **Have self-knowledge**—show metacognitive awareness; perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that both shape and impede our own understanding; are aware of what we do not understand; reflect on the meaning of learning and experience.

(P. 84)

Note that Saint Mary’s Press has created icons for each facet of understanding. When three or more facets are present, there will be an “understand” icon. When relevant, all facets of understanding should be addressed in each unit.
Provide a Day or Partial Day for the Students to Work on the Final Performance Tasks

This guide encourages you to give the students time in class to work on their final performance tasks if you have assigned them. You do not, however, have to wait until the end of the unit. Not only does this day give the students time to work in groups or do some research, but it also gives you the opportunity to identify and assist any students who may be having trouble with the assignment.

Give the Students a Tool to Help Them Reflect on Their Learning

The handout “Learning about Learning” appears as the final handout in each unit. It provides one way to help the students think about what they have learned during the entire unit. This process is valuable for several reasons:

- Looking over the unit helps the students revisit and identify which concepts they have learned and which concepts remain difficult for them to understand.
- It is important that the students are able to identify how they learn best. By examining the way in which concepts are best learned in this course, students can incorporate or focus on similar learning strategies in all of the disciplines they are studying.

Handouts

Each unit includes various handouts to support the learning experiences detailed throughout the lesson. These handouts can be photocopied as necessary for use in the classroom.

Thank You

We thank you for putting your confidence in us by utilizing this resource. Our goal is to assist in the development of students who are in a relationship with Jesus Christ, are religiously literate, and understand their faith in terms of their real lives.

Please contact us and let us know how we are doing. We are always looking to improve our resources, and we value your knowledge and expertise. Feel free to e-mail us at catholicfaithhandbook@smp.org to offer your feedback.
Unit 1
Introduction

Overview
This unit introduces the students to the core beliefs, practices, and attitudes of Catholicism. The unit also gives the students the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation for how God reveals himself to humanity and how we can come to know God and his divine plan through reason and Revelation. Special emphasis will be placed on discovering the importance of Scripture and Tradition in the process of coming to know God and his plan for our salvation.

Key Understandings and Questions
At the end of this unit, the students will possess a deeper understanding of the following key concepts:

- Catholicism encompasses diverse people of every nationality and cultural background, yet its people share common beliefs, practices, and attitudes.
- Reason and Revelation are two gifts God has given humans to know him and his divine plan for us.
- Scripture and Tradition are closely connected modes of Revelation that form a single sacred Deposit of Faith.
- Scripture is the inspired Word of God and shows how God has worked within the people and events of human history to reveal our purpose in life and our path to salvation.

Upon completing the unit, the students will have answered the following questions:

- What are some of the common beliefs, practices, and attitudes that Catholics share?
- How do reason and Revelation together help us to know God?
- What is the Catholic understanding of biblical inspiration?
- How does Scripture help us come to understand our own identity and intended destiny?

How Will You Know the Students Understand?
The following resources will help you assess the students’ understanding of the key concepts covered in this unit:

- handout “Final Performance Task Options for Unit 1” (Document #: TX003089)
- handout “Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 1” (Document #: TX003090)
- handout “Unit 1 Test” (Document #: TX003098)
Student Book Content

This unit draws on chapters from The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH), and incorporates them into the unit instruction. Whenever the teaching steps for the unit require the students to refer to or read content from the CFH, the following symbol appears in the margin: . The chapters covered in the unit are from the introduction and are as follows:

- “Being Catholic: The ‘CliffsNotes’ View” (chapter 1, pp. 14–21)
- “Knowing God: Reason and Revelation” (chapter 2, pp. 22–29)
- “The Bible’s Big Picture” (chapter 3, pp. 30–42)

The Suggested Path to Understanding

This unit in the teacher guide provides you with one learning path to take with the students, to enable them to begin their study of Catholicism. It is not necessary to use all of the learning experiences provided in the unit; however, if you substitute other material from this course or your own material for some of the material offered here, be sure that you have covered all relevant facets of understanding and that you have not missed any skills or knowledge required for later units.

Step 1: Preassess what the students know and want to know about the Catholic faith.

Step 2: Introduce the final performance task options and the rubric for the final performance tasks for unit 1.

Step 3: Invite the students to explore and discuss some of the core Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes.

Step 4: Help the students see how reason can lead us to understand the truth about God.

Step 5: Lead the students through a guided reflection on how God works through our needs and desires to reveal himself to us.

Step 6: Introduce the students to the Bible as an inspired source of Revelation.

Step 7: Explore Scripture passages about God’s covenants with the human race that reveal the “big picture” of the Bible.

Step 8: Examine the organization of the Bible

Step 9: Give the students a quiz to assess understanding
Step 10: Make sure the students are on track with their final performance tasks.

Step 11: Provide an opportunity for the students to reflect on how they have learned throughout this unit.

Scripture Passages

Scripture is an important part of this course and is frequently used in the learning experiences for each unit. The Scripture passages featured in this unit are as follows:

- Genesis 9:1–17 (Covenant with Noah)
- Genesis 12:1–9 (Covenant with Abraham)
- Exodus 19:2–11 (Covenant with Moses)
- 2 Samuel 7:8–16 (Covenant with David)
- John 14:1–14 (God's Final Covenant in Jesus)

Vocabulary

This unit includes the following key terms. To provide the students with a list of these terms and their definitions, make and distribute copies of the handout “Vocabulary for Unit 1” (Document #: TX003087), one for each student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible</th>
<th>Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biblical inspiration</td>
<td>Magisterium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canon</td>
<td>natural revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>covenant</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposit of Faith</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Revelation</td>
<td>Parousia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical Council</td>
<td>reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel</td>
<td>Sacred Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inerrancy</td>
<td>Sacred Tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israelites</td>
<td>salvation history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online Support Resources

All of the handouts in this unit are available online for easy access and customization. A variety of other resources are also available to be used to reinforce the content covered in this unit and provide additional support for lesson planning. These materials include PowerPoint presentations, additional activities, review-question answers, quizzes, and Web links. Go to catholicfaithhandbook.smp.org to see how these support materials might help you.
Learning Experiences

Step 1

Preassess what the students know and want to know about the Catholic faith.

1. Make and distribute copies of the handout “What Do I Know about the Catholic Faith?” (Document #: TX003088), one for each student. Provide an additional blank sheet of paper for each student. The purpose of this exercise is to find out what the students currently know and what they would like to know about Catholicism.

2. Direct the students to form pairs to answer the questions about the Catholic faith on the handout. If possible, make sure that at least one Catholic student is in each group. Give the student pairs the following directions:

   - In the time allotted for this exercise, you and your assigned partner should answer the questions on the handout about the Catholic faith to the best of your knowledge. Write your responses in complete sentences on a separate sheet of paper. Listen carefully to each other’s responses before writing your final answer. If you are unsure about a question, write what you believe to be the correct answer and place a question mark next to it. Do not worry about leaving some of the questions blank. You are not expected to know everything at this point. You may begin now.

   You may wish to give the students several examples to get them started. Allow the students adequate time to write their responses.

3. Direct each student pair to join another pair of classmates. Ask each small group to share their responses to the questions and to identify any common understandings revealed in their responses. Also invite the small groups to discuss particular questions they might have about the Catholic faith or additional topics they would like to cover during the course.

4. Ask the small groups to report their findings by choosing a spokesperson. The spokesperson should summarize to the larger class any common understandings discovered in the small-group sharing. Note this input on the board or in PowerPoint slides.

5. Collect the students’ answer sheets so you can review their answers at a later time. Be sure that the students have written their names on the answer sheets. Return these to the students at the next class meeting.

6. Lead the students through a semester overview, identifying at what points throughout the semester they can expect to explore the answers to remaining questions or areas of particular interest they might have.
Step 2

Introduce the final performance task options and the rubric for the final performance tasks for unit 1.

This unit provides you with three ways to assess whether the students have a deep understanding of the most important concepts in the unit. They may choose to reflect on what the Catholic faith means to them, write a personal salvation-history narrative, or interview a practicing Catholic. The first and second options for the performance tasks should be completed by individual students. The third option can be completed by small groups or by individual students.

1. **Prepare** by making copies of the handouts “Final Performance Task Options for Unit 1” (Document #: TX003089) and “Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 1” (Document #: TX003090), one for each student.

2. **Distribute** the handouts and offer the students a choice regarding which performance task they would like to complete. You may also wish to add additional performance task options of your own. Review the directions, expectations, and rubric in class, allowing the students to ask any questions they might have.

3. **Assure** the students that each learning experience is designed to build the knowledge and skills they will need to demonstrate their understanding of the core concepts presented in the unit.

Step 3

Invite the students to explore and discuss some of the core Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes.

1. **Direct** the students to read the student book chapter 1, “Being Catholic: The ‘CliffsNotes’ View,” as preparation and background for this learning experience.

2. **Preassign** the students into groups of three. Make enough copies of the handout “Core Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes of the Catholic Faith” (Document #: TX003091) so that each group of three students will have one three-page handout (a different page for each student in the group).

3. **Prepare** the students to participate in this learning experience using the following, or similar, words:

   - We will begin to examine core Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes as an overview of the major topics covered in this course. These beliefs, practices, and attitudes have been shaped by the faith experiences and wisdom of the Church over many centuries.
   - You will be moving into groups of three to consider some of the core beliefs, practices, and attitudes of the Catholic faith. I will tell
you which group you will be in. Once everyone has been assigned
to a group, you will move to sit with your group and wait for further
instructions.

4. **Tell** the students which group they belong to and where they will be
sitting, and allow them some time to move. Give each student in each
group one of the three pages of the handout, making sure that each
group has all three topics. After you have distributed the handouts,
proceed with the following information:

➤ Each member of your group has a different topic: core beliefs,
core practices, or core attitudes of the Catholic faith. You will first
work alone to complete the handout you have received. Silently
read each statement on your handout and choose a symbol that
best represents your own current understanding of each state-
ment. The three symbols represent “I get it” (thumbs up), “I’m
unsure about it” (question mark), and “I don’t get it” (thumbs
down). Then briefly explain what you might know about each core
belief, practice, or attitude of the Catholic faith. You will have about
10 minutes to complete your handout.

Consider playing soft instrumental music as the students work. Allow
the students to work for about 10 minutes, or longer if several stu-
dents have not completed the handout. At the end of this time period,
say:

➤ Please stop writing now. Even if you have not completed all of the
responses to the questions, you can discuss the ones you have
finished. The first student to share will be the person in your group
who is holding the handout dealing with core beliefs. The second
to share will be the one who has the topic of core practices, and
the third will be the one who has the topic of core attitudes. Listen
carefully as each member of your group speaks. You may read
what you wrote or describe your ideas to your partners. After shar-
ing each item, other members of your group may express their
ideas about these statements. If a particular statement interests
or presents a particular challenge to you or other members of
your group, feel free to take extra time to discuss it. You may begin
sharing at this time.

5. **Monitor** the students’ conversations so that you can get a sense of
their knowledge of and attitudes toward the topics they are discuss-
ing. If you have a large number of students who are not Catholic,
encourage these students to relate the statements to their personal
experiences as well as possible. This is also an opportunity for them
to express their own impressions of the Catholic Church. Catholic
students may appreciate the opportunity to assist other students by
sharing their own faith and beliefs, or even to share their own ques-
tions. After students have finished sharing information, call the class
together.

6. **Invite** volunteers to share with the large group something new that
they learned about the Catholic faith through this activity. Conclude by
reminding the students that they are only beginning this course about
the Catholic faith. They will have many opportunities to learn, to ask questions, and to share their faith and knowledge with one another.

**Step 4**

Help the students see how reason can lead us to understand the truth about God.

1. **Direct** the students to read the student book chapter 2, “Knowing God: Reason and Revelation,” and the “Did You Know?” sidebar on Aquinas's Proofs for the Existence of God on page 58 as preparation and background for this learning experience.

2. **Prepare** by making copies of the handout “Aquinas's Five Proofs for the Existence of God” (Document #: TX003092) and distribute copies to the students. Divide the class into groups of four students.

3. **Begin** the learning experience by highlighting the following information:
   - You will be working in groups today to examine the role of reason in coming to know God. You will specifically focus on some important understandings given to us by Saint Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth-century theologian. Aquinas is one of the Doctors of the Church, and is considered to be one of the greatest theologians and philosophers in the Church's history.
   - Saint Thomas Aquinas's most famous work is the *Summa Theologica*. As a work of systematic theology, the *Summa* sought to explain the Christian faith in a reasonable and coherent way by addressing human nature and our ability to know God. Aquinas worked to unite the intellect with the senses in what is sometimes referred to as “natural theology.” His work continues to be studied today as an important part of the Church's teaching on faith and reason.
   - You will be examining Aquinas's Five Proofs for the Existence of God in assigned groups. You have already read a sidebar in your student book with a brief explanation of these proofs. Aquinas based his arguments, or “proofs,” for God's existence on human reason. Aquinas's proofs are extremely valuable today because they demonstrate the idea that believing in God is reasonable.

4. **Direct** the class to move into their groups and assign one proof to each group. If you have more than five groups, several groups will focus on the same proof. Instruct each group to summarize the meaning of their proof in writing so that they will be able to present their understanding to the students in the other groups. The written explanations from each group should be submitted at the end of class.

5. **Call** the class back together. Invite each group to present a summary of the proof that they studied. Ask questions if you see a need for greater clarity.

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Teacher Note

You may want to give your own summary of each proof to provide additional background for the students. Assure the class that these proofs can be difficult to understand, but encourage them to do their best. Give them ample time to discuss their understanding of their assigned proof, and monitor the students so that you may assist them when necessary.
6. Ask the class for feedback on this exercise. Did they find it helpful or confusing? Could they have used more background information? Have the students share their understanding of why it is important to use the faculty of reason to better know our relationship with God. Also, ask students whether or not this approach to understanding God may have some limitations.

7. Remind the students of the following distinctions as a summary:
   - We can come to know God, on the basis of his works, through natural reason. Reason is the natural ability human beings have to know and understand truth.
   - Revelation is God’s self-communication and disclosure of the divine plan to humankind through Creation, events, and people, and most fully through Jesus Christ.

**Step 5**

Lead the students through a guided reflection on how God works through our needs and desires to reveal himself to us.

1. Prepare by making copies of the handout “A Restless Heart” (Document #: TX003093), one for each student. Create student groups of three or four students.

2. Lead the students in an initial discussion about how God can work through our experiences of loneliness and restlessness and our need to love and be loved to reveal himself to us. Use the following questions as prompts:
   - Have you ever felt a type of emptiness or loneliness that you felt no one could possibly fill?
   - What are some of the ways that teenagers try to fill or ease their emptiness or restlessness?

3. Direct the students to move into the groups to which you have assigned them. Give each student a copy of the handout “A Restless Heart” (Document #: TX003093). Instruct the students to discuss the questions. Monitor the students as they work, and assist them if necessary.

4. Invite each student group to describe in their own words how God uses humans’ restless hearts as important opportunities to reveal himself and his will. Then make the following points:
   - We have reflected on an important aspect of who we are. Virtually all human beings are at times curious, restless, or not easily satisfied. At the heart of our restlessness is a deep longing that all humans share but that only God can satisfy. As your text states, it’s as if we have a “God-shaped hole” in our hearts. Paradoxically, it is our very restlessness that often affords us the best
Introduction

Unit 1

opportunity to seek God. Fortunately, God can often use these experiences in our lives as occasions to communicate with us.

➤ Throughout time God has revealed himself and continues to reveal himself to us. Beyond natural revelation alone, the Church recognizes two other important modes of Revelation. God has spoken through Sacred Scripture, which is the written account of his actions in the lives of our ancestors in faith. We call Sacred Scripture the “Word of God” because God continues to speak to us through it. The second mode of God’s self-revelation is through the Church’s Tradition, which we will continue exploring as the major focus of this course. God has in the past, and continues in the present, revealed himself through his Church.

➤ The Pope and the bishops are the official teaching authority of the Church, the Magisterium. They carry the responsibility of faithfully handing down to us all essential truths of the faith. The two modes of revealed truths, Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, are together known as the Deposit of Faith.

➤ This course itself is an important reminder that all of us have the responsibility to listen and to respond to God—to turn our restless hearts toward him who made us and knows us better than we know ourselves. God communicates with us through our everyday experiences and through our consciences. We hear God’s voice through the Bible, the inspired Word of God, guiding us in our daily lives. And we also turn to the Church, to its teaching, to our pastors, and to the entire community of faith, to help us discern God’s will. Whatever God asks of each of us, we have been given the freedom and the responsibility to carry out his will.

Step 6

Introduce the students to the Bible as an inspired source of Revelation.

1. Prepare by making copies of the handout “God’s Word in Human Words” (Document #: TX003094), one for each student. Divide the class into groups of three or four students.

2. Introduce this learning experience with these, or similar, words:

   ➤ We have learned that Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are two modes of God’s self-revelation that help us navigate the meaning of life when natural revelation alone is not sufficient. We will turn first, for a brief time, to Sacred Scripture. The Bible holds a place of special importance for all Christians because it is the inspired record of traditions and beliefs of both the Hebrew people and the earliest Christians. These sacred writings are also the root of the Church’s Sacred Tradition.

3. Have the students move into their groups, and give each student a copy of the handout “God’s Word in Human Words” (Document
# TX003094). After all the students are in their groups and have received a handout, give them the following instructions:

- You will work together as a group to discuss the questions on the handout. The two main concepts you will be discussing are inspiration and inerrancy. Because each of these terms has a definite meaning for Catholics, it is important that you work together to understand the distinctions between the ordinary use of these terms and the particular meaning given them by the Church. I will monitor the groups as you work and provide assistance if you need it.

Allow the student groups to work for about 20 minutes.

4. **Invite** the student groups to share at least part of their conversation with the whole class. Use this part of the discussion to get an idea about how clear an understanding the students have of biblical inspiration and inerrancy. Conclude by briefly reviewing the meaning of these terms. Also, present to the students a basic explanation of the difference between fundamentalism and the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation used by the Catholic Church and many other mainstream Protestant churches:

   - The term **biblical inspiration** means that the Holy Spirit guided the human authors of the Bible as they wrote. Even though these authors were influenced by the conditions of their time and place in history and by their own creativity and talent, God guided them to communicate his Word.

   - The term **inerrancy** literally means “without error.” In reference to the Bible, the word **inerrancy** means that the Bible is without error with regard to the truths that God has communicated to us for our salvation. It does not mean that the Bible is, in every instance, historically or scientifically true. We know, in fact, that parts of the Bible are scientifically and historically inaccurate. Also, some of the customs and laws that we read about in the Bible would be considered immoral today. So, the task of interpreting the Bible responsibly depends upon both faith and reason.

   - Some non-Catholic Christians today believe that everything written in the Bible is factually, scientifically, and historically correct in every detail. This approach to the Bible is often called **fundamentalism**. The Catholic Church and many Protestant churches use an approach called the historical-critical method. The guiding principle for this approach is to always seek to understand what the biblical author intended to say and mean. Often this approach requires serious scholarship and painstaking work, but it is necessary in order to correctly understand Sacred Scripture.

5. **Invite** the students to ask questions or offer comments.
Step 7

Explore Scripture passages about God’s covenants with the human race that reveal the “big picture” of the Bible.

1. **Direct** the students to read the student book chapter 3, “The Bible’s Big Picture,” as preparation and background for this learning experience.

2. **Ensure** that each student has a copy of the Bible in class. Divide the class into groups of three students. Prepare by making copies of the handout “The Bible’s Big Picture (Part I)” (Document #: TX003095) and cutting the sections into strips so that each group will receive one Scripture passage. Fold and place the paper strips into a container so that each group can draw one passage. Make copies of “The Bible’s Big Picture (Part II)” (Document #: TX003096), one for each student.

3. **Instruct** the students to move into their groups. Walk around the room, inviting each group to select one Scripture passage. Then give each student a copy of the handout “The Bible’s Big Picture (Part II)” (Document #: TX003096). Give the students the following directions:
   - Each group has drawn a Scripture passage that describes one of God’s covenants. Choose one member of your group who will read the passage to you while the other members of the group follow along in the Bible. If you need help finding the passage, raise your hand and I will assist you. Then read the explanation of a covenant on your handout titled “The Bible’s Big Picture (Part II).” Be sure that everyone in your group understands the meaning of covenant. Then, using the questions provided on your handout, discuss why the covenant you have chosen is important. When you have completed your group work, you will share with the class a description of the covenant you chose and what you learned about it. You have 25 minutes to work.

Walk around the room as students work, and assist them if necessary. Make sure that each group has a basic understanding of a covenant. When the students have finished working, call on each group to share, in the order of their numbered passages. Make sure each group shares (1) a description of the covenant they read about in Scripture and (2) a description of what they learned about this covenant by answering the questions.

4. **Conclude** by explaining to the students the meaning of salvation history and inviting them to relate this concept to their personal lives. Use these or similar words:
   - All of God’s covenants, culminating with the final covenant in Jesus Christ, are together what we refer to as salvation history. Through his covenants that reach their ultimate goal in Jesus Christ, God has revealed the big picture of his relationship with us. Salvation history begins with Creation and finds its complete meaning in Jesus Christ, who has destroyed death and restored eternal life.
➤ All of us are an important part of salvation history. God has offered the New Covenant to each of us. Reflect for a couple of minutes on this question: How do you fit into the big picture of salvation history? After reflecting, write down your response. Be prepared to share your responses with the class.

Allow the students about 2 or 3 minutes to write, and then call on each student randomly to share her or his response with the class. Invite the students to make a comment or ask a question.

Step 8

Examine the organization of the Bible.

1. **Prepare** by making sure that each student has a student book and a copy of the Bible.

2. **Direct** the students to quietly read “The Organization of the Bible” on pages 40–41 of the student text. When they have finished, assign each student in class a number from one to eight. Then lead the class in the following activity:

   ➤ Each of you has been given a number, one through eight. If you look on page 41, you will see that the Old Testament can be divided into four sections and the New Testament can be divided into four sections.

   ➤ The numbers you have been given correspond to one of these eight sections of books in the Old and New Testaments. For example, if you have number one, your section of focus is the Pentateuch. If you have number two, your section would be the historical books; if you have section 5, your section is the Gospels; and so on.

   ➤ After you find your assigned section of either the Old or the New Testament, choose one of the books from that section and read the background information about that book in the Bible. Prepare notes so that you can report back to the class some key points you have discovered about this particular book.

Point out to the students that there is no further subdivision of Acts of the Apostles or the Book of Revelation, so if they were assigned one of these sections, their report will be on that one book.

3. **Invite** the students—starting with all number 1s, followed by all 2s, all 3s, and so forth—to share which book they chose from their assigned section and offer three or four key points they discovered about that particular book.

4. **Lead** a class discussion about the rich complexity of writing that comprises Scripture. You may want to give some general background similar to the following:
Various biblical genres (or literary forms) are represented throughout the Bible. For example, two genres in the Old Testament are historical books and prophetic books. Two genres in the New Testament are Gospels and letters, or epistles.

It is important to remember that the different books of the Bible were written for different audiences at different times. The books of the Bible were not written as concurrent chapters in a novel with one human author. For this reason, the Bible is often described as a library of books.

The four Gospels are an example of how one can relay the same truth differently. Although each Gospel describes the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, they do so for different audiences and, therefore, they emphasize different aspects of his ministry. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the “synoptic” Gospels because they cover many of the same events from Jesus’ life, often in the same order. The word synoptic derives from a Greek word meaning “seen together.” John’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ divinity and his union with God. Mark’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ humanity and the suffering inherent to his human nature.

Some books of the Bible, such as those attributed to Saint Paul, contain both insight into the development of the early Christian church and insight into and guidance for faithful Christian living.

5. Conclude this session by reminding the students that they have received only a brief overview of Sacred Scripture. Encourage them to further their study of Scripture and to use the “Scripture Connection” sidebars in their text to help connect the study of the Catholic faith with Scripture.

**Step 9**

**Give the students a quiz to assess understanding.**

If possible, devote 50 to 60 minutes for the students to ask questions about the tasks and to work individually or in their small groups.

1. **Make** and distribute copies of the handout “Unit 1 Quiz” (Document #: TX003097), one for each student. Note that the quiz revolves around the vocabulary utilized throughout this unit. This is to help you and the students identify what terms and definitions they do and do not now know in preparation for the unit test.

2. **Provide** 5 to 10 minutes for the students to review their books and notes. Distribute the quiz, and provide sufficient time for the students to complete it. If time permits, have the students correct their quizzes in class. Give each student a colored pen (all the same color), and instruct them to put away all other writing utensils. Review the quiz, allowing the students to correct their work. Collect the quizzes and use this information to further your analysis of topics that may need additional attention.

Teacher Note

At the end of the first unit, tell the students that the Catholic faith is often referred to generally as Catholicism. Tell them that they will hear the term Catholicism and the term Catholic faith used interchangeably throughout this course.
Step 10

Make sure the students are on track with their final performance tasks.

If possible, devote 50 to 60 minutes for the students to ask questions about the tasks and to work individually or in their small groups.

1. **Remind** the students to bring to class any work they have already prepared so that they can work on it during the class period. If necessary, reserve the library or media center so the students can do any book or online research. Review the final performance task options, answer questions, and ask the students to select a performance task if they have not already done so.

2. **Provide** some class time for the students to work on their performance tasks. This provides you with the opportunity to work with any students who need additional guidance with the project. You may wish to allow the students to suggest alternative tasks or ways they can further develop the tasks that are presented.

Step 11

Provide an opportunity for the students to reflect on how they have learned throughout this unit.

This learning experience will provide the students with an excellent opportunity to reflect on how their understanding has developed throughout the unit.

1. **Make copies** of the handout “Learning about Learning” (Document #:TX003100), one for each student.

2. **Distribute** the handout, and allow the students about 15 minutes to answer the questions quietly. Invite them to share any reflections they have about the content they learned as well as their insights into the way they learned.
Vocabulary for Unit 1

**Bible:** Also called Sacred Scripture, the collection of Christian sacred writings accepted by the Church as inspired by God. Composed of the Old and New Testaments.

**biblical inspiration:** The guidance of the Holy Spirit in the development of Scripture, whereby the Spirit guided the human authors to teach without error those truths of God necessary for our salvation. It is on the basis of inspiration that we can call the Bible the Word of God.

**canon:** This word has a variety of meanings. The canon of Scripture refers to the Church’s list of books of the Bible. The canon of the Mass is another name for the Eucharistic prayer. Canon law is the official body of laws for Catholics.

**covenant:** In general, a solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being in which mutual commitments are recognized; also called a testament. In the Bible, two covenants are central: (1) the covenant between God and the ancient people of Israel established in the Sinai Covenant with Moses; also called the Old Testament or Old Covenant; and (2) the New Covenant established by Jesus through his sacrificial death and Resurrection; also called the New Testament. The term testament has come to be associated primarily with the Sacred Scripture that records the history and meaning of the two biblical covenants.

**Deposit of Faith:** The heritage of faith contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. It has been passed on from the time of the Apostles. The Magisterium takes from it all that it teaches as revealed truth.

**Divine Revelation:** God’s self-communication through which he makes known the mystery of his divine plan. Divine Revelation is a gift accomplished by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the words and deeds of salvation history. It is most fully realized in the Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

**Ecumenical Council:** A gathering of all Catholic bishops, convened by the Pope and under his authority and guidance. The last ecumenical council was Vatican Council II, called by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

**Gospel:** Most basically, “the good news” (the phrase on which the word gospel is based) of the Revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ, proclaimed initially by him, then by the Apostles, and now by the Church; also refers to those four books of the New Testament that focus on the person, life, teachings, suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

**inerrancy:** The fact that the books of Scripture are free from error regarding the spiritual and religious truth God wishes to reveal through them for the sake of our salvation.
**Israelites:** The Chosen People of God; members of the twelve Tribes descended from Jacob who inhabited the land of Israel during biblical times.

**Law, the:** Another name for the Ten Commandments, it is also called the Law of Moses or the Old Law.

**Magisterium:** The official teaching authority of the Church, whose task is to interpret and preserve the truths of salvation revealed in both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

**natural revelation:** The process by which God makes himself known to human reason through the created world. Historical conditions and the consequences of Original Sin, however, often hinder our ability to fully know God’s truth through natural revelation alone.

**New Testament:** The twenty-seven books of the Bible written during the early years of the Church in response to the life, mission, death, and Resurrection of Jesus; also, another name for the New Covenant established between God and humanity by Jesus.

**Old Testament:** The forty-six books of the Bible that record the history of salvation from Creation, through the story of ancient Israel, and up to the time of Jesus; also refers to the Old Covenant established between God and the people of Israel in God’s encounter with Moses on Mount Sinai.

**Parousia:** The second coming of Christ, when his Kingdom will be fully established and his triumph over evil will be complete.

**reason:** The natural ability human beings have to know and understand truth.

**Sacred Scripture:** Generally, the term for any sacred writing. For Christians, the Old and New Testaments that make up the Bible and are recognized as the Word of God.

**Sacred Tradition:** This term (from the Latin, meaning “to hand on”) refers to the process of passing on the Gospel message. Sacred Tradition, which began with the oral communication of the Gospel by the Apostles, was written down in Scripture, is handed down and lived out in the life of the Church, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**salvation history:** The pattern of events in human history that exemplify God’s presence and saving actions.
What Do I Know about the Catholic Faith?

In the time allotted for this exercise, answer each question to the best of your knowledge. Each set of questions corresponds to the units you will study in this course and represents content you will cover in more detail in the coming weeks. Answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

Unit 1: Introduction

- What are some core Catholic beliefs?
- What is Divine Revelation?
- What do we mean when we say that the Bible is inspired?
- How do Catholics differ from fundamentalists in their reading of Sacred Scripture?

Unit 2: The Creed – Part I

- What is faith?
- What is Original Sin?
- Who or what is the Trinity?
- What was Jesus’ mission in the world?

Unit 3: The Creed – Part II

- How does the Church continue Jesus’ mission?
- In the Nicene Creed, the Church is described as “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” Describe what each of these four Marks of the Church means.
- What are the roles of the Pope, bishops, priests, and deacons in the Church?
- What is the role of the laity (all the nonordained) in the Church?
Unit 4: Liturgy and Sacraments

- Define sacrament in your own words, and name the Seven Sacraments.

- What is the purpose of the Sacraments?

- Why is the Eucharist called the “source and summit” of Christian life?

- What is a symbol? Give a brief explanation of two sacramental symbols.

Unit 5: Christian Morality

- How can the Church guide us to live a holy and moral life?

- What does the Church teach us about our relationship with other people?

- What does the Church teach us about our relationship with material things?

- Why does being a Christian call us to live in a right relationship with all human beings and with all of creation?

Unit 6: Christian Prayer

- What is prayer?

- Describe three different ways of praying.

- Why are personal and communal prayer important for a Christian?

- How can the Lord’s Prayer be seen as the summary of all we need to live?
Final Performance Task Options for Unit 1

Important Information for All Options

The following are the main ideas you are to understand from this unit. They should appear in this final performance task so your teacher can assess whether you learned the most essential content.

• Catholicism encompasses diverse people of every nationality and cultural background, yet its people share common beliefs, practices, and attitudes.
• Reason and Revelation are two gifts God has given humans to know him and his divine plan for us.
• Scripture and Tradition are closely connected modes of Revelation that form a single sacred Deposit of Faith.
• Scripture is the inspired Word of God and shows how God has worked within the people and events of human history to reveal our purpose in life and our path to salvation.

Option 1: Reflecting on the Catholic Faith

Choose this option only if you are Catholic. Reflect on what the Catholic faith means to you, and write a two- to three-page essay addressing the points below. Incorporate the key understandings for this unit and the effect these understandings have on your own Catholic faith. Consider the following to get you started:

• Name the three most important beliefs you hold as a Catholic, and explain why.
• Which Catholic beliefs or practices are hardest for you to explain to someone who is not a Catholic?
• What are the most important ways you can live your Catholic faith?
• What is an aspect of your Catholic faith that you would like to learn more about?

Option 2: My Salvation History

Write a personal story about your own salvation history, comparing your experiences with one of the Scripture accounts discussed in chapter 3 of your student text, “The Bible’s Big Picture.” First, select a Scripture passage and read it carefully. Then write about how God has been present to you, helping you through good times and difficult times, just as he was present to his Chosen People through the triumphs and trials of their lives, as told in Scripture. Be sure to refer specifically to the Scripture passage you chose and to cite verses from the passage, rather than simply referring to a textbook description of the scriptural event. As you write, remember to keep the focus of your story on yourself and your own experience of God’s mercy and work of salvation. However, be sure to also make some pertinent connections with the Scripture account you chose and to the essential understandings for this chapter.
Option 3: Interview a Practicing Catholic

Find someone who is a practicing Catholic whom you can interview, using the questions below. If you are not Catholic and would like to choose this option, you may choose to interview either a Catholic student or a Catholic faculty member. Tell the interviewees that they will remain anonymous. Only the content of the interview may be shared in class. After conducting the interview, summarize it in a one-page report, highlighting key points and insights. Use the following questions as a guide:

- Were you raised in a Catholic family? If yes, how was your family instrumental in your faith formation? If not, what led you to the Catholic faith?
- Who were mentors or examples of faith for you?
- What are the most important aspects for you of being a Catholic?
- How would you describe your Catholic faith to someone who is not Catholic?
- What are some important ways you nurture your faith and your relationship with God?
## Rubric for Final Performance Tasks for Unit 1

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# Core Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes of the Catholic Faith

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<th>CORE BELIEFS</th>
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<td>All humans were created to live in perfect harmony with God and with one another.</td>
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<td>Original Sin deprived the human race of our original holiness and justice.</td>
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<td>God worked to restore humanity’s relationship of love and trust through a series of covenants, especially through Jesus.</td>
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<td>What do you know about this core belief?</td>
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<td>Jesus died for the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of the relationship of love and trust between God and humankind.</td>
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<td>The Holy Spirit has been at work from the beginning of creation to the present day.</td>
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<td>God has revealed himself to be Trinity, that is, the mystery of one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.</td>
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<td>Christ established the Catholic Church on the foundation of the Apostles.</td>
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<td>The Bible is a source of God’s revealed truth.</td>
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<td>What do you know about this core belief?</td>
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<td>The baptized who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as their savior will find their eternal reward in Heaven.</td>
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<td>What do you know about this core belief?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Core Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes of the Catholic Faith

## Core Practices

Each statement below is a core practice of the Catholic faith. Choose a symbol ("I get it," “I’m unsure,” or “I don’t get it”) that best reflects your understanding of each practice. Then briefly explain what you might know about each core practice. You may need another piece of paper for your explanations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Practice</th>
<th>I get it</th>
<th>I’m unsure</th>
<th>I don’t get it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholics celebrate Seven Sacraments that form the basis of their worship, or communal prayer, together.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seven Sacraments were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church to make the love of God real and present in the world.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eucharist is the heart of the Church’s life.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics keep the Lord’s Day (Sunday) holy by attending Mass and resting from work.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic worship follows the Liturgical Year, which marks the events and mystery of Christ’s life.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics place a strong emphasis on living a moral life.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics defend the dignity of all human life and oppose any practices that threaten the sanctity of human life.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church is responsible for transforming society by working for justice.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics honor holy women and men of faith who have preceded them.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core practice?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Core Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes of the Catholic Faith

**CORE ATTITUDES**

Each statement below is a core attitude of the Catholic faith. Choose a symbol (“I get it,” “I’m unsure,” or “I don’t get it”) that best reflects your understanding of each attitude. Then briefly explain what you might know about each core attitude. You may need another piece of paper for your explanations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Attitude</th>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholics recognize that God is present to, in, and through all creation—the natural world, people, communities, and events.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics place their trust in the essential goodness of the human person, who is made in the image of God.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics rely on both faith and reason to grow in their understanding of God, and believe that reason can lead us to faith.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics believe that conflicts between religion and science are a result of not fully understanding one or the other.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics believe that the fullness of truth resides in the Catholic Church but that other religions can share in aspects of the truth.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics emphasize community life and communal worship.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Catholic faith deeply respects the diversity of cultures in the world and is committed to proclaiming Jesus’ message to all. (Your name) takes responsibility for nurturing (his or her) faith through the Church, especially by participating in the sacraments.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics respect and embrace a wide variety of prayer forms.</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
<td>![Symbol]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about this core attitude?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aquinas’s Five Proofs for the Existence of God

The *Summa Theologica* is a famous work written by Saint Thomas Aquinas between AD 1265 and 1274. It is divided into three main parts and presents reasoning for almost all core Christian beliefs. The *Summa Theologica* is well known for addressing the question of the existence of God. Aquinas responds to this question by offering the following five proofs:

1. **The Argument from Motion:** Our senses can perceive motion by seeing that things act on each other. Whatever moves is moved by something else. Consequently, there must be a First Mover which creates this chain reaction of motions. This is God. God sets all things in motion and gives them their potential.

2. **The Argument from Efficient Cause:** Because nothing can cause itself, everything must have a cause or something that creates an effect on another thing. Without a first cause, there would be no others. Therefore, the First Cause is God.

3. **The Argument from Necessary Being:** Because objects in the world come into existence and pass out of it, it is possible for those objects to exist or not exist at any particular time. However, nothing can come from nothing. This means that something must exist at all times. This is God.

4. **The Argument from Gradation:** There are different degrees of goodness in different things. Following the “Great Chain of Being,” which states there is a gradual increase in complexity, created objects move from the unformed inorganic matter to biologically complex organisms. Therefore, there must be a being of the highest form of good. This perfect being is God.

5. **The Argument from Design:** All things have an order or arrangement that leads them to a particular goal. Because the order of the universe cannot be the result of chance, design and purpose are at work. This implies divine intelligence on the part of the designer. This is God.
A Restless Heart

Read through the following questions and discuss your answers with your small group.

- Discuss the following statement with your group: “God has given us restless hearts so that we will continue to seek him.” What does your group think about this statement?

- Have you ever prayed to God or asked God for help at a time when you felt agitated or upset? Did you feel that God helped you? Describe your experience.

- Discuss the following statement: “It has been primarily during times of anxiety, struggle, disappointment, or defeat that God has revealed himself to humans over the centuries. Humans often fail to notice God’s presence when times are good.” What is your opinion?

- Describe any biblical story you can remember in which God revealed himself in the midst of a community or to an individual that was discouraged or in trouble.
God’s Word in Human Words

Many people consider Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech to be one of the most inspiring speeches in American history. Speaking to a racially divided American nation in 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. encouraged those who longed for equality to keep the faith and to never give up hope. Read the following short excerpt of this speech for an experience of inspiration.

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; ‘and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together’ (Isaiah 40:4–5, paraphrased).

“This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

“With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.”

(Excerpted from the Martin Luther King Jr. speech found on the American Rhetoric Web site, at www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm. Reprinted by arrangement with The Heirs to the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr., c/o Writers House as agent for the proprietor, New York, NY. Copyright © 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; copyright renewed 1991 Coretta Scott King.)

• Why have these words from Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous speech continued to inspire people for so long?
• Have you ever been inspired to write a speech, a poem, or a song, or to create something artistic? How might this type of inspiration be similar to and different from the inspiration the human authors of the Bible experienced?

• Sacred Scripture is sometimes described as “God’s Word in human words.” Which aspects of the words of the Bible are human? For example, is everything in the Bible scientifically true or historically true? Explain your answer.

• When we say that the Bible is God’s Word, what do we mean? Before answering, consider the quotation from the Book of Isaiah in Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech about the promise of justice and equality. Do you think that this vision of justice comes from the human writer of the Book of Isaiah alone, or is it from God?

• The belief that the Bible is without error in communicating what God wants us to know for our salvation is called inerrancy. It is in this sense that the Bible is always true. Describe, using your own words, what inerrancy means, and give an example of something in the Bible that God wants us to know.
The Bible’s Big Picture (Part I)

Scripture Passage #1

**Genesis 9:1–17 (Covenant with Noah)**

The entire world has turned to evil and is threatened with destruction. God finds one righteous person in Noah and offers him and the human race a chance to “start over.”

Scripture Passage #2

**Genesis 12:1–9 (Covenant with Abraham)**

Abram is an old nomadic shepherd without a homeland or an heir until God calls him, changes his name to Abraham, and promises him a long life, an heir, and land.

Scripture Passage #3

**Exodus 19:2–11 (Covenant with Moses)**

The Israelites have escaped enslavement by the Egyptians and are in the desert when God appears to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Scripture Passage #4

**2 Samuel 7:8–16 (Covenant with David)**

King David is promised a lasting kingdom that will live in unity and peace forever.

Scripture Passage #5

**John 14:1–14 (God’s Final Covenant in Jesus)**

Jesus is the New Covenant who promises the restoration of eternal life, originally intended for the human race, in perfect harmony with God and one another.
Covenant: At the Heart of the Bible’s Big Picture

When someone promises you something, how important is it that he or she keeps it? Promises are important because they are at the heart of our most important relationships. All covenants are open-ended promises between two parties in which both vow to remain faithful to each other, no matter what adversity may come along.

Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition reveal that God has entered into covenant relationships with people over and over again throughout human history. God promised the Jewish people the security of possessions or a home, the help of companionship, the satisfaction of a long life, and the joy of heirs who will continue an important legacy. God offered his Chosen People all of these wonderful gifts and promised he would remain with them in return for their faithfulness. God is always faithful to his promise, even when humans fail. In Scripture and Tradition, this faithful relationship is a covenant.

Sacred Scripture also reveals that God’s covenant with humans culminates with Jesus, who is the New Covenant. Jesus, paradoxically, does not promise any of the blessings mentioned in previous covenants. Entering into the New Covenant does not guarantee possessions, security, companionship, a long life, or heirs. We may, in fact, struggle and suffer, or we may enjoy health and success. We may appear to the world to be blessed, or we may appear to be unlucky or cursed. Despite appearances, however, the covenant in Jesus is unique in that Jesus promises to send his Holy Spirit to remain within us in the joys and struggles of life.

1. In the Scripture reading you chose, what specifically does God promise?

2. What does God expect the person or community with whom he makes a promise to do in response?
3. Is this promise for the good of an individual alone, or is it something that will help the entire community? Explain.

4. Describe the covenant you read about in the Scripture passage you were assigned. This description will be shared with the larger class, so make sure to be clear about the circumstances surrounding this covenant as well as what the covenant involved.
Learning about Learning

We can come to understand ourselves better by taking the time to review the process of learning the material in a unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knew none of this material before</th>
<th>Knew everything already</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What was your favorite learning experience and why? Do you usually enjoy this type of learning experience?

What was your least favorite learning experience and why? Do you usually find this type of learning experience challenging?
How did your understanding of the subject matter change throughout the unit?

Did you find anything you learned particularly interesting? Why?

Do you have any other observations?