

## CHAPTER 1

# Being Catholic: The “CliffsNotes” View

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## Core Activity

### Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes



1. For this activity you will need a copy of the handout “Being Catholic: Beliefs, Practices, and Attitudes” (Document #: TX003171) on card stock and cut into cards; two or three rolls of masking tape; and a basket.

2. Place the cards from the handout in the basket, put the basket and the masking tape on a small table in the center of your classroom, and write these four headings at the top of separate columns on the board or on separate sheets of newsprint:

- Beliefs: The Things Catholics Believe
- Practices: The Ways Catholics Celebrate and Pray
- Attitudes: The Actions and Values Catholics Treasure
- We Have No Idea What This Is!

3. Divide the class into groups of two or three. Explain to the students that they will be exploring what it means to be Catholic, by looking at some items and categorizing them under the posted headings.

4. Share the following information with the students in your own words:
- The basket contains cards naming a variety of items concerning the beliefs, practices, and attitudes of the Catholic Church. The first three categories on the board are closely related: our beliefs cause us to act a certain way (engage in certain practices) and to see the world a certain way (adopt certain attitudes). Your challenge is to randomly select cards from the basket, one card for each group, and then tape it under the category it best fits. The goal is not to take a wild guess, but to think about the selection and to make a good decision. If you draw a blank regarding the material on the card, place the card in the fourth category, “We Have No Idea What This Is!”

5. Invite the groups to form two or three parallel lines facing the table where you have placed the basket of cards and the masking tape. Instruct the groups to take turns going to the table, selecting a card, taping it on the board, and returning to the back of the line. Continue this process until all the cards have been allocated.

6. When all the cards have been placed, invite everyone to sit where they can clearly see the results of their work. Ask each group to look at the core Catholic beliefs, practices, and attitudes on pages 16–21 of the *CFH* and assess whether the cards are properly distributed. Conduct a large-group discussion of the small groups' assessments, focusing on each category separately.

Begin with the cards that ended up under the "We Have No Idea What This Is!" category, and ask the large group to decide where those cards should finally be placed. Then invite the class to look at the other three lists and to decide if every item in each of them is placed correctly. If the students decide to move a card, be sure they can articulate their reasons for doing so. Allow time for some discussion, especially if differences of opinion arise. Some of the terms could logically appear under multiple headings, so make sure you focus on a "both/and" approach rather than an "either/or" approach to assigning locations.

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## Core Activity Extension

### Creative Beliefs

As homework or class work, have each student select one of the core Catholic beliefs from pages 16–18 of the *CFH* and create a poster with words, signs, and symbols reflecting that belief. Use the posters to decorate your room, and make them available to other teachers in the school for their rooms. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

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## Additional Activities

### Mary, the First Disciple

As homework or class work, direct your students to read the saintly profile "Mary, the First Disciple," on page 19 of the *CFH*. Ask them to choose one of the following options to further their study of Mary:

- Find and bring to class copies of artistic depictions of Mary that reflect the unique devotion she receives through the Catholic faith.
- Find and bring to class several hymns or contemporary Christian songs that celebrate the special role Mary plays in the Catholic faith.
- Explore three of the following names given to Mary, and the attribute or experience of Mary that the name relates to; record the findings; and share the findings with the class:
  - Mary, mother of God
  - Our Lady of Fatima
  - Our Lady of Guadalupe
  - Our Lady of Lourdes
  - Our Lady of Perpetual Help

## Literature Connection: Catholic Attitudes

Before this class discussion, you may want to touch base with the English department to get an overview of the books the students are reading and to borrow copies of them. To open the discussion, ask your students to examine the literature they are reading, or have read over the previous school year, in their English classes. Invite them to determine whether any of the books reflect the Catholic attitudes discussed on pages 20–21 of the *CFH*. For books that do, discuss how those attitudes are present in them; for books that do not, discuss how the characters, themes, or plots would be different if those attitudes were present. Have the students provide specific examples of characters or situations, citing the literature they are critiquing. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

## School Attitude! Cool Attitude!

Invite your students to choose one of the Catholic attitudes found on pages 20–21 of the *CFH*. Ask them to spend their time between now and the next class paying attention to examples of the attitudes they see in their classmates and teachers at school. Have them share their findings in the next class. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

## Catholics Around the World

The *CFH* presents some interesting information about the Catholic Church internationally in the section “Why Are All These People Catholic?” on pages 15–16. Assign each student to research Catholicism as it is practiced in another country. Allow the young people to choose their countries, but make sure that each has a different one. Challenge students who are studying foreign languages to research countries where those languages are primarily used.

Explain that the students can do an Internet search by typing, “[name of country] AND Catholicism.” Have each student give a one- to two-page presentation on aspects of Catholicism found in the search.

In a follow-up discussion, ask questions of this nature:

- Was this research challenging or easy? Why?
- Did you encounter terms that were unfamiliar? If so, what were they?
- What impressed you about Catholicism in this other country?
- Did anything surprise you in your research? If so, what?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

(The material labeled *TC: Creed* is adapted from *Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, by Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary’s Press. All rights reserved.)