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CATHOLICISM
for Young Adults



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INTRODUCTION

Questions. We all have them. Sometimes, we know the answers but when it comes to life's ultimate questions, we think to ourselves, "Can anyone really know?"

How do I know that God exists?

What is my purpose in this world?

Will I get to heaven, if it exists, and how do I get there?

I have great news for you: all of these questions have answers.

I have bad news for you: to arrive at the answers of these questions, you'll have to go through a lot of suffering, confusion, and discomfort.

You've been given the gift of life and the soul purpose of this book is to answer your questions, to spark your faith, and to ignite your soul to become who it was meant to be. In short, you were meant to be **LIT**.

But it will cost you.

Think of your life like a candle that burns itself away. As the smoke of your memories rise, the wax, your body, begins to melt. From wick to wax, your life is limited. While alive, the world will try to blow you out, cover up your light, and crush you.

The only way to keep the flame alive is if you pass it on to others.

This book is my way of answering your questions and passing on the flame of truth that was given to me through years of study, prayer, and service.

If ever you are in need of more, know that I am here to serve you now and throughout the remainder of your life in any way that I am able. Don't hesitate to contact me at tj@signumdei.com if ever you need me.

Your brother,
TJ



Level 1: Ignite

Question 1- Does God Exist?

Question 2- Why Did God Create You?

Question 3- Was Jesus Really God?

Question 4- Why Are Mary and the Saints So Important?

Question 5- Are Non-Catholics Saved?

Question 6- Why Confirmation?

Question 7- Why is the Eucharist so Important?

Question 8- Why do Christians Get Baptized?

Question 9- What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Level 1: Question 1- Does God Exist?

Yareli is a freshman at St. John the Baptist de La Salle High School. She really doesn't want to be there, but she transferred to the school under her parents' orders. She no longer spends time with her friends from her old school, she is finding it difficult to keep up with high school level homework, and she is not a fan of wearing the school uniform.

After the first few weeks, Yareli has made a few close friends but her grades are beginning to plummet. She joined the school tennis club and is showing great talent. She is an up-and-coming protégée who, if trained well, could become a contender for State Champion in a couple of years. However, she realizes that if she doesn't get her grades up, she will not be eligible to play.

La Salle High has mandatory parent-teacher conferences for all new students after the first four weeks. Yareli's parents only speak Spanish and her teachers only speak English. Since they see Yareli as a very honest and trustworthy student, they have asked her to join them in her conference as a translator. Yareli reluctantly agrees.



When Yareli's mother and father are told that she is a talented tennis player, Yareli translates accurately and her parents beam with pride. When the teachers tell them that she is a joy to have in class, they are immensely delighted that she has made such a great transition to her new school. Yareli feels good knowing that her parents are proud of her.

However, when the teachers tell her parents that Yareli is not performing well academically, Yareli purposely translates incorrectly and tells her parents that she is doing great in all of her classes. She didn't want to upset her parents and knows that for the next 4 weeks, she can work extra hard to pick her grades up before her report card comes out and her parents would never know.

Everyone leaves the conference happy; everyone except Yareli.

Reflect

1. Put yourself in Yareli's shoes. Why do you think she would not be happy after leaving the parent-teacher conference?
2. Is it possible that she might be truly happy with her decision?
3. What could potentially happen to Yareli because of her "little" lie? What could happen to her parents? To her teachers? To her friends?
4. How would you define the word conscience?

YOUCAT

Read points 4-6 from your YOUCAT including all the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What is reason?
2. What does reason have to do with your conscience?
3. Why do people deny the existence of God?
4. Is it pointless to speak about God if we are imperfect humans?
5. How can we speak about God in a more perfect way?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 4, 5, or 6 in your response.

How can you prove that God exists?

Level 1: Question 2- Why Did God Create You?



Sofia loves to dance. She can frequently be found on the weekends at parties with her family and friends dancing to the latest music. She especially enjoys Latin music and has signed up to take salsa and meringue lessons. She is 16 and she is even contemplating becoming a professional dancer when she graduates from high school.

One day, Sofia's best friend, Janell, texts Sofia that she has great news and that they need to meet at the mall as soon as possible. Sofia gets in her car and drives out to see Janell. When they meet, Janell tells Sofia that she had a profound religious experience at a local Protestant church and that she is going to be baptized this weekend. Sofia is Catholic and is thrilled that her friend has made such a great decision. She will finally be part of God's family!

However, Janell goes on to tell Sofia that her church doesn't allow its members to dance, go to movies, or for its female members to wear anything but long dresses that are approved by the head preacher. The pastor of this church

believes that watching movies and dancing are sinful and that they lead people, especially young people, to hell. As a result, Janell tells her friend that she will no longer be able to go dancing with her. She then goes on to try to persuade Sofia into giving up dancing.

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in Sofia's shoes. How would you respond to Janell?
2. Is Janell right in saying that dancing, going to movies and wearing certain clothes are sins?
3. What is something that you really love to do? Have you ever thought that this thing you love to do is sinful? Why or why not?

YOUCAT

Read points 1-3 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. When do you most feel that God is near to you?
2. When do you feel that He is far away?
3. Earlier you reflected on the things you love to do most. Does what you love to do bring you closer to God or push Him farther away?
4. Are there ways to unite the things you love with God?

Final Reflection journaling prompt

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 1, 2, or 3 in your response.

Why did God create you?

Level 1: Question 3- Was Jesus Really God?



J'Kwan is an 8th grade student at César Chávez middle school. He has grown up in the area and everyone knows him to be a nice kid who loves the game of basketball. He plays every day during lunch and stays after school watching the high school kids play until it gets dark.

J'Kwan has always had a desire to play with the older kids, but every time he asks, they either tell him he is too young or ignore him completely. The only time he ever gets to play is between games while the others rest for a moment.

One day while the players were resting, Jamal, a high school basketball star, came over to J'Kwan and struck up a conversation. He told J'Kwan that the reason he never gets picked is because he doesn't have the right clothes to make him look like a basketball player. He recommends that J'Kwan buy the newest pair of Nikes and a jersey so that he can replace his school uniform and play with the rest of the guys.

Thrilled and overwhelmingly happy, J'Kwan ran back to home ask him mother for money to buy new shoes and a jersey. Since he rarely asks his mother for anything, she happily drives him to the mall to pick up his new basketball gear.

The next day, J’Kwan showed up in his new shoes and jersey and the guys chose him to play with them. He was beyond happy now.

He played very well throughout the night. He scored points, had many assists and even blocked a couple of the taller guys. Then, during the last game, he scored the final basket to beat one of the best teams in the area. He had finally made it! He was part of the evening basketball group that he had watched for so long.

As he started to walk home, he saw Jamal and thanked him for his advice. Jamal was equally happy for him for doing so well that night. Since he lived in the same neighborhood as J’Kwan, they walked home together.

As they were rounding the corner of their street, the guys that J’Kwan had beat with his final shot sprang out of some bushes, beat both of the boys up, and stole J’Kwan’s shoes and jersey. After the boys came crawling home, J’Kwan’s mother ran to their care and immediately called the police.

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in J’Kwan’s shoes. Would you ever return back to the basketball court?
2. What do you think about Jamal’s advice to buy new basketball gear? Was it helpful? Was it necessary?
3. Do you think that J’Kwan ever truly felt part of the basketball group?
4. Have you ever been part of a group that you never really felt a close connection to?
5. Have you ever been part of a group that you **HAVE** felt a close connection to?

YOUCAT

Read points 73-78 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What does the word *Lord* mean?
2. Why did God become man in Jesus?
3. Was Jesus the *Lord*, a *liar* or a *lunatic*? Explain your answer.
4. How do you think Jesus felt being both human and God on this earth?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 73-78 in your response.

Was Jesus really God?



Level 1: Question 4- Why Are Mary and the Saints So Important?

Jesse and Pete are best friends. Ever since they can remember, the two have been inseparable. They both love reading, building things with scrap wood, drawing, and riding their bikes along the city streets. It is understood that Jesse is always welcome in the house of Pete's family and vice-versa. In fact, both Jesse and Pete's parents frequently meet up for celebrations, movies and other moments for the two families to have a good time.

However, Jesse's mother, Raquel, is different in physical appearance than the rest. She is from Honduras and has darker skin and a thick accent. She married Jesse's father, Ron, 15 years ago and has never gone back to her home country.

One day, Jesse and Pete were out in the park with their families enjoying a nice spring day. After a long winter of being cooped up in their small apartment building, it felt nice to breathe in the fresh air and feel the sunbeams on their skin. Raquel made sure that both had on sunscreen, because their fair skin would always burn on warm days like this.



While the boys were playing volleyball in the community sand court, Raquel went to buy some ice cream for her family at a little stand just outside of the park. It was then that Pete had to go to the bathroom which was located near where Raquel was making her purchase. Jesse stayed on the court to continue playing with his father, who had taken Pete's spot.

As Pete came out of the bathroom, he watched as Raquel started to question the ice cream man about her purchase. She told him that he had given her the wrong flavor ice cream and he responded by saying, "I gave you the flavor you told me. No returns! It's not my fault you can't speak English. Go back to Mexico!"

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in Pete's shoes. How would you feel about what the ice cream man said? How would you respond?
2. Put yourself in Raquel's shoes. How would you feel about what the ice cream man said? How would you respond?
3. Do you have a relationship with someone like Pete has with Raquel? In other words, do you love someone who isn't related to you like they were family?
4. Have you ever had to defend this person because others didn't understand them?

YOUCAT

Read points 84,85 and 146-149 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the difference between the word adore and the word venerate?
2. What does the term "communion of saints" mean? Are you a part of this communion?
3. Catholics do NOT "worship" Mary. Why do you think people believe that we do?
4. Why is Mary the Mother of all Christians?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 84,85, or 146-149 in your response.

Why are Mary and the Saints so important?

Level 1: Question 5- Are Non-Catholics Saved?

Jessica is a junior in high school. She was recently confirmed into the Catholic Church and ever since the Bishop anointed her with the Chrism oil, she has had an intense desire to know God. As a result, she signed up to take a World Religions class as one of her electives at her public high school. She has been Catholic her entire life and she is kind of scared to take the class because she doesn't know a lot about other religions. She's afraid she will be labeled as "uncultured" or even "racist."

To feel a bit more comfortable, she convinces her friend Amir, a Muslim, to sign up for the class too. She's never had a religious conversation with him, but she's always felt comfortable in his presence. She thinks that if he is there, she will feel more confident in expressing her doubts, ideas and reasons for believing what she believes.



As they walked in and took their seats, the teacher passed out a small survey compiled of 4 short questions. They read:

What religion are you?

What do you think happens to you after you die?

Have you ever thought about what might happen if your religion is wrong?

Which religions do you think are wrong? Why?

As she writes down her responses, she notices that the other students in the class are uncomfortable. Most are staring blankly at the page while others are peering over their shoulders to make sure no one sees their response. Amir is one of them.

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think the students are uncomfortable with the survey questions?
2. How do you think Jessica answered the questions?
3. How would you answer the questions?

YOUCAT

Read points 129-131 and 136 from your YOUCAT and numbers [841-848](#) from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (especially paragraph 843), including all the citations, quotes and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Is there salvation for people outside of the Catholic Church?
2. Why can there only be one Church?
3. Many people believe that “all religions lead to God” and that it doesn’t matter which one we belong to because they all supposedly “end with salvation.” Why is this not true?
4. Are other religions “wrong”? Explain your answer.
5. How are we supposed to treat non-Catholics?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 129-131 or 136 from your YOUCAT or numbers [841-848](#) from the original Catechism of the Catholic Church in your response.

Are non-Catholics saved?

Level 1: Question 6- Why Confirmation?

Selena is a home-schooled 17 year-old. She was able to graduate from high school at the age of 16 and she is already moving into her second year of junior college. She wants to transfer to the University of Michigan when she is finished with her general education credits to become an engineer.

Julio is also 17 years old. He is a senior at George Washington Prep and looking into colleges. He has a solid GPA of 3.7, is part of several volunteer organizations, and has even been offered a partial scholarship to a few universities. Like Selena, he also wants to become a successful engineer and the University of Michigan has one of the top programs in the country.

Selena and Julio are both very intelligent. However, neither of them get accepted to U of M. They both received letters saying “Thanks for applying, but at this moment we are unable to accept you into our school due to full enrollment. Also, be advised that without credible letters of recommendation, we will be unable to consider you in the future. Please apply again next year.”



Reflection questions:

1. Put yourself in either Selena's or Julio's shoes. How does it feel to be denied by U of M?
2. What requirements did they need to satisfy in order to be accepted?
3. Besides letters of recommendation, what else did they have to demonstrate during their high school years in order to be accepted by the U of M?
4. What are the requirements for being a Christian?
5. What makes the faith of a 5 year-old different from the faith of a 15 year-old?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 3:2, then describe what a "mature" faith looks like.

YOUCAT

Read points 203-207 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What happens at Confirmation?
2. Who performs a Confirmation?
3. What does it mean to be in the "state of Grace"?
4. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit received during Confirmation?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 203-207 in your response.

What is Confirmation and why is it important?

Level 1: Question 7- Why is the Eucharist so Important?



Maira is a small, skinny 12 year-old girl who loves to swim. For her birthday gift, her aunt and uncle bought her tickets to a water park a few miles away. She was able to bring a friend to accompany her and her cousins.

When they got there, Maira and her friend Jewel went straight to the water slides. For hours they went up and down each one until they had to sit down and take a rest. Jewel suggested that they go to the calmer Lazy River so they could just float for a while until they got their energy back. Maira agreed.

When they were on the Lazy River, the current brought them in and around the long curves. It was very far away from the loud machines and screaming children on the slides so it was very peaceful. However, there were a lot of people on the river floating in their inner tubes.

Maira was almost asleep when CRASH! she ran into a mini palm tree mid-way down the river. She flew out of her tube! Surprised and without a sound she slid

into the water current. She started to sink and was so weak from the slides that she couldn't swim. She sank down to the bottom and pushed with her legs hoping to surface and breathe in a gulp of much needed air.

Her head connected with another tube. No air. No strength. She sank lower to the ground.

The moment her feet touched, she saw a bright light at her side and heard a voice telling her to push as hard as she could. She did, and as she torpedoed towards the surface, she saw the same blanket of inner tubes with adults on top of them. She thought she was going to die.

As her head was about to connect, she ducked and her shoulder now glowed with that bright light. She felt an explosion of energy and she tipped over a 40 year-old man from his inner tube. She breathed, apologized quickly and swam her frail body over to the ledge.

Reflection Questions

1. Define the word *miracle*.
2. Have you ever seen, experienced, or heard of a miracle that has taken place?
3. If you witness a miracle right now, what would you do? How would it change your soul?
4. What do you know about the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

YOUCAT

Read points 208-212 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why is the Eucharist a miracle?
2. Why is the Eucharist the "source and summit of the Christian life"?
3. What does the Eucharist have to do with the Lord's Supper?
4. Why is the Eucharist considered a sacrifice?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 208-212 in your response.

Why is the Eucharist so important?

Level 1: Question 8- Why do Christians Get Baptized?



Joel plays rugby and so does his older brother, Jake. Jake is a senior in high school and Joel has been home schooled up until this year, his freshman year of high school. Neither of the two really want to be at the school because they liked working on their own time at home with their parents. However, they REALLY like the sport of rugby and are willing to make the sacrifice to play on the local high school team.

Since Jake has been at the school longer, he makes sure to look after his little brother. He guides him to his classes, helps him make friends, and even eats with him at lunch with a group of other students who were home schooled and are still a little timid about high school life.

When the bell rings marking the end of the first school day, Jake and Joel head out to the field to meet the team. Jake knows most of them, so he introduces his

brother and they seem happy to see him. The coach is also pleased to have Joel on the squad since he has known Jake to be a very talented rugby player. He believes that the two of them will be stars.

The coach tells the team that he has to meet with the principal for a couple of minutes to discuss the schedule for the year. He puts Rick, the team manager, in charge of overseeing the locker room as everyone gets ready for practice.

When they walk in, Jake is a little bit hesitant to let Joel in. He remembered the first time that he went into the locker room as a freshman and was locked inside of a locker for the duration of the first practice. The team came back after practice and congratulated him for “passing the test.” Apparently this was part of his initiation to the team.

Jake is afraid that the same thing will happen to his little brother.

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in Jake’s shoes. Why would you be worried for your brother?
2. How do you think Joel feels as they come closer to the locker room door?
3. What do you think Jake is going to do?
4. Have you ever been part of or heard of a bad “initiation” ceremony like the one Jake went through?
5. Are there other “initiation” ceremonies that aren’t bad that you can think of?
6. Why do people create ceremonies like these, good or bad?

YOUCAT

Read points 194-202 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. How does Baptism unite us with Jesus Christ?
2. Why do Catholics baptize babies?
3. Who are the four people that can perform a baptism?
4. What does being baptized mean?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 194-202 in your response.

Why do we baptize people?

Level 1: Question 9- What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Note that this module does not include an introduction or reflection questions. The videos alone will suffice for the lesson. This was done so that you can have more time to physically go to an adoration chapel to adore once the lesson has been given.



YOUCAT

Read points 485 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, go to the nearest Catholic adoration chapel and adore Him.

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 485 in your response.

What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Lit: Level 1- Final Reflection

Congrats for completing your first Lit course! Now it is time for your final response.

One of Jesus' final words to His Apostles before He ascended to heaven was "Go." Since then, missionaries have "gone" to the ends of the world to tell the story of salvation to the people who didn't know it.

Now it's your turn, if you desire.



To complete level 1, begin writing your testimony. Journal about

- how you came to know God
- what you are doing now to build His Kingdom
- what you plan on doing in the future to sustain it
- what holds you back from Him
- what further questions do you have

Start thinking about ways in which your story can be told if you are willing to tell it, either now, or later when you are stronger in your faith:

1. Record your story and put it on YouTube.
2. Write your story and create a book.
3. Open up a blog that deals with your spiritual journey.

Best of luck as you continue on to the next level.



Level 2: Spark

- Question 1- What is the Sacrament of The Anointing of the Sick?
- Question 2- What Are My Priorities?
- Question 3- What is My Vocation?
- Question 4- Why Should I Read The Bible?
- Question 5- Why Should I Go to Mass?
- Question 6- Why Does God Allow Suffering in the World?
- Question 7- What are the Works of Mercy?
- Question 8- What is the Culture of Death and How Do We Defeat It?
- Question 9- Does Faith Conflict with Science?

Level 2: Question 1- What is the Sacrament of The Anointing of the Sick?

Junior was a runner. In the fall he participated in cross-country and in the spring he dominated the track and field competitions. Every summer he trained in the intense heat so that he would have enough stamina to race in the annual marathon put on by his town. He watched what he ate, lifted weights and dedicated every thought to his dream of becoming an Olympic marathon runner.



When Junior was 18, he had caught the attention of several university scouts. In fact, it seemed like every day of his senior year he either received a personally signed letter from a division 1 university or a direct phone call from one of their coaches who hoped Junior would sign a contract and become part of their team. Junior was on top of the world.

One day, Junior got a phone call from the United States representative for the Olympic development team. She told him that they had been watching his run times and were confident that if he were to train with them in their facility in the mountains of Colorado, he would be able to take the next step in his athletic

career. She told him, however, that she could not promise him a spot in the Olympic games. He would need to prove himself at a year-long running camp with them. She also mentioned that he would need to sacrifice his first year of college to train with the team.

After several weeks of weighing the pros and cons with his parents, Junior decided to forego his first year of college and dedicate his life to the Olympic development team.

Everything was going well for Junior for the first 6 months of his time in Olympic development. In every training session he always finished in the top three, which meant he was guaranteed to represent the U.S.A. in the Olympics the following year.

One starry night, he decided to do an extra training session of 20 miles in the mountains. He had already run 20 miles that day in the morning, but he wanted to push himself to his limit and increase his endurance.

After the 10th mile, his body couldn't take any more. He collapsed along the highway and fell into a small gorge near the side of the mountain. He broke his leg and began screaming for help.

When help arrived, he was taken to the hospital. There, they called the Olympic development facility and informed them of his injury. They hurried to his side and, after speaking with the doctor, told Junior that he would never be able to run again.

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in Junior's shoes. How would you feel after hearing the unfortunate news?
2. What would be your next move if you were Junior? What would you do now?
3. Do you believe that Junior will ever be truly happy again?
4. Have you ever heard of anyone who has been **thankful** for a sickness or injury they suffered from?
5. Why would anyone be happy to be sick/ injured?

YOUCAT

Read points 240-247 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What does the word *charism* mean?

2. Why are the sick people of the world so important to the Church?
3. Why would people be afraid to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?
4. What does the Bible say about the sick? (hint: check the side citations as well as the commentary of each section in your YOUCAT).
5. Who can administer the Anointing of the Sick?

Final Reflection journaling prompt

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 240-247 from the YOUCAT in your response.

What is the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?

Level 2: Question 2- What Are My Priorities?

Ray is the youngest of 7 children, all of whom were either in college or had already graduated and had their own families. His parents worked hard at the local newspaper so that they could afford his dance classes and his brothers' and sisters' college tuitions. He loved them very much and they him.

Ray was a standout dancer. When he wasn't in the studio practicing for his next ballet performance, he was on the street corner break dancing with his crew. He had all the moves, an incredible physique, and a creative mind that made him one of the most sought after dancers in Chicago.



In fact, the stage manager for the largest dance studio in the Windy City contacted Ray a few months ago to see if he would be interested in playing the part of Peter Pan in their upcoming production that would take place on his 17th birthday. After an arduous audition, he was the obvious selection for the lead role and began training immediately.

Now, three months later, Ray is ready to make the performance of a lifetime. At age 17, he is calm, well-prepared, and ready to please the audience with his talent and artistic movements.

For the first half of the show, Ray captivated the crowd with his thunderous leaps and strong throws of his female co-dancers. At one point, he received a standing ovation shortly before the people went out on a break at intermission.

Going into the second half, Ray felt proud and confident in his dancing ability. He grew far too confident, however. So much so that he began adding steps to the performance that the director had not included in the original piece. While the audience had no idea what was happening, the director was irate at Ray's adding of steps because the other dancers were unable to follow him the way they had rehearsed. The director, seeing that the audience was pleased, did not stop the show for fear of embarrassment.

The performance took a sudden turn when Ray, after defeating Captain Hook in the final battle scene, lost his footing and fell into the backdrop scenery tearing it down and revealing the entire stage as an artistic mess. The music stopped, the performers ran off the stage in confusion and Ray remained on the floor, embarrassed. The director stepped out on stage and apologized publicly to the audience and promised them their money back as they left the auditorium.

He picked Ray up and berated him behind stage. He told Ray that he had no right to switch the steps and that if he wanted to continue being a respected dancer that he would need to begin training harder at the director's personal studio across town that night. He then told Ray that he could not speak with anyone and would need to report to the director's private studio immediately for a late night training that would regain his dancing credibility and make up for his thoughtless act as Peter Pan. The director left his presence without giving him time to respond and said, "I'll meet you in the front with my car. Let's go!"

Ray gathered his stuff and walked towards he exit. There, he saw his parents smiling at him with a small cupcake and a sign that read "Happy Birthday." He also saw his director sitting in the driver's seat of his Ford Focus waiting for him with the engine running.

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in Ray's shoes. What would you do in this situation?
2. What does Ray risk by stopping to speak with his parents? What does he risk by ignoring them and following the director's orders?
3. Have you ever had to choose between two things that were important to you?

4. Have you ever had to suffer the consequences for making a correct/ incorrect decision? What happened?
5. What are the things in life that matter the most?

YOUCAT

Read points 304-309 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What are your priorities? Choose from the options in the list below to create a list of the top 7 most important things, people, and activities in your life right now. Place them in numerical order, **1 being your highest priority** and 7 your least highest priority. If there is something that is not on the list that you would like to add, go ahead and add it.

Family
 Friends
 Extra curricular activities (sports, drama, etc.)
 School
 Work
 Prayer
 Church
 God
 Girlfriend/Boyfriend
 Social activities (going to the movies, to the park etc.)
 Catechism class
 Homework

1. What does the word *moderation* mean?
2. How does faith fit into your daily life?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 304-309 from the YOUCAT in your response.

What are My Priorities?

Level 2: Question 3- What is My Vocation?

James comes from a fairly big family. He is the youngest of 5 children. All of his siblings are much older than him and have helped raise him. He is currently in the 7th grade and his next oldest sibling, his sister Angelica, is already a sophomore in college.

One day, James' oldest brother, Joaquim, invited James to come to spend a day with him at his job. Joaquim is a real estate agent who sells houses and apartments to people. James has always wondered about Joaquim's job as he is always able to go on expensive trips around the world and take his family out to eat at fancy restaurants. He has always wanted to know what his older brother did to make so much money, so he agrees.



Throughout the day, Joaquim brought James to his meetings, introduced him to his coworkers and showed him the many different skills needed to be able to sell houses well. At the end of the day, he took James to the coffee shop located around the corner from his office building and asked him a very serious question: "James, what do you want to do when you get older?"

James had never really thought about it. He responded humbly, "I don't know..."

Joaquim looked at James' eyes and said, "Now is the time to start thinking about it, little bro."

The thought of his future stayed in his mind for the rest of the day. As he pondered, he thought about his talents, his passions and his plans. He really didn't know what he wanted to do, he had so many talents it was hard to focus on just one! The only thing he really knew that he wanted in his future was to be happy.

So, he began to think about the happy people in his life, especially his family. His oldest brother was happy as a husband, father and real estate agent, his oldest sister was happy as an unmarried lawyer. His other older brother was happy as a priest and his other older sister was happy as a wife, mother and teacher.

The question remains with James to this very day, "What will make me truly happy when I get older?"

Reflection Questions

1. Name some people who are using their talents to make an impact in the world.
2. Is this impact positive or negative?
3. If you were James, what do you think would make you happy when you get older?
4. Have you ever heard the call to become a priest/sister?
5. Make a list of the talents you have and be prepared to discuss them with the class. There is no limit to the amount of talents you can write.

YOUCAT

Read points 260-267 and 249-250 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Which of the vocations mentioned in this module seems most appealing to you right now: remaining single, becoming a religious/priest, or living a married life? Please provide a few reasons why.
2. What is *marital consent*?
3. What is necessary for a Christian marriage to be valid?
4. Explain what *voluntary celibacy* means.
5. Why are priests so important for the Church?
6. How can you best serve the Church using the talents that God gave you?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 260-267 and 249-250 from the YOUCAT in your response.

What is my vocation?

Level 2: Question 4- Why Should I Read The Bible?

Julia and her sister, Anaí, are not ordinary sisters. They are identical twins who, at the age of 16 have been traveling the nation as models. They go from city to city wearing the the latest styles while photographers from big-name companies take pictures of them for ads. Since they are unable to stay in one place, they are home schooled by their parents. On top of that, the whole family is devoutly Catholic. They go to Mass often and only wear clothes that they believe to be modest and beautiful.



On their way to Chicago, a new stylist called the girls and asked if they would be willing to take pictures in her newest design. The girls asked if they could see the images of the clothes they would be wearing first, but the designer told them that they were not ready yet. She said that they would be completed by the time they arrived in Chicago. Julia and Anaí agreed to meet with the designer when they were in Chicago.

When they arrived, the girls entered with their parents as usual. The designer and her assistant, Raul, greeted them and moved towards her office, calling the girls to come in with her. The parents followed, but the designer stopped them and said, "I'm sorry, but I'd like to speak with the girls alone, if you don't mind."

Perplexed, the girls' father was about to open his mouth to refuse her, but his wife stopped him, looked at the girls' eyes and said, "That's fine. Girls, remember whose you are. We will be waiting for you in the lobby."

About 20 minutes went by and the girls walked out of the office with smiles on their faces, happy as ever. The designer remained inside with her hand over her head as if she was troubled or confused.

"What happened?" their father asked.

"We declined their offer, Dad. The clothes they wanted us to wear showed a lot of skin and we didn't feel comfortable wearing them. Like you said, 'remember whose you are?' Well, we're God's and we don't think He'd want us wearing stuff like that."

The parents hugged their daughters and left for their next appointment.

A few day later, Julia began receiving text messages from Raul, the designer's assistant. He congratulated them for declining. In one of his texts he wrote:

'I have been working as an intern here for a year and every girl always feels uncomfortable wearing her clothes. But you were the first to stand up and say "no." I'm really impressed.'

After having a few text conversations, Julia got a phone call from him. Turns out he was a 17 year-old who was helping the designer as part of his economics class in high school. The two, Julia and Raul, began a friendship over the phone that day, and every time the girls are in Chicago with their family, they meet up to have dinner with him.

Reflection Questions

1. Put yourself in Julia's and Anaí's shoes in the office. Would you have declined the offer?
2. Put yourself in the girls' parents shoes, what would be running through their father's mind while the girls were in the office? The mother?
3. How do you think the girls knew to decline the offer? In other words, how did they know that God wouldn't have approved if they would have worn the revealing clothes?

4. Why do you think Raul respected the girls so much?
5. How did he begin communicating this respect to the girls?
6. Do you think that, in the future, Raul and Julia might have a more personal, perhaps romantic, relationship?

YOUCAT

Read points 12-19 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions: The YOUCAT mentions the importance of both scripture and tradition for the Catholic faith. Describe each and tell why they are so important.

1. What is the Magisterium?
2. According to point 16 in your YOUCAT, what is the Bible?
3. Is everything that is written in the Bible true? Explain your answer.
4. St. Francis of Assisi once said that "To read Sacred Scripture is to ask God for advice." Have you ever read the Bible and thought that God had sent you a message? If so, describe your experience. If not, what's stopping you?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 12-19 from the YOUCAT in your response.

Why should I read the Bible?

Level 2: Question 5- Why Should I Go to Mass?

Situation 1:

Molly is a street performer. She works nights and days as a mime and kicks it with her break dancing crew on the weekends to make a little bit of extra money from those who pass by. She uses her money wisely on food and rent and, if she's made any extra, likes to go out with her friends. She missed going to Sunday morning Mass because she was up late dancing and slept through her alarm.

Situation 2:

Arturo is a State Representative. He spends a lot of time in the nation's Capital to help write laws and vote them into existence. He has three kids and a wife who rarely get to see him because he is constantly on the go working to build up the country that he loves. For spring break, he surprised his family with a one-week vacation on a cruise in the Caribbean Sea. There is no Catholic Church on the cruise, therefore Arturo and his family missed going to Mass on Sunday while they were out to sea.



Situation 3:

Yvonne is a missionary in Kenya. She lives with a group of religious sisters and helps them take care of the poor and dying. They don't have much, but they fill their time with daily meditation, prayer and a lot of service to the poor. While returning home from an outlying village on a Saturday evening, they came across a man who was crawling along the side of the road, injured and begging for help. Yvonne sent the sisters back to town to fetch an ambulance while she remained with the man giving him water and company until the sisters arrived. Yvonne and the sisters missed Mass the next morning because they were busy bringing the man to the hospital to help heal his wounds.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of the three situations provides the most valid excuse for missing Mass?
2. Are there things that are more important than going to Mass? If so, what?
3. Have you ever missed Mass because of something less important? If so, what?
4. Why do you think Catholics celebrate Mass?

YOUCAT

Read points 212-223 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What are some of the essential elements to the Holy Mass?
2. Why should Catholic Christians go to Mass every Sunday?
3. Judging by the amount of attention the YOUCAT gives to it, what is the most important part of the Mass?
4. How is Mass supposed to “change” you?
5. Have you ever experienced a profound closeness to God during Mass? Explain.

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 212-223 from the YOUCAT in your response.

Why Should I Go to Mass?

Level 2: Question 6- Why Does God Allow Suffering in the World?

Cynthia grew up in a small town where everyone knows one another. She had been dreaming of the day when she could finally escape from her quiet, rural homestead and spread her wings as a university student in the big city. Finally, that day has come for Cynthia as she sets off to attend her freshmen year in the state capital.

After spending the first couple of days getting to know her roommate, getting herself ready for classes, and meeting new friends, she was invited to a party with some seniors from the baseball team. She isn't sure at first because she's heard that this particular group tends to get a little out of control when it comes to parties. She decides to go, but brings her roommate along just in case things get out of hand.



As Cynthia and her roommate walked through the doors, they were welcomed with a shout from hundreds of college students dancing to loud music and drinking alcohol. One attractive boy then came over and offered the girls a drink.

Cynthia didn't want to look weird, so she accepted. Her roommate looked at her strangely then told her that she would be right back because she had seen one of her friends from high school.

After about 20 minutes of talking with the boy, Cynthia began to get dizzy. She tried to stand up to find her roommate, but the dizziness was too strong. She fainted and blacked out in the middle of the party.

The next morning, Cynthia woke up in her dorm room with her roommate staring at her with disbelief. A policeman knelt beside her bed and, after asking her how she was feeling, said, "Cynthia, I'm afraid I have to tell you some bad news..."

Reflection Questions

1. What bad news do you think the officer shared with Cynthia? Decide for yourself what you think happened for the remainder of the questions.
2. Who was at fault for what happened? Cynthia? Her roommate? The boy? The University?
3. What happens when humans make bad decisions?
4. Why would God allow this to happen to Cynthia?

YOUCAT

Read points 281-287 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What was God's original plan for His creations?
2. Why does God allow us to be free to make our own decisions?
3. Why does the world continue to choose evil over good?
4. How do the Beatitudes bring us to true happiness?
5. Have you ever been happy while practicing one or more of the Beatitudes? Explain.

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 281-287 from the YOUCAT in your response.

Why Does God Allow Suffering in the World?

Level 2: Question 7- What Are the Works of Mercy?

Greg is a lawyer who lives by himself in the middle of New York City. He has climbed up the corporate ladder and is well known as a very successful and effective lawyer throughout the entire nation. The wealthiest people from every state contact him when they need someone to represent them in a case. In short, he makes a lot of money to provide his legal talents and debating skills.



One night, Greg arrived home from a long day of work and flipped on the television. He wanted to watch the basketball game but was caught off guard when a commercial came on for Catholic Charities International. They showed images of what was left of a tiny city in the Philippines that had just suffered through a huge flood. He saw the children's faces, the mangled houses, the countless items, including food, floating in the water away from the poor families that needed it to feed their families.

Greg felt a sudden urge to help, but he didn't know how. His schedule was full until the following year and he had other responsibilities that he had to complete

for his law certification. Even then, his desire to help the poor people that he saw in the commercial tugged at his soul. He needed to do something now.

Reflection Questions

1. If you were in Greg's position, what could you do to help the poor? What *would* you do?
2. Are there ways to help the poor that do not involve physically serving them?
3. What are other ways that people can be "poor" besides not having any money?
4. What do you know about Jesus' relationship with the poor?

YOUCAT

Read points 448-451 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Describe the importance of the poor in the Catholic Church?
2. What are the Spiritual Works of Mercy?
3. What are the Corporal Works of Mercy?
4. Which of the Works of Mercy is the most important?
5. Which of the Works of Mercy are you willing and able to do right now? In the future?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 448-451 from the YOUCAT in your response.

What are the Works of Mercy? How can you practice them on a daily basis?

Level 2: Question 8- What is the Culture of Death and How Do We Defeat It?

Sara suffers with depression. Her parents are divorced and she lives with her mother who is an alcoholic. She visits her father on the weekends, but he is so obsessed with work that he rarely is home to see her. She spends most of her time listening to music, chatting online and writing dark poetry. She is often absent from school because she knows that when the principal calls, no one will be there to answer the phone.



One night, Sara became so depressed that she stole a bottle of her mother's liquor and locked herself in her room. She drank too much too quickly and began to lose her train of thought. She watched as the magazines of beautiful teenage girls spun around, laughing at her for being overweight. She fell into a deep depression and began using her pen to draw deep lines into her wrists. As she scratched the tender part of her wrist, she began to wonder if anyone would really miss her if she were to cut completely through.

Reflection Questions

1. What types of pressures cause people like Sara to contemplate suicide?
2. What steps could she have taken to choose life?
3. What steps could you have taken to save her life?
4. What do you think would happen if she did commit suicide? To her family? To her school? To the world?

YOUCAT

Read points 58-62, 280, and 379 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What are some aspects of the Culture of Death?
2. According to point 61 in the YOUCAT, how are all men and women equal?
3. What is your *soul*?
4. Pope Benedict had this to say about the union of body and soul: “Man is truly himself when his body and soul are intimately united... should he aspire to be pure spirit and reject the flesh as pertaining to his animal nature alone, then spirit and body would both lose their dignity. On the other hand, should he deny the spirit and consider matter, the body, as the only reality, he would likewise lose his greatness.” ~Deus Caritas est. Please explain this comment in your own words.

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you can. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 58-62, 280, and 379 from the YOUCAT in your response.

What is the Culture of Death and How Do We Defeat It?

Level 2: Question 9- Does Faith Conflict with Science?

George loves the outdoors. He is an Eagle Scout, a volunteer at the forest preservation society, and he has a part-time job at the zoo working with endangered animals.



George's sister, Ruth, loves art. In fact, she occasionally follows him to the zoo so that she can set up her easel and paint landscapes of the forest and images of the animals that George takes care of.

Since George is so busy, he often misses going to Church with his family. On one such occasion, Ruth accompanied her brother to help him clean up animals involved in a recent oil spill that filtered into the river in the middle of the forest.

While they were cleaning the animals, Ruth interrupted the awful silence and asked, "George, I know these animals needed our help today and it is good that we are here helping clean them. But every other Sunday, you know, when there isn't an emergency oil spill, do you actually try to miss going to Church? Like, do you schedule your volunteer hours to purposely miss it?"

George was caught. He didn't know what to say. It was true. He DID try to schedule his work and volunteer time when Church was going on.

Then, he stood up and said, "Yes. yes I do try to miss Church. It's a huge waste of time. When I first started working with nature, I liked Church. I prayed that God would help the endangered animals I worked with or keep stupid people from ruining the forest so I wouldn't have to clean it up!" He pointed toward the black, oil-filled river, "A lot of good those prayers did. God doesn't even care. In fact, I'd much rather be out here DOING something to save the world rather than muttering the same words over and over again hoping that God will."

He then added, "I've been all around this forest. I've heard it, smelled it, felt it, tasted it, and seen it. That's why I have more faith in science than I do in God."

Reflect

1. Put yourself in George's shoes. Why is science more believable for him than God?
2. If you were Ruth, how would you respond to George?
3. How do science and religion differ?
4. How are science and religion similar?

YOUCAT

Read points 23 and 41-43 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Define the word *Evolution*.
2. Why does the Christian faith demand and promote the natural sciences?
3. Are Christians allowed to accept the Theory of Evolution?
4. Is the world a product of chance? In other words, was the world created randomly? Explain your answer.

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 23 and/or 41-43 in your response.

Does faith conflict with science?

Lit: Level 2- Final Reflection

As mentioned in level 1, Jesus' final words to His Apostles before He ascended to heaven were "Go out." Now it is your turn to start following in His footsteps as a modern-day Apostle, if you desire.

To complete level 2, find a way to dedicate some time to serving others. There are limitless options:

- Become an altar server
- Join your parish's youth group as a leader
- Work in the nursery during Mass
- Teach catechism to young children
- Raise money to help missionaries overseas
- Help at your local soup kitchen
- Create your own way of helping others in your community

Try to find a service that goes well with the talents God has given you. For example, if you are a good reader, become a lector during Mass. Or, if you are a good artist, paint religious pictures and either give them away or sell them and give the money to charity.

Don't worry about letting us know about your service. In fact, we'd rather you kept it a secret between you and God. Why? Well, because Jesus told us to serve in secret.

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." ~Matthew 6: 3-4

And don't worry, if you truly are doing great things in a simple way, we'll know about it. As St. Catherine of Sienna reminds us, "If you are what you should be, you will set the whole **world on fire!**"



Level 2: Flame

- Question 1- What Exactly is “The Church?”
- Question 2- Has the Church Ever Messed Up?
- Question 3- What is More Important, Faith or Works?
- Question 4- Why is Abortion and Contraception Wrong?
- Question 5- Is War Good or Bad?
- Question 6- What Does the Church Teach About Homosexuality?
- Question 7- Can I Go to Another Religion’s Church Service?
- Question 8- What is Sin?
- Question 9- What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation and How Does it Help Me?

Level 3: Question 1- What Exactly is “The Church?”

Junie thought she could do it alone. She had an assignment to make a rocket car for shop class. She had read the instructions. She had all the materials. How hard could it be?

As is her usual, she didn't touch the project until the weekend before it was due. She had too many other things to do with her other classes and sports. And how hard could it be?

She discovered that it could be very hard. She had never used power tools before, so she had to ask her dad to help her with that. She didn't have a hard enough grip to get some of the pieces together, so she had to get her big brother to help her with those. Upon re-reading the instructions, a couple of the steps didn't make any sense. Her neighbor happened to walk by and she asked her to take a look. She got so absorbed into the project, her mom had to bring her dinner.

Maybe this project was hard, after all? She just couldn't do it on her own.



Reflection Questions

1. How do you think Junie felt when she realized she couldn't do the project on her own?
2. What would have happened if Junie didn't ask for help?
3. Recall a time in your life when you thought you could complete something on your own. What made you change your mind? How did it feel to admit you couldn't do it on your own?

YOUCAT

Read points 121-128 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. When you think of the Church, what do you think of?
2. How is the Church more than the building?
3. What does it mean to you to say that the Church is the "Body of Christ"? The "Bride of Christ"? The "Temple of the Holy Spirit"?
4. How could you be more active at Church to help build up the Church?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What does the Church mean to you?

Level 3: Question 2- Has the Church Ever Messed Up?

James is a huge baseball fan. He stays up every night either watching his favorite team, the New York Yankees, or studying their history, stats and current playoff hopes. He can tell you everything you've ever wanted to know about any Yankee that has ever worn the pinstripe uniform.



James is also a pretty good shortstop for his middle school team. He is still learning, but his coaches have already given him a starting spot in the infield. He works hard to remain there as there are many other boys who would love to replace him.

One day, James was watching the news. It turns out his favorite player on the team tested positive for using anabolic steroids to be bigger and better than anyone else. Apparently, testing positive for these drugs forced the Major League Baseball association to make a critical decision- they had to bench James' favorite player for the rest of the season and, if he tested positive again in the coming months, he'd be out of the league forever.

James was shocked. He never thought that something like this could happen. He became upset that someone, let alone his favorite player, would do something so wrong. He started losing his love for baseball because he thought it all so fake. Soon after, he stopped coming to baseball practice and started going to bed earlier. His parents and coaches asked if he was ok and all he could say was, "Yeah. I'm fine."

He never watched another game. He never played again either.

Reflection Questions

1. Did James make the correct decision to leave the game he loved so much?
2. Is all of baseball a bad sport because of one player who broke the rules?
3. Can you think of a situation in your life when someone who was part of a team messed up? How did it affect the rest of the team? How did it affect how other people viewed the team?

YOUCAT

Read points 119, 141-143, and 178 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. How does the Holy Spirit protect and lead the Church?
2. What has more authority than the Pope?
3. If the worthiness of the priest does not affect the Sacrament, what does?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

How would you respond to someone who asks you "How can you belong to a Church that has made so many mistakes"?

Level 3: Question 3- What is More Important, Faith or Works?

In class, Joan and Lynn were talking about what they would do in different hypothetical situations.

“What would you do if you won a million dollars?” Lynn asked.

“I would drop out of school and go and live in the Bahamas. What would you do if you could turn invisible?”

“I’d sneak into the teacher’s lounge and see what really goes on in there. What would you do if you saw Greg in trouble?” Greg was an unpopular kid who no one liked.

“I would help him,” Joan answered, “because that’s what you’re supposed to do.”

The bell rang and everyone got up to go to their next class. On his way out the door, Greg dropped all of his books. Joan saw the whole thing, but she just walked away. So did everyone else.



Reflection Questions

1. What should Joan have done? Why?
2. Should Lynn say something to Joan about saying one thing and doing another? Why or why not?
3. Recall a time in your life when you said one thing and did another. Why did you act differently? How did it make you feel?

YOUCAT

Read point 341 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. According to the YOUCAT, what is more important, faith or works?
2. How do we show our faith?
3. Why are works important?
4. What could you do to better act in accordance with your beliefs?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

How can you show your faith in what you do in your daily life?

Level 3: Question 4- Why is Abortion and Contraception Wrong?

Sarah couldn't believe this was happening to her. There she sat, on the bathroom floor rolled up in a ball, completely numb with fear.



It had only been one night. She and her boyfriend loved each other. She figured it wouldn't hurt just to do it this one time, and she wanted to be with him so bad.

But then her period was late. She had snuck to a drug store after school and bought a pregnancy test. She went home with the intention of doing the test quickly before her parents got home from work. But she chickened out. She just couldn't face it.

She knew, though, that waiting wasn't going to change the answer. She was going to have to face the truth sometime. So, after everyone went to bed, she did it. And it was positive.

The shock wore off and she started to cry. She knew her parents were going to be disappointed in her. She worried about her future. She heard a knock on the door. Her mom asked, "Are you alright?" Apparently she had heard Sarah's cries.

Reflection Questions

1. Should Sarah tell her mom? Why or why not?
2. Why should Sarah choose life?
3. What are some options for Sarah's future?
4. Recall a time when you messed up in a big way and your parents got upset with you. How did you feel? How did you deal with the situation?

YOUCAT

Read points 383, 414, and 418-421 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. In your own words, why is abortion at any phase in development wrong?
2. What are some better ways to fight AIDS than condoms?
3. Why are children important?
4. How can married couples regulate the number of children they have without using contraception? What are the benefits of natural family planning?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What can you do to help women facing unplanned pregnancies?

Level 3: Question 5- Is War Good or Bad?

Brad couldn't believe it. That jerk, Sean, took his girlfriend's seat on the bus. Sean is always talking smack. Nobody likes him. Brad and Sean had been exchanging words for a few days now, but this was the last draw. Brad threw the first punch. Sean fought back.

Alison, Brad's girlfriend, had mixed feelings about the whole thing. While she liked seeing him stand up for her, it was only a seat. She could sit somewhere else. It's not the end of the world. She wouldn't have gotten upset about the seat.

Craig, Brad's best friend, saw the fight. Sean seemed to be getting the upper-hand, so he intervened to defend his friend.

The bus driver stepped in between the boys and stopped the fight. Sean got to keep his stolen seat. Alison sat somewhere else. Brad and Craig complained about Sean the whole rest of the way home.



Reflection Questions

1. Was Brad right in starting the fight with Sean? Why or why not?
2. Was Craig right in getting involved? Why or why not?
3. Was Alison right in not getting involved? Why or why not?

YOUCAT

Read points 398-399 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. In your own words, what is the criteria for a “just war”?
2. Do you think that the criteria is fair?
3. Can you think of any war (real or fictional) you’ve learned about that didn’t meet the criteria? Can you think of any war that did?
4. What can you do to promote peace in your part of the world among your family and friends?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

When is war justifiable? What can be done to avoid war?

Level 3: Question 6- What Does the Church Teach About Homosexuality?

Carrie and Melissa have been best friends since kindergarten. They lived on the same street. They walked to and from school together. They were both active in the youth group at their Catholic Church. They spent the night at each other's houses and they told each other everything.

Melissa found out one day that Carrie had been keeping a secret. Carrie had been quiet for a couple of weeks, but she trusted not to push the subject. Carrie didn't like being pushed around.

Carrie looked at the ground. "I have something I need to tell you, Melissa. And you have to promise not to tell anyone."



"Of course I won't tell anybody."

"I also don't want this to ruin our friendship."

“It won’t ruin our friendship. You’re my best friend.”

Carrie stood still for a moment. Time stood still as Melissa waited for Carrie to speak. What could this secret be?

“Melissa, I think I’m gay.”

Melissa instinctively took a step back. That was the last thing she’d expected to hear. She wasn’t sure how to respond.

Reflection Questions

1. How did Carrie feel sharing her secret with Melissa? How did Melissa feel?
2. What would you say if you were in Melissa’s position? Why?

YOUCAT

Read point 65 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why is a loving, fruitful relationship between a man and a woman so important? What makes homosexual acts wrong?
2. You may have heard it said, “Love the sinner, hate the sin.” Why are we supposed to do that? What does that mean? How does it relate to the Church’s teaching on homosexuality?
3. How should Melissa respond to Carrie?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT point in your response.

What would you do if one of your friends told you they were gay?

Level 3: Question 7- Can I Go to Another Religion's Church Service?

It was Laura's first time sleeping over at her new friend Wendy's house. When school started, they had hit it off. They could just sit together and talk for hours.



The sleep-over was a blast. They played games, ate pizza, and talked until they fell asleep sometime in the early morning hours. Wendy, had said something that night about church the next morning, but between the gossiping and joking around, it had gone in one ear and out the other.

Wendy's parents woke them up at nine the next morning to go to church. Laura rushed to the bathroom and did what she could do to make herself not look like she'd only gotten 5 hours of sleep. Laura, Wendy, and Wendy's family loaded up into their van and went to church.

The sign out front said Presbyterian. Laura was a Catholic. Her first issue was whether she should be there in the first place. Once they got inside, the church looked funny. There were no kneelers or holy water. The pulpit was center stage

rather than the altar. She decided to sit in respectful silence through the service. Wendy's mother wouldn't let them talk anyway.

She left with more questions than answers. Laura spent the following week asking Wendy questions about her experience. She also talked to her parents and her priest.

Reflection Questions

1. Did Laura do the right thing?
2. What should Laura do the next time she sleeps over?
3. Have you ever been to another church? What was your experience?

YOUCAT

Read points 135-136 in your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why, as Christians, are we supposed to respect Judaism?
2. What do Christianity and Islam have in common?
3. What do we mean when we say "there is no salvation outside of the Church"?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

How can we respect what is good and true in other people's faiths while being faithful to our own?

Level 3: Question 8- What is Sin?

Jeremy had a test coming up that he simply was not ready for. He wanted to study, but he had basketball practice every night this week and it was his birthday the night before the test. This meant that he wouldn't have time to study if he wanted to celebrate with his family.

When test day came, he was tired and told his mother that he wasn't "feeling well." He was lying. He felt perfectly fine aside from the regular sleepiness he felt when waking up; he just didn't want to go to school to fail the test he hadn't prepared for.

After taking his temperature and watching him eat breakfast, his mom told him he needed to go to school anyway. Jeremy consented and grabbed his bag to go to school.

As he entered his class, the teacher gave him his test and Ross, who was sitting right next to Jeremy, was completing his test with his answers in plain view. Jeremy was stuck. He knew he'd fail the test, but he also knew that Ross probably had most of the right answers because he was a straight "A" student.

Jeremy looked over his shoulder to see if the teacher was watching. She wasn't, so Jeremy began copying Ross' answers without him knowing.



Respond

1. Is what Jeremy did wrong?
2. Which was more serious, lying to his mother about being sick or copying Ross' answers on the test?
3. What effects do you think this decision had on Jeremy? Do you think Ross was affected? Jeremy's mom?
4. If you had to rank the following sins from bad to worst, how would you rank them?

Cheating on a test

Lying to your mother

Killing an elderly woman

Stealing a pack of gum from the gas station

Lying to your friend

Killing a young child

Robbing a bank

5. Why did you choose the order you chose?

YOUCAT

Read points 67, and 315-320 from your YOUCAT. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What is sin?
2. What is the difference between mortal and venial sins?
3. What does mortal sin do to your relationship with God?
4. What does venial sin do to your relationship with God?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary.

Identify the sins that you commit most often. What steps can you take to stop committing these sins?

Level 3: Question 9- What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation and How Does it Help Me?

Jenny didn't mean to do it. She just told one person Anne's secret and the next thing she knew, the whole school found out.



Anne was very hurt and angry, but she had no idea that Jenny was the one who told her secret. Jenny was torn about whether or not to say anything.

If she kept her mouth shut, Anne will never know that she had broken her trust. Though, if she told Anne and apologized, she knew she'd feel better and maybe their relationship would be stronger because of it.

She decided to tell her one day after school.

"I'm the one who told your secret, Anne. I only told one person. I thought I could trust them, but apparently I was wrong. I'm sorry."

“You did what?” Anne asked. She couldn’t believe that Jenny was the one who had told.

“I told your secret. I didn’t mean for it to go as far as it did. I’m really sorry and I won’t do it again.”

Anne was still shocked. Jenny was the last person she had suspected of telling. Jenny seemed genuinely sorry and had promised not to do it again. Would she trust her?

Reflection Questions

1. What should Anne do?
2. Why did Jenny confess?
3. Have you ever confessed a wrong to someone, knowing that it might hurt your relationship? What was that like for you? What was the result of your honesty?

YOUCAT

Read points 224-239 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why is the presence of the priest so important to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
2. What do you need to do to prepare yourself for Confession?
3. What are the rewards for going to Confession?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

Why is confession an important part of your faith journey?

Lit: Level 3- Final Reflection

In an earlier reflection, you were asked to start serving others, to “Just Do It.” In this final response, you’re asked to “Do it right!”

In this course, you learned about morality and ethics. You’ve learned about how to apply the teachings you’ve learned to your day to day life and to many of the more difficult issues facing our society today.

To complete this level, you need to get active in helping your community. There are many different options:

- Collect donations for a crisis pregnancy center
- Write a letter or sign a petition to your elected officials about an important ethical issue
- Participate in local pro-life activities like 40 Days for Life
- Participate in a charitable interfaith event
- Help evangelize to fallen away Catholics or to friends who aren’t very active in the Church

Help in any way that you feel comfortable. As the final reflection in level 2 says, use the gifts God gave you. The important thing is to do something. We all need to practice what we preach. If we believe that all life is sacred, if we believe that Catholicism is the Truth, we need to act on it!



As the Letter of James says:

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works. – James 2:14-18



Level 4: Heat

Question 1- Hell

Question 2- Purgatory

Question 3- Heaven

Question 4- How Does One Become a Canonized Saint?

Question 5- How Do I Pray Correctly?

Question 6- How Do I Meditate?

Question 7- What Is Contemplative Prayer?

Question 8- How Do I Pray the Rosary?

Question 9- What is a Dogma?

Level 4: Question 1- Hell

Shane was 17 years old. When he became conscious he found himself in complete darkness, pitch-black. He had no idea where he was. He pulled himself up on his knees and started groping with his hands, but they didn't make contact with anything. The only sound he could hear was his own breathing. "Where am I? Hello ... HELLO ..."



Nothing. He felt absolute terror as the realization seized him that he was alone – completely ALONE. He didn't know how or why my mind jumped to it, but his next thought was, "I am dead; I'm in hell!" Alone, isolated – forever. Without any forethought, he found himself screaming, "Help! HELP me! HEEEEELLLP me!"

The darkness and isolation was suddenly interrupted by a thud and burst of light to his left — his younger brother stood silhouetted in the doorway of his bedroom, "Shane, what's wrong?!"

Overwhelmed by embarrassment and adrenaline, Shane shouted "Get out!" and threw himself back down on the bed. Snapping back to reality, he lay in the

darkness of his basement-level bedroom, embarrassed but grateful. “I’m not in hell; I’m not in Hell. Thank you God.”

“So there it is,” he admits to friends, “not the most embarrassing moment of my life, but hands-down the most frightening. For the span of almost a minute I thought I would spend eternity alone; and there couldn’t possibly be anything worse. Most people are familiar with Jesus comparing hell to the valley (Gehenna) where they burned trash outside of Jerusalem (see Mt. 5:22, 29; 10:28); but my understanding of hell had clearly been shaped by another image Jesus used – that of being ‘thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 8:12).”

Heaven and hell – it’s all about relationship, about presence. If we are united to God at the moment that our connection to this world is severed, then we will enjoy Him forever. But if we are spiritually at a distance from God, then once this world melts away ... we will be forever cut off. Shane psychologically tasted that for a minute, and it was the most horrific experience of his life.

Reflection Questions

1. Why would being absolutely alone be so terrifying?
2. What would you consider the most frightening, or “hellish,” experience of your life?
3. Do you think of heaven and hell in terms of relationship with God or in a more mechanical way? (“If I do *this*, then I’ll go to heaven; but if I do *this*, then I’ll go to hell.”)

YOUCAT

Read points 53, 151, 161-62, and 315-317 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What does having a free will have to do with the reality of hell?
2. What kinds of actions (sins) are an outright rejection of God and a refusal to live in relationship with him?
3. Who condemns a person to hell?

Journal

Respond to the following prompt with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response.

Your best friend tells you that she cannot believe a good and loving God would ever condemn anyone to hell. Explain to her why condemnation really has nothing to do with it.

Level 4: Question 2- Purgatory

Jen was a stress eater. She knew she had a problem but, since she was such an active athlete in several sports throughout high school, she never had an issue as her body remained thin and her metabolism quite active.

It wasn't until about 5 weeks into college that realized her bad habit of eating junk food was affecting her negatively. She no longer played sports as much because she didn't make the division 1 team. She was also very busy with her pre-nursing studies that she never stopped to think about how her diet was making her grow. She had heard of the freshmen 15, but she packed on 40 extra pounds before coming home for Christmas break.



When she saw all of the delicious looking Christmas sweets, her mom looked at her and said, "Jen, honey, you might want to think twice about eating those cookies. I'm worried about you."

Reflection Questions

1. Why was Jen's mom worried about her?
2. Have you tried to give up a bad habit?

3. Were you able to just drop it, or did it take several tries and a lot of work?
4. Did you need to ask anyone for help?
5. What behaviors or habits are part of your life today that you want to change?

YOUCAT

Read points 159-60 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. If sinful choices flow not from our bodies but from our hearts/souls, and it is the soul that is meant to experience heaven, then doesn't some kind of purification *have to* occur?
2. What passages of Scripture lend support to the Catholic belief in purgatory?
3. How do we assist those experiencing purgatory?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 159-60 in your response.

Your friend, a fellow Christian from another denomination, insists that there is no such thing as purgatory, that it has no basis in Scripture. Given what you have read in YOUCAT...

Explain why purgatory must exist and how it is simply an unrecognized element in your friend's belief that we can "go to heaven."

Level 4: Question 3- Heaven

You lived in complete darkness. Your entire world was that wet, increasingly cramped space inside your mother's womb. And you couldn't even begin to imagine that there was an entire world, an entire planet, awaiting you outside. You lived beneath your mother's heart, exposed to its constant rhythm, and yet you had never seen her face! You grew to recognize her voice, but your mind hadn't developed to the point of being able to understand any of her words.



And your birth – talk about TRAUMA! All of that amniotic fluid you had been swimming in was gone in an instant. Your head was compacted and squeezed through the birth canal. The light; the cold; that humiliating slap on the butt! But you finally entered the real world, finally got that chance to see mom face-to-face, to eat through your mouth instead of your belly button, and a million other experiences that were impossible to conceive of from the darkness of the womb.

Turns out that was just the warm-up; you and I are still in utero, and the REAL world awaiting us “outside” remains inconceivable. We’re going to get the chance to enter it though; and just like before, we don’t have a clue when. This time around though, we get to participate in our own growth process. Each “yes” to God allows our spiritual “organs” to develop a bit more. The Prayer of St. Francis is right on the money: “It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

Reflection Questions

1. Have you tried to imagine your own time in the womb?
2. What makes it so difficult?
3. Do you agree or disagree that there is a similarity between the processes of birth and death? Please explain.

YOUCAT

Read points 52, 157-58, and 285 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Is heaven a place?
2. What makes it possible for us to enjoy heaven?
3. How does our Faith define “happiness”?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response.

Give your best explanation of heaven.

Level 4: Question 4- How Does One Become a Canonized Saint?

When Sean graduated school and took a job, it was very intimidating. He had difficult clients and difficult co-workers. Every day was a struggle and, to be blunt, he came to hate his work. You know that feeling of dread you get on a Sunday night, knowing you have to return to school the next day? That was him, every night. After four years of that, you can imagine how low he felt. Throughout those years he prayed and maintained his relationship with God, but it didn't seem to "fix" the way he felt about work.

Then came that vacation when he picked up a book about St. Therese of Lisieux and the many miracles experienced by people who asked her to pray for them. He reached out to Therese and the Blessed Mother and asked them to pray about his work situation. And you know what? When vacation ended and he went back to work – his anxiety was gone! The job was still challenging, but he was putting his trust in God in a completely new way and he no longer went to bed dreading the next day. A year later a transfer opened up – same job, but a new location. That was eleven years ago, and now there is nowhere else he would want to be.



*When Sean underwent that almost instantaneous change in his anxiety level, he knew that it was because the Blessed Mother and Therese of Lisieux had been praying for him. He had been close to the Blessed Mother for many years, but now he felt a special connection to Therese as well. God had turned Sean's struggle into an opportunity to introduce him to another of his sisters in heaven. Unless he had been in need of her prayers, he would not have reached out to Therese. He went on to read her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*. He was amazed to read about Therese's "little way" to sainthood; she was convinced that just by living our everyday lives, God could turn anyone into a saint. Therese also inspired him to begin reading *Teresa of Avila* and *John of the Cross*, two of the saints who inspired her so greatly.*

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever made a new friend in the course of trying to solve a problem?
2. Do you or any of your family have a saint to whom you are especially devoted? Why?
3. If so, do you have a story about answered prayer?

YOUCAT

Read points 146, 339, 342, and 497 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. How does a person become a saint? What makes it possible?
2. Who is called to become a saint?
3. How do the saints in heaven help us?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response.

Who comes to mind when you hear the word "saint"? For what do you need this saint to intercede for you?

Level 4: Question 5- How Do I Pray Correctly?

John's daughter has no problem talking to him. She talks to him at the dinner table, in the car, while they're watching t.v., and when he tucks her in at night. If John is in the shower then she is talking to him through the bathroom door; she'll even talk to him when he is laying on the couch, trying to take a well-deserved nap. But that is fine by John, because he absolutely adores her.



He does not mind if she talks to him in a silly voice, or in a halting voice through tears. He always wants to hear what she has to say. Some of his favorite "talks" are the one when she climbs onto his lap and neither of them says a word.

The only time John doesn't enjoy their talks are those rare times when his daughter is mad because he said "no" to a request, and she then speaks to him as if she was denied something that she was owed. He still of course loves her unconditionally; but he doesn't enjoy those moments.

Reflection Questions

1. Think of five different settings or ways you have communicated with family and friends.
2. Who are you most at ease talking with, and why?
3. How does your posture and body language change from when you are joking to when you need to ask someone for help?

YOUCAT

Read points 469-70, 490-501, and 514 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. In what way is prayer the evidence of a relationship with God?
2. Where can you turn in the Bible to locate prayers that you can use?
3. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our prayer lives?
4. Although we can and should pray anywhere and everywhere, why do we Catholics seek the Lord especially within our churches?
5. Why do we pray the Our Father so frequently?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response.

What times of the day do you pray? Explain what your prayer consists of at each of those times.

Level 4: Question 6- How Do I Meditate?



When Juan first heard his Catholic teachers talk about meditation, he thought he knew what they were talking about: sitting cross-legged, chanting a sound over and over, as he tried to empty his mind. As he listened however, he discovered that what he had been picturing was Buddhist meditation. Christian meditation, far from emptying the mind, was about training it, focusing it, on Christ and his life and teaching. “Alright, how do I do that?” thought Juan. “I get distracted pretty easily.”

Juan’s answer came when he picked up a book about Mother Angelica, the feisty, elderly nun who founded the EWTN television and radio network. “Don’t tell me you don’t know how to meditate,” Angelica told her listeners. “When you get angry with someone you can meditate on that for at least half a day, can’t you? ... You remember what the other one said and then you add more to it ... In every meditation you must do two things: you must use your memory (to express what you already know) and you must use your imagination” (Raymond Arroyo’s Mother Angelica’s Private and Pithy Lessons From The Scriptures, p.3).

“If that’s meditation,” Juan told himself, “then I know I can do that.” He started reading little portions from the New Testament, praying for the Spirit to let him understand what God wanted to say to him through the passage. He read a

passage (including the study notes about it in the margins of his Bible) and then he tried to imagine it like a movie in his mind, thinking about what was said and asking God questions about it.

He had a very exciting realization when he was meditating on the first chapter of Acts of the Apostles: Juan read how for the nine days between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, the apostles prayed with the Blessed Mother and many of Jesus' other disciples. He read how Peter proposed that they find a man to succeed Judas (who had committed suicide) as an apostle, and how Peter was moved to make his proposal through meditating upon the Psalms. Peter meditated on Scripture (the Psalms), while spending time in prayer with the Blessed Mother – that was how Peter was made ready for the Holy Spirit's activity on the day of Pentecost. Juan suddenly realized that we today follow Peter's example of meditating on Scripture while praying with Mary when we pray the Rosary. "No wonder the popes and the saints are always telling us to pray the Rosary; that's how the apostles got ready for Pentecost! Come Holy Spirit."

Reflection Questions

1. Did you realize that the definition of "meditation" changed from one religion to another?
2. Have you engaged in Christian meditation without even realizing it?
3. Can you point to a moment of insight that you had while meditating?
4. What kind of environment do you think aids a person in meditation?

YOUCAT

Read points 502-506 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Where do we look to find material to meditate upon?
2. Should we expect certain emotions when meditating?
3. How might God speak to us during meditation?
4. Why is perseverance in prayer so important?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response. *Using the information you have read on Christian meditation, open your Bible to either Luke 22:39-46 (Jesus' agony in Garden of Gethsemane) or John 19:23-28 (Jesus' crucifixion); and engage in meditation for at least 7 minutes.*

Share the sequence of thoughts you had and any realizations you reached while meditating on one of the scripture passages above.

Level 4: Question 7- What Is Contemplative Prayer?

Some days stay with you, even years later. Barb was one of Jack's high school girlfriends, and shortly before they went off to college they spent a long, relaxing day together. They had an early lunch out and then spent hours at the pool. Their next stop was Jack's parent's house for dinner. By the time they got there however, all those hours in the sun had taken a toll on Jack; his skin was red and he felt completely exhausted.



Once inside he found the couch so that he could sit and rest while his mom finished making dinner. Barb sat down next to him and wrapped her arms around him. There he was – in the arms of this beautiful, insightful young woman that he had come to believe cared about him deeply. Neither Jack nor Barb said a word; there was no need to. He spent those few minutes before dinner resting in her arms and feeling completely content – sunburn and all.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever been so at ease with someone else that there was no need to speak?
2. What does it take to arrive at the level of intimacy with someone?

YOUCAT

1. What other names are used for contemplative prayer?
2. Why is contemplative prayer a gift that it may take a lifetime to be ready to receive?
3. Why do you think that the majority of people never receive it?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response. The prayer of contemplation is pure gift on God's part; but it is a gift we can dispose ourselves to receive.

Explain what steps you can take to make yourself more ready to receive contemplative prayer.

. (You may want to review what we have already studied about prayer.)

Level 4: Question 8- How Do I Pray the Rosary?



Preston had had a horrible day, but he didn't want to trouble anyone with his problems. A large group of relatives were coming over for a celebration, and Preston didn't want to bring anyone down. He plastered a smile on his face and did his best to join in the fun. Halfway through the evening he found himself alone in the kitchen with his mother. In a low voice she asked him, "What's wrong?"

"I'm fine mom; everything is okay."

"No, I can tell something is wrong. What's going on?"

"Oh, it was rough day at work," Preston admitted, "but I didn't want anyone to know. Have I been a 'downer'?" he asked.

"Not at all sweetie; I'm sure that no one else picked up on it ... but I could tell. I can always tell."

Reflection Questions

1. Do you share a deep, even unspoken, connection with your mother?
2. Do you have a similar connection with someone else?
3. How do you think that kind of bond is formed?

YOUCAT

Read points 85, 147-49, and 479-81 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the basis for the honor we show Mary?
2. Does the Bible show Mary interceding for our (the Church's) needs?
3. Where did the *Hail Mary* prayer come from?
4. How does the Rosary bring the gospel story to us in miniature?
5. What value can you see in praying the *Hail Mary* (*Ave Maria* in Latin) out loud as you think about the events recorded in the four gospels?

Journey

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT in your response.

Explain how invoking the intercession of the saints, vocal prayer, and meditation come together in the praying of the Rosary.

Level 4: Question 9- What is a Dogma?

Pierre is an 18 year-old student from Africa who is applying to colleges in the United States. He is having difficulty completing the application because he is unfamiliar with the American grading system. The school is requesting that he send his high school transcripts and his scores from the SAT and ACT, but the grades he earned were different than the ones the university is expecting and he has not taken either the SAT or ACT because he has no way of completing it while in his country.



He decided to make a long distance phone call to the university to clarify what their expectations were. As he speaks, the administrator informs him that without translated transcripts and a high score on the ACT or SAT, he is unable to show the university that he is smart enough to maintain a good grade point average if he were to attend. Therefore, if he couldn't provide the required information, he would not be accepted.

Reflect

1. Put yourself in Pierre's shoes. Why is he so confused?

2. Put yourself in the university administrator's shoes. Why would they be hesitant to accept Pierre as a student?
3. Why is it important to prove that you are able to do something before you do it?
4. Why is it necessary to prove something as true in order to believe it?

YOUCAT

Read points 83 and 143 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the difference between a Dogma and a religious practice?
2. How does the YOUCAT define the word Dogma?
3. What are some Dogmas that the Catholic Church has declared?
4. What is "Papal Infallibility"?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 83 and/or 143 in your response.

What is a Dogma?

Lit: Level 4- Final Reflection

You've read and thought about the intimacy that God wants to have with us, both in this life and eternity, and now it's time to start deepening that intimacy in prayer.



To complete level 4, create your own daily prayer regimen. As a young Jewish man, Jesus prayed formally at least three times a day – morning, noon, evening. We want to challenge you to do the same; but instead of noon, how about in the afternoon after you've finished school or work? Each of the times doesn't need to be any longer than 5 minutes to begin (as you stay with it, don't be surprised if the times begin to lengthen on their own). Somewhere in your three times of prayer, include the following elements:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Vocal prayer | A decade of the Rosary |
| The Our Father | Talking with God |
| Scripture | Petition |

Vocal prayer

A decade of the Rosary

Meditation

Thanksgiving

When you keep regular times of prayer throughout the day, you will very likely find yourself talking to God spontaneously at other times of the day as well. It's a relationship that evolves over time; the saints didn't become experts at prayer overnight. Two important principles to keep in mind:

“The holy Spirit of Jesus is in us, and he is speaking through us when we pray.” ~ YOUCAT 496

“Someone who does not pray regularly will soon not pray at all” ~ YOUCAT 499

After you have been at your prayer regimen for a week, write a couple of bullet points in your journal as well as a short description telling us your thoughts so far.



Level 5: Blaze

- Question 1- What is the Divine Office and Why is It Important?
- Question 2- Is it Possible to Understand the Trinity?
- Question 3- Can You Explain the Liturgical Calendar?
- Question 4- What is the Beatific Vision?
- Question 5- Is the Rapture True?
- Question 6- What is Apologetics?
- Question 7- What Does “Ecumenism” Mean?
- Question 8- What is the Difference Between Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics?
- Question 9- What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Why Do I Need it?

Level 5: Question 1- What is the Divine Office and Why is It Important?

Kyle and Brittany went on a date. They had been friends for a while, but it was their first time going out as a couple. It was awkward, but they were enjoying themselves.



Brittany noticed that Kyle had held the door open for her and that after dinner he paid the bill. “Why did you do that?” she asked. She always wondered why this was the tradition and since they were friends she felt comfortable talking about it.

“I don’t know, because it’s the right thing to do?” he guessed.

“Sometimes it makes me feel bad, like I’m not contributing anything,” she confessed.

“I can understand that. And I guess it started because the man wanted the woman to feel special, like she didn’t need to do anything.”

“But what does it mean today?”

“Well, to me, it means that I appreciate you taking the time to spend the evening with me and I want to be a gentleman.”

“It’s strange how traditions get passed down and meanings change, but the traditions remain the same.”

“Yeah.”

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think men still do those things for women when they are out on a date?
2. How should a woman understand that behavior?
3. Is there anything you do because it’s tradition? Why does it make sense to continue to do it? What can you get out of it in today’s world?

YOUCAT

Read points 188, 473, and 492 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. How does The Divine Office connect us to both God and the Church?
2. How can something written centuries ago still apply today?
3. How could The Divine Office enrich your own prayer life?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

Why are traditional prayers important and how can they help you?

Level 5: Question 2- Is it Possible to Understand the Trinity?

Laura and Jen were staying up late talking, as they usually did when they had a sleep-over.

They were feeling particularly philosophical that night. Jen asked, "What is love?"

"That's a good one," Laura responded, "I have no idea how to define it."

"Me neither. There is so many different definitions."

"Yeah, like you love so many different things, like food, your family, and your boyfriend."

"Also, you don't always have a feeling with it."

"Nor can you always control it."

"I don't think you can define it."

"But you know it when you see it."

That was the closest Laura and Jen got to a definition of "love" that night.



Reflection Questions

1. How would you define *love*?
2. Defining “love” is like defining the “Trinity.” No one definition works perfectly and it’s impossible to completely understand it. We can understand it only in part. How would you define the Trinity?

YOUCAT

Read points 35-39 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. If someone asked you, “Do Christians worship three gods?” how would you respond?
2. If someone asked you to explain the Trinity, how would you respond?
3. What is the importance of saying that God exists as Trinity?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What does it mean to me that God is a Trinity? How do I relate to all three persons?

Level 5: Question 3- Can You Explain the Liturgical Calendar?

Sofia was a first grader who loved going to Church with her family. She especially liked sitting next to her big brother who was already in high school and knew a lot about the world. Sofia would always ask him questions.



"Why is Jesus on the cross up there?" she would ask while pointing to a Crucifix.

"Why is there so much water in that big bowl? Can we swim in it?" she asked pointing to the Baptismal font.

Her brother, Jude, would always give her a short, but easy to understand, response.

"Because He loves you, so He died for you and for me. That's why we come to Church to visit Him every week."

"No, we can't swim in it. That's where people get baptized. When they become baptized, the priest pours water on their heads and they become part of God's

family that way. Father Mark poured water on your head in that same font, I know because I remember it. I was there.

Sofia then asked, "Why does Father Mark change his clothes every week. How does he decide what color to wear? Sometimes he wears white, but most of the time he wears boring old green. I think he should wear more purple, or PINK!"

Jude smiled. This answer would require a longer answer.

Reflection Questions

1. What color vestments does the priest at your Church wear? Can you name them all?
2. Why do you think he wears those different colors?
3. What is your understanding of time? How important is time? Why is it important (or not)?
4. Look into the symbolism of the Church's calendar. You can find an overview of the calendar on page 112. What do you notice?

YOUCAT

Read points 166-171 and 184-186 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What does it mean to say that the liturgy is a living thing?
2. What is the benefit of celebrating the same events and the same people every year? How can we get something new from it?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What does it mean to me in my life that God wants to be part of it?

Level 5: Question 4- What is the Beatific Vision?

Marianne was walking home from some after school activities. It had been a crazy day. She was very stressed out and she just wanted to go home, get something to eat, and go to bed.

Before she crossed a busy street, she looked both ways and stopped. She didn't cross the street right away. She was caught up in the beauty of the sunset.



She loved the colors blending together. She loved the pretty clouds hanging over the sunset. They didn't ruin the view, but enhanced it. She realized it had been a very long time since she had last appreciated a sunrise or a sunset. She was just so busy. She had no time to appreciate little things like this magnificent view.

It made her feel insignificant to see such beauty. It also made her feel important, to know that God made that moment just for her. She continued home feeling at peace. All of the things she was stressed out about would turn out just fine.

Reflection Questions

1. Recall a time when you've been very busy and stressed. How could you open yourself up for God in those times?
2. What is the most perfect, most beautiful thing you've ever experienced? How did it affect you?

YOUCAT

Read points 52, 158, and 285 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. In your own words, how would you describe heaven?
2. What things on earth give us a glimpse at what it's like in heaven?
3. Look at YOUCAT point 518. What does it mean when we say, "Our Father who art in heaven"?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What do you imagine heaven to be like? What does heaven mean to us on earth?

Level 5: Question 5- Is the Rapture True?

Mike was getting ready to bed when he started watching the weather on the local news. Apparently there was a big snowstorm that was going to hit his town that night. 13-16 inches were possible and the only thing Mike could think about was "Snow day!"



When he woke up the next morning, he found out it was true, he had a snow day and started texting his friend, Chaz:

Hey, dude, let's go sledding.

Can't, pop has the house under lock and key, no one can come in and no one can go out.

What? That's crazy.

I know, right?

Why?

Cuz he thinks it is the end of the world. Said our pastor predicted that the world would end with a big snow storm. So now, we're staying home until God lifts us up to heaven. Apparently it is supposed to happen in the next 24 hours.

Huh?

If I am not at school tomorrow, you'll know that God took my family and me to be with Him in heaven.

Mike didn't know what to text back. So, he went sledding with his little brother.

The next day, Mike saw Chaz at school.

Reflection Questions

1. What would you say to Chaz if you were Mike?
2. Do you think Jesus would take people away from earth before the end of the world came?
3. What have you heard about *the Rapture*?

YOUCAT

Read points 111-112 and 163-164 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why can we have hope about the end of the world?
2. How do we know when the end of the world will be? (This is a trick question.)

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What does it mean today to live in the hope that good will eventually triumph over evil?

Level 5: Question 6- What is Apologetics?

Kara was sitting at lunch one day when John came up to her. She knew he was a jerk. He liked to pick fights just to make himself sound smart. Today was no different.



“You know what I heard the other day? I read in a book that Jesus never existed. The Church just made him up so that they could gain power and money by starting a religious movement. No such person ever lived.”

Kara knew just how to respond. They had talked about this in her Confirmation class. “What kind of book was it? Was it a novel? You know that a novel is a fictional story, right?”

“But it is based on truth.”

“Historians, even non-Christian historians, agree that a man named Jesus lived in 1st century Galilee. Writers in his lifetime and shortly after wrote about him.”

“Yeah, they’re called the Gospels,” John responded. He clearly thought that he had trapped her.

“No, Jewish and Roman historians who didn’t believe that Jesus was the Messiah mentioned him in their writings. Most scholars agree that he existed. Only a very few say he didn’t and they probably say that only to sell books.”

Reflection Questions

1. What Kara did above is called apologetics. Apologetics is a “systematic argumentative discourse in defense (as of a doctrine)” according to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary. Apologetics is defending the faith. Why do we have to defend it? What do those who attack it have to gain?
2. What do we need in order to defend the faith?
3. Have you ever been in a situation like the one above? How did you handle it? How could you handle it better?

YOUCAT

Read points 11, 352, and 354 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Who is called to defend and spread the faith? Who gives us all this responsibility? Why is this job so important?
2. How can I become a better instrument of God’s love and truth?
3. Can we force someone to become Christian? Why not?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What can I do to become a better defender of my faith

Level 5: Question 7- What Does “Ecumenism” Mean?

Jessica and Jewel had a lot in common. They both went to the same school. They were both straight "A" students. They both played soccer and ran the same events in track. They even had the same family set up, two older brothers and one younger sister. They had so much in common, that they became close friends.

There was one major difference between them, however. Jessica was light skinned and Catholic while Jewel was darker skinned and Muslim. She wore a hijab around her head and never took it off, not even during her sporting events.



Every year, during the September 11th memorial day their school took part in, Jewel was treated harshly by the rest of the student body. They called her a "terrorist" among many other things. This practice had become a normal thing for her to the point that she decided not to come to school on September 11th during her senior year. She had had enough.

Realizing that her best friend hadn't shown up for her first hour class (they had identical schedules, of course), Jessica began to panic. Had someone crossed the line and hurt her before she even got into school?

Reflection Questions

1. Why did Jessica worry about her friend, Jewel?
2. What similarities does Islam have with Catholicism?
3. Are you familiar with a Protestant denomination? How does that church differ from Catholicism? What does that church have in common with Catholicism?
4. Recall a time when you had to work with someone who had hurt you. It's difficult to come to an agreement with someone with whom you have a painful history. What do you have to do to make your partnership work?
5. In light of your experience from question 4, what advice would you give to people who are working toward ecumenism?

YOUCAT

Read points 129-134 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why is it important that the Church be one?
2. What can we do to help the Church be unified?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

What makes Christians divide? How can we overcome the divisions?

Level 5: Question 8- What is the Difference Between Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics?



Eastern Catholics and Roman Catholics are both in union with the Bishop of Rome, otherwise known as the Pope. They share the same beliefs although there is often different emphases. Their services have a very similar basic structure with readings from the Bible and the Eucharist. There are so many differences, however: if a Roman Catholic were to visit an Eastern Catholic parish, they would wonder, “how on earth are both of these part of the same Church?”

The simple answer is that they have different rituals and traditions. Many of the Eastern Catholic traditions are in fact older than the Roman Catholic traditions. These different rituals and traditions make the rich tapestry that is the Catholic Church.

There are more than 20 different rites in the Catholic Church. A rite is defined as “an ecclesiastical, or church, tradition about how the sacraments are to be celebrated.” These rituals and traditions come from the culture and the history of the people who celebrate it.

Reflection Questions

1. Before reading this, did you know that there were different rites in the Catholic Church? If you did, where did you hear this before and what did you think about it?
2. Every parish has its different traditions even if they belong to the same rite. What are some traditions that are unique to your parish?

YOUCAT

Read points 129-138 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side column. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What does it mean to say that the Church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic”?
2. How does the creation of different rites allow for there to be a “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” church?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from the YOUCAT points in your response.

Why is it important for the Church to be “one, holy, catholic and apostolic”?

Level 5: Question 9- What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Why Do I Need it?



Complete the following questions by filling in the missing word:

If you want to know the definition of a word, you look for it in a _____.

If you want to know a synonym of a word, you look for it in a _____.

If you want to see the latest viral video you search for it on _____.

If you want to know the Spanish translation of the word boat, you look for it _____.

If you want to find a good spaghetti recipe you can find it _____.

If you want to read what the Catholic Church believes in its entirety, you read the _____.

Reflect

1. Did you put "Google" as your answer for one or more of the statement? Which one(s)?

2. Did you put “Bible” for your answer to the last statement?
3. What is the correct answer for the final statement?

YOUCAT

Read points 468 and 281 from your YOUCAT including all of the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. Why do you yearn for God?
2. What makes you truly happy?
3. How dedicated are you to satisfying your thirst for God through the study of your Catholic faith?
4. How can the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the YOUCAT help you satisfy this yearning?
5. What else do you need to help you come closer to Christ?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary. Make sure you quote at least one sentence from points 468 and 281 in your response.

What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church and why do I need it?

Lit: Level 5- Final Reflection

We've discussed the rich history and diversity that makes up the Catholic Church. We've talked about our origin and our ultimate destination. Now, I want to see you put this knowledge to work.

To finish level 5, we would would like to challenge you to broaden your spiritual horizons. You can do this by:

- Visiting a Catholic Church of a different rite
- Praying a different traditional prayer than you're used to, maybe the Divine Office
- Reading a book of the Bible that you are unfamiliar with. For example, we talked about the end of the world when we discussed the Rapture, you could give the Book of Revelation a try.
- Becoming friends with a non-Catholic Christian. Maybe share a meal and talk about your respective churches.
- Join a group, online or in person, to learn about the Church and defend it.

There are always more things to learn and to do as you grow in your Catholic faith! Much more than we will ever accomplish in one lifetime, but that doesn't mean we don't grow in our faith now!

“For now we see as in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood” – 1 Corinthians 13:12





Level 6: Torch

Question 1- Deacons, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops & Cardinals- What's the Difference?

Question 2- What is Seminary Like?

Question 3- What is a Religious Order?

Question 4- The Life of a Priest

Question 5- The Life of a Religious Sister or Nun

Question 6- The Life of a Consecrated Religious

Question 7- What is a Third Order?

Level 6: Question 1- Deacons, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops & Cardinals- What's the Difference?



Mark is a convert to the Catholic faith. When he joined the Church, it didn't take long for him to figure out how his pastor was involved in parish life, but when he joined a friend for Mass at a cathedral, things got more complicated – the bishop showed up!

The Mass was almost the same, but Mark knew after he walked out of the cathedral that morning that there was something more to the bishop than his unusual vestments.

But what was it?

YOUCAT

Read points 249-259 in the YOUCAT, along with the citations, quotes, and definitions on the side columns. When you're finished, review with the following:

1. What is the connection between the role of the Bishops and the life of Christ?
2. What is the special role of the priesthood in the Church?
3. Why do we talk about the “gift of celibacy”?

Journal

Answer with as much detail as necessary:

Think about the role of deacons and priests in your parish. What impact have they personally had on your life?

Level 6: Question 2- What is Seminary Like?

John grew up a “cradle Catholic,” and has always loved his faith. He loved being an altar server in his parish, and now, he’s starting to wonder if God might be calling him to consider a vocation to the priesthood!

*But could he really fit in at a seminary? I mean, what do seminarians **do** all day . . . ?*



Reflect:

1. Seminarians are normal people, too! What parts of seminary life appeal to you?
2. What parts do you think would be difficult for you?
3. What about this community helps a man grow in holiness?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary.

What did I think seminary life was like before studying this lesson? Has this changed?

Level 6: Question 3- What is a Religious Order?



Steve's dad was a Deacon at his Church. One of his responsibilities was housing and caring for the religious missionaries that would come to visit their parish asking for donations every year during World Missions Sunday.

Each year, he met some of the most interesting men from some of the most interesting places he had ever heard of. The stories of intense struggle and limitless joys really resonated with him. He enjoyed their stories so much he always wrote a thank you letter for their service to the Church and donated a portion of his allowance that week to help their mission.

But one thing really confused him, when he would write their name, he realized that all had strange initials afterwards: Father Dominica DeSilva, O.P., and Father Francisco Ramos, F.S.C., etc. He asked his dad what those meant.

His dad told him that that was the religious order that each man belonged to. The O.P. stood for the Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominican Order. The

F.S.C represented the Fratres Scholarum Christianarum, or the order of the Christian Brothers of St. John the Baptist De la Salle. He went on to tell his son that there were over 100 different religious orders that made these visiting missionaries different than their local diocesan priest, all with different abbreviations after their names that indicated to which religious order they belonged to.

YOUCAT

Read points 138 and 145 from your YOUCAT. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What are the special gifts of a vocation to a life as a consecrated religious brother or sister?
2. How do the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience help a religious brother or sister imitate Jesus?
3. What will ultimately make us happy in life? Why is this important to life as a religious?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary.

How does life as part of a religious order build up the Church?

Level 6: Question 4- The Life of a Priest



Respond

1. How were the two stories in this short video similar?
2. How were they different?
3. How does one know they are being called to the priesthood?
4. What do you think a priest does all day?

YOUCAT

Read points 249-250 and 258-259 from your YOUCAT. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the role of the priesthood in the Church?
2. What does it mean for a priest to act *in persona Christi*?
3. How is a priest a “shepherd” for the people of the Church?
4. Why do we call priests “Father”?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary.

How have priests impacted my life?

Level 6: Question 5- The Life of a Religious Sister or Nun



Respond

1. What did you expect as you began to watch this film?
2. After watching, do you look at the lives of consecrated religious women in a different way?
3. There is no more required of this course as it ties in to the previous lesson on the life of the Priesthood.

Level 6: Question 6- The Life of a Consecrated Religious



YOUCAT

Read points 138 and 145 from your YOUCAT. When you are finished, reflect on the following questions:

1. What similarities do you see between the lives of these two communities? What differences?
2. How do the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience help these religious brothers imitate Jesus?
3. What does the YOUCAT say will make us truly happy in life? Why is this so important to life as a religious brother?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary.

What do the lives of consecrated religious bring to the Church? What can I learn from them?

Level 6: Question 7- What is a Third Order?



Stephanie just turned 18 and she is having difficulty deciding what she wants to do when she graduates from high school. She's been accepted into the big university in her state, but she feels called to do more. She feels called to the vocation of marriage and yet, she also feels a call to become a religious. She isn't so sure what to do.

When she arrives on campus, she discovers that there is a small group of adults and students that meet regularly at the college chapel. They call themselves the Lay Dominicans, a Catholic group of lay men and women who are also part of the Dominican order. She enjoys their company and, after speaking with the spiritual director of the group, she decides to join the group as a full-fledged member.

On the night of her reception, her boyfriend proposes to her. Stephanie couldn't be more happy. She finally understands her call to be both a married woman and a religious member of the Dominican order.

Respond

1. What does it mean to be part of the laity?
2. What does it mean to be part of a religious community?
3. Have you ever felt called to be both/and?
4. Did you know it was possible to be both/and?

Instead of a YOUCAT section, please read the following:

Third Orders are an immense blessing to the Church and they are deserving of your contemplation. The following pieces of advice are for those who are discerning a lay vocation as a member of a Third order:

1) Discern.

This first step towards spiritual growth is to will it. God has already called you to become something great whether you join a religious Order or not. Your job is to uncover all of the muck and clutter that sin has piled on top of your soul by actually getting up and doing something about it. Establish a time for quiet reflection, go to confession consistently and take Christ's body and blood at Mass as often as you are able. Nothing gives your mind more clarity than these simple practices.

2) Research the charism of each religious Order that you feel drawn towards.

Every religious Order has a specific charism, or way by which they serve Christ's evangelical mission. Each shares in a specific way of life that is based on prayer, community and service, but each has a certain charism that pretty much defines their style of proclaiming the Gospel and building the Kingdom.

The four most popular religious communities that offer Third Order formation and membership are:

The Third Order Carmelites, whose charism is contemplative prayer
[The Oblates of St. Benedict](#), whose charism is to seek God in association with a monastic community.

The Third Order Franciscans, whose charism is based on living a simple lifestyle like that of St. Francis.

[The Lay Dominicans](#), whose charism is to attain knowledge and wisdom through study and preaching.

These are just a few options of religious communities that have Third Orders, but many others, like the Jesuits, offer [association possibilities](#) for lay men and women. An *associate* is someone who works alongside the consecrated religious members of the order but does not receive the graces of being a full-fledged part of the community as a Third Order member would.

3) Practice what they preach.

After researching each Order, begin to read through their Rule, which is a written explanation of how each member is to participate more fully in their spiritual life. The Rule is typically a set of expectations that the founder of each community desired for his/her members to follow. This code of conduct is much like a set of directions to help guide the person towards their eternal salvation. They typically include methods of prayer and spiritual exercises based on the charism of the Order.

4) Pray, pray, pray... and discern some more.

While practicing the Rules of several religious Orders, continue to pray and act as if you were already a member. One of the greatest ways to know if you are doing God's will is to act as if you already know what it is. Sometimes you will fall, but the constant practice of virtue will solidify your stride and you will grow in your understanding of His will for you by thinking about it constantly.

5) When you feel the nudge, get in contact with the formation director of the Order you feel called to commune with.

At some point, the lifestyle by which you have been called to live will become second nature to you. The Rule that brings you closest to Him, the charism in by which you feel most comfortable spreading the Good News and the community with which you are most effective in animating is typically the one that God's voice beckons you to join. Respond accordingly by getting in contact with the formation director of the Third Order that you have been called to join. Don't be surprised if it takes a while for them to respond; the majority of the formation directors are Third Order members who are balancing their worldly careers with family and Church. Be patient, all things on God's time.

6) Be prepared to tell people what a Third Order is.

When I had finally come to terms with God calling me to become a Lay Dominican, I sent out a mass e-mail to my family and friends. Most, if not all, of the responses I received expressed their confusion and worry that I was changing religions. I received comments like "Wait, what? What does this mean?" and "So, you're not gonna be Catholic anymore?" as opposed to the "Awesome! Congrats!" that I was expecting. Even after the e-mails, I find myself explaining to people that being part of a Third Order has nothing to do with switching religions. In fact, it is quite the opposite; I feel more Catholic now than ever!

7. Stay consistent with your formation.

Most Third Order formation programs include modules for study and contemplation that can last anywhere from 6 months to five years. For example, the Lay Dominicans in the Central Province require the first 3-6 months of going

to meetings and inquiring, 6 months of postulancy, 1 year of candidacy, and 3 years of continuing formation before you can make your final vows. You are considered a member of the Order at postulancy but the formation is constant even after you make your final vows.

Becoming a member of a Third Order isn't for everyone. You don't have to be one to be a good Catholic. However, they do offer constant prayer support, free spiritual formation, and numerous options for service that can help anyone grow closer to Christ. **It leaves an indelible mark on your soul** and surrounds you and your loved ones with graces that come straight from Jesus through the many Saints that make up each community that surround God's throne in an eternal symphony of praise.

Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?

Journal

Answer the following question with as much detail as you feel necessary.

After researching the various Lay Orders, to which Third Order might I be called toward joining? Why?

Lit: Level 6- Final Reflection

This final level was named “Torch” for a reason; all who are truly enlivened by Christ’s love live their lives as one who is on a mission. In the end, these people are the ones who carry the torch of God’s love to the ends of the earth and to the front lines of our communities.

Now, God calls you.

How will you answer?

To complete this section, please do one (or all) of the following:

- **Get a spiritual director.** This is a hard task as many holy men and women who can give you advice are typically very busy people. Pray about it and find someone who can guide you to a higher level of closeness with God by meeting with them as often as you both are able.
- **Discern the mission God has for you.** Limit the time in which you pursue meaningless tasks (for example- using your phone/tablet, playing video games, binge watching tv, etc) and fill this time with prayer, meditation, and reflection. Ask God what He wants from you.
- **Meet your vocations director.** It is possible that you are being called to become a priest, religious or married spouse to someone. It is also possible that you are being called to the single life. If you feel you might be called to a religious vocation, contact your vocations director. This person will help you immensely, *especially* if you aren’t sure if you are being called.
- **Live a life of joy.** There is no better way to carry the Torch of God’s love than by living a happy and complete life. The only way to do this is to sacrifice yourself for the good of others, for that is the definition of *Love*.
- **Grow in your knowledge of the Catholic faith.** We at Signum Dei have dedicated our lives to helping you come to know and love Christ and His Church through the development of online courses and free resources. Please take advantage of all that we offer on our site.

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you on finishing this step of your journey. The story of salvation continues on through your mission. Please don’t hesitate to contact us any time if ever you are in need of prayer intentions, tools, resources, or community to help you do exactly what God is calling you to do. That’s why we exist.

Your brother,
T.J. Burdick, *Founder*, Founder of Signum Dei

