

Lesson 6: The Challenge of Following Christ

Curriculum Goals:

- Understanding of the sacrifice involved in living the moral teachings of the Catholic Church including the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.
- Understanding of prayer and its importance in our lives.
- Gaining a working knowledge of The Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has been written as the normative guide of Catholic teaching. It is the authentic instruction for all people who have questions about their faith. Due to this fact, it should be presented as the core resource that the candidates can use throughout their lives. Also, the Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church is to be recommended to the students as the core resource for on-going faith formation, as well as the Parent Handbook for Catechetics, Office of Catholic Formation, Diocese of Burlington, 2007.

Lesson Plan Overview:

1. Intro and Prayer (3 mins)
2. Reflection Activity I: Living the Good Life Means Having a Good Guide. (5 mins)
3. Confirmation Series Episode 6: The Challenges of Christian Discipleship (10 mins)
4. Discussion Questions and/or Worksheet: Beatitude Poster (10-20 mins)
5. Teacher Presentation I: Prayer is Conversation with God as Friend (15 mins)
6. Reflection Activity III: Should I Google It? (5 mins)
7. Teacher Presentation II: The Catechism of the Catholic Church (5 mins)
8. Closing Activity: Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor (10 mins)
9. Closing Prayer: (2 mins)

1) Introduction and Prayer

2) Reflection Activity I: Living the Good Life Means Following a Good Guide

Develop a reflection activity in which students are asked to relate who it is in their life who they trust as a guide toward truly being a good person. They should be prompted to provide real life examples of people who have lived according to these qualities. Examples of possible activities include:

-Mentor Skit: Split the students into at least 2 different groups. Have each group choose a "mentor" or "guide" that they all respect (a coach, teacher, local hero, etc). Then, have them act out the typical way that this person leads others in the community.

-Think, Pair, Share: Students should be instructed to think about someone who has been a great inspiration in their lives. Then, they should be led to consider who they would turn to if this person was no longer there or was not available. Next, they should be instructed to pair up with someone and share each others' experiences. When discussion time comes, each students shares what their partner said.

The point of this activity is to set up the video, in which Jesus is described as the leader from whom we receive the best guidance on how to become who we are born to be!

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3) Episode 6 of the Confirmation Video Series: The Challenges of Discipleship *(These are the Key Points from the Catechism of the Catholic Church that are covered in the video. They are provided here in their entirety as a reference to aid your interaction with students while reviewing the Discussion Questions after viewing the video.)*

- CCC 1716 The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. the Beatitudes fulfill the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven:
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.
- CCC 1717 The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

- CCC 2075 "What good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" - "If you would enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:16-17).
- CCC 2076 By his life and by his preaching Jesus attested to the permanent validity of the Decalogue.
- CCC 2077 The gift of the Decalogue is bestowed from within the covenant concluded by God with his people. God's commandments take on their true meaning in and through this covenant.
- CCC 2078 In fidelity to Scripture and in conformity with Jesus' example, the tradition of the Church has always acknowledged the primordial importance and significance of the Decalogue.
- CCC 2079 The Decalogue forms an organic unity in which each "word" or "commandment" refers to all the others taken together. To transgress one commandment is to infringe the whole Law (cf Jas 2:10-11).
- CCC 2080 The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law. It is made known to us by divine revelation and by human reason.
- CCC 2081 The Ten Commandments, in their fundamental content, state grave obligations. However, obedience to these precepts also implies obligations in matter which is, in itself, light.
- CCC 2082 What God commands he makes possible by his grace.

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4) Discussion Questions and/or Worksheet Activity: Beatitude Poster

Lead the group in the discussion questions from the video and/or distribute the worksheets for Confirmation Series Episode 6 and have the students complete them. Encourage them to be as creative as possible. This Beatitude poster should be their way of expressing both what they perceive as the challenges Christians face and what are the qualities and gifts that a Christian disciple should have to spread the Gospel in the world.

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5) Teacher Presentation II: Prayer is Conversation with God as “Friend”: *Key notes: (Use these annotated paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church to prepare a brief presentation on the topic. Also, feel free to draw on appropriate experiences to give witness to your students about how your own personal prayer has made your life better and made you a better disciple of Jesus.)*

- CCC 618 The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the "one mediator between God and men". But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, "the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery" is offered to all men. He calls his disciples to "take up [their] cross and follow (him)", for "Christ also suffered for (us), leaving (us) an example so that (we) should follow in his steps." In fact Jesus desires to associate with his redeeming sacrifice those who were to be its first beneficiaries. This is achieved supremely in the case of his mother, who was associated more intimately than any other person in the mystery of his redemptive suffering. Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven
- CCC 2558 "Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part Two), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Part Three). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.
WHAT IS PRAYER?
For me, prayer is a surge of the heart;
it is a simple look turned toward heaven,
it is a cry of recognition and of love,
embracing both trial and joy.
- CCC 2559 "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God."
But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart?
He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer,
Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought,"
are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer.
"Man is a beggar before God."
- CCC 2560 "If you knew the gift of God!"
The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being.

It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us.

Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.

- CCC 2561 "You would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." Paradoxically our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water!" Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God.

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6) Reflection Activity III: Should I Google It?

Develop a brief reflection activity in which students should create a list of things that can be googled and a list of things that should not be googled. (Exs: Recipe for apple pie=can be googled. Can I trust my best friend?=should not be googled.) The point of this activity is to demonstrate that, when it comes to personal things and complicated questions of the Faith, the internet is not the best resource. That is why we have the Catechism.

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7) Teacher Presentation II: The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Key Notes

- This short presentation should be adapted to fit with your students' relative familiarity with *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *YouCat*.

- If you already use one or both resources in your classroom, this should be a quick review of basic research skills (how to use a glossary, index, how to access the *Catechism* online, etc)
- If you have not used either of these resources in the classroom before, take this time to explain to the students what a catechism is, why *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* was promulgated, and how the *YouCat* reduces the teachings of the *Catechism* into an easier-to-understand format.
- It should be noted to the students that all of these lessons have been using the *Catechism* as the reference point: they are already familiar with the *Catechism*!
- Finally, make sure to remind students that Church documents like the *Catechism* are not organized by page number but rather by paragraph number so that all editions and translations can have an accurate reference point.

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8) Closing Reflection Activity: Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor

Students should be given time to reflect on who in their lives best lives out the teachings of Jesus and would make a good confirmation sponsor. If students have already chosen a sponsor, they can be encouraged to share about their sponsors with the class.

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9) Closing Prayer

Additional Lesson Suggestions:

- In addition to the Scripture and Catechism references above, be sure to include some real-world examples of how these young people might be called to suffer for the faith. How might they be embarrassed or set apart for believing in Jesus Christ? Are there any appropriate examples that you or another adult could share where you have experienced the cross of discipleship? As always, examples should be age appropriate.
- Being a disciple isn't easy, but that doesn't mean you have to leave this session on a note of doom and gloom! Being a disciple of Jesus ultimately means sharing eternal life with him in heaven. "Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness" (CCC 1024). Make sure that candidates are aware that they are called to this supreme and definitive happiness.