



Resources for Returning Catholics

Catholics Come Home Sample 8 Week Curriculum

Overview: This sample curriculum would take place the 1st Week of Easter and culminate after Pentecost. Based off the Mystagogia experience of the neophytes inactive Catholics and those who wanted to learn more about their faith would be invited to a series of sessions during the Easter Season.

Goals: To help inactive and returning Catholics encounter the living Christ through evangelization and catechesis.

Recruitment: Starting with Ash Wednesday returning Catholics should be invited to meet a designated person who can lovingly answer their questions and invite them to be active in their Catholic faith. Pulpit, bulletin announcement, along with personal invitations to new people should be included. Those who sought a more formal entrance would be signed up for the 8 week Catholics Come Home Sessions. (see sample form attached).

Opening Dinner: After Easter all those who wish to return to their faith, or those adults who want to learn more about their faith should be invited to an opening meal. Careful thought and planning should go into the dinner, as it can also serve as a recruitment tool. The dinner should include prayer, scripture and an opportunity for catechesis and small faith sharing.

Session Format: Each session should be well executed and lovingly presented. Since people have left the Church or become inactive in their faith for a number of reasons be open to designing sessions that address their specific needs. Certain topics should have been gathered from the entrance conversations and sign-up forms. Parishes are encouraged to give participants a Bible and Adult Catechism when possible.

- I) **Opening Prayer:**
 - a. The opening prayer should include the participants. (Use an abbreviated Liturgy of the Hours, or another prayer form from the Catholic tradition can include the group)
 - b. The opening prayer when possible should be lead by someone else other than the session leader.
- II) **Scripture Reading:**
 - a. A Gospel verse that is easily understood (e.g. Beatitudes, Parable of Sower) and coordinates with the session theme should be joyfully proclaimed.
 - b. Participants should be directed where to find the verse in the scriptures.
- III) **Small Faith Sharing**
 - a. Questions pertinent to the scripture that inspire deep discussion should be developed.
 - b. Active Catholics and volunteer catechists may be placed in each small group to help facilitate dialog.
- IV) **Catechesis**
 - a. An individual from the parish should present the catechetical content of the session. It is helpful to have a different presenter at each session.
 - b. The presenter should consider the “Keys of Catholic Doctrine” when designing their presentation (see attached).
 - c. Time for Questions and Answers
- V) **Discussion/Closing Prayer**



Catholics Come Home Sign-Up Form

(Whenever possible this form should be filled out by the coordinator in the context of a conversation)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Would you like to share your experience of the Catholic Church?

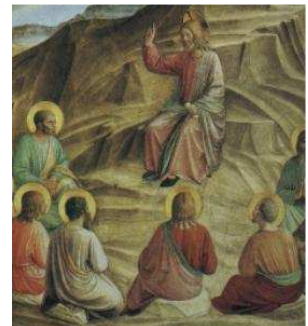
What can we do to help your relationship with Christ grow? (Retreats, Bible Studies, etc)

What questions would you like answered about your Catholic faith?

Have you received all your sacraments? Which ones?

What topics of discussion/teaching interest you?

- _____ Prayer and understanding the Mass
- _____ How to read and understand the Bible
- _____ Mary and the saints
- _____ Sin and Confession
- _____ Holy Communion as Jesus' True Presence
- _____ Heaven, Hell and Purgatory
- _____ The problem of pain and evil in the world
- _____ Divorce and annulments
- _____ Catholic teaching on contraception
- _____ The Holy Spirit and the importance of Confirmation
- _____ OTHER: Please explain...



Goal of Catechesis

The goal of catechesis is knowledge and conversion for insertion into the mystery of Christ with the ultimate goal of communion with Him.

Keys of Catholic Doctrine

1. **Teach the PREMISE:** This is the underlying truth upon which the doctrine is based. It is not necessarily the definition but always God doing something.
2. **Teach the ESSENTIALS:** These are those aspects of a doctrine that cannot be taken for granted when teaching it. ***(Always provide 1 reference to the Catechism of the Catholic Church)**
3. **Teach what is COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD:** There are many misconceptions about what the Church teaches. Most inquirers will come with false understandings of doctrines of the Faith.
4. **Teach the SCRIPTURAL BASIS:** Many people fail to recognize that Catholic doctrine is grounded in Sacred Scripture. ***(Provide at least 1 and no more than 3 Scripture references for each teaching)**
5. **Teach the RELATED DOCTRINES:** The doctrines of the Faith form a certain organic unity. They are not independent. Often, the teaching of a related doctrine will reveal what was previously hidden.

