

POD 1 — REVELATION

By revealing himself God wishes to make them [men] capable of responding to him, and of knowing him, and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity.

(CCC, 51)

This pod consists of four sessions focusing on Revelation. They are:

Session A: Inborn Desire for God

Session B: Natural Revelation & Divine Revelation

Session C: Transmission of Divine Revelation

Session D: The Magisterium

Vocabulary

Apostolic Succession

Fathers of the Church

Divine Revelation

Doctrine

Dogma

Infallibility

Magisterium

Natural Revelation

Patristic Writings

Private Revelation

Public Revelation

Reason

Tradition

Session 1A – Inborn Desire for God

As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.

My being thirsts for God, the living God.

(Ps. 42:2-3)

Objectives

1. Humans have a longing for God written in their hearts, because we have been created by and for God (CCC, 27)
2. Human beings strive to know God
 - a. Only in God, will they find the truth, peace, and happiness for which we never stop searching (USCCA, 7; CCC, 27)
 - b. Humans are religious beings as evidenced by our religious beliefs and behaviors (CCC, 28)

Note to Catechist: St. Augustine said it beautifully, that God made us for himself and our hearts are restless until they rest in him. Everyone seeks truth, goodness and beauty. Some people look for them in material things alone, but the only reason that anything has truth, goodness, and beauty is because they share a little bit in God, who is the ultimate truth, goodness, and beauty. As a result everyone who seeks these things is really looking for God.

3. Humans come to know God through
 - a. Natural Revelation
 - b. Divine Revelation

Session 1B – Natural & Divine Revelation

By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers:

the order of divine revelation.

(DF, 1870)

Objectives

1. Human reason is our ability to know and understand truth (CCC, 36)
2. Natural Revelation is the way God makes himself known to human reason through the created world (CCC, 36)

Note to Catechist: Sacred Scripture attests to natural revelation in the story of creation and the book of Wisdom (13:1). It is affirmed in the New Testament in the Acts of the Apostles (17:26) and in Romans (1:20). Natural revelation is also affirmed in the Patristic Writings; an example can be found in the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo. (CCC, 32)

3. Natural Revelation is not enough to completely reveal God because of our human limitations (CCC, 37)
4. In his goodness and wisdom; “God reveals himself to man by gradually communicating his own mystery in deeds and in words” so that we may be saved and share in his life. This is Divine Revelation (CCC, 51; 69)
5. The fullness of Divine Revelation is the life, person, and mission of Jesus Christ (CCC, 53)

Session 1C – Transmission of Divine Revelation

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.
Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Teach them to carry out everything that I have commanded you.
(Mt. 28:19)*

Objectives

1. Scripture and Tradition are the two methods by which divine revelation is transmitted (CCC, 74-95)
 - a. Sacred Scripture is the written word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit (CCC, 81)
 - b. Sacred Tradition are the teachings of Jesus, entrusted to the apostles, handed on by their successors (bishops), under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and passed on to all generations through the doctrine, life, and worship of the Church (CCC, 78)
2. Scripture and Tradition are intimately bound together springing from the same source and make the mystery of Christ present in the Church (CCC, 80)
3. Authentic interpretation of the Deposit of Faith (Scripture and Tradition) is entrusted to teaching office of the Church (CCC, 85)

Session 1D – The Magisterium

Do you resolve to guard the deposit of faith, entire and incorrupt, as handed down by the Apostles and preserved in the Church everywhere and at all times? “I do”
(From the Rite of Ordination of a Bishop)

Objectives

1. The Magisterium, the bishops in communion with the Pope, is the living, teaching office of the Church (CCC, 85)

Note to Catechist: Apostolic Succession is the handing down of the uninterrupted preaching, teaching, sanctifying and governing authority of the apostles to their successors the bishops. It is conferred through the laying on of hands at their episcopal ordination. (CCC 888-892)

2. This teaching authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ (CCC, 85)
3. The Church exercises its Christ-given teaching authority fully when it defines dogma (CCC, 88)

Note to Catechist: Dogma is definitive, infallible teaching of the Church.

Defending the Faith

1. Why do Catholics believe in things and do things that are not in the Bible?

The Bible is not the sole means God chose to hand on the truths of Revelation. Scripture and Tradition are the two complementary ways Revelation is handed down. There are things taught in Tradition that are not explicitly found in Scripture. Nothing taught through Tradition however contradicts Scripture since both come from Christ through the Apostles. An example of this is the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Apostolic Tradition refers to what Jesus taught the Apostles and early disciples. This was first passed on orally and only later was it written down. Apostolic Tradition and Scripture are both God's revelation to us.

2. Does God still reveal himself today?

Jesus Christ is the fullness of revelation. There is no new public revelation to be expected before the second coming of Jesus. Yet even if revelation is already complete we do not fully understand it. The Church has continued to grow in understanding revelation's full significance over the course of the centuries. The understanding of revelation by the faithful, aided by the teaching authority of the Church, continues to grow, deepen and expand. Private revelations, such as the message of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Lourdes and Fatima, while revealing nothing new, help us to live more fully that which was revealed to us.

3. Is everything the Pope says infallible?

No, but the Pope makes infallible statements when some doctrine has been called into question or to reiterate Church teaching. A pope's private theological opinions are not infallible, only what he solemnly defines in the area of faith and morals is considered to be infallible teaching. Most doctrines have never been doubted by the majority of Catholics. The Pope exercises his role as Supreme Teacher of the Church when he makes an "ex cathedra infallible statement", a special gift of the Holy Spirit. Ex Cathedra is Latin for "the chair" (meaning the seat of St. Peter).

4. Can't I come to know God on my own, do I need the Church?

By our nature we are religious beings looking for something greater; God has made us to be in intimate relationship with him. The faithful must nurture their faith and relationship with God. The Church is entrusted to pass on the teachings of Jesus Christ, care for the deposit of faith and guard it with dedication. We need the Church's wisdom and guidance to fully understand revelation, to come to know, love and serve Jesus Christ and so to enter heaven.

Faith in Action

- Take a walk outdoors, paying attention to nature. Write a short essay on how you see God revealed in creation
- Sketch out a family tree. Talk about how previous generations have influenced your family today. How is this like the Catholic Church passing on the faith?
- Create a web site aimed at revealing God. Consider your audience and design it with links for further information
- Pray this prayer from St. Anselm. Share it with someone who is struggling with their faith

Prayer for Those Searching for God

O Lord my God,
Teach my heart this day where and how to see you,
Where and how to find you.
You have made me and remade me,
And you have bestowed on me
All the good things I possess,
And still I do not know you.
I have not yet done that
For which I was made.
Teach me to seek you,
For I cannot seek you
Unless you teach me,
Or find you
Unless you show yourself to me.
Let me seek you in my desire,
Let me desire you in my seeking.
Let me find you by loving you,
Let me love you when I find you.

Other Resources

Dei Verbum, Vatican II document

The Reason Series, Fr. Robert Spitzer, Magis Center of Reason and Faith

www.magisreasonfaith.org

POD 2 — OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, "but as what it really is, the word of God."

(CCC, 104)

This pod consists of four sessions which serve as an introduction to the Bible. They are:

Session A: Where Does it Come From?

Session B: How the Canon Came to Be

Session C: Literary Genres & Senses of Scripture

Session D: The Bible & Science

Vocabulary

Apocrypha

Apostolic Tradition

Canon

Christological

Deuterocanonical

Exegesis

Inerrancy

Inspiration

Lectionary

Vulgate



Session 2A – Where Does it Come From?

All scripture is inspired by God...
(2Tim. 3:16)

Objectives

1. Sacred Scripture
 - a. Was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit [in human words] (CCC, 105)
 - b. Has God as its author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself (DV, 11)
 - c. “Firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation...” (DV, 11)
2. Divine revelation has been transmitted in primarily two ways: (CCC, 105-108)
 - a. Oral transmission
 - i. The Israelites’ experience of God was passed down by
 1. prophesying
 2. preaching
 3. storytelling
 4. poetry
 - ii. The Gospel was handed on by the apostles by
 1. preaching
 2. example
 3. the institutions they established
 4. what they themselves had received

Note to Catechist: Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing...Teaching them all I have commanded you and behold I am with you always until the end of the age” shows us that Jesus commanded us to preach and teach the Gospel and not just publish it in a book.

- b. Written transmission
 - i. Writing replaced what had been passed down orally because
 1. The end of the world was not coming as soon as the early Christians had thought and eyewitnesses began to die
 2. Distortions and misunderstandings of the Gospel were taking place (2 Cor. 11:3)
 3. To preserve God’s message of salvation and the words of Jesus
 4. A written record could be used as a teaching tool

Session 2B – How the Canon Came to Be

It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of sacred books.
(CCC, 120)

Objectives

1. The Canon of the Bible is the complete list of the books in Sacred Scripture (CCC, 120)
 - a. Became fixed within the first centuries of the Church (USCCA, 24)
 - b. The Old Testament was written over hundreds of years being completed approximately 100 BC
 - c. The New Testament books were written from approximately 50 AD – 120 AD

Note to Catechist: Scripture in the early church was characterized as those writings that could officially be read in Church. A list of the divinely inspired books was organically developed up to the fourth century and definitively accepted at the Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397).

2. Apostolic Tradition discerned which writings would be included in the Canon of the Bible (CCC, 120)
 - a. Council of Trent (1546) declared all 73 books of the Catholic Bible were divinely inspired in their entirety (USCCA, 24)
 - b. Both the First and Second Vatican Councils confirmed the declaration that all the books of the Bible were divinely inspired (USCCA, 24)
 - c. The Catholic Bible includes books which are not accepted as Scripture by Protestants. Catholics refer to them as Deuterocanonical books and Protestants refer to them as the Apocrypha (USCCA, 24)

Note to Catechist: The Deuterocanonical books are Maccabees I & II, Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Tobit, Judith, Baruch, and some passages from Daniel and Esther.

3. Be familiar with Catholic Translations of the Bible
 - a. St. Jerome Vulgate
 - i. First official translation from original languages to Latin
 - ii. In 405 it became the authorized version of the Church
 - b. Douay-Rheims Version is the English translation of the Latin Vulgate
 - c. New American Bible is used by the Church in the United States in the *Lectionary*
 - d. New Jerusalem Bible is widely used outside the United States

- e. Revised Standard Version—Catholic Edition (Used in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

Note to Catechist: The English translations other than the Douay-Rheims are translated from the Greek, the Vulgate, and Hebrew

Session 2C – Literary Genre & Senses of Scripture

*...The four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church
(CCC, 115)*

Objectives

1. The Bible is written in several literary genres (DV, 12)
 - a. Some genres present are: origin accounts, epics, poetry, history, parables, letters, wisdom literature, prophetic literature
 - b. Recognizing the literary genre provides insight into the “meaning the sacred writers really intended” (DV, 12)
2. The Senses of Scripture
 - a. Literal Sense is “the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis (CCC, 116)
 - i. Proper interpretation of scripture requires an examination of actual events, key characters, knowledge of the cultural context and identifying the literary genre of the passage
 - ii. Lays the foundation for the other senses
 - b. Spiritual Sense is derived from the unity of God’s plan of salvation (CCC, 117)
 - i. The text of Scripture discloses God’s plan (USCCA, 29)
 - ii. The realities and events are also signs of the divine plan which are interpreted using the spiritual senses of scripture
 1. Allegorical
 - a. Recognizing how people, events and things in the Bible point to the life, death, resurrection of Christ and therefore have a more profound meaning. In other words it examines their Christological significance
 2. Moral
 - a. People, events and things in the Bible encourage us and teach us how to live and act justly
 3. Anagogical
 - a. People, events and things in the Bible point to eternal significance, “leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem” (CCC, 117)

Note to Catechist: Provide your students with an example of interpreting a scripture passage applying the four senses of scripture. Here are two examples:

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA (Ex. 14:10-31)

Literal—The Israelites crossed the Red Sea because it opened before them. It closed destroying Pharaoh's army.

Allegorical—The crossing illustrates the Israelites freedom from slavery. Through Jesus, God frees us from the slavery of sin.

Moral—The water of the Red Sea freed the Israelites by destroying Pharaoh's army and so through the waters of Baptism original sin is destroyed so that we may live lives of virtue.

Anagogical—Through the waters of the Red Sea the Israelites entered the promised land and so through the waters of our Baptism we hope to enter the promised land of heaven

THE TEMPLE

Literal—The actual building (construction) on Mount Zion. (1Kings 6)

Allegorical—The passage where Jesus tells the Jews to destroy the temple (referring to himself) and in three days he will raise it up again, encompasses both the literal and allegorical sense of Scripture. (John 2:19-21)

Moral—Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy spirit within you, whom you have from God, in that you are not your own? (1Cor 6:19)

This refers to treating the human with dignity and respect. For teens this can be used when teaching about sexual morality and is often used in discussions regarding drug and alcohol abuse. (CCC, 1004)

Anagogical—I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. (Revelations 21:9-27) (v. 22) This refers to St. John's vision of heaven.

Session 2D – The Bible & Science

*Though faith is above reason, there can never be a contradiction between faith and science because both originate in God.
(Compendium, 29)*

Note to Catechist: In presenting this session, point out that Scripture reveals the primary causes and science deals with the secondary causes. A helpful analogy to explain this is the building of a house. God is the carpenter. The work of the carpenter is the primary cause of building a house. The secondary cause is how it is done—hammers, nails, lumber, concrete, etc. In relating this to Scripture, God divinely interacts with humanity to bring about salvation. This is the primary cause. Secondary causes would be that the world is created in seven days, or that Noah died at 950 years.

Objectives

1. The Catholic Church teaches that faith, science, and history can coexist and they can help inform one another (CCC, 159)
2. The Church supports a contextualist approach, where the literal sense is informed by scientific and historical knowledge of Scripture
 - a. Teaches us how to relate the truths of faith to science
 - b. When used to study Scripture “there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason” that is, truths revealed in the Bible will not conflict with those gleaned from science and history (CCC, 159)

Note to Catechist: A contextualist approach is one that takes into account literal, scientific, and historical views to glean the deeper meaning of a passage—the one that God intended to reveal to us.

3. Science and history, combined with the many other academic disciplines are avenues for understanding Divine Revelation; however
 - a. They have their limitations
 - b. We can never fully understand God
 - c. If science and faith conflict, it means we have an inadequate understanding of one or both of them (truth cannot contradict truth) (CCC, 159)

Note to Catechist: The above points are taken from *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, Chapter 4 On Faith and Reason – Vatican Council I (1870)

Defending the Faith

1. Is it true Catholics do not use or read the Bible?

No. On the contrary, Catholics use the Bible regularly in many ways. The Bible is a part of the Church's liturgy, especially the Mass, and of the Church's official prayer, the Divine Office. Catholics also use the Bible for personal prayer. Scripture study groups are a common part of parish life. Scripture has always held an important part in Church life. In the fourth century, St. Jerome famously said, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

2. Why does the Catholic Bible have more books than other Bibles?

While all Christians accept the New Testament, there is disagreement on which books of the Old Testament are divinely inspired. Catholics accepted all 46 books of the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Bible. The Protestant reformers accepted only those books that were originally written in Hebrew and were accepted by Jewish rabbis in 90 AD.

3. Is the Bible always literally true?

Yes. The senses of scripture inform us how to understand passages of the Bible. The Bible is not a science book, it focuses on the larger truth; the who (God) and the why (our salvation) not the how (the means God uses.) Some non-Catholics focus on the how, not the who, and the why. What the Bible teaches, that which is necessary for our salvation, (moral teachings, the words of Jesus, etc.) is always without error or "inerrant".

While there are scientific and historical contradictions in the Bible according to modern understanding, this information is not necessary for our salvation.

4. How should we read the Bible?

Catholics read the Bible contextually. That is, they understand Sacred Scriptures in the broad historical, cultural, and geographical context in which they were written. They also examine the styles of literature present. Catholics rely on the Magisterium (Pope and bishops) to help them interpret the meaning of the Bible. Oppositely, a fundamentalist approach to reading the Bible involves taking all the words literally. For example, a fundamentalist would believe that God created the world in six twenty-four hour days. A no less important criteria, is that Sacred Scripture must be read in the light of the Holy Spirit by whom it was inspired and written. This means that the reader must pay attention to the content and unity of the Bible as a whole, read Scripture in light of the Church's entire Tradition, and be attentive to the analogy of faith, that is, "the coherence of

the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of revelation” (CCC. 114).

5. **Are historical and scientific truths and Biblical truth at odds?**

The Bible is not meant to be a history book. The Bible is not meant to be a science book. It is a written record of Divine Revelation with truths that reveal our destiny—eternal life of union with a loving, Triune God. The Church is open to both historical and scientific research. Historical research has proven that Jesus of Nazareth did exist, that the Romans under the prefect Pontius Pilate crucified him, and that he established a Church that exists to this very day. Through scientific research the wonders and workings of the universe have revealed the genius of our God, creator of all. Cardinal Baronius (1538-1607) provided us with great insight when he said, “The Bible teaches us how to go to Heaven, not how the heavens go.” When examining the scientific theory of evolution one should note that there is nothing in it that is in opposition to the existence of the loving creator who is the first cause of creation.

Faith in Action

- Learn about Lectio Divina and use that prayer method with a favorite passage from Scripture or with the Sunday Readings
- Read the Sunday Gospel and discuss it with friends/your parents
- Choose your favorite passage, study it using the various senses of scripture. Use your artistic skills (writing, drawing, music, etc.) to express the meaning of the passage
- Create a sacred space in your room or home to display your bible
- If you have a family bible, examine it for any sacramental records that tell your family’s story of faith

Other Resources

- *Dei Verbum* (DV), Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Vatican II document)
- *T3 Timeline*, Ascension Press
- *Catholic Youth Bible*, Reading Plans; St. Mary’s Press
- Concordance
- www.americancatholic.org (Search for articles on Bible or Scripture)
- <http://www.usccb.org/bible/index.cfm>
- *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, Chapter 4 On Faith and Reason – Vatican Council I (1870)

POD 3 — OLD TESTAMENT

*The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.
(St. Augustine)*

The Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) is the 46 books of the Bible that record the history of salvation from creation, through the story of ancient Israel, up to the time of Jesus.

This pod consists of four sessions focusing on the Old Testament. They are:

Session A: The Pentateuch

Session B: The Historical Books

Session C: The Wisdom Books

Session D: The Prophetic Books

Vocabulary

Apocalyptic

Babylonian Exile

Covenant

Divine Office

Patriarch

Pentateuch

Prophet

Psalm

Salvation History

Session 3A – The Pentateuch

*The foundation documents for the people of Israel are the books we now commonly refer to as the Pentateuch. These books do more than introduce the rest of the Bible: They are the very foundation on which the rest of the Scriptures stand.
(Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to The Pentateuch)*

The books in the Pentateuch are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Objectives

1. The Pentateuch, a Greek word meaning “five books”, is the name given to the first five books of the Bible (CCC, Glossary)
 - a. Genesis
 - i. Creation of the world, Adam and Eve, the Fall, promise of redemption, and effects of sin (CCC, 337; 362; 375; 385)
 - ii. Call of Abraham, our Father in Faith (Gn. 11:27-25:18)
 - iii. Patriarchs: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (Gn. 27:19-50:26)
 - b. Exodus
 - i. Call and life of Moses
 - ii. Crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:10-31)
 1. Divine liberation from slavery to freedom
 2. Hebrew slaves become God’s chosen people, the Israelites
 - iii. Ten Commandments
 - c. Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
 - i. Tell the story of the Israelites
 - ii. The revelation and development of the Law
 - iii. The Israelites’ expansion and history
 - iv. Israel’s liturgical practices

Note to Catechist: The first five books are also referred to as the “Torah” or The Law and are very sacred to the Jewish people.

2. Covenant is a sacred agreement between God and humanity. (CCC, Glossary; 873)
 - a. Covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:8-17)
 - b. Covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15; 17)
 - c. Covenant with Moses (Ex. 19:1-9)

Session 3B – The Historical Books

*The story of the Israelite people is told in the Pentateuch and the historical books.
(Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to The Historical Books)*

The Historical Books are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 & 2 Maccabees

Objectives

1. The historical books narrate how God's chosen people, the Israelites, struggled to live out the covenant in the Promised land
 - a. Turning away from God
 - b. Suffering and oppression
 - c. Repentance and returning to God
 - d. Faithfulness to God and his covenant
2. The historical books recount the lives of various leaders and important figures
 - a. Joshua
 - b. Ruth
 - c. Saul
 - d. David
 - e. Solomon
 - f. Elijah
3. The historical books point to the saving action of God in the lives of the Israelites

Session 3C – The Wisdom Books

Since every person in every culture must struggle with the questions of life...people of other religious cultures can more easily identify with the teaching of the Wisdom Books than the other books found in the Bible.

(Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to The Wisdom Books)

The Wisdom Books are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, & Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)

Objectives

1. The Wisdom books are a collection of writings
 - a. That teach about the ordered universe God has created
 - b. That assist us in our quest for the meaning of human life
 - c. That provide instruction and practical advice on the right way to live
2. The Wisdom Books focus on themes of wisdom, self-control, patience, honesty, diligence, suffering and respect for elders
3. The Book of Psalms is an essential part of Wisdom Literature
 - a. A collection of 150 prayers in the form of hymns and poetry
 - b. Many are traditionally attributed to King David
 - c. Expresses every human emotion and praying them reminds us that God always shares in all our joys and sorrows
 - d. Part of morning and evening prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, the public prayer of the Church (CCC, 1174; 1176)

Session 3D – The Prophetic Books

“Thus says the Lord...” are words often spoke by the prophets because they dare to speak for God on matters that go counter to the accepted actions of within the community.

(Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to The Prophetic Books)

The Prophetic Books are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Objectives

1. Prophets of the Old Testament
 - a. Were messengers of God
 - b. Interpreted the signs of the times in light of the Mosaic covenant
 - c. Were those who God called directly to challenge and comfort people
 - d. Are classified as
 - i. Major prophets due to the length of the books named after them
 1. Isaiah—the longest of these books; foretold of the Messiah
 2. Jeremiah—chosen in the womb; preached repentance
 3. Ezekiel—deported to Babylon; encouraged the exiles
 4. Daniel—wrote in an apocalyptic style
 - ii. Minor prophets whose recorded sayings are much briefer
 1. Hosea
 2. Joel
 3. Amos
 4. Obadiah
 5. Jonah
 6. Micah
 7. Nahum
 8. Habakkuk
 9. Zephaniah
 10. Haggai
 11. Zechariah
 12. Malachi
 - iii. Non-writing prophets are those who appear in the Historical books
 1. Samuel—Anointed Saul as the first King of Israel
 2. Elijah—Prophet of Prophets; present at the Transfiguration
 3. Others—Nathan and Elisha
2. Historical context of the times and places in which the prophets lived and preached is critical to understanding their message
3. Major themes of the Prophetic books are
 - a. Worship the one, true God
 - b. Accept God’s love and mercy
 - c. Be just, especially to the poor
 - d. That God will ultimately triumph

Defending the Faith

1. Isn't the Old Testament meant for Jews and the New Testament meant for Christians?

While the Jewish people hold the Old Testament as sacred, Christians also recognize it as divinely inspired and an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture (DV, 14). As a Jew, Jesus cherished the Hebrew Scriptures and lived the core beliefs of the Jewish faith. As the Messiah, Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament, establish the new covenant, and offer salvation to humankind. Christians read the Old Testament in light of Christ crucified and risen. Many of our practices and beliefs can clearly be traced back to the Old Testament.

2. Is the creation story found in Genesis 1-11 accurate?

The author of Genesis, who was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was not concerned with "how" God made creation or "how long" it took him to do it. He was not a modern historian interested in the chronological timeline of creation. In fact, the earliest Fathers of the Church, who were quick to defend orthodox Christianity against heretical teaching, repeatedly wrote that Christians don't have to believe that God made the world in six chronological days. (cf. www.catholic.com/library/Creation_and_Genesis.asp)

So why did the author of Genesis 1 say that God made the world in six days and rested on the 7th? The reason is that in Hebrew the number 7 is the same word used for swearing an oath which was the means by which covenants were formed. Therefore, the author of Genesis says that creation took place in 7 days in order to show that God forged a covenantal family bond between himself and creation (especially man). The main point is that Genesis is accurate in saying what the author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, intended it to say. It was not written as a science book. It was not written as a history book. It was written as an answer to the question "Why did God create and why is the world the way it is?" Science cannot answer those questions. History cannot answer those questions. Only philosophy and religion can, and Genesis 1-11 provides answers given by God to those questions.

3. Isn't a prophet a person who tells the future?

A prophet in the Bible delivers God's divine message. They warn of the consequences of peoples' actions and call people to conversion. Although they do not foretell specific dates, actions, and times, their message always contains urgency because, "as to the exact day or hour, no one knows it" (Mk. 13:32).

Faith in Action

- Research someone whom you consider a modern day prophet. Explain why you regard them as a prophet to your group
- The Old Testament is our history as the Christian people. Learn about your family history, especially as it relates to the celebration of sacraments
- Find several Proverbs that speak to you. Print them and put them in a place where you will see them often
- Find in the book of Leviticus the origins of a liturgical practice that we continue today in the Catholic Church

Other Resources

- *New American Bible*
- *Dei Verbum*

POD 4 — NEW TESTAMENT

The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament.

(DV, 17)

The New Testament (Christian Scriptures) is the 27 books of the Bible written during the early years of the Church in response to the life, mission, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

This pod consists of four sessions focusing on the New Testament. They are:

Session A: Gospels 1

Session B: Gospels 2

Session C: Acts of the Apostles

Session D: Book of Revelation

Vocabulary

Apocalypse

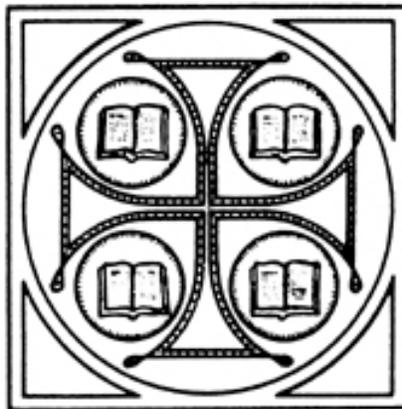
Apostle

Disciple

Evangelist

Gospel

Synoptic Gospels



Session 4A – Gospels 1

*The Gospels . . . are the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior.
(DV, 18)*

Objectives

1. The Gospels (CCC,124; 125; 127)
 - a. Occupy the central place in Scripture
 - b. Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the definitive revelation of God
 - c. Contain a record of the life of Jesus Christ, of his teachings and redeeming work
 - d. Lead us to accept Jesus Christ in faith and apply his teachings to our lives
2. There were three stages in the formation of the Gospels (CCC, 126; DV, 19)
 - a. The life and teaching of Jesus
 - b. The Good News preached and passed on orally by the apostles after Jesus ascended into heaven
 - c. The writing of the Gospels

Note to Catechist: It should be stressed, in light of objective # 2 above, that Christianity is not a religion of a book(s), but of a person—Our Lord Jesus Christ—about whom the “books” of the Gospels were written many years after the birth and spread of the Church. Furthermore, the Gospels were not originally intended for the Church at large, but written for individual Churches over which the Evangelists had authority.

Session 4B – Gospels 2

There is no doctrine which could be better, more precious and more splendid than the text of the Gospel.
(CCC, 127)

Objectives

1. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the Synoptic Gospels
 - a. Matthew or Levi, a tax collector, wrote his Gospel around 85 AD for fellow Jewish Christians around Palestine
 - b. Mark, a companion of St. Paul on his first missionary journey, wrote his Gospel especially for Gentile Christians in Rome around 65-70 AD
 - c. Luke, a physician and disciple of St. Paul, addressed his Gospel to the Greek Gentiles, represented by a certain man named Theophilus around 80-90 AD

Note to Catechist: Although the dates of the Gospels are still in dispute, the best in current biblical scholarship suggests the above dates.

2. The Synoptic Gospels recount certain teachings, parables, events, etc. in the life of Jesus yet each have some unique characteristics
 - a. Only Matthew and Luke give accounts of our Lord's birth
 - b. Only Luke has the parables of the Prodigal Son/Good Samaritan
 - c. The Sermon on the Mount is in Matthew and Sermon on the Plain is in Luke

Note to Catechist: The word "synoptic" is from the Greek meaning "a similar view or eye". These Gospels are arranged and harmonized section by section, so as to allow the eye to see "at a glance" the numerous passages which are common to them, and also the portions which are unique either to one or two of them. The Synoptic Gospels are different from the Gospel of John in style, content and arrangement.

3. The fourth Gospel is the Gospel of John, written 90-100 AD
 - a. John is the brother of James the Greater and the son of Zebedee (cf. Mt. 4:21)
 - b. The Gospel was written for Jews and Jewish Christians throughout the Mediterranean world
 - c. John's Gospel includes many discourses and miracles, called signs, which are not in the Synoptic Gospels

Note to Catechist: In the discourses, our Lord explains the mystical and theological significance of his signs and actions. It is in this Gospel where we find the great Prologue, the Bread of Life discourse and Our Lord's high priestly prayer in chapter seventeen.

Session 4C – Acts of the Apostles

*Salvation brought by Jesus has extended to the Gentiles through the divinely chosen representatives whom Jesus prepared during his earthly ministry.
(Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to Acts of the Apostles)*

Objectives

1. The human author of the Acts of the Apostles was the evangelist St. Luke
2. The Acts of the Apostles can be outlined in different ways
 - a. Major figures
 - i. Chapters 1-12 focus on St. Peter's role in establishing the Church
 - ii. Chapters 13-28 focus on the missionary efforts of St. Paul in expanding the Church
 - b. Geographical movement of the Church's growth and mission
 - i. Beginning in Jerusalem
 - ii. Extending from ". . . Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."
(Acts 1:8)
3. The Acts of the Apostles traces the first thirty years of Christian history from Jesus' ascension to the imprisonment of St. Paul in Rome
4. The Acts of the Apostles
 - a. Tells of the establishment and expansion of the early Church
 - b. Speak primarily of the Holy Spirit working through Peter and Paul
5. There are many parallels between the work of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and the Apostles Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles
 - a. Parallels between Jesus and Peter
 - i. Heads of the Church
 - ii. Preaching and healing
 - b. Parallels between Jesus and Paul
 - i. Each had their authenticity questioned
 - ii. Both died at the hands of the Romans
 - c. Parallels between Peter and Paul
 - i. Both of their names are changed
 - ii. Confer the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands
 - iii. Both were martyred in Rome

Note to Catechist: The questioning of Jesus' authenticity is found throughout many scripture passages. Some in the early Church questioned whether St. Paul was an

authentic apostle. St. Luke shows that he was an authentic apostle as evidenced by giving his conversion story three times and showing that St. Paul possessed the same power, preached the same gospel, and received the same divine protection as St. Peter.

Session 4D – Book of Revelation

Blessed is the one who reads aloud and blessed are those who listen to this prophetic message and heed what is written in it, for the appointed time is near.

(Rev. 1:3)

Objectives

1. The human author of the Book of Revelation, also referred to the Apocalypse, is St. John

Note to Catechist: This book's authorship is traditionally ascribed to the evangelist St. John. Biblical scholars disagree whether it was written by John or one of his disciples. Even the early Fathers of the Church had a difference of opinion as to the identity of the true author. (New American Bible, Introduction to the Book of Revelation)

2. Revelation was written by John on the Lord's Day to strengthen the faith of seven Churches during a time of persecution (Rev. 1:10-11)
3. The book of Revelation is written in apocalyptic style
 - a. Borrows language from the Old Testament books of Ezekiel and Daniel
 - b. Filled with elaborate symbolism
 - c. Not intended to be an exact prediction of future events
4. The book expresses
 - a. Hope for a persecuted church
 - b. The core Christian belief that God will ultimately be victorious at the second coming of Jesus

Defending the Faith

1. Why are there differences between the Gospels?

The differences between the four separate Gospels have to do with the various times, audiences, and theological points of emphasis of each of the evangelists. For example, Mark emphasized Jesus the Suffering Servant and the meaning of discipleship; Matthew wrote for a primarily Jewish audience and traced Jesus as a descendent of Jewish patriarchs. Luke's Gospel was for Gentile Christians and served as an opening to the Acts of the Apostles. John's Gospel, written years later than the others, emphasized the divinity of Jesus.

2. We hear about other gospels. Why aren't they in the bible?

Like the four evangelists, many people wrote down their experiences and understandings of Jesus. Some of the more famous ones are the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of James. These were written after the death of the apostles and used by the early Christian community to foster the faith and learn about Jesus. While they may provide enlightenment and contain portions of truth, over time these documents were found to have serious theological defects. Taken as a whole, these non-biblical documents are not essential for our salvation and are not the inspired Word of God.

3. Does the book of Revelation tell us when the end of the world will be?

The book of Revelation is written in the apocalyptic style using language filled with mysterious symbols that require the reader to decipher what the author is actually saying. It is wrong for Christians to attempt to predict the end of the world, after all, "of that day and hour no one knows" (Matthew 24: 34-36). Unfortunately, many people today have written books or produced movies that fantasize the end of the world. They loosely cite the book of Revelation leading people to believe that an exact prediction exists.

Faith in Action

- Meet with an elderly person discussing their recollection of learning about Scripture. Do they remember it being read at Mass as a young person? Did they read Scripture at home? What is their favorite miracle or parable?
- Recall a favorite family story that you have heard many times. Write it down including as many details as possible. Ask a parent or a relative who knows the story to read it. Ask them if it is how they remember the story or if there are details that you left out that are important to the point of the story. How is this like the transmission of oral to written tradition?

- The book of Revelation uses symbolic language and mysterious symbolism. What symbolic language or mysterious symbols do you utilize, i.e. abbreviated text message language, nicknames, etc. Make a legend explaining the terms that someone who is unfamiliar with these symbols/abbreviations could use
- Research the symbols for each of the evangelists. Go into your Church and look for the symbols of the evangelists that are present in the building on walls, books, etc. Make a drawing, sculpture or some other sort of artistic representation of these symbols
- St. Paul wrote letters to church communities giving them advice and encouraging them to live the Christian life. Write a letter to a friend who may need advice or encouragement
- Choose one of Paul's missionary journeys. Determine the distance he traveled. Using an appropriate scale, walk the distance he would have traveled on the journey

POD 5 –LIFE ISSUES

God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.
(CCC, 2258)

This pod consists of four sessions focusing on Life Issues. They are:

Session A: Respect for Human Life & Dignity

Session B: Contraception & Abortion

Session C: Euthanasia & Suicide

Session D: Capital Punishment

Vocabulary

Abortifacients

Abortion

Capital Punishment

Contraception

Euthanasia

Suicide

Session 5A–Respect for Human Life & Dignity

*Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator.
(CCC, 2258)*

Objectives

1. From Old Testament times, human life is to be respected and defended evidenced by the Fifth Commandment, “Thou shall not kill” (CCC, 2258; 2261)
2. Cain’s murder of Abel revealed the presence of anger, envy, and the disrespect for the inherent dignity of one made in the image and likeness of God which are the consequences of original sin (CCC, 2259; 2261)
3. In the New Testament, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount broadens the teaching of the Fifth Commandment to defend human dignity (Mt. 5:21)

Note to Catechist: This point needs to be expanded to teach the youth that “killing” is not just a physical thing. It can also be done by disrespecting human dignity. We “kill” someone’s soul with words, attitudes, and actions that flow from anger, vengeance, and hatred. See Appendix L on the Ten Commandments for a list of sins against the Fifth Commandment.

Session 5B – Contraception & Abortion

Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.
(GS, 51§3)

Note to Catechist: This session will most likely bring forth many questions and discussion. Prepare by reading the *Catechism* (2270-2275; 2360-2377) prior to the session to be clear on the Church's teachings. Be open to emotions as these are sensitive issues that may directly impact youth in your class.

Objectives

1. Artificial contraception is: (CCC, Glossary)
 - a. Deliberate prevention of conception of new life using chemicals, mechanical means, or a medical procedure
 - b. Contrary to marital love and the marital act (sexual intercourse)
 - c. Gravely immoral
2. Many of these methods actually act by inducing an abortion (abortifacients)

Note to Catechist: The pill, which is the most common of chemical contraceptives works in three ways. The first way works as a contraceptive, that is it prevents conception. The other two ways are as abortifacients.

3. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person-among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life (CCC, 2270)
4. Since the first century, the Church's teaching on abortion has not changed, that is, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law (CCC, 2271)

Note to Catechist: This teaching is found in the *Didache*, an early church document summarizing Christian moral teachings. Blessed John Paul II affirmed that this teaching has not changed in his document *Evangelium Vitae* (62) where he said, "I declare that direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder..."

Session 5C – Euthanasia & Suicide

*The fifth commandment forbids direct and intentional killing as gravely sinful.
(CCC, 2268)*

Note to Catechist: This session will most likely bring forth many questions and discussion. Prepare by reading the *Catechism* 2276-2283 prior to the session to be clear on the Church's teachings. Be open to emotions as these are sensitive issues that may directly impact youth in your class.

Objectives

1. Euthanasia is the intentional killing of a handicapped, sick or dying person (CCC, 2277)
2. A terminal illness or debilitating condition does not diminish the value of a person. Suffering needs to be understood and joined to Jesus' suffering on the cross (CCC, 1505)
3. Suicide is the willful taking of one's own life. It is contrary to love for the living God (CCC, 2281)
4. The Church prays for people who take their own life, and commends them to God's mercy (CCC, 2283)

Note to Catechist: Many believe that the Church teaches that those who commit suicide go directly to hell. However, one must remember the three conditions for committing a mortal sin are: it be a serious matter, one must have full knowledge of the seriousness, and freely choose to do it. In the case of suicide a person's mental state calls into question full knowledge and free will. This is why the *Catechism* calls us to pray for God's limitless mercy for those who have committed suicide.

Session 5D–Capital Punishment

The cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity “are very rare, if not practically non-existent”.

(CCC, 2267)

Objectives

1. Capital Punishment is the intentional killing, by the state, of a person convicted of a serious crime
2. Protecting society, for the common good, from violent aggressors is a responsibility of the state (CCC, 1898; 2266)
3. When the death penalty is used, the guilty have no opportunity to redeem themselves (CCC, 2267)

Note to Catechist: The Church has always taught that abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are inherently evil because of the killing of innocent life. However, the Church has never taught that Capital Punishment is inherently evil and it is the Church’s current position that it should not be used except for a very serious reason, such as the need to protect society.

Defending the Faith

1. **We “put our pet down” to be merciful and humane. Why can’t we do the same for people?**

Animals are not due the same dignity as human life. Pets are made by God, but they are not made in the “image and likeness of God,” with an immortal soul. Human life is to be defended from conception until natural death. While it is natural to want to ease a loved one’s suffering or discomfort we must rely on the wisdom and mercy of God. Even through suffering God’s plan can bring good; we unite our suffering with Jesus’ on the cross. God alone is the Lord of life.

2. **What if I kill someone in self-defense?**

Killing is always wrong. Killing someone in self-defense, also called legitimate defense, stems from our own human dignity and protecting the value of our life. Killing in self-defense is only acceptable when killing the other person is the only option to prevent being killed. Rendering an aggressor unable to cause harm is the desired effect. The killing is still wrong, but the moral culpability is removed.

3. **My older sister and her husband can’t get pregnant. What is wrong with in vitro fertilization?**

In vitro fertilization removes fertilization of the sperm and egg from the marital act; that is the total self-giving of husbands and wives in loving sexual intercourse. Separating the two is contrary to God’s plan for marriage and artificially mimics our participation in creation. Also in vitro fertilization, to be successful, fertilizes multiple eggs, many of which are then discarded which is a direct and intentional killing of a human person. A couple’s desire to have children is good and is often realized through adoption.

4. **If the Church allowed contraception, wouldn’t there be less abortion?**

With the widening use of contraception, the actual result has been more abortions, which the Church predicted. With artificial contraception, many people feel liberated to engage in sexual intercourse more often. The result is more unplanned pregnancies, which has resulted in an increase in abortions. The self-mastery of the passions is the true, respectful use of our gift of sexuality.

Faith in Action

- Research how the death penalty unfairly targets the poor and minorities. Why do you think this happens? Present your findings to your class
- Pray the rosary as a group outside of organizations such as Planned Parenthood or a medical facility that does in vitro fertilizations or abortions
- Volunteer at an organization that supports life
- Do a study on the Just War theory, articulating the five necessary criteria.
- Research a political candidate's stance on life issues
- Attend the March for Life in Washington D.C
- Read *Humanae Vitae*. Convene a panel discussion regarding this document

Other Resources

- *Donum Vitae*, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1987
- *Humane Vitae*, Pope Paul VI, 1968
- *Guadium et Spes*, Vatican II Document, 1963
- *Didache*, www.newadvent.org

POD 6 — THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

*The body [is meant] for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
(1Cor. 6:13-15)*

This pod consists of four sessions focusing on the Theology of the Body. They are:

Session A: Dignity of the Human Body

Session B: Chastity

Session C: Modesty

Session D: Dating & Courtship

Vocabulary

Chastity

Courtship

Conjugal act

Dating

Masturbation

Modesty

Session 6A – Dignity of the Human Body

*... the believer's body and soul already participate in the dignity of belonging to Christ.
(CCC, 1004)*

Objectives

1. God created man in his own image (Gn. 1:27)
 - a. Making the invisible mystery of God visible, the spiritual and divine
 - b. We recognize the sacramentality of the body (MWCT, pg. 204)

Note to Catechist: The body was “created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God.” When John Paul II said this he was making explicit that the creation of man—male and female—in the image of God, reveals himself: ultimate Truth and Love to the world. “The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the Spiritual and the divine” (MWCT, pg. 203).

2. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)
3. All should treat with respect his own body, and also the body of every other person (CCC, 1004)
4. The body of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection (CCC, 2300)

Session 6B – Chastity

*All the baptized are called to chastity.
(CCC, 2348)*

Objectives

1. Every baptized person is called to live a chaste life, each according to his particular state of life (CCC, 2394)
2. Chastity is:
 - a. A fruit of the Spirit enabling one to imitate the purity of Christ (CCC, 2345)
 - b. The moral virtue that regulates one's sexual thoughts, desires, and actions (CCC, 2341)
 - i. Includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery*
 1. a training in human freedom to govern one's passion and find peace (CCC, 2339)
 2. a long and exacting work that calls for renewed efforts at all stages of life (CCC, 2342)

Note to Catechist: Self-mastery includes self-discipline, practice, and maintenance. It involves both avoiding occasions which might provoke or encourage sin as well as knowing how to overcome one's own natural instinctive impulses; not looking at suggestive images, not staring lustfully at attractive girls or boys, being vigilant on what TV shows or websites you view, monitoring your language. Exercising self-mastery helps us to more easily stop sinning and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

- c. The successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being (CCC, 2337)
 - i. The person's gender is essential to his or her nature and spirituality (Catechetical Formation in Chaste Living pg. 3)
3. Chastity is the gift of self
 - a. It leads him who practices it to become a witness to his neighbor of God's fidelity and loving kindness (CCC, 2346)
 - b. A virtue that blossoms into *friendship* showing the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends (CCC, 2347)
 - c. Expressed in *friendship with one's neighbor* (CCC, 2347)

Note to Catechist: Friendship is giving of ourselves to another person. Chastity and friendship go together as we grow in giving more of ourselves and recognizing boundaries and personal weaknesses.

Session 6C – Modesty

*Purity of heart requires the modesty which is patience, decency, and discretion.
(CCC, 2533)*

Objectives

1. Modesty is:
 - a. A virtue that flows from temperance and regulates our interactions with others including
 - i. Decency in dress - it inspires one's choice of clothing (CCC, 2522)
 - ii. Discretion in conversation and self-control in our external actions - it keeps silent when there is unhealthy curiosity (CCC, 2521; Catholic Dictionary, 514)
 - b. A recognition of one's dignity and the dignity of others (CCC, 2521)
2. Modesty protects the intimate center of the person, refusing to unveil what should remain hidden (CCC, 2533)

Note to Catechist: Modesty guides how one looks at others and behaves toward them in conformity with their dignity. The intimate center of a person is to be shared only with a person's spouse.

3. Modesty encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships (CCC, 2522)
4. A modest person does not tempt or encourage sinful sexual behavior (USCCA, 441)

Session 6D – Dating & Courtship

*“To the pure all things are pure”
(Ti. 1:15a)*

Note to Catechist: The Church does not have definitive teaching in this area. A faith-filled approach to dating and courtship flows from a foundation in modesty, chastity, Christian marriage and the innate dignity of the human person.

Objectives

1. Dating in a chaste manner requires purity
 - a. Purity of Heart – enables us to see *according to God* (CCC, 2519)
 - b. Purity of Intention – seeking God’s will in everything (CCC, 2520; 1752)
 - c. Purity of Vision – discipline of feelings and imagination (CCC, 2520)
2. Purity requires modesty (CCC, 2521)
3. Having learned the value of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to engage in honorable courtship, and enter upon a marriage of their own (CCC, 1632)
4. Those who are *engaged to marry* are called to live chastely through the absence of sexual activity. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love (CCC, 2350)

Defending the Faith

1. Is it wrong to get a tattoo or piercings?

Tattoos and acts of body piercing are not intrinsically evil. The Church offers principles by which Catholics can discern whether it is sinful to be tattooed or have one's body pierced in particular situations. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and as such we should treat our bodies with dignity. Much like getting one's ears pierced, a modest tattoo that is not an image opposed to Christianity, is not contrary to Church teachings. Such actions become morally questionable when multiple tattoos or offensive images and sayings are placed on the body. The website below offers some questions if you are considering a tattoo or piercing http://www.cuf.org/faithfacts/details_view.asp?ffid=233

2. Will there be sex in heaven?

The answer depends on how you are using the word "sex". If you are referring to the conjugal act, that is sexual intercourse—no. If you are referring to gender—yes, because we believe in the resurrection of the body. When that happens and the human body achieves "fullness of the perfection proper to the image and likeness of God—having regained them in their masculinity and femininity and those raised in glory will experience a bliss so far superior to earthly sexual union that our wee brain can't even begin to imagine it." (From John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, December 2, 1981; *Theology of the Body for Beginners*, Christopher West)

3. I love my boyfriend/girlfriend, why can't we have sex?

Without the permanent committed bond of marriage and the openness to new human life, sexual activity is using another person simply for the physical pleasure of sex. Engaging in this activity prior to marriage denies the sacred gift of intimate relationship between one man and one woman. While there may be love between a boyfriend/girlfriend the Church teaches that the conjugal act is reserved for marriage. Sex outside of marriage is a sin against the sixth commandment, which deals with all human sexuality not just married people.

4. Why is masturbation wrong?

Masturbation is wrong because there is no giving to another in love. It removes the pleasure of sex from the bond of a loving, committed, marital relationship. It is a selfish act focused only on one's own pleasure and not open to new life.

5. How far can I go before it is a sin?

Any deliberate seeking of sexual pleasure including passionate kissing, sexual petting, or oral intercourse outside of the bonds of marriage is a sin against the sixth commandment. All these acts are near occasions of sin and many times lead to unintended intercourse due to the level of arousal they create. These and all sexual expressions belong to the loving embrace of husband and wife. Fr. Larry Richards, author of many books, provides clear guideline—nothing below the neck.

6. I think I look good, so what is wrong with the way I am dressed?

Modesty in dress directs the thoughts of you and everyone you encounter. If you dress showing too much skin you may be an occasion of sin for someone else. Immodest attire conveys the message that your identity is based on your sexual attractiveness. Your dress should convey respect for yourself and express your dignity as a child of God and the incredible value God places on you.

7. Can I look at pornography on the internet if I do not get aroused?

Pornography removes the sexual act from marriage, and introduces a third party to what should be an intimate act between only two people. It turns people into objects only viewed for lustful pleasure, and harms the viewer by rendering the idea that sex for only pleasure is ok. It also is very addictive by its nature and can have long-lasting impacts.

Faith in Action

- Take a magazine and cut out advertisements. Separate them in two piles; one that promotes sex and one that promotes modesty. Create a two sided collage of your pictures. Discuss the wide use of sex in promotions in our culture
- Take a vow of chastity, and wear an external sign such as a ring
- Make a list of ways to avoid temptations against chastity while dating, put it in a place you can view it every day
- Start a group promoting modest dress and write a letter to your local retailer requesting that they carry modest fashions

Other Resources

- *Men and Women are from Eden*, Mary Healy
- *Man and Women He Created Them: Theology of the Body*, John Paul II (MWCT)

- *Persona Humana*, Declaration on Certain Questions concerning Sexual Ethics, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, December 1975
- *Theology of the Body for Beginners*, Christopher West
- *Theology of the Body for Teens*, Evert & Butler, Ascension Press, 2006
- There are numerous books and resources speaking on chastity and sexuality for teens