

Study Questions

Saints & Pivotal Players

Bishop Robert Barron

Kick-off Meeting

Kick-Off:

- I. Distribute Books and Materials – Get Organized**
- II. Ice Breaker – Get Acquainted**

Lesson 1 **St Francis**

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Francis "restore the 'flesh and blood' to the mysteries of Christianity"? Why was this particularly important at this time in Church history?
2. In the video, Bishop Barron talks about two graces that Francis prayed for about a year before he died. What did he pray for and how did God answer his prayer?
3. Francis embraced suffering with great joy, even seeming to seek it out. Why do you think he did that? How is suffering related to penance? (Rom 8:16-17; Col 1:24; CCC 977, 1494, 1434-35, 1032)
4. In what way would you describe St. Francis as a "reformer" during his lifetime? How do you believe the reform took shape after his death from the seeds he had planted? (CCC 1430-32, Ps 51:12; Rom 12:2)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. What can you do to "radically" change your habits to better follow the Gospel? If this question is difficult for you to answer, spend some time in prayer and then read the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). Reflect on what meaning there might be for you in these verses.
2. How has your view of suffering changed since learning about St. Francis? What can you do to incorporate these changes in the future?

Lesson 2 **St Thomas**

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How would Thomas and the Church answer those who believe that faith and reason are incompatible? (CCC 154-159, 286)
2. Describe what the soul is and how it relates to the human body. How should we treat the body based on this understanding? (Gen 2:7; Eccles 12:7; CCC 33, 362-366, 382)

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3. What does it mean to be "made in the image and likeness of God"? How has sin changed that and what restores it? (Gen 1:26; CCC 356-57; Rom 3:23; CCC 2809; CCC 705, 1701-02)
4. In Thomas' view, humans are in great need of the incarnate Word. Who is the incarnate Word and why do we need him? (John 1:1-4; CCC 241-42; Acts 4:10-12; John 14:6-7; Matt 1:21; CCC 1741)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. The story is told that Thomas put his treatise on the Eucharist at the foot of the Cross, asking for guidance. Christ spoke from the Cross, telling Thomas he had written well and asking what he would like in return. What would you answer if Christ said, "What do you want me to give you?" What do you think Thomas was requesting when he said, "Nothing but you, Lord"?
2. Are you in love with Jesus? If so, describe that love. If not, reflect and comment on whether you'd like to be in love with him. How can we fall in love more deeply or grow closer to Jesus during our lives here on earth?
1. Why are you Catholic? Please incorporate your understanding of faith and reason in your answer.

Lesson 3 **St Catherine**

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What can the life of St. Catherine teach about God's purpose for each person and how to cooperate with his plan? (Jer 29:11; Psalm 139:1-16; CCC 898-900, 1877, 2712, 2724, 2745)
2. How did St. Catherine "witness to a dimension beyond this world" while she was on Earth? (CCC 955-957, 2683; Ephesians 6:10-13)
3. Define and explain what St. Catherine was referring to when she said, "What is this thing that is ours, given us by God, that neither the devil nor anyone else can take from us?" (Sir 15:11-20; CCC 1730-31)
4. Explain St. Catherine's metaphor about the raging river and the bridge, including the three stages of spiritual growth. (CCC 1852-53; John 14:6; I John 4:17-18)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. Reflect on St. Catherine's comment that there is "no comparison between my sins and God's mercy." How can this statement give you hope? What can you do to reap the benefits of God's mercy?
2. Do you ever focus on your feelings and emotions regarding the ' Faith instead of the reality and truth of Christ and his teachings? How can you become more grounded in Christ and the reality of his teachings and rely less on "interior sensations"?

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3. Put yourself into St. Catherine's metaphor (Q4 above). Where are you: in the river, on the bridge, or on one of the steps up to the bridge? What is needed for you to progress to the next level?

Lesson 4 **St John Newman**

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Explain Newman's view regarding the development of Christian doctrine over time. How does the Church manage this development and decide what constitutes true and false development? (CCC 890-92, 2034)
2. In his book *The Idea of the University*, Newman concluded that universities were in the business of creating gentlemen, and the Church was in the business of creating saints. How does this relate to the universal call to holiness? How does the Catholic Church help its members to grow in holiness and become saints? (I Pet 1:13-16; 2 Tim 1:9-10; CCC 2013-14, 2813)
3. In the *Grammar of Assent*, Newman developed his thesis that the key step to faith is assent, not certitude. Explain the difference between assent and certitude, as well as how they relate to belief in God.
4. What did Newman think was the most real or concrete evidence for the existence of God? (CCC 5706, 5776, 5778)
5. Newman suffered much in his life for speaking the truth. What is the core truth of Christianity, and how is sharing this truth the responsibility of all disciples? (John 1:1-5, 8:58, 14:6; CCC 638, 851)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. Do you embrace the universal call to holiness? How are you following the path to sanctity?
2. Newman was a deep thinker, and his intellect was instrumental to his conversion and profession of faith. How do you nurture the life of your mind with regard to the Catholic faith?
3. Have you ever stepped out of your comfort zone to speak the truth about Christ? What happened, and how did that affect you and/or the people around you?

Lesson 5 **G.K. Chesterson**

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What are the three main themes in Chesterton's writing? How can you use these themes to evangelize? (CCC 905, 2044, 2472; CCC 257, 1730)
2. 'What is free will and how is it perfected? (CCC 1730-33, 1738)
3. Why is Jesus Christ not "just one religious leader among many"? (John 8:58; 14:6-10;

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Col 2:9; CCC 469, 653)

4. How did Chesterton show that he was a committed disciple of Jesus Christ and a model of lay spirituality in the contemporary world? (CCC 899-900, 1832)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. Choose one of Chesterton's quotations and write about how it illuminates a Christian truth.
2. How do you exhibit your discipleship? How are you a "model of lay spirituality"?

Lesson 6 **Michelangelo**

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Not much is known about Michelangelo's interior life. What can we learn about his faith based on his works? (Matt 7:15-20; CCC 901, 1704)
2. Explain what Bishop Barron means when he said that creation was an "act of division and God continues to separate." (Gen 2:21-23; Lev 20:26; Luke 11:23, 12:51-53; Matt 25:31-43)
3. In the center panel of the Sistine Chapel ceiling, what truth about the creation of man is represented by God's pointing finger? (Gen 2:7; CCC 33, 362, 366)
4. Explain how Noah's ark represents the Church (Gen 6:11-14, 7:1; I Pet 3:18-22; CCC 845, 1180).
5. Explain how Mary represents the Ark of the New Covenant. How does Jesus embody the three things that were carried in the original Ark of the Covenant? (Exod 25:8-16; Rev 11:19-12:1-2; CCC 2676; Heb 9:3-4; Mt 5:17-19; John 6:48-51; I Chron 23:13; Heb 5:1-6)
6. Michelangelo placed his Jonah depiction in the Sistine Chapel right above The Last Judgment. Why could Jonah be so closely associated with the resurrection of the dead? (Jon 2:1, II and 3:1-5; Matt 12:38-42)
7. How is Christianity the "greatest humanism possible," as Bishop Barron states? (CCC 460, 461, 463)

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

1. How do your outward works show your faith to others? In what ways could you make them more expressive and definitive of your beliefs?
2. Select a favorite religious work of art. Spend ten minutes in silent meditation using this work as your focal point. What insights did you gain by this meditation?
3. What works of art are in your parish church? What do they signify? Choose one work of art in your church that you are unfamiliar with and do some research to find out more about its background and what it represents.