



*Confirmation
Basic
Beliefs
Journal*

Important: These Journals are your responsibility to keep for the two years of Confirmation. Chapters 1-5 are to be completed at home with your parents during the 1st year of Confirmation. Chapters 6-10 are to be completed at home with your parent during the 2nd year of Confirmation. Your answers can be recorded on regular notebook paper and turned in after Chapters 1-10 are completed. For Year Two Confirmants, please return **no later than Wednesday, March 25.**

A SUMMARY OF BASIC CATHOLIC BELIEFS

CHAPTER ONE: GOD

Basic Catholic Teachings on God

A. As Creator

- a. We believe that God is the creator of all life, of all that is. Look up Genesis 1
- b. We believe that God has created us in His image and likeness and that God lives within us. Look up Genesis 1:27, Corinthians 3:16-17, Corinthians 6
- c. We believe that God created our world and the universe, but that creation is not yet completed, and that God calls each one of us to continue the act of creation by using our gifts and talents and discovering the greatness within us. Genesis 1:28-31, Psalm 104

B. As Mystery...God as Mystery stresses:

- a. The silence and invisibility of God, God's 'beyondness'. John 1:18, 6:46, 1 John 4:12 & 4:20, "I Am Who I Am" (Example: Is. 40:12-31)
- b. That God is 'within' and not 'out there'.....to try to see God is like trying to look at your own eyes, for he is nearer to us than we are to ourselves" – (Alan Watts). Look up Acts 17:28 or 1 Corinthians 15:28 to see what scripture says about this.
- c. The Good News is that this God of mystery wants to be our friend and that He loves us.
- d. We know and experience God's friendship by listening to our insides, our guts, our feelings. He is present in all of our everyday experiences. (Rahner)

C. As Love - We believe:

- a. That God is LOVE and love is expressed through relationships, friendships. Romans 1:19
- b. That God calls each of us to have a direct, one-to-one relationship/friendship with Him (this is the "KINGDOM". John 1:18, 6:46 and 1 John 4:10-11
- c. We believe that God's purpose in designing us and creating us is for us to become our best selves and to one day be with Him in Heaven. Ps. 100
- d. God has loved us first and invited us to love by learning to be creative in our relationships with ourselves and with others. Luke 15:3-10
- e. Our God, who is love, does not send pain into people's lives – God does not permit Evil. God is against it, and fights it by inspiring those who struggle against it -- Wisdom 1:13. Our God punishes no one, judges no one, damns no one. Man judges himself, punishes himself, and damns himself. Romans 8:28-39.
- f. Each person is a 'mystery' and God gives us the tool of love to help us come to know and accept one another.



D. As Father

We believe that the love that our God has for us is like the love and closeness a Father has for his children. Because He is our Father, we can always share our joy and pain with Him, always be forgiven and know we are loved no matter what happens to us. Luke 15:20

E. Religious: Any experience that 'moves' us, 'touches' us deep inside, and leads us to new insights about the meaning and purpose of our lives.

CHAPTER ONE: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- GOD

1. In what way is God our Creator?
2. In what way is God 'Mystery'?
3. In what way is God 'Love'?
4. In what way do we look to God as 'Father'?
5. Think about one of your favorite scenes from nature, e.g. a lake, ocean beach, woods, mountains, and then answer the following questions:
 - a. In what way does that scenery show something about the God who created us?
 - b. What lesson can we learn about ourselves when we think of our favorite scene from nature?
6. Describe a person in your life who you think is very creative. Why do you think they are creative?
7. What kinds of experiences make you stand in awe and wonder? E.g. good music, stars, outer space, birth, friendships, chocolate cake, biology, sunsets, etc....
 - a. Do you think that God could be speaking to you through these experiences? Why?
 - b. Share a recent experience when you were moved and felt God's presence.



CHAPTER TWO: JESUS CHRIST

Born of Mary, wife of Joseph of Bethlehem, Jesus worked as a carpenter in Nazareth. About the age of 30 he began preaching in Galilee, building up a reputation as a 'Rabbi', a teacher of Scripture.

- A. He gave us an example with His life, and how we are capable of being what it means to be 'fully human'. He spoke the 'truth' to those around Him and was creative in His relationships, bringing physical and spiritual life to those who heard His message and believed. To speak the 'truth' and to be creative in our relationships is risky. It cost Jesus His life. Some scripture to consider: John 10:10--Good Shepherd; John 10:14--The Way, the Truth, and the Life; John 14:6--Door; John 10:9--Resurrection; John 11:25-- Bread of Life; John 6:35--Teacher and John 13--Lord.
- B. His ministry was 'person-to-person, 'other-centered' and His message was and is that the "KINGDOM OF GOD" is available to ALL people and that it is "NOW", here, already begun. His ministry is boldly summed up by the way He would welcome and break bread with non-Jews, tax collectors, beggars, lepers and sinners. In fact many scripture authorities believe that one of the main reasons that Jesus was executed was because He PROCLAIMED THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS FOR ALL PEOPLE, not just Jews. This is the Good News. Romans 1:16-17; Matthew 9:9-13
- C. Jesus is the Son of God. The second person of the Trinity. He is the greatest sign of God's love for us. The 1st born of all creation. John 1:18; Col 1:15; Philippians 2:5-11.
- D. Jesus summed up the 10 commandments and gave us a blueprint for transforming the world with His 2 Great Commandments:
 1. Love God with your whole heart and soul.

2. Love your neighbor as yourself. (Expressed His “WAY”: Acceptance and Forgiveness). “This is the encouraging, the enspiriting difference that Jesus can make to a distracted and weary world. Life can be worth living.” God Present As Mystery: John 15:12; Romans 12:19-21; Luke 15:11-24.

E. Jesus is not the focal point or the end of our faith. God is. Jesus always points past Himself to God. Jesus told us that we can come to know God by coming to know Him. Colossians 1:15; John 14:57; John 10:30. “Jesus Christ is not central to our Faith and prayer; God alone is that.” (Soyant).

F. To become Christian is to become a new creation, by inviting Jesus into our lives. 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3-4; Acts 9:1-22; Matthew 4:17; Matthew 18:3

G. Christian Morality – Jesus revealed to us what it means to be fully human and how fully human persons act.

It can be summarized in this way:

1. Honor God
2. Respect His Creation
3. Respect your own dignity
4. Respect the dignity and rights of all others

Just what such honor and respect involves is described in the Ten Commandments and summarized again by Jesus in his command that we love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. John 13:13-15



H. Mary, Mother of Jesus – She offers a calm vision and a reassuring world to people of today. She was a woman of strength who experienced poverty and suffering, plight and exile. (Paul VI) John 19:26-27; Luke 1:47

CHAPTER TWO: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- JESUS

1. What is the Good News that Jesus came to tell us about?
2. What is the Kingdom of God?
3. Who in your life has been a ‘Good News’ person to you? Describe a time when you were a ‘Good News’ person to someone else.
4. What are the two commandments of love that Jesus gave us?
5. What kinds of things are necessary for you to love yourself?
6. Where does Jesus fit into your life?
7. What kinds of things would you need to do in order to have a good understanding of His life and a close friendship with Him?
8. Regardless of what you may feel or not feel about Him right now, write a prayer to Him, inviting Him into your life, and share with Him your struggles, doubts, fears, and hurts.
9. What kinds of feelings and images about Jesus did you grow up with?
10. If you had your own children, how would you describe Jesus and your relationship with him to your children?
11. Jesus lived a life of service; describe situations in your life where you feel called to serve.
12. Jesus challenges us to love our enemies and to do good to those who persecute us. Who are the enemies and persecutors in your life? Is Jesus asking us too much when he calls us to love them?

13. At the heart of his message is the challenge to love and forgive one another. Who in your life do you need to forgive and be healed with?
14. How does the group of friends that you hang out with influence your decisions?
15. Are you satisfied with the friends in your life? What changes would you like to make?
16. Describe the 'ideal' friend. Are these qualities that you see in Jesus?
17. Who in your life really believes in you and lets you know you are special to them?
18. Describe the relationship you have with your Mother and Father. Describe the kind of things that you need from your Mother and Father. What are you willing to do to improve your relationship with your Mother? Your Father?
19. Describe your relationship(s) with your brother(s) and/or sister(s) and how you would like to improve your relationship with them.
20. Describe in one or two words what it is you need most right now from your friends.
21. Describe the qualities that you are able to offer to a friend.
22. If you were a parent today, what would be the hardest area for you to deal with?
23. If you were a parent today, what do you think would be the most enjoyable part of having kids?
24. If God is a God of Love and Jesus came to teach us how to Love, why is there so much suffering and pain in our world?
25. If you are living a Christian life, do you think there are ever times when it is o.k. to get angry?
26. Describe how you think Jesus felt near the end of his life when he knew he would probably be killed and all his followers and closest friends would leave and even deny knowing him? Have you ever had similar feelings?
27. Just as Jesus had to go through death in order to be resurrected, we are often faced with moments of spiritual and emotional death that we need to work through if we are going to feel renewed and have new life. For example: A fight with a friend or parent, death of someone you love, loneliness, alcohol and drug use, self doubt etc. Describe any relationships or experiences that are causing you spiritual and /or emotional pain (inner death). Also set down some action steps you will take to deal with the situation so that you can experience 'new life' (resurrection).
28. Rearrange in order the following events and briefly define or explain what happened at each event: The Ascension...The Resurrection....Pentecost...The Last Supper...The Crucifixion.

CHAPTER THREE: HOLY SPIRIT CONTINUING JESUS WORK IN THE WORLD



The Holy Spirit

- A. The Third Person of the Trinity – Jesus pledged that the Spirit of truth would be within us and would remain with His Church – Look up John 15:26
God's spirit is always associated with the power that helps us discover the gifts we have been given and to use them in a creative way for the good of others. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11; Acts 1:3-8; Acts 2:1, 11, 17; Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 10:21-24; Ephesians 1:15-19
- B. The Fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Humility, Self-Control, Galatians 5:19-26 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

CHAPTER THREE: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. How does the Holy Spirit work in our lives?
2. Describe the gifts and talents that you think you have been given.
3. What images of the Holy Spirit did you grow up with?
4. Does receiving a deepening of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation call for a change in our lives? Explain.
5. Do you think the Holy Spirit is able to work in people's lives even if they are not aware of the Spirits' presence? Explain.
6. Do you believe that God has a special purpose for your life? Why?
7. Symbolically speaking, in the Body of Christ what part of the body are you? E.g. the hands, the back –because you carry other people's burdens, the heart because of how well you love, tears because of compassion, etc.
8. Do you think that true meaning of life can be found mainly through service to others? Why?
9. In what ways do you think you could use your gifts and talents to help the Church?
10. What kinds of distractions do you let get in the way giving more of yourself to others?
11. What kinds of things are you doing and would like to do to stay healthy physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually?
12. When and with whom are you most creative and giving of yourself?
13. Right now, what are some short- and long-range goals you have for your life?
14. What's your definition of success? Of having made it in this world?
15. The Fruits of the Spirit Inventory:

LOVE

I am quick to sense the needs of my friends, classmates, and family, and I respond...just as Christ would.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

JOY

I can celebrate life even in the midst of pain and confusion because of deep spiritual reservoirs.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PEACE

I have a quiet, inner confidence in God's care of my life that keeps me from feeling uptight and anxious.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PATIENCE (ENDURANCE)

I have a staying power that helps me to handle frustration and conflict without blowing my stack.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

KINDNESS

I act toward my friends, classmates and family as I want them to act toward me: warm, considerate, generous with praise, always trying to see the best in others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

GOODNESS

I have a real desire to live a clean life, to set a good example by my conduct wherever I am.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FAITHFULNESS

I stick to my word; I stand up for my friends; I can be counted on to stay firm in my commitment to God and others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HUMILITY (GENTLENESS)

I have an inner strength that permits me to be gentle in my relationships; open; aware of my own abilities without having to make a show of them.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SELF-CONTROL

I am learning to discipline my time, energy and desires to reflect my spiritual values and priorities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CHAPTER FOUR: SACRAMENT

In Latin – ‘Mystery’ is a ‘Sacrament’.

- A. The sacraments are outward signs that celebrate the life-giving activity of God in our lives. They were given to us through the teaching and example of Jesus.
- B. The sacraments are the ‘unhiding’ of the activity of God in our lives, activity that is going on whether we know it or not. They are: Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Anointing of the Sick.
- C. The Church recalls certain actions of Jesus when he walked on earth. The Church does this by means of certain objects, gestures and words (signs). In doing this Jesus actually becomes present under these signs and touches our lives in the same way he touched the lives of the people during his earthly life.

There are seven such sacraments:

- 1. **Baptism** – we participate in Jesus’ death and resurrection, dying to sin and being raised to life in Jesus in a community.
- 2. **Eucharist** – we celebrate a memorial meal which recalls Jesus’ last supper, his death and his resurrection. The bread and the wine actually become Christ’s body and blood. We offer these in sacrifice to the Father and share in them at Communion.

The Mass has three main parts:

- 1. Liturgy of the Word (readings)
- 2. Liturgy of the Eucharist (Canon)
- 3. Communion

3. **Reconciliation** – by confessing our sins in sorrow we celebrate the forgiveness and acceptance given us by God.
4. **Confirmation** – we receive and are empowered by the very Spirit of God who seeks to strengthen, encourage and guide us in living the life of Jesus to the fullest extent possible.
5. **Marriage** – believing couples enter marriage in the name and in the presence of Jesus.
6. **Holy Orders** – persons are introduced into the priesthood of Jesus, being empowered to lead the Church in Jesus' name and to celebrate the sacraments.
7. **Anointing of the Sick** – Jesus cares for the sick members of the community, strengthening them spiritually and in some cases physically.

D. Life as a Sacrament: This means that if we can learn to sift through the struggles, joys, and events of our daily life for those moments that are life-giving and make us more human, then we will come to know more how God is present to us as Mystery. This in turn helps us to deepen our friendship with God, and know how much He loves us.

E. It is important to remember that the actual celebration of a sacrament is really the ritualizing and celebrating of a lifegiving, humanizing experience that has already taken place, e.g. forgiveness and healing between a mother and her son is ritualized and celebrated in the sacrament of Reconciliation; the love that has grown and matured and results in a commitment between a man and a woman is celebrated and witnessed to by the community in the sacrament of Marriage.

CHAPTER FOUR: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- SACRAMENT

1. Name the seven sacraments and describe what each one of them celebrates.
2. Describe a time in your life when you:
 - a. were accepted into a new group and felt that you 'belonged' and were supported.
 - b. celebrated a special event in your life with a meal or party and how it felt.
 - c. felt a real break in your relationship with your parents or a friend – what did it feel like and what did you learn about yourself?
 - d. you were really down on yourself for something you did – were you able to forgive yourself?
 - e. stood up for something you believed in when others had a different value
 - a) someone challenged your religious beliefs and you told them how you felt.
 - b) spoke to your friends about what it means for you to be a Catholic Christian.
 - c) What does it mean to be confirmed?
 - d) in what way is Confirmation the end of something and the beginning of something else?
 - f. you felt a deep commitment to a friend, to your family, to a group.
 - g. were interested and inspired by the lifestyle or vocation of someone.
 - h. felt emotionally rundown and what it took to get you back on track.
 - i. experienced someone very close to you be seriously ill or die. What were the feelings you had?

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE KINGDOM OF GOD – THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

A. Kingdom/Queendom of God

‘The Kingdom of God’ – Matthew 13:31-33, 1 Corinthians 2:9, John 19:14

This phrase is used over 100 times in the New Testament. The word for ‘church’ is used only 2 times in the New Testament. The ‘Kingdom of God’ is the goal of the Christian life. The ‘Church’ is one of the ways that can lead people to the kingdom.

B. Church:

1. The Church is not an ‘end’ in itself, but a “WAY” of journeying together with other believers in realizing the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 12
2. The Christian Church stands as a witness, a reminder. It should radiate the experience that life is worthwhile, that our living together is divinely significant, and that the pain of growth and death can be healing and liberating, as proven in God’s work in Jesus.
3. The Church has a missionary role, to invite outsiders to share its experience and vision. Matthew 16:15
4. Salvation is for all: 1 Timothy 2:1-6, Acts 10:34-35
5. For the early followers of Jesus the ‘act of coming together’ in the name of Jesus was their understanding of Church -- Matthew 18:20. Church is not a building but Church is wherever people gather in the name of Jesus. Revelation 1:16, Ephesians 4:5, Acts 7:48
6. The Church is made up of those who profess belief in Jesus as Lord and God, and who are baptized into his life. This faith community has three tasks: (1) to worship God together in the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) (2) To proclaim what Jesus has done for humanity to all who will listen (share the Good News of our salvation through Jesus) (3) to work to overcome injustice and care for the sick and the needy. Jesus remains present on earth through the life of this faith community. Ephesians 3:14-21
7. Church Authority and dogmas – Bishops are official leaders of the Church who have two special tasks: to insure that the revelation God has given us is not corrupted or distorted as it is handed down to each new generation and to help the faith community continue to grow in the correct understanding of what God has revealed. Hence bishops are considered official teachers. Their official teachings, which all faithful believers accept as true, are called the dogmas of the church.

C. Communion and Community: for the people of God who ‘are’ the church, to be effective they must first experience ‘communion’ (fellowship) and then ‘community’.

1. Communion (Koinonia) (Com-Union)

- a. Communion is the love-bound network of friendships that must be present before true ‘community’ can happen. Romans 15: 1-7, Philemon 1-7
- b. Small “c” - ‘communion’ and small “k” (koinonia) is a relationship in which there is openness and freedom to be yourself, where you can share with each other your pain and sorrow as well as your hopes and dreams without fear of condemnation, and to support each other in perfect love. John 13:34-35, Acts 2:42, Galatians 6:12

2. Community:

- a. The word ‘community’ does not come from the word “communion” but from the word communio, meaning to ‘build with’. Thessalonians 5:14-22

- b. The primary meaning of ‘community’, then is a task force bent on building a world of justice among brothers and sisters. (M. Fox) Leviticus 19:18; Isaiah 1:16; Deuteronomy 10:17; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 10:30 Matthew 20:26; Acts 2:44; Luke 11:42

CHAPTER FIVE: JOURNAL QUESTIONS – THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

1. If the Kingdom of God and the love of others is the main goal of being Christian, why do we need the Church?
2. Community means gathering of friends who have the same purpose and support one another. Where do you experience community?
3. What are the main areas of the belief that distinguish the Catholic Church from other Churches?
4. What are some beliefs that we have in common with other churches?
5. What is the main mission of the Church?
6. How would you describe your experience of Church up to now?
7. What are some of the things, e.g. rituals, symbols, etc. that you have the most difficulty understanding?
8. What are some things our Church could do to help make people feel more welcome?

CHAPTER SIX: FAITH

- A. **LIFE PURPOSE:** (Evely) “The purpose of human life is to learn how to love. In this world there is nothing more sacred than our relationships with others. God is love, Jesus models what it means in human terms to truly ‘love’, the more we become ‘fully human’. And the better we are able to love, the deeper our experience of the ‘kingdom of God’ can become. That makes our relationships and our ability to experience quality friendships the ‘most important’ work of our lives.”
 1. (Rahner): “It can really be said seriously that the love of God and the love of neighbor are one in the same thing.”
 2. Only one thing will be resurrected with you: the way you love.
 3. Faith defined: Hebrews 11:1, Ephesians 2:8, James 2:14-18
- B. **HEAVEN:**
 1. Means the ‘surrounding presence of God’. “In Heaven” we are ‘in’ the presence of God, our creator. In fact, eternity has already begun, we experience heaven, not fully, but it has begun. Revelation 7:14, 16-17
 2. Your eternal life will be a process of perfecting yourself continually.
- C. **HELL:** is the absence of progress, it means staying imperfect while heaven means becoming more perfect. Hell is for those who have cut themselves off from the presence of God.
- D. **REDEMPTION:** Expresses the experience of return and reconciliation in Mystery’s/God’s presence.
- E. **SALVATION:** To ‘save’ means to ‘respond’ the way that Jesus did to the challenge of love, we have ‘salvation’ (wholeness’ is the meaning of the Greek word for ‘salvation’ – so when we respond in love the way Jesus did, we become more ‘whole’ – holy.)

F. GRACE: The biblical notion of grace is that it is primarily God's mercy and love for us. It is his living, and loving presence reaching out to the very core of our existence.

G. DEATH AND RESURRECTION:

1. As He neared his crucifixion, Jesus gave over his fears and doubts in complete trust to his Father. In that awful moment of death, He broke through to the fullness of life with His Father and was resurrected.
2. Every day we are confronted with moments of emotional, physical and spiritual death that can be turned into moments of life (resurrection) through letting go and trusting our God. Galatians 2:20, Phillipians 2:9

H. CREATION:

1. Creation points to God's/Mystery's ongoing self-communication, as a here and now presence in time and space.
2. To create actually is to bring about justice and the community of all people, thus, to advance God's rule/reign. 2 Peter 3:13

I. REVELATION:

1. The 'self-communication' of God/Mystery. The 'unhiding' of God's presence. It occurs whenever and wherever people have experiences of the Presence of God. Romans 16:26
2. God most fully and completely has expressed and revealed Himself in and through Jesus Christ.

J. FAITH:

1. Is saying YES to life as we find it. It is a personal commitment to the ultimate in our experience. It is an acceptance of the meaning of life as taught to us by Jesus. 1 John 4:16
2. Faith is a gift from God -- John 6:44. It is Faith that unites us to Jesus. Faith is an inner confidence in Jesus that allows us to see the Risen Jesus in the face of the lonely, the poor, the sick, your friends, and your family. Luke 24:21-25; Ephesians 4:11
3. Faith is our commitment to love. To love is to embrace all and to hang onto and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

K. PERSONAL IMMORTALITY AND PERSONAL RESURRECTION:

Catholics believe that every person has an immortal soul and that even the body will be raised up again and transformed into perfection after death. In other words, we believe we will live forever. (Reichert) Phillipians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35; Matthew 22:31

L. BEING CATHOLIC:

Besides the centuries of traditions and faith beliefs, what most distinguishes Catholics from other Churches is: 1) our belief in the Pope as the head of the Catholic Church on earth, who receives his authority from Jesus and the first Pope, St. Peter; 2) our belief in the true presence of Jesus in the Eucharist; 3) and our emphasis on the seven sacraments.

M. THE MASS: is our prayer of thanksgiving in Jesus' name, to the Father for all He has given us. 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Corinthians 10:14, 11:34, Luke 22:14-20

THE BIBLE: is a collection of books and stories in which God reveals Himself through the history of the Jewish people. 1) The Old Testament deals with the Religious history of the Jewish people up to the time of Jesus. 2) The New Testament deals with the Christian belief in Jesus as God's son, who became a human being--The Incarnation.

1. **Gospel – means “Good News”:** - The written Gospels reveal the words of Jesus with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The evangelists--Matthew, Mark, Luke and John--expressed the early Church’s memory and understanding of Jesus. All four Gospels were completed by about A.D. 95.

CHAPTER SIX: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- ‘FAITH’

1. From a Christian point of view, what would you say is the purpose of life?
2. What does it mean to have Faith?
3. Who is someone you really believe in and trust?
4. As you see it, what do you most want out of life?
5. What is Heaven?
6. What is Hell?
7. What is the bible and who are the four Gospel writers of the New Testament?
8. What is the Mass? How could it be more meaningful for you?
9. What is grace?
10. What is salvation?
11. Where have you learned the most about your faith?
12. Do you think God sends us suffering and pain to help us learn lessons? Why?
13. If God wants us to be happy and to enjoy his creation, why are there thousands of people starving to death everyday, and millions of people out of work, and children being physically abused, etc.?
14. Is it necessary to attend Church regularly to have Faith?
15. Is it possible for people who haven’t even heard of Jesus to have Faith and to go to heaven?
16. Describe the events of Jesus’ life from the Last Supper to His Resurrection. How did He show His Faith in God?

CHAPTER SEVEN: SIN

- A. **Biblical sin is a rupture of a personal relationship with God. It is not just breaking a rule but is a failure to respond with love to others. 2 Corinthians 5: 21; Matthew 5:23-26; Luke 15:11-21**
- B. **When we fail to love, we create distance in our relationships with God. To again enjoy His friendship we must ask: What does God ask of me? How do I respond to what He asks?**

Conscience – Is a person’s ability to make a moral judgment. By conscience we are able to think through what it is we should do.

- 1. We must always follow our conscience.**
- 2. We must be responsible and inform our conscience correctly; good information and listening to God speak to us in our depths.**
 - C. The worst sin, as Jesus warns us, is hardness of heart, passing by people, to give a stone to someone begging bread. This hardness is the opposite of ‘metanoia’ or conversion.**

CHAPTER SEVEN: JOURNAL QUESTIONS - SIN

- 1. What is sin?**
- 2. What is conscience and how do we go about forming our conscience?**
- 3. What does hardness of heart mean to you?**
- 4. What kinds of people suffer from hardness of heart?**
- 5. Read the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke. 15: 11-24). What does it tell you about God’s willingness to forgive us?**
- 6. To Love is to build ourselves and others up, to sin is to tear others and ourselves down. Write an examination of conscience that you think would help people your age look at their lives and see where they have fallen short of the challenge of love.**
- 7. What weaknesses in yourself most bug you?**
- 8. Is there someone you can’t forgive?**
- 9. In what situations do you find it most difficult to be honest and open about what you feel?**

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE BEATITUDES

- A. Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!**
- B. Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!**
- C. Happy are the meek; they will receive what God has promised!**
- D. Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!**
- E. Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!**
- F. Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!**
- G. Happy are those who work for peace among men; God will call them his sons!**
- H. Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!**

CHAPTER EIGHT: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- THE BEATITUDES

MATTHEW 5:3-10

First read over the Scripture passage. Then on each question rank your life from 1-10. One being very weak and 10 being very strong.

- A. HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO KNOW THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY POOR**
1. Are you ready to admit to yourself and others that you don't have all the answers?
 2. Are you ready to admit that you need God and others?
- B. HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO MOURN**
1. Are you sensitive enough to other people to help them when they are hurting?
 2. Are you able to show your feelings and to let others show their feelings without you feeling uncomfortable?
- C. HAPPY ARE THE MEEK**
1. Are you the type of person that can let someone else get attention without feeling that you're not important?
 2. Are you quiet enough inside yourself to hear what God and others are really saying to you or is there always noise going on in your life--i.e. television, music, computer.
 3. Do you feel a need to always be proving how smart, funny, cool, or nice you are to people or are you sure of your specialness?
- D. HAPPY ARE THOSE WHOSE GREATEST DESIRE IS TO DO WHAT GOD REQUIRES**
1. Is God number one in your life?
 2. Do you know the difference between God being in charge of your life and you always being the one in the driver's seat?
 3. In the tough choices of your personal life, do you honestly seek to do what God would want you to?
- E. HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO SHOW MERCY TO OTHERS**
1. Are you a 'caring' kind of person who brings warmth and love to others?
 2. Do you give to others your time, your gifts without thought of getting something back?
 3. Are you quick to respond to someone in need of help?

CHAPTER NINE:

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

- A. Feed the hungry
- B. Give drink to the thirsty
- C. Shelter the homeless
- D. Clothe the naked
- E. Visit the sick
- F. Visit the imprisoned
- G. Bury the dead

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

- A. Teach the ignorant
- B. Advise those who need it
- C. Comfort those who suffer
- D. Be patient with others
- E. Forgive others who hurt you
- F. Correct those who need it
- G. Pray for others

CHAPTER NINE: JOURNAL QUESTIONS -- THE CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

1. What are the Spiritual works of mercy?
2. Select one and describe how you apply it to your life today.
3. What are the Corporal works of mercy?
4. Which one do you need to work on in your life and why?
5. List the ways that you think your parish church lives out the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
6. What do you think are some of the main causes of hunger and homelessness in our world today?
7. What kinds of things could you do to show your support and care for the poor and homeless?
8. Which is more important: to pray for the sick and for prisoners or to visit them? Why?
9. In your estimation, which groups of people are most oppressed and persecuted in our society?
10. Should life be protected by all reasonable means from the moment of conception? Why?
11. Is there ever a situation when an abortion would be morally right?
12. Should terminally ill persons have the right to determine how long their life will be prolonged?
13. Do you think Capital Punishment is a just punishment in any situation?
14. Are cloning or genetic selection morally right practice?
15. How would your neighborhood be different if all of you depended on one another?

CHAPTER TEN PRAYERS AND TEACHINGS TO REMEMBER AND KNOW

Prayer is communication or communion with God. It is a meeting with God, who invites us to be ourselves, turn over our worries and hurts and most of all to listen to Him speak deep within us. Luke 11:1-13; Galatians 4:6; Mark 14:36; Luke 11:16; Rev 3:20; Psalms 50:15; Matthew 18:19-20; Ephesians 6:18; Matthew 7:7-8

1. **THE OUR FATHER:** Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

2. **THE HAIL MARY:** Hail Mary full of grace; the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.
3. **ACT OF CONTRITION: (Familiar Translation)** O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you. I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin.
4. **ACT OF CONTRITION: (Newer Translation)** My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.
5. **THE PROFESSION OF FAITH:** We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, one in Being with the Father, through whom all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became a man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.
6. **THE APOSTLES' CREED:** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again for the dead; He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.
7. **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:**
 - a. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
 - b. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
 - c. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
 - d. Honor your father and your mother.
 - e. You shall not kill.
 - f. You shall not commit adultery.
 - g. You shall not steal.
 - h. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - i. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
 - j. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.
8. **GLORY BE TO THE FATHER:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE SEVEN PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

- 1. Celebrate Christ's Resurrection every Sunday (and holy days of obligation) by taking part in the Mass and avoiding unnecessary work.**
- 2. Lead a sacramental life.**
- 3. Study Catholic teaching throughout life, especially in preparing for the sacraments.**
- 4. Observe the marriage laws of the Catholic Church and give religious training to one's children.**
- 5. Strengthen and support the Church: one's own parish, the worldwide Church and the Holy Father.**
- 6. Do penance, including not eating meat and fasting from food on certain days.**
- 7. Join in the missionary work of the Church.**

CHAPTER TEN: JOURNAL QUESTIONS –PRAYERS AND BELIEFS

- 1. What is prayer?**
- 2. When is your favorite time to pray?**
- 3. What kind of a prayer are you more comfortable with: formal or spontaneous?**
- 4. Do you think God always answers our prayers?**
- 5. What kinds of things do you most often pray for?**
- 6. Write out the Hail Mary.**
- 7. Write out the Our Father.**
- 8. Write out the Apostle's Creed.**
- 9. What are the Ten Commandments?**
- 10. What are the Seven Precepts of the Church?**