

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church

Confirmation Preparation Program

CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION SAINT

Use the resources on the table to research different Saints and then keep notes here for when it is time to choose your Saint.

Some questions to consider:

Is your birthday a Saint's Feast Day? What other Saints are in your birthday month? What Saints are connected to your hobbies or interests? Which Saint's life experience inspires you? Which Saints are connected to the profession you aspire to?

St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church

Confirmation Preparation Program

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: WISDOM

Instructions:

- Read through the definition & examples of your assigned Gift of the Spirit.
- With your small group, make a plan to present one of the examples at the Retreat on Jan 31st.
- You can present the example in any way you choose, but you CANNOT simply read the story or re-tell it in different words.
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WISDOM: SEEING FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

The gift of wisdom helps us view the world through God’s perspective and the light of our faith. With this gift a person will see and evaluate all things - successes or failures, joys and sorrows, gifts and losses - from God's point of view, and be more able to live with peace and trust.

- **Scripture Example:** Job is a faithful Jewish man with a large family and great wealth. Satan says to God that Job is only faithful because he has a great life; so God allows Satan to test Job to prove that his faith is real. Job loses everything - his family is killed, his home destroyed, and his livestock dies. But he says this when his friends tell him to curse God and abandon his faith: “Let come upon me what may. Why should I take my flesh in my teeth, And put my life in my hands? Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. This also will be my salvation, For a godless person cannot come before His presence.” (Job 13:14-16) He knows that everything he has has been given to him by God, and can be taken away. He continues to come before God, even with his complaints, and chooses hope.
- **Saint Example:** Saint Ignatius of Loyola grew up in a royal family and was set on becoming a renowned soldier. He wanted prestige and wealth. Unfortunately, he was severely wounded by a cannonball and had to spend months in recovery. During that time, without much to keep him busy, he read the Bible and the Lives of the Saints, and recognized that there was so much more to life, and that God was calling him to more than military fame. He saw the broader picture. He founded the order of the Jesuits and became known for helping others to “see” God’s work in their lives and to “discern” spiritual realities.
- **Modern Example:** John Doe is easily overwhelmed by day to day troubles; he is often anxious. He is a glass “half empty” type of guy. He knows that he is not always seeing the bigger picture, so he asks the Holy Spirit to help him put things in perspective. He still worries, but feels God helping him “take a step back” and remember what is important in life. He strives to remember “God’s reality” and this brings him peace.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF WISDOM when you need another perspective, when you are struggling to understand your own situation, or when you need a reminder that our faith is real.**

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: UNDERSTANDING

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UNDERSTANDING: GRASPING DEEPER TRUTHS

The gift of understanding is the gift of comprehension, or the ability to deeply grasp truths of the faith. Our human intellect cannot grasp all of God’s mysteries, but through the gift of understanding we can be led to the truth, even when we do not fully comprehend it. The gift of understanding also helps us to be tolerant and sympathetic of others. It helps us sense when someone is hurting or in need of compassion. It helps us to “see below the surface”, and gives us “insight”, into truths of the faith and the lives of those around us.

- **Scripture Example:** After Jesus started his public ministry, rumors started swirling. People wondered who he was. Even the apostles probably wondered. That is the context of this Gospel passage: “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:13-17) Through the gift of understanding, Peter was able to recognize who Jesus truly was.
- **Saint Example:** Saint Josephine Bakhita was stolen from her family in Sudan and sold as a slave numerous times. She was beaten and abused. She eventually moved to Italy, with a family, and upon seeing a crucifix for the first time in her life, she automatically knew that that represented God and that he loved her. She received the gift of immediately understanding the sacrifice of Jesus, based on her own experience of suffering. Although an extreme example, this shows us how powerfully God can reveal Himself in our lives.
- **Modern Example:** Jane Doe is sitting in a class in her first year of college. It’s an economics class, but the professor commented that Christians do not believe in helping people to escape poverty, and that Christians, because they honor the cross, require people to accept dire circumstances. Something inside tells her that this isn’t correct, but she is not sure what the actual truth is. After class, she talks to a good friend, who is also a Christian, and digs into what the faith actually teaches. She was moved by the Holy Spirit to identify and seek the truth.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING when you need to see “through” confusion or darkness to the truth of something.**

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: COUNSEL

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COUNSEL: SEEKING WHAT’S RIGHT

The gift of counsel inspires us to seek out what is the right thing to do in difficult circumstances and also to speak up and encourage others. This gift prompts a person to ask, "Will this lead to holiness? Will this lead to Heaven? What is the right thing to do?" and helps us to give counsel to others, especially in matters of faith.

- **Scripture Example:** Once Jesus’ public ministry took off, the religious leaders of the time became increasingly worried and antagonistic. Jesus challenged them and they didn’t want to hear what he had to say. But a few were different. One of those was Nicodemus. He wasn’t sure about Jesus, but he reached out: “Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus at night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” (John 3: 1-2) They had an amazing conversation, and this is where we find the famous verse John 3:16: ““For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.” After this, Nicodemus defends Jesus to the Sanhedrin (religious leaders) and assists with his burial.
- **Saint Example:** Saint Francis grew up in a wealthy merchant’s family. He had everything he wanted and lived a life of luxury and pleasure. After a while, though, he felt empty and wanted to know what to do with his life. He heard God asking him to rebuild the Church. He took this literally and started piecing back together a small chapel that had fallen down, but soon realized that God was asking him to spiritually renew the Church. He did this by living a life of simplicity and prayer and encouraged others to do the same. This led to a radical moment of renewal in the whole Church.
- **Modern Example:** John Doe is someone that others feel comfortable talking about their problems with. He has a friend who is struggling with a hard decision - whether or not to take a job that would require him and his family to move, but would include a pay raise, or to stay around family and friends but work longer hours to make ends meet. This friend comes to John and they talk it through and pray about it. John has a way of asking good questions and helping the situation to seem a little clearer.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF COUNSEL when you need help knowing if something is right or wrong, or help deciding between choices.**

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: FORTITUDE

Instructions:

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FORTITUDE: SUPERNATURAL COURAGE

The gift of Fortitude helps us to defend our faith and sustains our decision to follow the will of God in any situation. Through fortitude, God gives us His very own courage and strength to stand firm in our faith, even when threatened by bodily injury or death.

- **Scripture Example:** The gift of fortitude does not take away fear, but gives us courage to persevere in the face of something difficult. Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane show us this. “He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.” (Luke 22:41-44) The next steps to Calvary literally terrified Christ, but he brought that to the Father and received fortitude.
- **Saint Example:** Maximilian Kolbe is one of the best examples of fortitude. He was arrested for being a Catholic Franciscan priest and sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He volunteered to die in place of another prisoner, a stranger who had cried out for mercy because he had a wife and kids. Fr. Kolbe took his place and was sent to a starvation bunker along with nine others. Every day, he prayed and sang with the men until everyone had died but him; he was then executed.
- **Modern Example:** Jane Doe and her group of friends and their families normally take a trip to the beach around Eastertime. One year, they were there on Good Friday. Jane knew it was Good Friday, and wanted to do something to remember Jesus’ sacrifice, but was afraid of bringing it up. She prayed about it and asked for strength, and was able to suggest that they do the Stations of the Cross together. Surprisingly, everyone agreed, and they had a powerful moment of prayer on that Good Friday.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF FORTITUDE when you have an opportunity to stand up for what you believe but you feel weak and in need of strength.**

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: KNOWLEDGE

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KNOWLEDGE: SEEING WHAT IS RIGHT

The gift of Knowledge enlightens our mind to see and choose the right path. It is like a God-given spotlight shining on the right choice. Knowledge helps bring to light the temptations that we face and enables us to see and use created things in a holy way.

- **Scripture Example:** In the Acts of the Apostles, we read about Saint Paul’s conversion: “Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord... was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told to you what you must do.” (Acts 9: 1, 3-6) God literally “shined a light” on Saul/Paul’s sinful acts and called him to conversion... and Paul responded and became one of the Church’s greatest Saints.
- **Saint Example:** Saint Teresa of Avila led a relatively comfortable life. This did not change even after she entered a convent. Her parents’ marriage wasn’t great, so she decided to become a nun, knowing that, at that time, convent life was very similar to her life at home - she could continue to have lavish meals, comfortable rooms, jewelry and even parties. She was drawn to pleasure but also to prayer, but didn’t have the confidence to make a change. After a few years of this, God spoke to her, very clearly, and called her to start a new convent with more silence, poverty and meditation. She was persecuted and made fun of, but answered the call and went on to form a number of “reformed” convents.
- **Modern Example:** John Doe had plans to go out with his college friends at night. They always drank, but never so much that it got them into trouble. He knew his limits. So, he was planning on joining them, but something inside told him to stay home instead. He tried to brush it off... why would he not go? But eventually, he gave into the thought and decided to watch a game on TV instead. His friends, after drinking, got into an accident. No one was seriously hurt, but if one more person had been in the car, it would have been worse. He knew that his desire to stay home was an inspiration from God.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE when you need help seeing and avoiding obstacles - obstacles to anything good in your life - faith, friendship, a relationship, doing well in school, etc.**

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: PIETY

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PIETY: CONFIDENCE IN GOD

The gift of Piety strengthens our confidence in God. It inspires us to joyfully serve God and others, based on the conviction that God is our (and everyone’s) loving Father. It moves us to turn to God in our need and to relate to others as adopted sons and daughters of God.

- **Scripture Example:** We do not know if the “Good Thief” had faith before this moment, but we do know that he had done something bad enough to be sentenced to crucifixion. In his final moments, he was given the gift to turn to God and ask for mercy: “One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” But the other responded, and rebuking him, said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our crimes; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23: 39-43) In contrast to the other criminal, the “Good Thief” was given the gift of piety, and responded.
- **Saint Example:** Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta is best known for her incredible love and care for the poor. She literally picked people up out of the gutters and cared for them, usually until they died. Firmly believing everyone to be a son and daughter of God - no matter their religion or circumstances - she felt that no one should be abandoned or die alone. Less known, though, is that she did most of this without “feeling” anything in her prayer. At times, she even felt like God was far from her. Nevertheless, she held firm to the belief that God had called her to do this work, and that He was with her, and continued her mission passionately.
- **Modern Example:** Jane Doe was raised by a single mom for most of her life. Even when her mother married, her step-father traveled a lot and was not very close. Jane had grown up Catholic, but it wasn’t until after her Confirmation, that she really understood that God was a true Father, who could be a part of her life. She had a very real experience of learning to turn to God with her needs and trusting that He would always be at her side.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF PIETY when you need help turning back to the Lord, or help strengthening your relationship with Him.**

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GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: FEAR OF THE LORD

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FEAR OF THE LORD: BEING IN AWE

The gift of Fear of the Lord inspires us to be in awe of God (and God’s works) and inspires us to draw closer to Him and to strive to avoid sin. It helps our faith to “move” from being something we understand with our mind to something we believe deeply and live out through our actions.

- **Scripture Example:** In Luke we hear the story of a leper who recognized what Jesus had done for him: “As He entered a village, ten men with leprosy who stood at a distance met Him; and they raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” When He saw them, He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they were going, they were cleansed. Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. But Jesus responded and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.” (Luke 17:12-19) God works wonders in our lives and the gift of the Fear of the Lord helps us to see this and to respond in gratitude and action.
- **Saint Example:** Blessed Solanus Casey was a Franciscan priest who lived in Detroit and New York. Because he struggled with his studies, he was ordained but not allowed to hear Confessions or preach; his order did not believe he was smart enough. He was assigned to be the “porter”, to answer the door to all who came to the monastery. He had a simple but deep prayer life; he really believed in God’s presence and gifts, and was always giving thanks. One of his most famous phrases was “Thank God ahead of time”... in other words, be so confident that the Lord can work miracles, that you thank him even before it happens. Blessed Solanus soon became famous for encouraging and even healing people. Around 150-200 people started coming each day and countless miracles have been reported through him.
- **Modern Example:** John Doe had a job he enjoyed, but it was often fast paced and stressful. Although he liked the work, he also knew it took a toll on him, physically, mentally and even spiritually. So, each year, he set aside some time to go on “retreat”. Sometimes, it was a guided, planned event, other times it was just time away in nature. Those days helped him to remember how real God was and to reconnect with Him. Seeing natural wonders, like the mountains or the ocean, moved him to give thanks to God for all that was good and beautiful in his life.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit for the GIFT OF FEAR OF THE LORD when you are getting overwhelmed with daily stress or the busyness of life and you need a reminder of God’s goodness and presence.**

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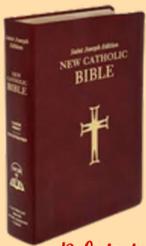
Confirmation Preparation Program

CLASS 1: THE MATRIX & CONFIRMATION

This year of Confirmation preparation is about a choice. Your choice. A choice to move forward in faith. A choice to look at the world, and your own life, through a certain lens. A choice to step into the rest of your life with God at your side, the Sacraments as your strength and the Church “in your corner”. Like Neo, you have a mission, and like Neo, you will receive specific gifts to help you be all you are called to be. Like Neo, you have a team, a family that is around you, the Church, who will help you to see what is not always visible, and to help you break free from everything that holds you captive. So, this year, strive to see beyond, strive to strengthen yourself for the journey ahead, and strive to uncover all the graces that God wants to offer you through Confirmation.



“—
I’m trying to free your mind Neo. But I can only show it to you.
You’re the one who has to walk through it. You have to let it all go,
Neo: fear, doubt, disbelief. —”



Related
Scripture
Passages

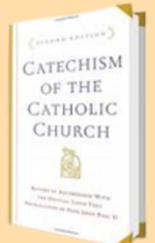
The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- **2 Corinthians 4:18**

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. -

John 10:10

Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.



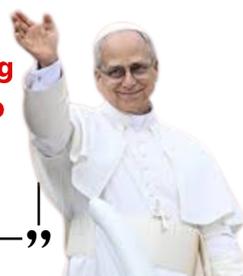
Catechism of
the Catholic
Church: #1304

All of human life... shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully, so that everyone feels as though he is bound by chains. But **the Lord Himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly...**

For sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment. The call to grandeur and the depths of misery, both of which are a part of human experience, find their ultimate and simultaneous explanation in the light of this revelation.

- **Vatican II Document *Gaudium et Spes* #13**

“—
The Spirit accomplished something extraordinary in the lives of the Apostles. Following Jesus’ death, they had retreated behind closed doors, in fear and sadness. **Now they receive a new way of seeing things, an interior understanding that helps them to interpret the events that occurred and to experience intimately the presence of the Risen Lord.** The Holy Spirit overcomes their fear, shatters their inner chains, heals their wounds, anoints them with strength and grants them the courage to go out to all and to proclaim God’s mighty works. - Pope Leo, June 8th, 2025 —”



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Confirmation Preparation Program

CLASS 1: THE MATRIX & CONFIRMATION

Discussion Questions

What do you think about the Catholic teaching that there is more to "reality" than what we can experience with our senses, what we experience in our lifetime? Why is it sometimes hard to believe in the spiritual world?



Neo "risked it all" to believe Morpheus and leave the Matrix. God asks us to trust him, and, in the same way, choose a path that is sometimes challenging and unknown. What does taking this step towards Confirmation mean for you?



Christ frees us from what binds us, from what makes us "sleepwalk" through life. What do you need to be freed from? What holds you back from true peace and life?



St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church

Confirmation Preparation Program

CLASS 2: LORD OF THE RINGS & YOUR STORY

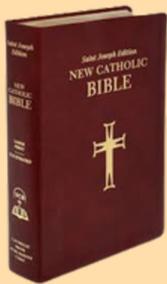
Both the Matrix and the Lord of the Rings are meant to help us pull back and see the bigger picture of our lives. It may not feel like it, but each one of us is a part of something EPIC. We are born into a story that is full of darkness and light, danger and redemption. There are true stakes and the decisions we make have lasting impacts. Each person has a crucial role. Those who have gone before us have paved the way, and now we have to decide how we are going to live out our part. We are part of a fellowship. We have a God King who fights for us. We cannot see the end, but we can trust that we can find help, light and sustenance along the way.



MOVIE CONNECTION



“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” — J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*



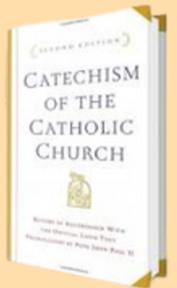
Related Scripture Passages

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

- 2 Timothy 4:7

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die... a time to weep and a time to laugh... a time to mourn and a time to dance. - Ecclesiastes 3

We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of his providence are often unknown to us. Only at the end, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God "face to face", will we fully know the ways by which - even through the dramas of evil and sin - God has guided his creation to that definitive sabbath rest for which he created heaven and earth.

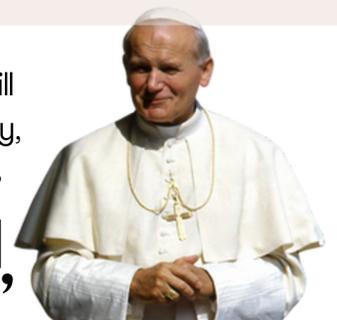


Catechism of the Catholic Church: #314

Sams says, “I wonder what sort of tale we’ve fallen into?” Sam could not have asked a better question. He assumes there *is* a story; there is something larger going on. He also assumes they have somehow tumbled into it, been swept up into it. *Wha sort of tale have I fallen into?* is a question that would help us all a great deal if we wondered it for ourselves. It just might be the most important question we ever ask. - John Eldridge

“It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the whole world more human and more fraternal.

- Pope Saint John Paul II at World Youth Day in Rome, 2000



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CLASS 2: LORD OF THE RINGS & YOUR STORY

Discussion Questions

Do I believe that I am part of a great story? Part of something “bigger” than just my own life? Why it is sometimes hard to believe this and/or easy to forget this?



How important was the “Fellowship” to the story? How important is a fellowship of faith in your own life? Do you have friends that inspire you to grow in your faith?



Sin weighs us down and “eats at us” like the Ring did to different characters. What is one thing you can do to try to identify sin and its effects in your own life?



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CLASS 3: SIGNS & GOD IN OUR LIFE

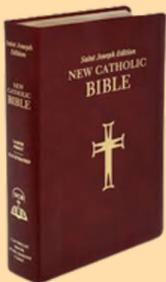
This movie is meant to help us ask what kind of person we are - the kind with that believes that life is pure chance, or the kind that believes that there is a depth and a symmetry to life that points to a Creator. Specifically, a Creator God who not only made all things and then “left”, but One who is still there, still in the midst of it all with us. Each and everyone of us have been created in love and then accompanied throughout our life. We are not alone. We are not unknown. God knows our struggles and he is constantly reaching out to us to let us know he is there. Seek to see his presence in your life!



“—
People break down into two groups. When they experience something lucky, group number one sees it as more than luck, more than coincidence; they see it as a sign. Evidence, that there is someone up there watching out for them. Group number two sees it as just pure luck, a happy turn of chance. I'm sure that people in group two were looking at those 14 lights in a very suspicious way. For them, this situation is a 50/50: could be bad, could be good. But deep down, they feel that whatever happens, they're on their own, and that fills them with fear. There are those people. But there's a whole lot of people in the group number one, and when they see those lights, they're looking at a miracle and deep down, they feel that whatever is going to happen, there will be someone there to help them, and that fills them with hope.

So what you have to ask yourself is **what type of person are you?**

Are you the kind that sees signs, miracles, or do you believe that people just get lucky? —”

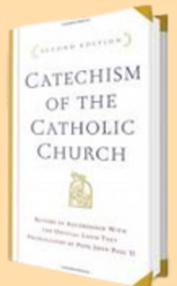


*Related
Scripture
Passages*

It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. - **Deuteronomy 31:8**

Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. - **Hebrews 11:1**

With creation, God does not abandon his creatures to themselves. He not only gives them being and existence, but also, and at every moment, upholds and sustains them in being, enables them to act and brings them to their final end.



*Catechism of
the Catholic
Church. #301*

We may ignore, but we can nowhere evade, the presence of God. The world is crowded with Him. He walks everywhere incognito. - C.S. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm

“—
Along the path of life we never walk alone. To remind us of this, God helps us understand that salvation is not a momentary event but a history that unfolds day by day, amid successes and failures, until the final encounter. ~ Pope Francis April 21, 2016 —”



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CLASS 3: SIGNS & GOD IN OUR LIFE

Discussion Questions

What do you think about the Catholic teaching that God is always with us and that we can find signs of Him in our world today? Based on the movie quote above, are you a "signs" person or a "luck" person?



What are some "signs" of God's existence/presence you have seen in your own life?



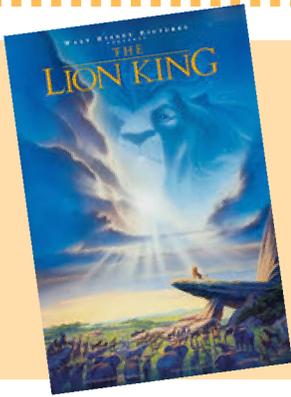
What makes believing in God's presence difficult?



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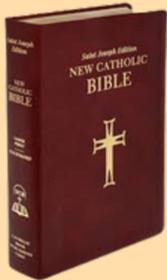
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CLASS 4: THE LION KING & VOCATION



The first week of November is usually National Vocations Awareness Week. The topic of “vocation” includes both large and small life paths and decisions. It picks up the theme of “time” and what we do with it from The Lord of the Rings. The Lion King also moves us to ask what holds us back in life, what we are afraid of, and how our family and friends help us to move in the right direction. Take this movie as a moment to pray about what your life holds and what your unique mission may be. “Be who you are called to be and you will set the world ablaze” - St. Catherine of Siena.

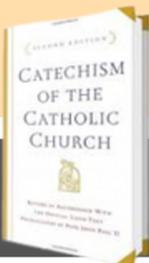
“ Rafiki: Oh yes, the past can hurt. But from the way I see it, you can either run from it, or learn from it.. Simba: That's not my father. That's just my reflection. Rafiki: No. Look harder. Rafiki: You see? He lives in you...You have forgotten who you are, and so have forgotten me. Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the circle of life. Simba: How can I go back? I'm not who I used to be. Mufasa's Ghost: Remember who you are. You are my son and the one true king. Remember who you are. —”



Jeremiah
29: 11-13

For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will let Myself be found by you

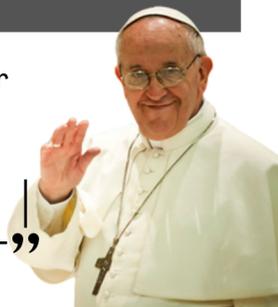
Just as he did during his earthly existence, so today the risen Jesus walks along the streets of our life and sees us immersed in our activities, with all our desires and our needs. In the midst of our everyday circumstances he continues to speak to us; he calls us to live our life with him, for only he is capable of satisfying our thirst for hope. He lives now among the community of disciples that is the Church, and still today calls people to follow him. The call can come at any moment. Today too, Jesus continues to say, “**Come, follow me**” - Pope Benedict XVI



Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.
Catechism of the Catholic Church #1604

“ Today the Lord continues to call us to follow him. We should not wait to be perfect in order to respond with our generous 'yes,' nor be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our hearts to the voice of the Lord. To listen to that voice, to discern our personal mission in the Church and the world, and at last to live it in the today that God gives us. —”

Pope Francis Message for the 55th World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2018



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CLASS 4: THE LION KING & VOCATION

Discussion Questions

Do I believe that God loves me and has a specific mission/plan/vocation for me?



When you think about your future, what is one thing that you are excited about, or one thing that you are passionate about?



Has there been a moment of loss or heartbreak in your life, that in some way, prevents you from living life fully? How can you surrender this to God?



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CLASS 5: THE GIVER & SUFFERING

The Giver, based on the book of the same name, focuses on the theme of suffering, which we touched on briefly with Lion King. Now, we turn to a world that has planned everything, down to the last detail, to avoid pain, but in turn, has sacrificed things like love, family and uniqueness. What do you think about the trade-off? What life would you rather? We have the same choice today. We can try to plan out our lives to avoid suffering, or we can take life as it comes, knowing that we have faith, the ability to “see beyond”, and a God “with us” - Emmanuel.



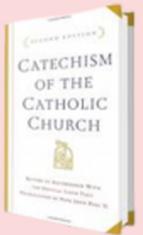
“ To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. [...] We shall draw nearer to God, not by trying to avoid the sufferings inherent in all loves, but by accepting them and offering them to Him; throwing away all defensive armor. - C.S. Lewis *The Four Loves* ”

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.



Psalm 34:18

No one can escape the experience of suffering or the evils in nature [...] Where does evil come from? "I sought whence evil comes and there was no solution", said St. Augustine, and his own painful quest would only be resolved by his conversion to the living God. [...] The revelation of divine love in Christ manifested at the same time the extent of evil and the superabundance of grace. We must therefore approach the question of the origin of evil by fixing the eyes of our faith on him who alone is its conqueror.



Catechism of the Catholic Church #385



“ Even Jesus is shaken [...] the Gospel says, “deeply moved”. This is God’s heart: far from evil but close to those who are suffering. He does not make evil disappear magically, but he endures the suffering; he makes it his own and transforms it; he abides it.

Pope Francis, Homily on April 4th, 2017

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CLASS 5: THE GIVER & SUFFERING

Discussion Questions

If you had to choose between the two worlds presented in the movie, which would you choose and why? A world without illness, differences, emotions vs. A world with pain, suffering, family and love. (No judgement, both "worlds" have pros and cons!)

What role does faith play in facing and enduring through suffering?

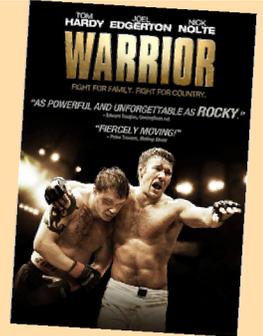
What is one thing in your life that has been hard for you, but that has helped you or blessed you in some way?

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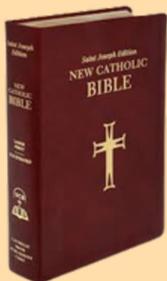
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CLASS 6: WARRIOR & LETTING GO

This movie is meant to help us look at the topic of sin and forgiveness and to take a step forward in faith, specifically but letting go of what may hold us back in life. It's also about family. Each of us has one and sometimes they are complicated. We go through life collecting burdens and just like we've seen in other movies, we've got a choice to make with each one. We can go through life weighed down, or we can try our best to keep letting them go. Knowing we are loved and accompanied by God helps us to live with fortitude and forgiveness.



Jesus is born for a humanity searching for freedom and peace; he is born for everyone burdened by sin, in need of salvation, and yearning for hope. On this night God answers the ceaseless cry of the peoples: Come, Lord, save us! His eternal Word of love has taken on our mortal flesh. "Your Word, O Lord, came down from his royal throne". The Word has entered into time: Emmanuel, God-with-us, is born. ~ Pope Saint John Paul II, December 24th 2002

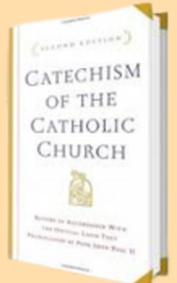


Related
Scripture
Passages

Do not call to mind the former things, Or consider things of the past. Behold, I am going to do something new, Now it will spring up; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18-19

Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again... Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Saviour; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator [... these things moved] God to descend to human nature and visit it

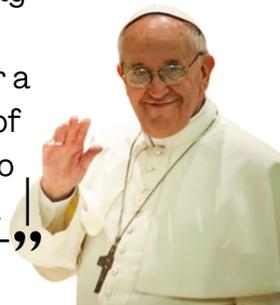


Catechism of
the Catholic
Church: #457

It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love. ~ Pope Benedict, Spe Salvi

“Go to Jesus: he likes you to tell him these things!” He forgets, he has a very special capacity for forgetting. He forgets, he kisses you, he embraces you and he simply says to you: “Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more.” That is the only advice he gives you. After a month, if we are in the same situation ... Let us go back to the Lord. The Lord never tires of forgiving: never! It is we who tire of asking his forgiveness. Let us ask for the grace not to tire of asking forgiveness, because he never tires of forgiving. Let us ask for this grace.

- Pope Francis, March 17, 2013



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CLASS 6: WARRIOR & LETTING GO

Personal Reflection Question

Did you catch what the dad was listening to? Moby Dick... the story of one man's relentless pursuit of revenge. Ahab's never ending search for the great whale who attacked him and took his leg, and who in the end, after mortally wounding the whale with a spear is dragged along with him to death because he gets caught up in the harpoon line. I think this perfectly sums up the movie. Each character, whether they acknowledge it or not, is holding onto something. Holding onto a hurt, a mistake, a wound... and we get to see them struggle with it and finally let go, symbolized in the final "tap" at the end of the movie. What are we holding onto and what will it take to get us to a place where we too "tap" and let go? How does God factor into this? How can I let him into my life a little more this Christmas?

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CLASS 8: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN & ME

This last movie is meant to tie everything together - ultimately, what is at the heart of our faith is God's personal love for us that can carry us through every trial. This love is epitomized in Christ, who literally went through hell for each and every one of us, and who is forever by our side in the Church & the Eucharist. So... we return to one of our earlier themes: we each have a choice, to believe that we have Someone looking out for us or to believe that we are ultimately alone. Holy Spirit, help us know God's presence.

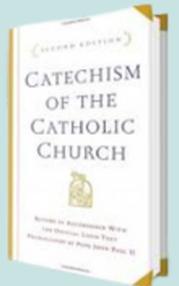


MOVIE CONNECTION

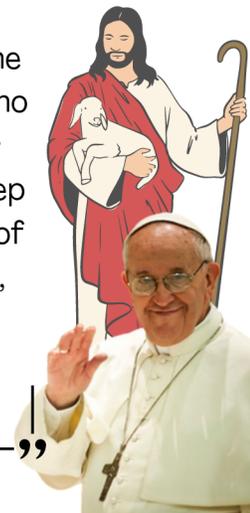


THERE IS NO EVIL TO BE FACED THAT CHRIST DOES NOT FACE WITH US. THERE IS NO ENEMY THAT CHRIST HAS NOT ALREADY CONQUERED. THERE IS NO CROSS TO BEAR THAT CHRIST HAS NOT ALREADY BORNE FOR US, AND DOES NOT NOW BEAR WITH US. AND ON THE FAR SIDE OF EVERY CROSS WE FIND THE NEWNESS OF LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT NEW LIFE WHICH WILL REACH ITS FULFILLMENT IN THE RESURRECTION. THIS IS OUR FAITH. THIS IS OUR WITNESS BEFORE THE WORLD. ~ POPE SAINT JOHN PAUL II, DECEMBER 24TH 2002

Jesus knew and loved us **each** and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for **each one of us**: "The Son of God. . . loved me and gave himself **for me**." He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, "is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that. . . love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings" without exception. ~ *Catechism of the Catholic Church #478*



“—
The lesson that Jesus wants us to learn is, rather, that not a single one of us can be lost. The Lord cannot accept the fact that a single person can be lost. God's action is that of one who goes out seeking his lost children and then rejoices and celebrates with everyone at their recovery. It is a burning desire: not even ninety-nine sheep could stop the shepherd and keep him enclosed in the fold. He might reason like this: "Let me do the sum: If I have ninety-nine of them, I have lost one, but that's no great loss". Nevertheless, he goes looking for that one, because every one is very important to him and that one is in the most need, is the most abandoned, most discarded; and he goes to look for it... God does not share our current throw-away culture; it doesn't count to God. God throws no one away; God loves everyone, looks for everyone: one by one! - Pope Francis, May 4th, 2016



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CLASS 8: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN & ME

Discussion Questions

Read through the 3 quotes on the Movie Summary page. Write down any words or lines that particularly resonate with you, or speak to your heart.

What is one concrete thing you need to be "rescued" from this Lent?

While we can never "earn" God's love, we can live differently as a result of this love.

What is one way you can strive to live differently after your Confirmation?

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MY CATHOLIC BAPTISMAL PROMISES

DO YOU RENOUNCE SATAN, AND ALL HIS WORKS AND EMPTY PROMISES? **I DO**

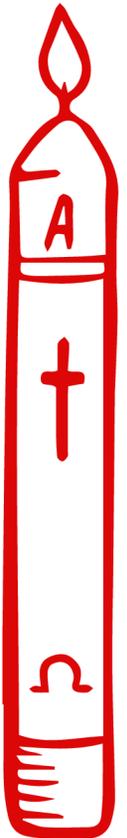
DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH? **I DO**

DO YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED DEATH AND WAS BURIED, ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER? **I DO**

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE LORD, THE GIVER OF LIFE, WHO TODAY THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IS GIVEN TO YOU IN A SPECIAL WAY JUST AS HE WAS GIVEN TO THE APOSTLES ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST? **I DO**

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND LIFE EVERLASTING? **I DO**

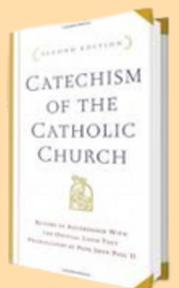
**THIS IS OUR FAITH. THIS IS THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH.
WE ARE PROUD TO PROFESS IT IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. AMEN.**



When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, as is the case in the Roman Rite, the Liturgy of Confirmation begins with the renewal of baptismal promises and the profession of faith by the confirmands. This clearly shows that Confirmation follows Baptism.

Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the 'character,' which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness. This 'character' perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and 'the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially.

~ *Catechism of the Catholic Church #1285 & #1304-1305*



“ Leave behind [your] sense of defeat... roll away the stone of the tombs in which we often imprison our hope, and look with confidence to the future, for Christ is risen and has changed the direction of history. - **Pope Francis, Easter Vigil 2023**

