

LIGUORI CHRISTIAN INITIATION PROGRAM

# Journey of Faith



**FOR TEENS**

**INQUIRY LEADER GUIDE**



**Journey of Faith for Teens, Inquiry Leader Guide (826306)**

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## Welcome to Journey of Faith!

Liguori Publications is dedicated to providing parishes with quality resources like *Journey of Faith*. Since 1993, *Journey of Faith* has established itself as a trusted and beloved program for catechists to guide participants through the RCIA process. As the Catholic Church takes on the challenges and graces of each generation, *Journey of Faith* has been carefully developed to help you meet the changing needs of adults, teens, and children who are inquiring about and seeking initiation into the Catholic Church—ever ancient, ever new.

The *Journey of Faith* program is cohesive, comprehensive, and flexible. *The Word Into Life* provides you with the *Lectionary* texts from Sunday Mass, and the forty-eight catechetical lessons and corresponding *Leader Guides* create a practical and attractive formation process for today's team leaders, catechists, and participants. All the materials are referenced to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and have been granted an *imprimatur* from the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Unbaptized children over the age of seven are to be considered catechumens. Liguori offers any child or teen needing formation or sacraments *Journey of Faith for Children* and *Journey of Faith for Teens*. With the exception of the *Word Into Life* volumes, all *Journey of Faith* products are available in Spanish under the title *Jornada de fe*.

We hope you enjoy using *Journey of Faith* and find it enlightening and engaging for all. To see our entire collection of sacramental preparation titles, parish subscriptions, formation and spirituality books, and more, please visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org) to contact us for a copy of the latest catalog.

—The editors

## An Overview of the RCIA

### The Historical Development

The decision to become a member of the early Christian community bore serious ramifications. Becoming Christian meant a break with one's background and often required fracturing relationships with the non-Christian members of one's family. In many cases, this decision meant a willingness to suffer persecution or even death, as seen in the example of the martyrs Perpetua and Felicity. Perpetua, a noblewoman of Carthage and mother of an infant son, and Felicity, a pregnant slave woman, both refused to denounce Christianity and were subsequently martyred during the public games in the amphitheater around AD 200.

Just as the decision to become a Christian was not made lightly, the formation process wasn't quick or easy. Catechumens—those in the process of preparing for baptism—were invited into a step-by-step journey of three or more years with the community before achieving full membership. During this process, they were expected not only to begin to accept Christian beliefs but also to begin to live the Christian life. The community shared their faith with the catechumens and celebrated each step along with them.

One period of this preparation has remained throughout the centuries: the season of Lent. Originally this time was one of immediate preparation for baptism, which was celebrated at the Easter Vigil. During Lent, the entire Christian community, especially the catechumens, devoted themselves to prayer, fasting, and self-scrutiny. For those already baptized, it was a time to remember and renew their original commitment.

During the solemn Easter Vigil, the catechumens—now called the elect—received the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist) and were welcomed into the community. As a rule, this initiation was celebrated at the Easter Vigil only. Formation of the newly baptized did not end with the rites of Holy Saturday night, however, but continued with further instruction and daily living out of Christian values.

This process began to change in the fourth century, when periodic persecution of Christians was replaced by tolerance. Because of the favor many emperors showed toward it, Christianity became fashionable, and many people began entering the catechumenate

for social and political reasons. As a result, the pattern and standards for formation gradually transitioned to the point where, by the fifth century, the rites of initiation were separated into the three sacraments we know and celebrate today. Infant baptism became the norm, and the catechumenate vanished.

The Church published the first *Roman Catechism* in 1566, following the Council of Trent. This book of teachings was presented in question-and-answer form and was used for instruction of the faithful. Such catechisms later became the foundation for what came to be called "convert classes." Using a teacher-student model, the priest would meet with interested parties and assist them in memorizing certain prayers and learning the material in the catechism. The duration of the process, the material to be covered, and the format were left to the priest or parish custom, with few outside directives given.

Successful completion of these classes meant either baptism or formal reception into the Catholic Church. This event was usually celebrated in a private ceremony, with only close family in attendance. Those received into the Church would be confirmed by the bishop at the cathedral or would receive the sacrament in their local parish whenever the bishop came to confirm the schoolchildren. Follow-up for the new Catholics, if any, might consist of being sent to a formal course in liturgy, Scripture, dogma, or morality.

Following World War II, a call for a change in the formation of new Catholics came from the Church in Africa. They began to use the ancient form of the catechumenate to provide stability in formation and a period of time for faith to mature. The Second Vatican Council in the 1960s called for a thorough revision of all the rites (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*], 4), and a committee was formed that engaged in a formal study and revision of the methods leading to baptism or reception into the Catholic Church. This study resulted in the promulgation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) in 1972.

Thus the catechumenate was restored: a process of formation, sanctified by various liturgical rites that mark progress in the journey of faith and culminate in full membership in the Catholic Christian community. An integral part of the revision is that the whole process and its rites are to be celebrated with and in the context of the local parish community and diocese.

## Q2: What Is Faith

**Catechism:** 142–165, 302, 854

### Objectives

Participants will...

- Understand faith is given freely by God and helps us understand God's love.
- Realize that having faith does not mean ignoring science or rational thought.
- Recognize that for faith to grow it must be practiced both alone and in community.

### Leader Meditation

*John 14:1–4*

Read the Scripture passage, then think about the strength of your own faith. When you pray, do you believe your prayers are being heard? Do you trust that God is intimately involved in your life, even with all its difficulties and imperfections? Most important, do you see the face of God in the questioning, doubting, and sometimes challenging young people you teach?

### Leader Preparation

- Read the lesson, this lesson plan, the Scripture passage, and the *Catechism* sections. "The Characteristics of Faith" (CCC 153–165) may help you to answer questions posed by your class, especially how faith relates to science.
- Be familiar with the vocabulary term for this lesson: faith. The definition can be found in this guide's glossary.

### Welcome

As participants arrive, welcome any new inquirers and sponsors. Check for supplies and immediate needs. Ask for any questions or comments about last week's lesson that may have come up during the week. Begin promptly.

### Opening Scripture

*John 14:1–4*

Ask a volunteer to light the candle and read aloud.

Following the reading, allow a moment of silence, and then welcome any comments or reactions to the words.

Finally, ask for any special intentions. Before beginning the discussion of the lesson handout, ask participants, "**How easy is it for you to 'take things on faith?'**" Allow time for responses.

Faith is a gift of God, a supernatural virtue infused by [God].

CCC 153



# Journey of Faith



Q2  
INQUIRY

### In Short:

- Faith is a virtue freely given by God.
- Faith, science, and reason coexist.
- Faith grows when we're alone and part of a community.



### What Is Faith?

Some people love to get lost in an adventure. Their journeys can last years and cover miles. They thrive on not knowing what will come next, who they'll meet, or where they'll end up. They don't care if they head off into their journey unprepared—planning lessens the adventure.

Other people aren't quite as ready to leave everything to chance. They make plans, figure out what they need to pack, and trace exactly where they'll go. They don't leave room for the uncertain—they don't have room on their adventure for the unexpected.

- Do you think either of these ways is the best way to travel? Why or why not?
- What's the purpose of going on a journey?
- What kind of journey has your own life been?



Life is a process. A journey is a process, too. Both involve growth, change, and development. When we're on a journey, we don't stay in the same place, at least not for long. We move on.

We choose new roads. We discover new things. We grow in wisdom and understanding. We mature. We are always in process.

### The Journey of Faith

**Faith** means having certainty in God and all his works and is more certain than all human knowledge. However, having faith doesn't mean never asking questions or ignoring empirical facts. Actually, as your faith grows, so does your desire to know more about God. Faith is a grace we can't have without God, but it's also a human act. So while God can give us the grace and courage to live and act with faith, it's still up to us to take those steps (CCC 156–162). When we have faith, we live each moment knowing that God loves us, even when life seems to tell us otherwise. To have faith means to trust that nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love of God.

Faith is also a process. It's the most important process and most important journey of our lives because it brings us closer to God. The more we live our faith, the closer we get to God. Being close to God brings us an inner joy and peace that can't come from anything else. We all want to feel close to God, yet the process of getting there may seem difficult, if not impossible.

Let's take a deeper look at what it means to have faith in God.

*"What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?...No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us."*

Romans 8:35, 37

CCC 142–165, 302, 854

TEENS

### The Journey of Faith

- Discuss what the process of faith entails.

*Suggested responses may include: asking questions, desiring to know more about God, taking steps to live like Jesus, trusting that God loves us, and more.*

- Emphasize that this process never ends, faith is always growing, and we will never be finished with our faith formation on earth.

- As you go over the reflection questions for this section, also discuss how faith in God is different from, or similar to, having faith in people or things.

Ask participants to pick one of the following passages with a partner, group, or on their own and share what they learned about faith. You may need to direct them to a particular page number until you cover lesson Q5 *The Bible*.

- Mark 9:23  
everything is possible when you have faith in God
  - Matthew 21:22  
whatever you ask for in prayer, you will receive
- Remind participants that God answers our prayers in his own time and often in ways we don't expect. So while God does answer all our prayers, he may not give us exactly what we want.
- 1 Peter 1:8–9  
because we have faith we will experience salvation
- Remind participants that having faith isn't passive. We must live out our faith actively, not just claim it in words only.

## Our Personal Faith

Have participants answer the reflection question on their own, or if you have time do the following activity as a group. Make a list of circumstances that might make us doubt God or our faith. Then make a list of ways we can use our faith to help us in those scenarios.

*Suggested responses include: After the death of a loved one we can reach out to a priest, youth minister, or other spiritual guide with questions or frustrations. We*

INQUIRY

- What are some other things you've had faith in?
- Has that faith paid off? Why or why not?



The good news is, you're not alone. There are a lot of people of faith out there, and they're struggling to live like Jesus, too. If you're able to tune out noise from the rest of the world, you'll see you're not in this alone.

JOURNEY OF FAITH

- Are there circumstances where you find it difficult to live your faith? How do you handle them?



The teachings of the Catholic Church on faith come largely from Scripture.

Take a few moments and look up the following passages in your Bible. Then briefly write or discuss what each passage means:

Mark 9:23                      Matthew 21:22  
1 Peter 1:8–9

### Our Personal Faith

Because faith involves trust in something that goes beyond our human understanding, it can be very difficult to accept. As a teen, you're transitioning into the adult you will become. That's a process filled with questions and doubts, a time when you question nearly everything you once believed to be true. You'll question your parents and society—their wisdom, their values, and their beliefs. You might even find yourself looking around and wondering, "Isn't there anyone else I can ask?"

It can be tempting to trade in these questions for answers, to want these mysteries of faith to be solved. You might think that having faith means you're no longer allowed to ask questions or that you have to give up your own opinions to blindly follow some Church authority. Rest assured, having faith doesn't mean we stop asking questions; it means we live like we are loved and desired by God—and that we treat others like they are, too.

When we become people of faith, we take on the values of Jesus Christ. But while living like Jesus leads us to a more authentic life, it isn't an easy lifestyle. It can seem like the world values beautiful people and expensive things over values like simple living, chastity, and sacrifice.

Sometimes even when we do have faith, we don't always feel sure of our beliefs. We shouldn't judge our closeness to God by how we feel. God is just as close to us when we're depressed, irritated, or stressed out as when we're joyful and carefree. When we're going through tough times, we can feel like God is very far away. But God's perfect love for us is always there, even in times of doubt and trouble. We cannot hide from the love of our Lord.

When we question God, we may not receive the answers we want. But that doesn't mean God isn't listening or that he doesn't care about us. God reaches out to us in our ordinary, everyday lives. God wants us to become the thinking, creative, feeling people we were created to be, and sometimes that means struggling with our faith or changing part of how we live.

In the future, when you start to worry about this thing, pray: "I give the burden to God, I relax and let go." Then take a deep breath and as you breathe out, know that God is taking your burden and working on it.

- How do you handle times of fear, mistrust, or a lack of faith?
- Think of something that you're trying very hard to control in your life. Perhaps you struggle with a particular classmate, school subject, or family member. It could be a person, a situation, anything. Write it down.
- What about that situation can you give up and turn over to God?



*can read Scripture passages about life after death, or talk to our loved one in prayer.*

*After the end of a relationship or friendship we can share our doubts, concerns, or frustrations with God in prayer. We can seek forgiveness for anything we did wrong from both the other person*

*involved and God (through prayer or, in a special way, the sacrament of reconciliation).*

### Called to Faith

*"Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that, if he should find any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them back to Jerusalem in chains."*

Acts 9:1–2

For some, the gift of faith comes in surprising ways. One day, a man named Saul was making a journey to the town of Damascus. All of a sudden he was blinded by a flash of light and heard a voice from heaven. "He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'" (Acts 9:4). He went from someone who persecuted Christians to a follower of Jesus Christ himself and a great teacher, spreading the story of Jesus throughout his part of the world. God even changed Saul's name to Paul as a sign of his new identity as a follower of Jesus (Acts 9:1–19).

For most of us, our faith beginning isn't as dramatic. God is like a quiet gardener who knows where the "good soil" lies within us better than we do. God plants the first small seed. But if we want our faith to grow, we have to be active about it. Once you ask God for the gift of faith, God gives it to you freely. But we can't just ask God to give us the gift of faith and be done with it. We have to nurture the faith he gives us. We can't expect our faith in God to grow if we do nothing.

There's another important element in Paul's story, too. Once he found faith, he didn't keep it a secret. He went out and told other people about Jesus. He spread his faith to others. You might not be called to be a missionary or an evangelist like Paul, but you are called to share your faith in some way. And the more you share your faith, the stronger it will grow.

- What have you learned about your faith so far that you are most excited to share with others?



# Faith

### Growing Our Faith

Here are some things you can do to nurture your faith:

#### Read

Reading Scripture (the Bible) and other spiritual writings introduces you to the great wisdom of others. Spiritual reading gives you the knowledge and strength to resist the temptation to put other things before God—like money, power, popularity, physical beauty, or drugs.

#### Pray

For faith to grow, you must pray on your own and with others. If we want to get to know God, we must spend time talking with God. This means making time for quiet moments. Finding time to pray is sometimes the most difficult aspect of prayer.

#### Live

This is another challenging part of growing in faith. If you want to live authentically, the way you live your life must match your religious ideals. You may have friends who pressure you to do things that make you feel uncomfortable or that you know are wrong. Having faith means avoiding behaviors that would lead you away from God.

#### Get Involved

The Catholic sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist will bring you into the life of the Church, the community of believers. As you live, work, and play with others, you come to know God, and you bring God to others. We belong to our community, and belonging helps our faith grow.

## Growing Our Faith

After reading this section, brainstorm other ways participants might be able to grow their faith or opportunities in the four listed categories that are specific to your parish. *(If you have a parish youth group, youth choir, or special youth Mass let your participants know about it and when and where it meets.)*

Ask participants to share any questions about the faith, or common arguments they hear against the faith. Try to answer those questions as a group. *(If there are questions you can't answer, try to find answers for the next class.)*

### Called to Faith

If time allows, read the full account of Saul's conversion in the Bible (Acts 9:1–19).

Discuss why God might have chosen to speak to Saul and urge his conversion.

Ask participants what about Saul's story stands out the most to them and why.

Discuss the ways God plants seeds of faith in us.

*Suggested responses include: putting inspirational people in our path, reading a relevant Scripture passage at the right time, and so forth.*

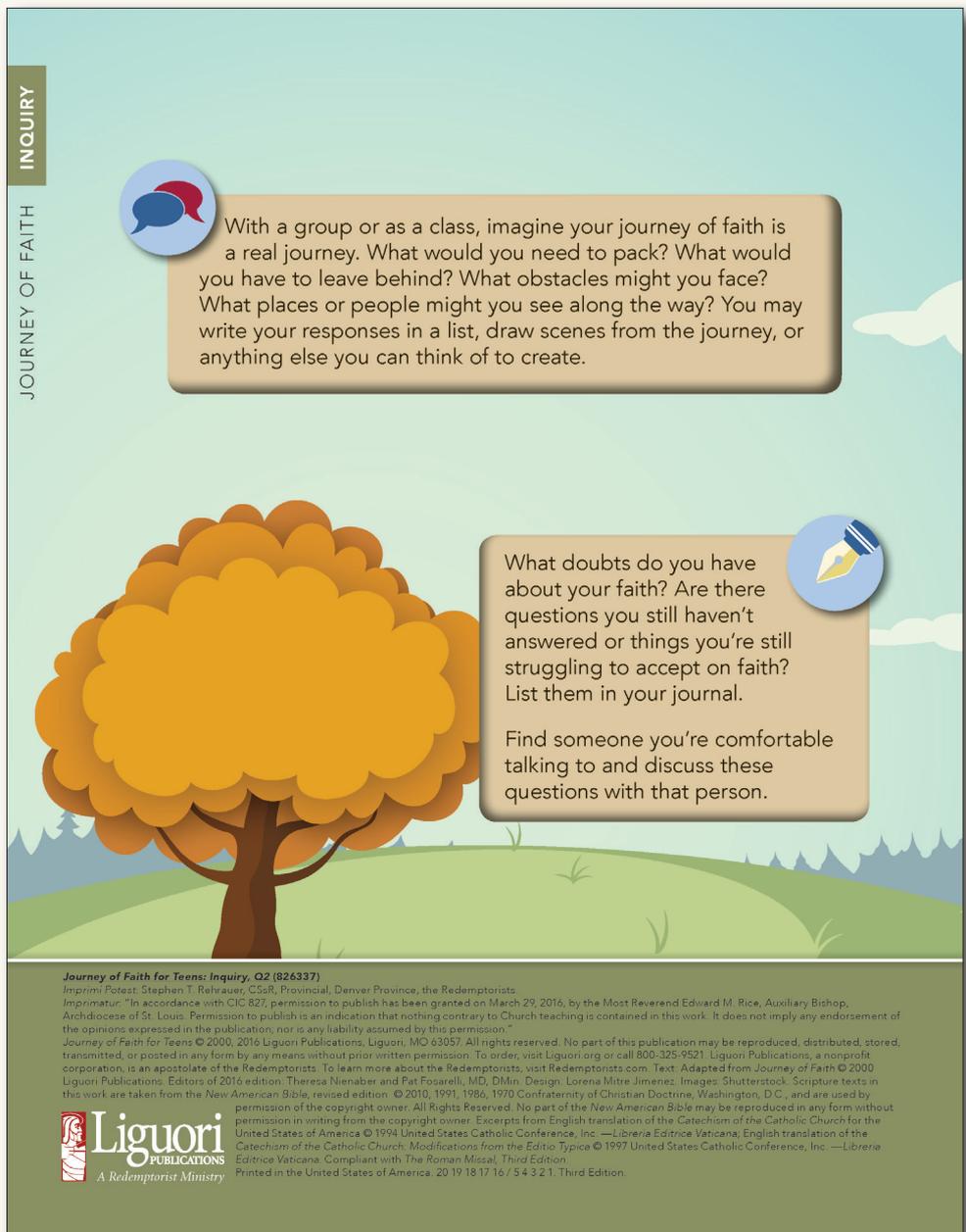
Ask participants what they are most excited to share about their faith. Share what excites you most about your faith, too.

With a group or as a class, imagine your journey of faith is a real journey. What would you need to pack? What would you have to leave behind? What obstacles might you face? What places or people might you see along the way?

Encourage participants to be creative here. They could draw pictures, create a comic, write a short story....They don't just have to write a list—although that's fine, too! You can also create a bag of your own to show as an example that includes a Bible, journal, prayer book, religious statue, and so on.

**INQUIRY**

JOURNEY OF FAITH



With a group or as a class, imagine your journey of faith is a real journey. What would you need to pack? What would you have to leave behind? What obstacles might you face? What places or people might you see along the way? You may write your responses in a list, draw scenes from the journey, or anything else you can think of to create.

What doubts do you have about your faith? Are there questions you still haven't answered or things you're still struggling to accept on faith? List them in your journal.

Find someone you're comfortable talking to and discuss these questions with that person.

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## Journaling

What doubts do you have about your faith? Are there questions you still haven't answered or things you're still struggling to accept on faith? List them in your journal. Find someone you're comfortable talking to and discuss these questions with that person.

## Closing Prayer

Read aloud *The Prayer of a Seeker*:

*Dear God, I'm walking this road without a map in my hand. Once I knew where I was headed on this journey, but now, I'm not so sure. Anyway, all I've got are a few directions scribbled down, some advice on how to read the road signs, maybe a place up ahead to ask the way when I get lost. Help me set my feet toward you. Steer me to those who will guide me wisely. Send me true companions along the road. Teach me that feeling lost may not be cause for panic but may lead to new and challenging paths. Let me know that you are always walking with me. Amen.*

## Looking Ahead

For next week, have participants think about faith as understanding God's love and how that might apply to the idea of the Trinity (God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Ask participants to think this week about their relationships with each member of the Trinity.