

THE CHURCH

Out of Focus



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE
TRANSFORMING CATHOLICS FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

There are many misconceptions in the world today about the Church, and it is certainly not uncommon for teens to encounter them. In this session, teens discovered the beauty and the goodness of the Catholic Church. They learned that the Church is trustworthy, relevant in the 21st century, and able to answer today's big questions.

The CONNECT section of the parent sheet connects you with the information that was presented to your teen in our small discipleship group. The DISCUSS section contains questions that you can use to start meaningful discussion on the topic covered and how it relates to your teen's life. The COMMIT section explains to you the commitment or challenge that your teen committed to as a way to grow in his or her faith.

CONNECT

A culture is the very way of life of a people. It encompasses music, values, art, and principles of thought. No institution in the history of mankind has contributed more to culture and human civilization than the Catholic Church. Many of our daily practices and inventions, and much of our education, science, art, and music, have been inspired by the Catholic Church. And no one has done more for the sick and the poor than the Catholic Church. At the heart of all of this activity is the Catholic Church's mission from Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel and celebrate the sacraments—a mission which she has faithfully carried out for 2,000 years.

In this discipleship group, teens discussed these realities of the Church, as well as the negative impressions many people seem to have of the Church today. We discussed how to clearly and kindly respond to someone when they argue against the Church, and we talked about how to discover and witness to the importance and beauty of the Church in our own lives.



“The Church, in Christ, is like a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men.”

—CCC 775



DISCUSS

One of the most important things for communication and in building a relationship with someone is, as St. Francis of Assisi prayed, to “seek first to understand.” People’s reactions to the Church and her role in our lives can vary, but in order to help them understand the truth of the Church better, it is also important for us to be good listeners and try to understand where other people are coming from, especially when we disagree.

Here are some conversation starters to help you talk with your teen about this week’s session. Remember to share your perspectives as well.

- » What are some positive experiences that you have had in the Catholic Church?
- » Why do you think there is such a gap between people’s negative impressions of the Church and all of the positive things that the Church does?
- » What are three things we can do, individually or as a family, to help people better understand the Catholic Church?



COMMIT

One of the best ways to avoid distractions in Mass is to come to a better understanding of the beauty and goodness of the Church, and to learn more about why the Church does what she does and teaches what she teaches. This week, teens were challenged to observe the Mass on Sunday and pick out something in the Liturgy that they do not understand. They are to find out what a specific gesture, vestment, or prayer means, and then come back next week to share about their experience.



“There are not a hundred people in America who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions of people who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church—which is, of course, quite a different thing.”

—Archbishop Fulton Sheen