LESSON 6 SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

LESSON SUMMARY: “Why the Church?” They may not say it aloud, but by their reluctance to attend Mass and their obvious boredom when anything “religious” is brought up, many teens make it clear that church isn’t at the top of their favorite activities list. Many teens want to know what religion has to do with Jesus and why we need the Church at all. In this session we will discuss how we can know that the Catholic Church is the one true Church that Jesus established.

This first scene poses a really great question. Many of us can get on board with Jesus and believing in a God who loves us. But why the Church? Is the Church really necessary for following Jesus? This is the question that we are going to get into today.

1. How would you respond to someone who says that they love Jesus but hate religion?
2. What would you say to someone who says that the Church isn’t necessary in order to be a follower of Christ?

Most non-Catholic Christians believe that the Bible is the only authority that teaches God’s truth for our lives.

1. Do you think there is a problem with relying on the Bible alone in determining God’s truth?

The early Church was persecuted. People became Catholic at great risk. The early Catholics had to really consider the claims of Jesus and count the cost of following Him in the Catholic Church. They had to ask themselves if their faith was worth dying for. Father Walter Ciszek was accused by the Soviet secret police of being a Vatican spy. He was sentenced to 23 years of hard labor in Siberia. When he was released in 1963, he wrote a book about his experiences there, called He Leadeth Me. He writes: “I have seen…prisoners deprive their bodies of needed sleep in order to get up before the rising bell for a secret Mass….We would be severely punished if we were discovered….The Masses were held in drafty storage shacks and sometimes outside huddled in mud or slush. In these primitive conditions, the Mass brought us closer to God than anyone might conceivably imagine.”

6. Why do you think the Mass was so important to these prisoners?

The Catholic Church is the only Church that has as its founder Jesus Christ. For example, the founder of the Lutheran Church was Martin Luther, and the founder of the Presbyterian Church was Jean Calvin. Protestant Christians will say the Catholic Church was man-made and that it became something that Jesus never intended. But Chris, our presenter in the video, tells us the Church is like an acorn of a maple tree and that Jesus’ proclamation about Peter reveals several things:

» Jesus had a plan for the Church.
» Jesus had a plan for authority and structure in the Kingdom of Heaven.
» Jesus was building on the foundation of Peter.

7. What are some reasons you think the Church has been able to withstand all these threats over the past 2,000 years, especially when you consider that the longest known empire lasted just under 600 years?