



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 1 “MY SOUL LONGS FOR YOU, O GOD”

INTRODUCTION

Before his conversion, St. Augustine desperately searched for truth and the meaning of life—in the ancient philosophies, in wealth, in social prestige, even in the immoral practices of his time. However, in all these things his heart was restless and his life unfulfilled. It was only when St. Augustine encountered Jesus Christ that he was able to know and rest in the truth—the truth about God and the truth about himself. Only then was he able to proclaim, “My heart is restless until it rests in you, O Lord.” We are made for God, and made to know and rest in his love and truth, and our souls long for the presence of God.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Psalm 42:2-6

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO I

*Play the Echo I video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following questions.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

When you listen to your heart, where are your deepest longings?

How is God the fulfillment of your desires?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-9)

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 27-43

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **Our hearts are restless without relationship with God. In what ways is your heart restless? How can God satisfy this restlessness?**

2. **What are the ways in which we can come to know God? In which one of these ways have you come to a deeper knowledge of God in your own life?**

3. **How can you more deeply search for God in your own daily life? What is one thing you can do moving forward to deepen your relationship with God each day?**

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 2 GOD COMES TO MEET US

INTRODUCTION

Many people today believe in God, but they see God as a very distant and non-personal God who created and put the universe in motion, but then has little care or concern about his creation or us as human beings. Nothing can be further from the truth. Not only did God create us in his image and likeness, but even after the Fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, God desired to reveal himself in a very real and personal way all throughout salvation history, culminating in the Incarnation of his own Son, Jesus Christ. As Vatican II teaches, “Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself.” This session will explore exactly how God has throughout salvation history unveiled himself through Divine Revelation and desires a very personal relationship with each and every one of us.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Psalm 119:89-90; 105

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO II

*Play the Echo 2 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following questions.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What are some of your deepest experiences of God?

Where do the two of you regularly cross paths?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapter 2 (pgs. 11-19)

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 50-67

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Vatican II teaches us: “Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God out of the abundance of His love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself.” How does God’s revelation invite us into friendship with him?

2. Jesus is the fullness of God’s revelation of himself. What does Jesus reveal about God? About ourselves?

3. In what ways do we live in a culture of disbelief? What can we do in our daily lives and relationships to counter this culture of disbelief and reveal God’s loving plan to others?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 3 “PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE”

INTRODUCTION

How do we know today what Jesus really said and taught over 2,000 years ago? Where do we go to truly know and understand all that God has revealed? In this session, we will be exploring how Jesus Christ himself established the Church as the “pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15) and how we can come to really know what Jesus did and taught through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. Through the gift of the Church and Divine Revelation, we can come to know with certainty and confidence what God has revealed about himself and the human person and how we are to live our lives as Christians even 2,000 years after Christ walked on earth.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, Book 1, Chapter 2, Nos. 2-4

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO III

*Play the Echo 3 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following questions.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Who witnesses the Good News of Jesus Christ to you most profoundly?

How do you give the same witness?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapter 3 (pgs. 21-33)

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 74-133

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What traditions do we hand down in our families or institutions? How does Sacred Tradition in the Church hand on the very person and teachings of Jesus?

2. Why is the teaching authority of the Church so important? How can we grow in appreciation of the Church and her guidance in helping us live the Christian life?

3. St. Jerome says that “ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” How is Sacred Scripture truly the word of God? What can you do on a daily basis to read and study Scripture?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 4 BRING ABOUT THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION

What is faith? For many faith is merely an intellectual assent to something that is believed to be true. However, faith is so much more—it is the full submission of both our intellect and will to God who personally reveals himself to us as proposes to us his plan for our lives. Therefore, faith and life can never be separated, but our lives should shine forth as a compelling witness to Christ. This chapter will explore more deeply the reality of Christian faith and how we are to live our lives in response to God’s revelation of himself.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

The Apostle’s Creed

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO IV

*Play the Echo 4 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following questions.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What does it mean to say that faith is both knowing and trusting at the same time?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapter 4 (pgs. 35-47)

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 142-197

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Who are some great examples of faith from the Scriptures and what makes their faith so exemplary? What can we learn from them?

2. How is faith more than an intellectual assent to what God has revealed? Why can't one's faith and life ever be separated? How is my life a faith witness to others?

3. What are some of the challenges to faith in our current culture? How can our Catholic faith evangelize American culture?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 5 I BELIEVE IN GOD

INTRODUCTION

The central mystery of the Christian faith is our belief in one God in Three Persons—the Blessed Trinity. This belief has major ramifications about what we believe about God, about his creation, and about ourselves as human persons created in the image and likeness of God. This session will explore this mystery of the Trinity and the Christian belief about creation, evil, and the relationship between faith and reason.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Act of Faith

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO V

*Play the Echo 5 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following questions.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

In what ways have God’s plans for your life surprised you?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapter 5 (pgs. 49-63)
Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 199-349*

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to say that the Trinity is a mystery? How can we more deeply comprehend the mystery of God in our own lives?

2. Why is there evil in the world? How does faith in God shed light on the mystery of evil?

3. How are faith and reason complementary? How can faith shed light on science and vice versa? How can we help people overcome the belief that science and faith cannot exist in harmony?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 6 MAN AND WOMAN IN THE BEGINNING

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing questions of our time surrounds the meaning of life and the nature of the human person. *Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is human happiness? What does it mean to love?* The good news is that Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith provide the definitive answers to all the pressing questions that modern men and women are asking. This session will discuss how God has revealed the truth about the human person as created in the image and likeness of God, but also the reality and tragedy of sin as well as our desire for God's salvation and mercy.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
Because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO VI

*Play the Echo 6 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

How would our society be different if everyone truly knew and believed that every person is made in the image of God?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults Chapter 6 (pgs. 65-75)

Catechism of the Catholic Church Paragraphs 355-421

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **What does it mean that human persons are created in the image and likeness of God? What does the original state of Adam and Eve reveal about the human person and God's plan for the human family?**

2. **Why is there the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden—was the first sin really just about eating fruit from a tree? What are the effects of original sin?**

3. **The reality is that each of us has a sin problem. How do we react and deal with sin in our lives? How does God respond to sin in our lives?**

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 7 THE GOOD NEWS: GOD HAS SENT HIS SON

INTRODUCTION

Who is Jesus Christ? This is the question we will be exploring in this session. Jesus, who is both fully God and fully human, reveals to us the truth of not only who God is, but also the fullness of truth about the human person. As the Second Vatican Council beautifully teaches us: “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (*Gaudium et spes* 22). Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—this is the definitive answer to all of the pressing questions that modern men and women are asking.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
have mercy on me a sinner.

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO VI

*Play the Echo 7 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

How would you speak of Jesus to someone who has never heard of him?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 7 (pgs. 77-87)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 422-570

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why was it necessary that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine? What would the consequences be if he was not either fully human or fully divine?

2. Reflect on the following quote from Vatican II:

“The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.”

—*Gaudium et Spes* 22

How does Jesus fully reveal the dignity and vocation of the human person? What does Jesus reveal about how we are to live our lives?

3. What is your favorite gospel “portrait” of Jesus? Why?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 8 THE SAVING DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

“O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!” These words proclaimed by the entire Church in the Exsultet of the Easter Vigil Mass powerfully sum up the saving Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our glorious Redeemer who truly saves us from sin and opens to us again the gift of eternal life. This session will explore exactly why Jesus had to die on the Cross, and why his Resurrection and Ascension are so necessary to accomplish our salvation. This session will also discuss how the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s death and Resurrection is not just something that happened 2,000 years ago, but rather is truly lived and experienced in our lives each day we, as disciples of Jesus, carry our crosses and follow him.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Let us always bless the Lord,
let us sing his resurrection,
for by enduring for us the pain of the cross,
He has crushed death by his death.

—Hymn from Easter Sunday, *Byzantine Daily Worship*

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO VI

*Play the Echo 8 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

How does the dying and rising of Jesus explain everything in your life?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 8 (pgs. 89-100)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 571-664

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How and from what did Jesus's death on the Cross save us? How can you come to more deeply know and understand your need for a Savior?

2. Reflect on the following quote from St. Rose of Lima:

"Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we get to heaven."

When we look at a crucifix, what does the crucified Jesus reveal to us? How can we daily carry our crosses and offer our sacrifices to Christ?

3. Reflect on the following passage from the Letter to the Hebrews:

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

—Hebrews 4:14–16

Why should this passage give us so much hope? How does this give us confidence as we battle against sin and temptation in our lives?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 9 RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

In the Nicene Creed we profess, “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life.” The Holy Spirit fills our hearts and animates and gives us the grace and power to live the Christian life. This session will explore exactly who the third Person of the Trinity is and discuss his role in both the life of the Church and in the life of every Christian.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle them in the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.
Let us pray.
Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts
of your faithful.
In the same Spirit, help us to know what is truly right
and always to rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.
Amen.

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO IX

Play the Echo 9 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes. At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

When do you feel the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 9 (pgs. 101-110)
Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 683-747

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways that the Holy Spirit provides us an experience of God's presence?

2. Which of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit have you experienced most powerfully in your life? Which of the gifts would you ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen in your life?

3. Reflect on the following passage from the Letter to the Romans:

“The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with sighs too deep for words.”

—Romans 8:26

How does the Holy Spirit inspire and empower our prayer? How can we allow the Holy Spirit to help us to pray?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 10 THE CHURCH: REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council teaches that “the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.” (*Lumen Gentium* 1). The Church was founded by Christ to be the visible Kingdom of God on earth, and to bring about the unity of all humanity in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. This session will explore the mystery of the Catholic Church and also how the People of God in the Church share in the mission of Christ to, in a very real sense, continue his saving work on earth.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Father, you called your people to be your Church.
As we gather together in your name, may we love,
honor and follow you to eternal life in the kingdom
you promise.

—Prayer for the Dedication of a Church
Liturgy of the Hours, vol. III, 1596

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO X

*Play the Echo 10 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

Many people say yes to Jesus, but no to the Church. As Catholics we can never separate the two. Why not?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 10 (pgs. 111-123)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 748-810

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Some will say that they are spiritual and not religious, that they can love Jesus, but hate the Church. How does this view contradict the mission and actions of Jesus himself?

2. How do the People of God share in the mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King? How does this mission shape the way we live our daily lives as Christians?

3. Reflect on the following passage from Vatican II:

“Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself ‘according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal.’”

—*Lumen Gentium* 33

**How can we be the “salt of the earth” and living witnesses to our modern culture?
Into whose lives can we bring the good news of the Gospel?**

**STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER
GLORY BE**

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 11 THE CHURCH: THE FOUR MARKS OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

In the Nicene Creed every Sunday we profess: “I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.” These four marks of the Church stand at the very heart of the mission and nature of the Church, and if any one of these marks is removed or diminished, the Church as Jesus founded her would no longer exist. This session will explore why each of these marks is unique and important, and how each of these marks is, in some way, interrelated with all of the others.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Praised be to you, Lord, for your holy Church founded on the apostles,
where we are gathered together into your community.

Praise be to you, Lord, for the cleansing power of Baptism and Penance
that you have entrusted to your apostles,
through which we are cleansed of our sins.

—Intercessions from Common of the Apostles
Liturgy of the Hours, vol. III, 1668

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO XI

*Play the Echo 11 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

Which of the four marks of the Church do you find the most significant or inspiring?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 11 (pgs. 125-139)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 811-962

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Read the Pentecost account from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-13). The Pentecost event is known as the birthday of the Church. How are all four marks of the Church present at Pentecost?

2. How are the marks of the Church as one and apostolic interdependent?

3. What is the Magisterium of the Church and why is it so important? In what three ways does the Magisterium teach faith and morals infallibly? Why do you think the gift of the Magisterium and its teachings are freeing rather than a burden imposed upon you?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 12 MARY: THE CHURCH'S FIRST AND MOST PERFECT MEMBER

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel of John, we see the powerful scene in which Jesus gives to the Church his final gift: “Behold, your mother!” (John 19:27) Here we see Jesus inaugurating Mary’s role as mother of the Church. Therefore, it should be no surprise that from the very earliest time of the Church, Christians have turned to Mary as their spiritual mother for her prayers and her motherly help. This session will explore why Mary is not only the Church’s first and most perfect member, but how she is also the mother of the Church and each and every Christian’s spiritual mother.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone
who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your
intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you,
O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to you do I come, before you I stand,
sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,
but in your mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.

—Memorare

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO XII

*Play the Echo 12 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

Do you have a personal relationship with the Virgin Mary? If not, how do you think you can build one?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 12 (pgs. 141-149)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 484-507; 963-972; 2673-2677

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does Mary have a unique role in God's plan of salvation? How is Mary a model disciple for us to follow?

2. Many Christians believe that Catholics worship Mary? How would you explain to someone the falsity of this claim and how Catholics truly view and honor Mary?

3. Reflect on the following passage from St. John Paul II:

The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary's side as she is busy watching over the human growth of Christ in the home of Nazareth. This enables her to train us and to mold us with the same care, until Christ is "fully formed" in us (cf. Gal 4:19). —Rosarium Virginis Mariae, 15

Based on the above passage, why do you think that the Rosary is a particularly powerful prayer? How is Mary's intercession in the Rosary key to helping us become more like Christ?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.



ECHO

Bishop Donald Hying

PART I: THE CREED, EPISODE 13 OUR ETERNAL DESTINY

INTRODUCTION

What happens after we die? Is there life after death? Does what I do in this life really have eternal consequences? These are the questions that humanity has been asking since its beginning. For Christians, death is not the end of life; rather for those who hope in Christ, death is the entrance into eternal life. This session will explore the Christian view of death and eternal life and the Last Things: Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, and the Last Judgment.

STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world
in the name of God, the almighty Father,
who created you,
in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who suffered for you,
in the name of the Holy Spirit,
who was poured out upon you,
go forth, faithful Christian.
May you live in peace this day,
may your home be with God in Zion,
with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God,
with Joseph, and all the angels and saints.

—Prayer of Commendation
Order of Christian Funerals

STEP 2: WATCH VIDEO: ECHO XIII

*Play the Echo 13 video segment, which will last about 5 minutes.
At the end of the segment, discuss the following question.*

STEP 3: VIDEO REFLECTION QUESTION

How do you imagine Heaven? How do your experiences of love and experiences of the Eucharist and prayer form your ideas?

STEP 4: READ AND STUDY

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Chapter 13 (pgs. 151-162)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraphs 988-1065

STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How does the Christian view of death challenge the way you live your life here and now?

2. Why is the Church's teaching on Purgatory very good news? How does this teaching challenge you to grow in holiness?

3. Reflect on the following passage from the Letter to the Hebrews:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. —Hebrews 12:1-2 (NABRE)

Who is the cloud of witnesses? How are you “running the race” of the Christian life? Are your eyes fixed on Jesus as the ultimate goal of your life, or are other things getting in the way?

STEP 6: CLOSING PRAYER GLORY BE

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.