

Adult Faith Formation Presentations

The first set of presentations are for the core RCIA classes used at Good Shepherd, which generally last for about an hour and a half. Four of the classes use video episodes from Bishop Robert Barron's *Catholicism* series. The classes are listed in the order that we primarily teach them for our RCIA Program. Note that these presentations were developed specifically to teach these classes.

- (1) Introduction to RCIA
- (2) Lifelong Journey in Search of God
 - Including a *Catholicism* Episode
- (3) Having a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ
- (4) The Mass
- (5) The Liturgical Year
- (6) A Church Tour
- (7) Prayer
- (8) Christian Service
- (9) The Saints
 - Including a *Catholicism* Episode
- (10) Mary
 - Including a *Catholicism* Episode
- (11) Church History
- (12) The Bible (2 Parts)
 - Focus on the Hebrew Scriptures
 - Focus on the Christian Scriptures
- (13) The Teachings of Jesus
 - Including a *Catholicism* Episode
- (14) Morality
- (15) Summary
 - Including an Introduction to the Sacraments
- (16) Sacrament of Baptism
- (17) Sacrament of Confirmation
- (18) Sacrament of Eucharist
- (19) Sacrament of Reconciliation
- (20) Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick
- (21) Sacrament of Marriage
- (22) Sacrament of Holy Orders
- (23) Holy Trinity

The next set of presentations are not part of the core classes that one should take to become Catholic, and they are generally (but not always) longer, more detailed, and more advanced. These presentations are listed in alphabetical order. Note that these presentations were not necessarily developed to teach classes.

- (1) Abortion on Trial
- (2) Apologetics (2 parts)
 - Christian Apologetics (the Defense of Christianity)
 - Catholic Apologetics (the Defense of Catholicism)
- (3) Apparitions and Appearances of Mary
- (4) Art and the Catholic Church
- (5) The Catholic Martyrs of Uganda
- (6) Catholic Mysticism (3 Parts)
- (7) Catholic Religious Orders (2 Parts)
- (8) Catholic Theology 101 (2 Parts)
- (9) Catholicism in the United States (2 Parts)
- (10) Catholics in the Movies
- (11) Christian Churches and Denominations
- (12) Christian Music ... and the Catholic Church (Includes Imbedded Music)
- (13) Contemporary Christian Music ... including Contemporary Catholic Music (2 Parts)
 - Contemporary Christian Music (Includes Imbedded Music)
 - Contemporary Catholic Music (Includes Imbedded Music)
- (14) The Divine Office (Praying the Liturgy of the Hours)
- (15) Fathers of the Church (2 Parts)
- (16) The Future Church
- (17) Heroic Service
- (18) Jesus and the Holy Land (Includes Imbedded Audio Gospel Passages)
- (19) *Lectio Divina*
- (20) A Library of Catholic Books
- (21) Liturgical Ministries
- (22) Miracles of God
- (23) The Parables of Jesus (Includes Imbedded Audio Parables)
- (24) Prison Reform and Prison Ministry ... A Catholic Perspective (2 Parts)
- (25) The Prophets and Messianic Prophecies (Includes Imbedded Audio Scripture Passages)
- (26) Reasons to Be Catholic
- (27) The Rosary
- (28) Saint Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles
- (29) The Second Vatican Council
- (30) Secularism (2 Parts)
- (31) Short-Term Mission Trips
- (32) Social Teaching of the Catholic Church
- (33) Traditions of Christmas (Includes Imbedded Music)
- (34) Vatican City
- (35) The Wisdom of God (The Wisdom Books of the Bible, the Word of God)
- (36) The Youth and the Catholic Church

In addition, I have 10 games of Catholic Jeopardy.

Here are the 10 video episodes from Bishop Barron's *Catholicism Series* (which can be used for classes as well).

- (1) Amazed and Afraid: The Revelation of God Become Man***
- (2) Happy Are We: The Teachings of Jesus***
- (3) That Than Which Nothing Greater Can Be Thought: The Ineffable Mystery of God
- (4) Our Tainted Nature's Solitary Boast: Mary, The Mother of God***
- (5) The Indispensable Men: Peter, Paul, and the Missionary Adventure
- (6) A Body Both Suffering and Glorious: The Mystical Union of Christ and The Church
- (7) Word Made Flesh, True Bread of Heaven: The Mystery of The Liturgy and The Eucharist
- (8) A Vast Company of Witnesses: The Communion of Saints***
- (9) The Fire of His Love: Prayer and the Life of the Spirit
- (10) World Without End: The Last Things

***Used in the core RCIA classes.

Finally, here are additional topics—Topics on the Spiritual Journey (including abstracts)—that Nancy Cord-Baran, and Vince Bojan have developed. The first two topics each have a single presentation, while the other topics would have multiple presentations.

(1) Spiritual Discernment: The Ability to Recognize the Voice, Presence, and Action of God in Your Life

How often have we wished that God would simply speak to us unambiguously, without mincing words, in our native language? While this can indeed happen, most people of faith would agree that this (for better or worse) is not God's primary way of communicating with us. How then do we come to recognize God's voice, presence, and action in our lives? The ability to recognize these things is called spiritual discernment, and an ancient method of learning discernment involves a working relationship with a "spiritual director." A spiritual director is a specially-trained person whose function is to help individuals deepen their relationship with God by facilitating the discernment process in a manner which is as compassionate, objective, and non-judgmental as possible. Everyone can potentially benefit from spiritual direction, and even great Saints (like Mother Theresa and Teresa of Avila) needed spiritual direction in their lives.

In this one-evening, introductory presentation, the role of discernment and spiritual direction will be explained in the context of the spiritual journey. Ample time will be provided for questions and discussion.

This topic will be presented by Nancy Cord-Baran. Nancy is a Good Shepherd parishioner who has been a practicing spiritual director for the past 15 years. She is a graduate of Oasis Ministries' "Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides" and "Deepening Year for Spiritual Directors" programs. She is also a Commissioned Presenter with Contemplative Outreach for Centering Prayer, the Forgiveness Prayer, and Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Practice. Nancy is the coordinator for Contemplative Outreach of Central PA, the local chapter of Contemplative Outreach International.

(2) Introduction to Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a silent Christian practice for consenting to the presence and action of the Divine Indwelling. It is based on Matthew 6:6—as well as the teachings from the 14th-century text *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Saint Theresa of Avila, Saint John of the Cross, Father Thomas Merton, Father Thomas Keating, and

others. Centering Prayer is a method that renews the contemplative Christian tradition of silence, solitude, and simplicity in opening and deepening one's relationship with God. Practitioners will discover a level of prayer beyond asking for aid or offering praise—one that can lead to an intimate, graceful communion with God.

This topic will be addressed in a one-night, introductory presentation by Nancy Cord-Baran. Nancy is a Good Shepherd parishioner who is a Commissioned Presenter with Contemplative Outreach for Centering Prayer, the Forgiveness Prayer, and Centering Prayer as an 11th Step Practice. She is also the coordinator for Contemplative Outreach of Central PA, the local chapter of Contemplative Outreach International. She has been a practicing spiritual director for the past 15 years. Nancy is a graduate of Oasis Ministries' "Spiritual Direction for Spiritual Guides" and "Deepening Year for Spiritual Directors" programs.

(3) Contemporary, Practical Insights into the Nature and Practices of a Christian Spiritual Journey

From a Christian perspective, the spiritual journey can be thought of as the life-long trajectory by which we yearn to and eventually become more Christ-like. The landscape and processes of this journey can be, and often are, mysterious and confusing. Father Thomas Keating (1923-2018), a contemporary Cistercian monk, has synthesized perspectives on the nature of the spiritual journey using insights from modern psychology, and his broad and deep understanding of the church's spiritual perspectives and practices. His models bring clarity to aspects of human nature that lie at the heart of the spiritual journey. In this series of four or five presentations and discussions, we will use Father Keating's perspectives to address the following questions: (1) Why is it often incredibly difficult to hear God's voice and discern God's actions in my life? (2) Why do I see myself gravitating towards the same "sins" repeatedly throughout my life, and why is it so hard to break those patterns? (3) What kinds of practical tools are available to help me better understand both myself, and God's calling, so that I can be more attentive to the aspects of my personal journey that are in need of transformation and Grace? (4) What kinds of pragmatic tools and practices are available to help me remain steadfast, while promoting genuine growth on my spiritual journey?

(4) A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life: Perspectives, and a Framework from Richard Rohr and Paula D'Arcy

Father Richard Rohr (OFM) and Paula D'Arcy are internationally-known teachers on many topics associated with the spiritual journey. An audio recording of their presentations at a conference addressing "a spirituality for the two halves of life" was generated, and within that recording, they discuss the nature of a "healthy spirituality" that can be associated with each half of life.

The first half of life is primarily concerned with the development of our egoic identities, and the establishment of purpose, careers, vocations, families, and relationships. We build structures and strengthen perceptions and belief systems that are used to find and experience love and acceptance, power and control, security, and self-actualization. As life unfolds, invitations to "second-half-of-life spirituality" invariably appear by means of losses, failures, or circumstances that are unexpected, traumatic, or beyond our control/comprehension. These experiences invite us to develop a second-half-of-life maturity that accepts life as it is, while learning to transform and release the ego-driven framework that defines first-half-of-life spirituality. The nature of the journey into second-half-of-life spirituality is often very different for men and women, especially regarding motivations and actions involving power and control. Men in many cultures typically structure their lives and decisions in ways that allow them to steadily increase power and control throughout life. Women, however, must often deal with substantial losses of power and control much earlier in life than men. Regardless of gender or circumstances though the personal transformations that accompany healthy second-half-of-life, spirituality allows our priorities and motivations to come more into alignment with those of Christ, while we learn to allow ourselves to be led in new, life-giving ways by the Creator of all things.

The perspectives above will be explored within a series of six or seven two-hour gatherings, wherein the group begins by listening to about an hour of the audio recording, with subsequent discussion and faith sharing around the material which is presented. The total length of the audio recording is about 6-1/2 hours.

(5) An introduction to the Enneagram: A Powerful Tool for Self-Knowledge on the Spiritual Journey

Contemporary psychology has provided important and practical insight into emotional and physical needs that are common to all human beings, regardless of gender or cultural upbringing. Among the most prominent are (1) the need to love and be loved, (2) the need for some sense of power and control, (3) the need for security, and (4) the need to self-actualize (*i.e.*, to discover, use, and develop the potential and actual abilities that one possesses). The egoic dimension of the human psyche has an outsized investment in developing conscious and unconscious strategies and perceptions to (a) get these needs met and (b) cope somehow when they are not met. The transformation and re-purposing of these egoic “seeking” and “coping” strategies is one hallmark of the spiritual journey. For a Christian, the transformation and re-purposing occur as a consequence of an intimate relationship with God that deepens and grows in its scope over some segment of a lifetime.

The Enneagram is an ancient tool that provides profound (yet easy to understand) insight into the thought and behavioral patterns that characterize our seeking/coping strategies, and the motivations behind them. The information within the Enneagram encompasses both psychological and spiritual growth and development. It provides clear insight into healthy and unhealthy patterns of attacking and reacting to life’s circumstances.

Father Richard Rohr, and many others, have done a considerable amount of work to make the Enneagram an accessible and very useful tool for the types of self-knowledge that are essential to the spiritual journey. An introduction to the Enneagram will be given in a series of 4 or 5 two-hour presentations, with ample time for questions and discussion.