

Junior High

Growing in Prayer

Task 4: Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ



. . . the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him.

. . . Prayer is *Christian* insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ's love.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2565

396
1/12/2010

Session I ∞ Introduction to Prayer

Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth ~ pages 304-307
Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers ~ pages 460-466

Total Catechesis Handbook published by Saint Mary's Press pg. 16

Matthew 21:18-22 (Whatever you ask for in prayer, you will receive.)
 Ephesians 6:18 (Pray in the Spirit at all times.)
 Philippians 4:6 (Do not worry, the Lord is near.)
 James 5:15-16 (Pray for one another.)

Catechism	Content	Teacher Notes
• 2558	• God as Creator reaches out to each person giving them His faithful and steadfast love. Our minds think about these blessings from our loving God. Our hearts respond to God's love with gratitude and a desire to love Him in return.	
• 27, 30	• God desires to have a personal relationship with each person. He created in every human a longing and desire for Him.	
• 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A great saint who lived hundreds of years ago stated, "Your have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. (St. Augustine) • Growing in spirituality also requires that a person listen to God. Listening to God occurs when a person can be quiet before God. God cannot be heard speaking as though one can hear God with human ears. Rather, God gives the gift of grace to know His will. By listening to God the heart will be moved to 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2559 • 2559 • 2564 • 2558 • 2565 	<p>love God more, and love other people who are created in His image.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying is communication with God. Praying is both thinking about God and allowing the heart to be moved by love for God. In all good relationships a person thinks a lot about another and has love for that person. • A person must be humble when praying. Humility recognizes that God is Creator and Lord of all. Humility teaches us that we are God’s creatures and are totally dependent on Him. Through humility each person is able to see that the good within them comes from God alone. We also recognize that we can turn away from Him by choosing what is wrong and sinful. • Scripture helps us to understand that we have a covenant relationship with God. • Scripture speaks of a covenant relationship as having two commitments. God’s commitment is the first part of the covenant. The Old Testament affirms God is Lord of the Covenant. His love is steadfast, meaning He will always be faithful. The other part of the covenant is the person’s response. A person can accept or reject their part of the covenant relationship. It is their choice. • By having faith in God and saying ‘yes’ to Him, a person strengthens their personal relationship with God through prayer. Prayer must become a habit. People stay in touch with others by communication, such as talking. Prayer is talking to God and becoming familiar with Him through daily communication. • During His life on earth, Jesus prayed to His Father in heaven. He was taught by his mother, Mary. When He went to the temple He prayed with others. • Prayer can be private or communal. Private means praying alone. Communal prayer is gathering together with others to pray. The Church calls us to pray as a community as well as in private. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke 18:9-14
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2691 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the celebration of the Eucharist the people of God pray together in a parish church. They are united to Christ in their worship. Through Christ the gathered community is joined to the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Trinity. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2655 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because all members of the Church gathered in prayer are united to the Blessed Trinity, they are also a worldwide community all participating in the sacramental liturgy of the Church. • The worldwide community prays together through the Church's Liturgical Year. • Just as the secular world has a special calendar to help people celebrate events so does the Church. The Church's calendar is called the Liturgical Year. This calendar helps the universal Church to celebrate together. For example, all Catholic celebrate the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on January 1st. • The Liturgical Year begins on the First Sunday of Advent which usually falls in late November or early December. • The Liturgical Year is divided into seasons: Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, and Easter. Each season has its own liturgical color. • The seasons of Advent and Lent are represented by violet which symbolizes that these two seasons are times of penance. During Advent the Church prepares, waits and performs acts of penance for the coming of Christ at Christmas. Lent is a very penitential season in which the Church recalls the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. • The seasons of Easter and Christmas are represented by white which symbolizes joy and purity. Easter and Christmas are times of great celebration in the Church. Easter is the most important season of the Liturgical Year because it celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ which confirms that all He said was true and He brought salvation for each person. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinary Time is represented by green which symbolizes the new life won by Christ. During Ordinary Time the Church celebrates the events of Christ’s life and the saving power of God throughout all of history. • Almost every day in the Liturgical Year remembers a special event or saint, these are called Feast Days. On the many Feast Days of the saints who died as martyrs the liturgical color will be red to represent the blood shed by the saint to protect the Faith. • Prayer is a gift of God’s grace. People who are faithful to regular prayer speak of the effects in their lives. They grow in virtue, overcome temptations and are more loving as people. 	
	<p>Prayers students should know by heart:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross • Angel of God • Our Father • Morning Offering • The Hail Mary • The Angelus • The Apostles’ Creed • Act of Contrition • The Glory Be To the Father • Act of Faith • Act of Hope • Prayer before and after meals 	
	<p>Helpful Websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic Answers www.catholic.com 	

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia www.newadvent.org/CATHEN• Eternal Word Television Network www.ewtn.com• The Official Catholic Directory www.catholicway.org• Catholic First www.catholicfirst.com• Scripture Catholic www.scripturecatholic.com | |
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Activities: Total Catechesis Workbook / Prayer pp. 17-19; #1-9

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2629-2633 • 2634-2646 • 2637-2638 • 2639 	<p>Body of Christ exposed on an altar. During Eucharist Adoration a very decorative holder called a monstrance contains the wafer of bread that has become the Body of Christ during the consecration at Mass. With the attitude of the faith, many Catholics find it fruitful to come to adore God in this atmosphere of silence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petition is the form of prayer which asks God to grant requests. The Scriptures state: “Ask and you shall receive.” The prayer of petition is a very common form of prayer. Sometimes in their human desires a person prays for something that is ultimately not good for them, thus God in His goodness answers their prayer in an unexpected way. We must remember that God always hears our prayers. If a prayer is not answered in the way a person expects that does not mean that the prayer is unanswered. God answers all prayers according to His wisdom which desires the greatest good for each person. • Prayers of intercession are very similar to prayers of petition. Intercessory prayers ask God’s help for other people. At Mass the prayers of intercession pray for the needs of many, always beginning with the intentions of the Holy Father. • Intercessory prayer asks for healing of the sick, aid for the poor, faithful marriages, vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, etc. Intercessory prayer is very important and powerful. • Prayers of thanksgiving are powerful and important prayers. God our Father and Creator is the giver of all gifts, some seen and others unseen. At the Mass or celebration of the Eucharist, the very meaning of ‘eucharist’ is thanksgiving. A heart that is grateful gives thanks for all the blessings and goodness God gives. Even suffering brings about various blessings if properly accepted. St. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “give thanks in all circumstances.” • Prayers of Praise recognize that God is the One who is above all others. This 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1407 • 1406 • 1416 	<p>prayer expresses love for the God who IS. Singing hymns is a common way of praying prayers of praise. The Book of Psalms from the Old Testament has many psalms of praise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many times a special prayer to the Trinity is said. This prayer is: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen. • During the Liturgical Year (the Church’s Year) the expression ‘alleluia’ is heard. This word means “Praise the Lord.” • The greatest prayer of praise and thanksgiving is the celebration of the Eucharist, the Mass. The Church requires of each Catholic to participate by going to Mass each Sunday. • The Gospel of John, 6:51, 54, 56 reveals that Jesus is the living bread who comes down from heaven to nourish us. If we believe in Christ and worthily eat the bread and drink the wine which has been consecrated to become His body and blood, we will have eternal life forever with God in heaven. • Through the Mass we are united with Christ and our lives over time are changed so that we have a greater desire for goodness and truth. We become like Christ as we grow in love and are united to all people through love/charity. True happiness is found by allowing God to change our lives so that we may bring the way of Christ to all people. 	
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Activities: Total Catechesis Workbook / Prayer pp. 45-47; #1-6

Session III *✧* Personal Prayer

Chapter 33 – Catholic Faith Handbook
Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth pages 323-327
Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers ~ pages 474-477

Total Catechesis Handbook published by Saint Mary’s Press pg. 57

Psalm 46:10 (Be still, and know that I am God.)

Psalm 77:11-12 (I will meditate on all your works.)

Mark 6:30-32 (Jesus and the disciples rest for a while.)

Catechism	Content	Teacher Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2700-2704 • 1324 • 2700 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayers can either be said by oneself or in a group. Prayers said by oneself are known as personal prayer. Prayers said in a group are known as communal prayer. • Personal prayer is communication between God and each person which helps to nourish our relationship with Him. Because God is love, mystery, and beyond what can be imagined, each person can never exhaust growing in deeper union and experiencing a constant strengthening of a personal relationship with Him. Just as married couples who are faithful to their commitment grow closer through constant love and communication, even more does a growing relationship with God grow through personal prayer. • There are three common methods of prayer: vocal, meditation, and contemplation. These three common methods of prayer can be practiced both in personal prayer and communal prayer. In Eucharistic liturgy, which is the source and summit of the Christian life, we pray in common with other people using vocal prayer and meditation. In ‘Lectio Divina’ a person prays meditatively and contemplatively. In devotional prayers, such as the Rosary or Novenas, a person prays vocally and meditatively. • Vocal prayer is a very important way of praying out loud with the voice. In 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2702-2704 • 2005 • 2709 • 2713 	<p>vocal prayer the voice is used to say the words of the prayer, the mind is attentive to the words that are said, and the heart, stirred by love, becomes attentive to the mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each person is made up of body and soul. The body expresses itself through appropriate gestures which come from the desire for God arising from the soul of each person. When in human life, a person experiences the absence of a loved one, the soul longs to see that person again. In a similar way, the ‘soul longs for God’ and through prayer the soul expresses reverence for God bodily, by kneeling, bowing, etc. • Meditation is a form of prayer which thinks about the truths of God. Scripture reveals God’s directives for living love and truth. Taking passages of Scripture and prayerfully thinking about them is meditation. This requires silence and a presence to God. Meditation helps us to think about how we are living in accord with God’s truth and goodness. It stirs the heart to a greater desire to love. Meditation leads us to talk to God in silence. It also uses the imagination and the emotions. These in turn strengthen the desire for God. • God is present to each person who is meditating on His truths. Humility helps us to recognize that we are God’s creatures, this life is temporary and we journey to eternal life with God for all eternity. • Contemplation is the highest form of prayer. It is a gift of love given by God to a person who chooses to be with Him through a loving personal relationship. A person cannot achieve contemplation by their own efforts. It is a gift of God given to those who are faithful to prayer. • Contemplative prayer is a peaceful being with God. As two people who have a strong bond of love and can be together in one’s presence lovingly without talking, so it is in contemplation that God speaks to a person’s heart without the person needing to pray with words or thinking about images. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A famous story tells about an elderly gentleman who would go to Church to be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. He was lovingly aware of God's presence and described the experience of just 'being with God'. This is contemplation.• God is the giver of all gifts. Maybe not all people arrive at contemplation. The important thing is to accept God's will, whatever God wants to give. There should be no competition with prayer. To the faithful person of prayer, God will transform their lives as He so desires.	
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Activities: Total Catechesis Workbook / Prayer pp. 58-61; #1-7

Session IV Challenges of Prayer

Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth ~ pages 327-331
Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers ~ pages 467-469

Total Catechesis Handbook published by Saint Mary's Press pg. 74

Jeremiah 29:11-13 (For I know the plans I have for you.)

Mark 9:14-29 (Help my unbelief.)

Philippians 3:13-16 (I can do all things through him who strengthens me.)

Catechism	Content	Teacher Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2725 • 2752 • 2752-2753 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our covenant relationship with God is strengthened and continues to grow as we are faithful to prayer. God is always present to us with love and faithfulness. • Each person must make an effort to be faithful to prayer. During our life on earth we are challenged to choose good or evil. Everyday choices must be made to overcome sinful tendencies in order to choose the good. It is a discipline to say morning and night prayers, and to attend Mass on Sundays. God's life within each person helps them to be loving people rather than mean and angry towards others. • To live in the Spirit of Christ we must pray to grow continually in virtues of love, kindness towards others; and standing up for what is true, good and God-like. Humility helps us to acknowledge areas of weakness within ourselves. • There are many challenges to staying faithful to prayer. Young people who choose to develop talents in sports, music or other areas must develop a routine and be faithful to practicing so they become experts. It is the same with prayer. Through discipline a person should pray to God each day; 	

	<p>should fight against it and go aside to pray. Dryness can be a temptation for a person not to pray. Being too busy is another type of temptation not to pray.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A more serious form of dryness is called ‘acedia’ – an indifference to prayer because of one’s own laxity or sloth/laziness. To move beyond this state of mind calls for real conversion.• Two holy women, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, one of the three female Doctors of the Church, experienced dryness in prayer throughout her life. She never gave into it and continued to pray faithfully. A more recent deceased holy woman, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, experienced darkness and dryness for many years. She never gave into the feeling of dryness, rather she prayed for hours everyday and served God by caring for the poorest of the poor.• Dryness should never keep us from prayer or attending Mass on Sunday.	
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Activities: Total Catechesis Workbook / Prayer pp. 75-78; #1-9

Session V  **Praying with the Scriptures**
Lectio Divina

Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth ~ pages 332-341
Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers ~ pages 287 “Live it,”
473 “Did you know,” and 474-476

***Total Catechesis Handbook* published by Saint Mary’s Press pg. 86**

Psalm 145:18 (God is near to all who call.)

Matthew 6:6-8, 14-15 (Jesus speaks about prayer.)

John 1:1-15 (The Word became flesh.)

Catechism	Content	Teacher Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very special method of praying is using the Bible, also called the Scriptures. The Scriptures contain God’s very own revelation. The Church assures us that all the Scriptures are divinely inspired by God. • Faith is believing what we cannot see with the human eye. Faith lets us know that as we grow in our personal relationship with God, prayer is our conversation with Him. Our conversation with God can become more special by using God’s word as found in the Bible. • ‘<i>Lectio Divina</i>’ is a Latin expression which means ‘holy reading’. It has been practiced for thousands of years. It began in the early monasteries founded by St. Benedict who lived from AD 480-547. • There are four steps for <i>Lectio Divina</i>. • The first step of <i>Lectio Divina</i> is to read the word of God. God speaks to us when we read about the people and events of the Bible. The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts as we read from the Bible with a special attentiveness, listening to how our hearts are moved. The mind thinks about what the words are 	

trying to teach us.

- After reading we go to the second step which is meditation. Meditating is an activity of the mind which invites us to think of what God is trying to tell us.
- The third step is called 'oratio' which means prayer. After thinking about what has been read, the heart begins to talk to God about the Scripture and what it means to them and how it can help them grow in their love of God. God is the giver of life and each person must recognize their need for God's grace. Only God can give the strength to become more like Him – good, truthful and loving.
- The fourth step is contemplation; simply being in God's presence quietly, knowing He created you, loves you and wants a personal relationship with you.
- People who truly grow in their relationship with God never stay the same. They change to become more loving and happy. They grow to be truly free, choosing the good even when it is difficult.
- 'Actio' or action is a result of praying *Lectio Divina*. It is not a part of this way of praying but it is a fruit. The person who prays acts with greater charity in many ways.
- All people struggle to choose the good over what is bad or evil. Our lives on earth are a journey towards God. At our Baptism we received God's grace (His own life) in our souls. However, each day each person must strengthen their will to choose the good.
- There are many evils in the world around us. We have the tendency to do the wrong or be mean to others. Praying strengthens us to choose good. This brings true happiness.
- The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, is the Spirit of love. At Confirmation we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We must pray to the Holy

Session VI Catholic Prayers and Devotions

Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth ~ pages 319, 344, 345-349, 380-387 and 399-427

The Rosary: 307

Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers ~ pages 479, 500-510

Total Catechesis Handbook published by Saint Mary's Press pg. 117

Luke 1:36-56 (Mary's visit with Elizabeth.)

Luke 1:68-79 (The canticle of Zechariah.)

Catechism	Content	Teacher Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1674-1676 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic prayers and devotions are pious practices of the Catholic Church. They assist people to grow in their life of faith and prayer. People choose various devotions for various times in their life. A devotion recommended for everybody is the recitation of the Rosary. • Of the many devotions that are popular, seven will be discussed in this session. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Eucharistic adoration, ② Novenas, ③ The Sign of the Cross, ④ Prayer to the Holy Spirit, ⑤ The Rosary, ⑥ The Advent Wreath, and ⑦ Stations of the Cross • <i>Begin this session VI with 'Talking Points'</i> <i>Ask the students:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the first (traditional) prayer you learned? (Do not lead the youth to give personal information but get them to talk in general about prayer) 2. Since studying about prayer, what have you learned about prayer that you didn't know before? 	

3. Do you know people who have special devotions in their lives? Why do you think these are important for them?

• **Eucharistic Adoration:**

- * A very special devotion is the adoration of Christ out-side of the Mass. A consecrated host is put in a monstrance and placed upon the altar. Because the host was consecrated at Mass, it is the Body and the Blood of the person, Jesus Christ. Believing this in faith, people go to a Church or Chapel where there is exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
- * Christ is always present in the tabernacle at Church. However, taking the host from the tabernacle and exposing it for people to adore allows them to be in His presence at other times in a special way. It is God's greatest gift of love that He gives Himself each day at Mass. Thus, the Church extends the gift of God's presence by providing times for people to come and adore him.
- * In the diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend the Bishop allows special chapels for adoration, all day and all night. In Fort Wayne at St. Jude's parish and St. John the Baptist parish, there are chapels of adoration, 24 hours a day. In South Bend, Corpus Christi parish has daily adoration from 5:00 am in the morning until 10:00 pm each day. In Mishawaka, the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration allow the public to join them for adoration from 7:30 am Monday - Friday and 8:00 am on Saturdays and Sundays until 7pm each day. Parishes have special adoration times maybe half a day, once a week.
- * People who make this devotion a special part of their lives experience a growth in love of God and their lives become more spiritual.

• **Novenas:**

- * A novena is a special devotion of nine days of prayer. A novena can take place before a feast commemorating a mystery of Christ's life or the feast of a special Saint.
- * After Christ ascended to heaven, He sent his Holy Spirit, the third

<p>• 2159</p> <p>• 683-747</p> <p>• 971, 2678, 2708</p>	<p>person of the Trinity, to the Apostles who were with Mary (Acts 2:1-41). The presence of the Holy Spirit took the form of tongues of fire. This event became known as Pentecost, the birth of the Church. Each year there is a novena in preparation for Pentecost, praying for the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>* Many who have devotion to Saints such as St. Joseph, St. Thérèse of Liseux and others pray novenas, by praying for special intentions.</p> <p>• The Sign of the Cross:</p> <p>* This is a ritual gesture which honors the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Made with the right hand and with reverence, the Sign of the Cross is made by touching the forehead, the chest and two shoulders while saying: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. This devotion is used at the beginning and end of prayers as well as during the sacraments, especially Baptism and Confirmation.</p> <p>• Prayers to the Holy Spirit:</p> <p>* The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit, sometimes symbolized as a dove, is the Spirit of love and truth. The Holy Spirit's mission is the Church, assisting in making it holy and faithful to God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. He brings God's grace to all people through the sacramental life, bearing the fruits of new life. He inspires all who pray to Him with many gifts of grace.</p> <p>• The Rosary:</p> <p>* The Rosary is a powerful and popular devotion which focuses on the twenty mysteries of the life of Christ. It began in the 13th century when St. Dominic was said to receive it from our Blessed Mother Mary. Mary's special place in the Church is to assist in the fulfillment of the mission of Christ. The rosary is prayed with beads divided in sections of ten. On Sundays and Wednesdays the Glorious Mysteries are prayed, on Tuesday and Fridays the Sorrowful, on Monday and Saturdays the</p>	
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Joyful, and on Thursdays the Luminous Mysteries are prayed.

• **The Advent Wreath:**

* During the four weeks of Advent, a time of waiting for the commemoration of the birth of Christ, the Advent Wreath is a popular devotion to begin the Liturgical Year of the Church.

• **The Stations of the Cross:**

* During Lent, people make these prayers a remembrance of how Christ suffered and died for our **Salvation**.

Activities:

- Eucharistic adoration: If a parish has Eucharistic Adoration during the school day, take the students over for about 15 min., allowing them time before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Another opportunity would be to ask the Pastor to provide them with Benediction and allow them 10-15 min of time for Adoration.
- Go on one of the Catholic web sites, listed on page 4, and find a novena in honor of the Blessed Mother or St Joseph. Make a copy of a novena and teach them how to pray this devotion.
- On a Catholic website, find a prayer to the Holy Spirit. Pray it from time to time in class. If possible make them a copy and encourage them to pray it on their own.
- If they do not know how to pray the Rosary, go on a Catholic web site and locate a document that will teach them how to pray the Rosary. Explain to them the four sets of Mysteries pertaining to the life of Christ and what days they are used.
- During the season of Advent, create an Advent wreath for the class. Find the prayers on a Catholic web site that would be said each week.
- Find on a Catholic web site all the Stations of the Cross. Teach them to understand how each of the stations takes them through Christ's passion and death. Ask different children to create a prayer for each station. Take them over to the Church during Lent, walk them through the stations and allow the appropriate prayer to be read and prayed at each station.