

WHY WE'RE CATHOLIC

Summary & Discussion Questions

PART 2: JESUS AND THE BIBLE

Christianity is not simply belief in a book or a set of ideas. It is faith in the risen Jesus Christ, who revealed the Trinity, entrusted His teachings to the Church, and continues to speak to us through Scripture and Tradition.

Ch. 6 - Why we Believe in Jesus

Jesus is unique because He didn't merely teach about God—He claimed to be God.

1. Every major world religion has something to say about Jesus. Some say He was a prophet, a teacher, or a holy man.
2. But Jesus claimed something much greater—He claimed to be God.
3. If Jesus was not God, then we must explain His claims. He was either:
 - a. A liar,
 - b. A lunatic,
 - c. Or He was telling the truth.
4. The evidence we have from Scripture and historical sources shows that Jesus was a real historical person, and belief in His divinity was not a legend invented centuries later.

Questions & Application

- Who is Jesus to you personally?
- What historical evidence supports Jesus' existence?
- Why is Jesus unique among religious leaders?

Ch. 7 Why We Believe in the Resurrection

If Jesus rose from the dead, then everything He taught carries divine authority.

1. Christianity stands or falls on one event: the Resurrection.
2. Even skeptical historians generally agree on several facts:
 - a. Jesus was crucified.
 - b. He was buried.
 - c. His tomb was found empty.
 - d. His followers claimed to see Him alive.
 - e. The Apostles were willing to suffer and die for that belief.
3. Alternative explanations such as fraud or hallucinations explain some facts but not all of them.
4. The Resurrection best explains the entire set of historical evidence.

Questions & Application

- Why is the Resurrection central to Christianity?
- How does belief in the Resurrection affect your view of death and suffering?
- What alternative explanations for the Resurrection are discussed?
- Which evidence do you find most compelling?

Ch. 8 Why We Believe in the Trinity

The Trinity reveals that God is an eternal communion of love.

1. Christians believe in one God—not three gods.
2. The mystery of the Trinity teaches that:
 - a. The Father is God.
 - b. The Son is God.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is God.
 - d. Yet there is only one God.
3. A helpful distinction is:
 - a. **Being** = what something is.
 - b. **Person** = who someone is.
4. You are one being and one person. God is one divine being who exists eternally as three divine Persons.

Questions & Applications

- Which Person of the Trinity do you most naturally relate to in prayer?
- What aspects of the Trinity are difficult to understand?
- Why does the Church teach one God in three Persons?
- How does the Trinity shape Christian life and prayer?

Ch. 9 Why We Believe in the Bible

The Bible helps us know God's plan and encounter Jesus personally.

1. The Bible tells the story of God's plan of salvation.
2. The Old Testament prepares for the coming of the Messiah.
3. The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ and the beginning of the Church.
4. Catholics trust Scripture because it is inspired by God and preserved by the Church Christ founded.
5. "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." —St. Jerome, a fourth-century Bible scholar who produced the world's most popular Latin translation of the Bible.

Questions & Applications

- How was the Bible formed?
- Why do Catholics trust Scripture?
- What role has Scripture played in your faith journey?

Ch. 10 Why We Aren't Bible Only Christians

The Bible comes from the Church, and Scripture and Tradition work together to preserve Christ's teachings.

1. The first Christians did not have a New Testament.
2. They learned the faith through:
 - a. The teaching of the Apostles,
 - b. The worship of the Church,
 - c. And Sacred Tradition.
3. The Bible itself never teaches that all Christian teaching must be found in Scripture alone.
4. Catholics believe God's revelation comes to us through:
 - a. Sacred Scripture,
 - b. Sacred Tradition,
 - c. And the teaching authority of the Church.

Questions & Applications

- How have Scripture, Tradition, and the Church helped shape your faith?
- Why isn't Scripture alone sufficient?
- What role does Tradition play?
- How did the early Church function before the New Testament was completed?

Part 2 Applications

- Read one Gospel passage this week and ask yourself what Jesus is inviting you to do differently.
- What fear or burden can you place more fully in Christ's hands because of the hope of the Resurrection?
- Begin and end each day this week with a conscious prayer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Commit to reading and praying with a passage of Scripture every day this week.
- Learn about one Church teaching or practice that you have never fully understood.