The Church
Sacrament of Salvation

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Congratulations! You have been entrusted to help others grow in their love of God by growing in their knowledge of the Catholic Faith. Whether the participants in your sessions will be high-school students attending religious education classes, adults who want to learn more, or inquiring non-Catholics who want to learn about the Faith, we have made this Presenter's Guide to help every participant better comprehend the material in the book.

We have also designed the Presenter's Guide to aid you in your presentation, covering one chapter per session. We encourage you to tailor the activities and questions to your participants, taking into account their knowledge level, what they hope to get out of these sessions, and the amount of time you have to meet. For example, you might choose to forego the Opening Activity altogether if your participants have not yet read the material, or you might choose to omit some of the Focus Questions if you are pressed for time.

As the presenter, your tendency might be to schedule more activities and questions than can be completed in the amount of time that a session lasts. Start out with less, and have a few questions or activities in mind if there is time at the end of a session. You should have no problem, for example, introducing a discussion topic from an earlier section after having presented the whole chapter.

There is at least one exercise in each chapter, be it a Guided Exercise or Closing Activity, that is focused on helping each participant make a personal connection to the material. It is recommended that you identify this one and make time to cover that activity with the participants during the session.

It is a good idea to open and close each session with a prayer. You might choose to use the same prayer to open and close each session, especially a popular prayer such as the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, or the Glory Be. If you prefer, each session has a suggested Opening Prayer that is related to the chapter.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Overview of Chapter 1

Be sure you and each of the participants have a copy of this book:

The Church: Sacrament of Salvation, Parish Edition
Available from MTF at www.theologicalforum.org

At the time of registration, give each participant a summary of Chapter 1 and have him or her read Chapter 1 before the first session.

You might want your registrar to reproduce and distribute page 62 in this guide to the participants.
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCH

Key Ideas

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- The Church is the assembly of God’s people on earth.
- God created the universe to share his beatitude with creatures, especially human beings; hence, he created the universe for the Church, the communion of the friends of God.
- Salvation history is God’s initiative to bring humanity back into communion with him: it began with the Fall, culminated in the Death and Resurrection of the Incarnate God, and is applied to humanity through the mission of the Church.
- The Church can be described with images like the Body of Christ, the People of God, and the Kingdom of God.

Vocabulary List

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- Church — In its fundamental sense, the convocation of God’s people called together by Christ. Its root is the Hebrew word qahal, or “assembly,” and the Greek word ekklesia, or “called out.” (p. 3)
- Covenant — It is a solemn agreement between God and people — an agreement that involves mutual commitments and promises. (p. 3)
- Diocese (archdiocese) — A territorial jurisdiction of the Church, ordinarily governed by a bishop (or archbishop). (p. 4)
- Mystery — Something that cannot be fully explained or understood, or whose meaning cannot be completely exhausted. (p. 4)
- Christ or Messiah — Literally, “the anointed one.” (p. 4)
- Creation — God’s bringing forth the universe and all its inhabitants into being out of nothing. Creation is good, yet it has been corrupted by sin. (p. 4)
- Communion — The state of being united together in friendship. (p. 6)
- Matrimony — The Sacrament of Marriage, by which a man and a woman, in accordance with God’s design from the beginning, are joined in an intimate union of life and love, “so they are no longer two but one.” Adam and Eve, our first parents, were created by God in a state of marriage. (p. 7)
- Sabbath — The Sabbath — or seventh — day on which God rested after the work of the six days of creation was completed. In honor of Christ’s Resurrection, Sunday, the new Sabbath, must include rest from servile labor and the worship of God as required by the Third Commandment. (p. 7)
- Devil — A fallen angel, who sinned against God by refusing to accept his reign; also called Satan or the Evil One. (p. 8)
- Fall — Biblical revelation about the Original Sin which introduced sin in human history, as narrated in the Book of Genesis. (p. 8)
- Original Sin — Adam and Eve’s abuse of their human freedom in disobeying God’s command. As a consequence, they lost the grace of original holiness and justice, and became subject to the law of death; sin became universally present in the world; every person is born into this state of Original Sin. This sin separated mankind from God, darkened the human intellect, weakened the human will, and introduced into human nature an inclination toward sin. (p. 8)
- Salvation history — The gradual process by which God has redeemed sinful humanity. (p. 8)
AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following or incorporate the Scripture passage that is referenced in the Opening Activity (cf. Mt 16:13-21; see below):

Let us give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. All things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the Church.

(Liturgy of the Hours, Evening Prayer, from the Canticle of Colossians 1:12-20)

Overview of the Chapter

If you did not have the registrar distribute the summary to the participants, read the summary (p. 62 in this guide) to them.

Opening Activity

Have the participants complete the Opening Activity (p. 2).

Key Ideas

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p. 3).

A PEOPLE CALLED TOGETHER

(pp. 2-4)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 3 and the TOP of page 4.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. In what Old Testament context is the idea of “church” rooted? It is rooted in the idea of assembly, or qahal; specifically the people of Israel who assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive God’s Law. Qahal is Hebrew for “assembly.”

2. Describe several meanings for the word “church.” “Church” variously refers to the entire People of God, the local (or diocesan) Church gathered around her bishop, and the local liturgical community (or parish).

3. Why is the Church a “mystery”? It is a mystery because it cannot be fully understood or explained.

4. What are some of the ways in which the Church is described? The Church is variously described as the Mystical Body of Christ, the People of God, and the Kingdom of God.

THE CHURCH AND CREATION

(pp. 4-5)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on the BOTTOM of page 4.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.
Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

5. “God created the universe for his Church.” Explain. God created the universe to share his beauty, goodness, and truth with us so that we may live in perfect communion with him and share his divine life as the one People of God.

6. Did God have any need to create the universe or anything in it? No. God is perfectly happy in himself.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 5).

THE CREATION OF HUMANITY

(pp. 6-7)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 6-7.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

7. What does it mean to “fill the earth and subdue it”? It means that human beings are to have children and develop creation through their work.

8. What is the main reason God created human beings? God created us so that we could share in his divine life and be in communion with him and with one another.

9. How can the ideas of good creation and the Fall summarize the first three chapters of Genesis? God created the “good” universe and the “very good” Adam and Eve, who soon fell from grace.

10. What is communion? It is the state of being united together in friendship.

11. What does it mean to be created in the image and likeness of God? It means we are created with an immortal soul, a rational intellect, and free will.

It also means belonging to a community of persons and being made a son or daughter of God.

12. What is the significance of work? Human work is part of God’s plan, a way in which we can live in the image of God. We “subdue” the earth in imitation of God who made the earth.

13. Why did God create the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day of rest from work, so that we can express our communion with God through prayer, worship, and other activities.

SALVATION HISTORY; CONCLUSION

(pp. 8-10)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 8.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

14. What is salvation history? It is the gradual process by which God redeemed fallen humanity.

15. How did Adam and Eve fall from grace? They disobeyed God’s will and committed the first sin.

16. What two lies did the serpent tell Eve? The serpent implied (1) that God coveted his own knowledge and power and (2) that they were not already “like God.”

17. What did Adam and Eve reject when they disobeyed God? They rejected both God and being children of God.

18. What do we inherit from Adam and Eve? We inherit Original Sin and a loss of original grace.

19. How was Bl. Williams’s apostolic work different from most missionaries? He re-evangelized fallen-away Catholics after the French Revolution.

20. What do political rulers often want to do to the Church? They often try to separate the Church from her hierarchy and make her subordinate to the state.
CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Closing Activities

Have the participants complete the Closure or Alternative Assessment (pp. 9-10).

Ask the participants to answer the Discussion Questions (p. 10; answers below). These can be given as a quiz or used to lead a class discussion.

Discussion Questions (p.10)

1. In what Old Testament context is the idea of “church” rooted? It is rooted in the idea of assembly, or qahal; specifically the people of Israel who assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive God’s Law. Qahal is Hebrew for “assembly.”

2. Describe several meanings for the word “church.” “Church” variously refers to the entire People of God, the local (or diocesan) Church gathered around her bishop, and the local liturgical community (or parish).

3. “God created the universe for his Church.” Explain. God created the universe to share his beauty, goodness, and truth with us so that we may live in perfect communion with him and share his divine life as the one People of God.

4. Did God have any need to create the universe or anything in it? No. God is perfectly happy in himself.

5. What is the main reason God created human beings? God decided to share his divine life with us so we could be in communion with him and with one another.

6. How can the ideas of good creation and the Fall summarize the first three chapters of Genesis? God created the “good” universe and the “very good” Adam and Eve, who soon fell from grace.

7. What does it mean to be created in the image and likeness of God? It means we are created with an immortal soul, a rational intellect, and free will.

8. What is salvation history? It is the gradual process by which God redeemed fallen humanity.

9. How did Adam and Eve fall from grace? They disobeyed God’s will and committed the first sin.

Overview of the Next Chapter

Read this summary to the participants:

Chapter 2 presents how God prepared his people for his Church. This chapter looks at the promises and covenants that God made with the great figures of the Old Testament—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David—and how they foreshadow the founding of Christ’s Church.

Key Ideas of the Next Chapter

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p. 12). These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- After the Fall of Adam and Eve, God promised to send a Redeemer.
- God made a covenant with Noah that he would never again destroy the world by flood.
- God made a covenant with Abraham that he would make him the father of a nation and bless every nation through him.
- Through Moses, God created a covenant with the nation of Israel to be his son with the Israelites a priestly people obeying the Ten Commandments.
- God promised that David’s kingly heirs would be sons of God, with the Temple on Mount Zion as the nation’s spiritual center, and wisdom the nation’s new law.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION

Read the Next Chapter

Have the participants read Chapter 2 before the next session.

Closing Prayer

End the session with a closing prayer. Examples include the Lord’s Prayer, the Hail Mary, or the Glory Be.

NOTES

PRESENTER’S GUIDE
Chapter 2:
GOD PREPARES FOR HIS CHURCH

Vocabulary List
These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- **Protoevangelium** — God's first promise that he would send a Redeemer, a “seed” of Eve who would bruise the head of the serpent, the Devil (Gn 3:15). (p. 13)

- **Ark of the Covenant** — An ornate box that held the tablets of the Law (Ten Commandments), the rod of Aaron, and some manna; it represented God's throne on earth. (p. 16)

- **Gentiles** — The non-Jewish people of the world. (p. 16)

- **Manna** — A kind of bread “from Heaven” given by God to the Hebrews as their daily food to sustain them during their years of wandering in the desert. (p. 16)

- **Monotheism** — The belief that there is only one God. (p. 16)

- **Passover (Pasch, Pascha)** — A Jewish feast commemorating the deliverance of their firstborn males from death by the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts while in bondage in Egypt; the angel of death passed over their homes, allowing them to leave Egypt for the Promised Land. This was a type of the sacrificial Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, saving men from bondage to sin. The Eucharist celebrates Christ's Passover. (p. 16)

- **Plagues on Egypt** — Any of the ten torments God sent upon the people of Egypt in an effort to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. The plagues were: river turned to blood; frogs; lice; flies; sick animals; boils; hail; locusts; darkness; and the death of every firstborn child. (p. 16)

- **Christ** — Greek for “anointed.” This is used in reference to Christ because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission of priest, prophet, and king, signified by his being “anointed” as Christ. The Hebrew word for this is *messiah*. (p. 18)

- **Consecration** — The act of separating someone or something apart as holy and devoted for a particular purpose. Israelite kings of the Old Testament were consecrated by being anointed with sacred oil. Today, we refer to the consecration of individuals to the priesthood, the religious life, or to ministry as a bishop; in the context of the Mass, we also refer to the consecration of the bread and wine by which it becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. (p. 18)

- **Levites** — The priestly class of Israel, members of the tribe of Levi. (p. 18)

- **Mount Zion** — The hill on which the oldest part of Jerusalem was built. A poetic name for the city of Jerusalem. (p. 18)

AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE SESSION

**Opening Prayer**

*Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following or incorporate the Scripture passage that is referenced in the Opening Activity (Lk 1:26-38; see below):*

> Lord, our God,  
> Savior of the human family,  
> you brought salvation and joy to the house of Elizabeth  
> through the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
> the Ark of the new Covenant.  

> We ask that, in obedience  
> to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,  
> we too may bring Christ to others  
> and magnify your name by the praise of our lips  
> and the holiness of our lives.  
> We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.  

*(Novena to the Immaculate Conception, Fourth Day, Introductory Prayer)*