

Accompanying notes for parents/catechists to use with 'Discovering God Within'

'I bless you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to mere children'. (Matthew 11:25)

Aims and objectives:

The aim of this film is to enable children to develop and deepen their understanding of the Church's teaching from Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The objective is to explore the interior life of the soul, using authentic, orthodox catechesis, enhanced by visual effects. Please note that these effects, rather than having literal connotations, are used purely as pedagogical tools designed to stimulate imagination.

This film is aimed at families in general, and at children aged 8-12 years in particular. In addition, it can be invaluable for adults, where initial catechesis may have been weak. It can be used alongside any First Holy Communion programme, in order to help prepare children interiorly, as well as exteriorly for this wonderful Sacrament. It is important to note that, in order to understand all the allegorical imagery used in the film, initially it must be played from the beginning.

What is Evangelisation?

Evangelisation:- the word has Greek origins and it means 'to announce the Good News' namely the Gospel Message. Catholic Evangelisation is the **TOTALITY** of one's journey of faith which continues through life. It is very much to do with **MESSAGE**.

What is Catechesis?

Catechesis is essentially the **PASSING ON** of what has been previously received. It's like an **ECHO**. So it is more than just teaching; it is teaching **PLUS** the witness of conversion within the catechist i.e. the expression of the Holy Spirit at work within him or her, helping to inspire a new generation to live out, and pass on the Catholic Faith in all its fullness and beauty.

What is the New Evangelisation?

It is The Church's call for a New Evangelisation, in which the Catholic Faith is joyfully proclaimed anew, in all its beauty, depth and vigour. It aims to respond to the great need of our times – the need for a New Evangelisation of our culture at every level.

What is Pedagogy?

Pedagogy, in catechesis (or teaching in general), refers to a way of using visual or other forms of stimuli to put across a message, outside the actual text of what is being taught. This might include the use of music, images, computer graphics or even metaphor, but

in order for this to be effective, it must be beautiful, engaging and stimulating without diluting or undermining the message.

So the pedagogical tools used in this film lend themselves to helping children to perceive God through the use of mystery to stimulate the imagination. Children are naturally drawn to these through play, because a child-like acceptance of mystery feeds the imagination, leaving no limits as to where these can lead. The film will encourage children to think more deeply, and explore the presence of God by allowing their minds to transcend to a supernatural level that moves beyond the natural world around them. In essence, it is a means of contemplating God.

The Pedagogy of God

There is nothing new in the use of pedagogy in the handing on of The Faith. ‘As a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations’ (*General Directory for Catechesis n.139*)

We see examples of this throughout Holy Scripture, for instance through the use of local example and metaphor in the parables and prophetic writings, through poetry in the Psalms and Song of Solomon and through image-rich revelation in the Book of the Apocalypse.

FILM CONTENTS

The film is divided into four chapters, and each chapter starts with an electronic ‘Chapter Marker’ on the actual film. Further, each chapter is divided into sub-sections with an electronic ‘Standard Marker’ at the start of each sub-section on the actual film. This gives natural breaks to pause regularly for questions.

Each sub-sub-section finishes with a one-line summary on-screen, and these one-line summaries are reproduced here, underlined, at the end of each sub-section, as follows:

Chapter one - Our Relationship with Christ

1. The Soul:

‘Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity’ (*GS 14§1*). ‘The doctrine of the faith affirms that the spiritual and immortal soul is created immediately by God’. (*CCC 382*)

The soul is that spiritual part deep within us.

2. Grace:

‘Grace is a participation in the life of God. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ ... It is the sanctifying or deifying grace received at Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification’ (*CCC 1997-1999*).

Grace is a free, undeserved gift of loving help from Our Father in Heaven.

3. The Most Holy Trinity:

‘The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself’ (CCC 234). The unity of substance and distinction of persons - known as the ‘Trinitarian formula’ - was expressed by St Gregory Nazianzus and affirmed by Pope St Damasus 1 at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381: ‘The Trinity is one substance, Three Persons’. It is declared at Sunday Mass in the Nicene Creed.

God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit.

4. Mystery:

‘Mystery ... requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God’ (CCC 2558).

Hidden in God, and revealed out of love for us to enter into.

Chapter two - Sin and its effects

1. The Origin of Sin:

Sin originates from Adam and Eve - our first parents - who chose to disobey God in the Garden of Eden.

2. The Ten Commandments:

‘The gift of the Commandments is the gift of God himself and his Holy will. In making his will known, God reveals himself to his people’ (CCC2059).

The Ten Commandments are the ten worldwide laws given directly by God to Moses on Mount Sinai.

3. Personal Sin: a) Venial Sin, and b) Mortal Sin.

Venial Sins are those sins which are not serious enough to be classed as ‘Mortal Sins’. They damage our relationship with God, by weakening the divine life of the soul.

Mortal Sin is so called because it is serious enough to kill the divine life of the soul. Such sin needs three conditions: that it is ‘grave matter’ (ie that it is gravely wrong); that it is committed in full knowledge; that it is committed with full consent. ‘Mortal Sin destroys charity in the heart of man by a grave violation of God’s law; it turns man away from God, who is his ultimate end and his beatitude, by preferring an inferior good to him’ (CCC 1855).

All sin occurs through the absence of love. It goes against the will of God.

4. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation - or 'Confession':

'Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offence committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins' (CCC 1422).

The Sacrament of Penance is the way Christ heals the wounds of Sin through a Priest.

5. Spiritual childhood:

'Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it' (Luke 18:17).

St Therese of Lisieux wrote at great length on spiritual childhood, such as the notion of remaining little. She searched Holy Scripture for an easy way to heaven, such as a lift, because she felt too little to climb the steep staircase to holiness. She found her lift by imagining the arms of Jesus that would take her to heaven. She had no desire for the need to grow up, and instead she felt she must stay little and become more and more so.

'I bless you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to mere children' (Matthew 11:25)

Spiritual childhood is about knowing our need of God, and having complete dependance on him, in order to become holy.

6. Holiness:

'... the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is cleverly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints' (CCC 2013 also citing Mt 5:48 & LG 40).

'All are called to holiness: 'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect'

Chapter three - Holy Mass

The Mass, built around the Eucharistic sacrifice, lies at the very centre of all the Church's worship. In fact it is 'the source and summit of the Christian life' (LG 11).

1. The Mystery of the Mass:

What we see and hear during the Mass seems very ordinary, because our limited, earthly minds cannot understand what is really going on. The truth of what is happening, is hidden under a veil which we call mystery, and we accept this truth through faith.

'If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy' – St. Jean Vianney.

2. Supernatural time and space:

Remember that the word supernatural means 'above and beyond' the laws of nature. This is different from earthly space and time, since it is not of this earth: it is of God.

Thus, the full and correct name for the Mass is the 'Holy Sacrifice of The Mass', since Christ is still being sacrificed there on Calvary, because the altar and Calvary occupy the same supernatural space and time, and this remains so for ever.

During Holy Mass, the Sanctuary of a church enters supernatural time and space.

3. Sacrifice:

But even more so, in the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ in The Mass, we perfectly achieve four important things: we honour God; we thank him; we achieve communion with him; and we receive pardon for our venial sins.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrifice of Christ himself 'because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ the Saviour ... since it completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant [*as in the Old Testament*]' (CCC 1330).

Sacrifice means giving up something precious to us, in order to do good to another, and so to please God.

4. The miracle of The Eucharist:

In the Eucharist, the gifts of bread and wine actually become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ, through a miraculous process called Transubstantiation, where the 'substance' of Christ becomes real on the altar.

'When Mass is being celebrated, the sanctuary is filled with countless angels who adore the Divine Victim immolated [*sacrificed*] on the altar' – St. John Chrysostom.

The gifts of bread and wine actually become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ.

5. Parts of The Mass:

The structure of the Mass involves these five parts: the Introductory Rite; the Liturgy of the Word; the Liturgy of the Eucharist; the Communion Rite and the Concluding Rite.

The Introductory Rite is where we all prepare together for the rest of the Mass.

The Liturgy of the Word is the reading, or singing, of Holy Scripture, finishing with the gospel.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the central section of the Mass, in which the sacrifice on Calvary is 're-presented', and where Jesus Christ is made present on the altar.

The Communion Rite is when we receive Our Lord in Holy Communion.

The Concluding Rite is where we are blessed and sent out into the world to spread the Good News.

Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist - the greatest miracle on Earth.

Chapter Four - Our Lady; The Church; The Four Last Things

1. Our Lady

Mary was without sin from the moment she was conceived in her mother's womb. She became Mother of God by bearing Jesus Christ, even though she was a virgin, and remained so. She was always without sin, was taken body and soul into heaven, and is the Mother of the Church as well as our spiritual mother.

Through Our Lady, we come closer to God in trust, love and virtue.
She shows us a safe and easier way to Heaven

2. The Purity of Mary.

'The splendour of an entirely unique holiness by which Mary is enriched from the first instant of her conception comes wholly from Christ: she is redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son. The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places and chose her in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love. (CCC 492)

Mary who, being free from sin, was able to bring into the world the glory and perfection of God

3. Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

The celebrated Catholic writer, St. Louis De Montfort, had a particular devotion to Our Lady. He tells us that God the Holy Spirit gave his gifts of grace to Our Lady – his spouse, to be dispenser of all he possesses, and has left in her charge, the decision of giving as much grace as she chooses.

'Mary, Holy spouse of the Holy spirit' (DOMINICAE CENAE John Paul II Feb 1980 - citing St Francis and St Louis de Montfort)

Mary is Spouse of the Holy Spirit because there is a mystical, divine union with the Holy Spirit by whom Our Lord was conceived in the hidden depths of her womb.

4. Mary, Mother of us all.

Mary is Mother of us all, because when Jesus was dying on the cross, he said to her 'Women behold your son', and to St. John: 'Behold your Mother. **Jn.19:26-27**

The Son whom she brought forth is he whom God placed as the first born among many brethren, that is, the faithful in whose generation and formation she co-operates with a mother's love.' (CCC 501)

Jesus is Mary's only Son, but her spiritual motherhood extends to all men whom indeed he came to save.

5. Mary, Mother of the Church

'The Catholic Church taught by the Holy Spirit, honours her [Mary] with filial affection

and devotion as a most beloved mother' (LG 53)

'We believe that the Holy Mother of God, the new Eve, Mother of the Church, continues in heaven to exercise her maternal role on behalf of the members of Christ' (CCC 975, citing Paul VI, CPG §15)

Mary became Mother of the Church when Christ, on the Cross, said to John the Evangelist: "Behold your mother!" (Jn 19:27).

6. The Church

The four marks of The Church: One; Holy; Catholic and Apostolic.

The Church is one because of her source, the Blessed Trinity, and her founder, Jesus Christ. The Church 'acknowledges one Lord, confesses one faith, is born of one Baptism, forms only one Body, is given life by the one Spirit for the sake of one hope' (CCC 866).

The Church Is Holy because 'the Most Holy God is her author ... her holiness shines in the saints; in Mary she is already all-holy' (CCC 867). Her members, the baptised People of God - though sinners - can become holy, through living sacramental lives, especially by receiving the Sacraments of the Church.

The Church Is Catholic The word 'Catholic' means 'universal', and so the Church is for all people and in all ages.

The Church Is Apostolic because she is founded on the apostles, and through the valid Sacrament of Ordination down the ages, to us today, 'Christ governs her through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors, the Pope and the college of bishops' (CCC 869).

A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and Spiritual Grace

7. The Four Last Things.

7.1: Death

Death is the end of our earthly life, and the moment when our body and soul separate. From then on we can no longer choose between good and evil.

'For those who die in Christ's grace it is a participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can also share his Resurrection.' (CCC 1006)

Death is when our earthly body dies, but our soul lives on for ever.

7.2: Judgement

Each person at the point of death man receives from God ‘a particular judgement that refers his life to Christ’ (CCC 1022). Thus, during life, we should regularly be asking God for mercy and help in staying free from sin, and regular receiving the Sacrament of Confession.

We shall be judged by God, in terms of the way we have lived our lives

7.3: Heaven beginning with Purgatory

‘All who die in Christ's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.’ (CCC 1030)

Purgatory means to cleanse and make pure, for anyone less than pure will not be fit for heaven.

Heaven

We shall experience joy and peace as we've never known it, and live together with The Blessed Trinity, Our Lady, the saints and angels forever. ‘This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with The Trinity, with the virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed – is called 'heaven'. Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness. (CCC 1024)

In heaven, we shall have been made perfect, and shall be able to see and understand the life of God totally

7.4: Hell

As such, it is a place of deep misery and, while still alive, we need to do our best to avoid this happening after death. We also need to warn others of this danger.

‘We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbour or against ourselvesTo die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. (CCC 1033)

Hell is the complete separation from God, forever.

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Church document references:

CCC = *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

GS = *Gaudium et Spes*

LG - *Lumen Gentium*

CPG - *Credo of the People of God. ('Solemni Hac Liturgica': Paul VI 1968)*