



TEACH US TO PRAY

PRAYING THE PSALMS



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic* media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level. As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the emotional content of our faith rather than the intellectual content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to

build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video magazine” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group

settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (*story segment*), testimony (*witness segment*) and song (*musical reflection segment*) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (*teaching segment*) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

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- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the ***witness segment*** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the ***teaching segment***. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the ***musical reflection segment***.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence should prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader’s guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program. It includes the following features.

- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** for the *story, witness* and *teaching segments*; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the *musical reflection segment* provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an “elapsed time” counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an “elapsed time” counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

TEACH US TO PRAY **PRAYING THE PSALMS**

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The “Teach Us to Pray” programs are a “mini series” within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed for small groups gathering for prayer and faith formation, the RCIA, youth ministry and high school religious education. Each video explores how to pray, drawing from Scripture, Catholic tradition and the insights of teachers and authors on spirituality.

If you’re learning to pray, where better to start than with God’s prayer book? “God’s prayer book” is a good way to describe the biblical Book of Psalms. For thousands of years, God’s people have turned to the psalms for prayers to fit almost every human emotion. Whether we are feeling joy, sorrow or gratitude—even if we question God—our emotions can find expression in the psalms.

The Book of Psalms is a collection of prayers that were meant to be *sung*. Like our modern hymnals, most of the psalms were composed for use in public worship. But believers down through the ages have made them part of their private prayer as well. Because the psalms began as songs, much of this *Catholic Update Video* uses music as a way to help us get to know the psalms better.

Our *story segment* features a conversation with contemporary religious composer David Haas. His music is used for both liturgical worship and personal meditation throughout the United States and beyond. David shares with us why music and prayer go together. He illustrates with musical examples how the psalms capture human emotions. He also shares with us

how, as a religious composer, he finds inspiration to express these ancient prayer-songs in contemporary melodies. At the end of this program in our *musical reflection segment*, David returns to offer an extended music meditation for his setting of Psalm 139.

More music ministers join us in our *witness segment*. We talk with members of St. Agnes Church choir, Cincinnati, Ohio, about how singing, especially in public worship, helps their personal prayer to grow.

In our *teaching segment*, spiritual writer and teacher Gloria Hutchinson presents a brief overview of the Book of Psalms. She also offers practical ways to incorporate the psalms into daily prayer.

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- faith-sharing, prayer and study groups;
- music ministers*;
- adults who are learning about prayer in the RCIA process; and
- high school students in their religious education classes.

** This program lends itself well for use with music ministers, especially during a day of recollection or faith formation. This guide contains some special **Questions for Sharing and Suggestions for Use** written specifically for music ministers. Another program in the Catholic Update Video series that would be useful with such a group is A Walk Through the Mass (D2060).*

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 3:00 into program.)

Summary

Catholic Update Video producer, Father Greg Friedman, O.F.M., interviews composer David Haas in a sound studio. Greg invites David to talk about his personal experience praying with the psalms and how he composes contemporary music to accompany these ancient song-prayers. David illustrates his answers with examples of his work.

David begins by talking about the connection between music and prayer. He defines prayer as conversation with and about God and sees music as one of our most powerful forms of communication. Music can communicate thoughts, emotions, feelings and beliefs in a unique and powerful way. He suspects that Jesus probably sang when he prayed.

As song-prayers, the psalms are musical in their very essence; they combine their words and music to speak the language of the heart. David believes the Book of Psalms is the most human book in the Bible. Psalms speak to the whole range of emotions and expressions—joy, praise, thanksgiving, suffering, and even the feeling of the absence of God.

He refers to the writing of Scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann, who suggests three groupings of the psalms in his book *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*, Augsburg Publishing House, 1984:

- psalms of orientation—express assurance about God (example: Psalm 127);
- psalms of disorientation—express feelings of chaos, despair (example: Psalm 6) and

- psalms of reorientation—express a *new* way of seeing things (example: Psalms 148-149).

The power of the psalms is in the fact that they remain timeless in expressing nearly every possible human emotion. (Later, in the *teaching segment* of this program, Gloria Hutchinson will offer another set of categories in which to group the psalms.)

Ancient musical accompaniment for the psalms has been lost; all that remains is the words. Composers must use their own experiences to compose music for the psalms. David finds it helpful to begin by studying the scriptural text in order to understand the context in which the psalm was written. He uses his personal experience to get in touch with the emotions of the psalm but remembers that he is writing liturgical music for a community, not just personal prayer. He works to “enshrine” the words in sounds that communicate the tone and message of the psalm.

David relates a personal story to illustrate how a psalm gave him words when his own were not enough. On the occasion of the death of a young child of some friends, David composed a song to Psalm 131 and sang it at the child’s funeral. The words of the psalm, combined with his musical composition, offered comfort to his friends.

David uses the psalms for his personal prayer as well as for his ministry of composing and performing. The psalms are a place to go to help him figure out how to handle where he is on his journey of faith as well as what God is saying to him. The psalms remind him that prayer is listening as well as talking. They are a springboard for his creative work. There, he celebrates the power of their poetry.

Suggestions for Use

Those who have little or no prior knowledge of the Book of Psalms will benefit from some preparation before viewing this segment. You may begin with some sharing about the power of music to communicate and touch us deeply (see Question 1 below). Explain that David Haas is a contemporary Christian composer and that many hymns and liturgical songs are based on psalms. Explain that the Book of Psalms is a collection of song-prayers in the Bible and that the psalms cover nearly every possible human emotion. Share a few brief examples of some different psalms or provide each person with a Bible and give them a few minutes to page through the Book of Psalms. After viewing, use the following or similar questions for sharing.

For music ministers:

Music ministers know well the power that music has to convey emotions and to enhance prayer. Most will recognize David Haas as a liturgical composer. They will also likely recognize that psalms are the basis for much liturgical music. While the information David shares may not be new to them, the perspective he shares as a fellow music minister may help enhance their own experience and understanding of their ministry. Before viewing the segment, invite them to reflect and share about the emotions some of their favorite liturgical songs express. After viewing, use the following or similar questions for sharing.

Questions for Sharing

1. David says that music is one of our most powerful forms of communication. When have you experienced the power of music?
2. What emotion most frequently draws you to prayer? Has a psalm ever been helpful in expressing this emotion?

3. What psalm has been most meaningful for you?
4. What do you think of David's suggestion that Jesus probably sang when he prayed?

For music ministers:

5. What personal experiences help you to convey, through your music, the message of the psalms?
6. When have you used your music to communicate something that simple words were unable to?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 17:30 into program.)

Summary

Several members of the choir of St. Agnes Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, under the direction of Reginald Butler, share their experiences of singing and praying. As people of faith, they find that music helps them to pray. As music ministers, they offer the gift of song to assist the assembly in its prayer. Their comments include the following themes:

- the power of song to communicate and touch people;
- music helps express emotions;
- music opens up our senses;
- music is an aid to personal prayer;
- the music of our souls is always playing a song that God put there;
- involvement in music ministry enhances the experience of Sunday liturgy; and
- every person's voice is beautiful to God's ears.

Suggestions for Use

The thoughts and insights shared by the choir members

interviewed may help non-musicians to appreciate this ministry in a new way. Those who participate as part of the Sunday Eucharistic assembly may find their own “singing through prayer” enhanced by learning how the choir members express their own prayer through song. Music ministers may find some of their own feelings and experiences expressed here. In both cases, the segment may be used to move the group to personal sharing about the experiences of combining prayer and music. Use the following or similar questions to help with this sharing.

Questions for Sharing

1. When has music helped you to pray?
2. Do you sing at Mass? Why or why not?
3. What is your favorite song/hymn used at Mass at your parish? What emotion does it express?
4. What was said that expressed your own experience?
5. What was said that helped you to see the relationship of music and prayer in a new way?

For music ministers:

6. What personal benefit do you gain from your involvement in music ministry?
7. How has your personal prayer grown and changed since becoming involved in music ministry?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 22:30 into program.)

Summary

Gloria Hutchinson, teacher for this segment, likens the Book of Psalms to a roller coaster ride because of the

range of conflicting emotions contained within it. She tells us something of the history, variety and qualities of the psalms. The following outline summarizes her presentation.

I. There is great variety and intensity in the 150 psalms found in the Book of Psalms.

- A. The language of the psalms speaks to our hearts like all great poetry.
- B. The psalms remind us that all authentic prayer embraces all that is human.
- C. The psalms transport us deep into the Church's inner life.

II. What are the Psalms?

- A. The Book of Psalms is a collection of hymns used for centuries in worship and private prayer.
- B. The Book of Psalms is divided into five parts, each ending with a doxology or expression of praise.
- C. The psalms may be divided into six overlapping categories.
 - 1. *hymns of praise*.
 - 2. *laments* (The faith of the singer presumes the Lord has already heard the lament and saved the psalmist or the nation from calamity.)
 - 3. *royal songs* (Here the king speaks to God on his own or the nation's behalf.)
 - a. Seventy-three psalms are attributed to King David.
 - b. Scripture scholars note that few reflect his character and that his authorship is probably limited to a few psalms.
 - 4. *wisdom psalms* (These often echo other wisdom literature; they may give advice or propose a beatitude.)

5. *liturgical psalms* (These were sung in the Temple as well as in our Eucharistic celebrations.)

6. *historical psalms* (These recall God's marvelous works on behalf of Israel.)

III. The psalmists are secure in their relationship with God and so “come as they are” before God.

- A. They don't hide their strong emotions—desire for revenge, rage at injustice, hatred for enemies, fear of death, heartbreak over betrayal.
- B. The honesty of the psalmist (especially when expressing vengeance) reflects that they have not been enlightened by the nonviolent teachings of the New Testament. This “healthy venting” may prevent the feelings from leading to sinful deeds and may lead to growth in compassion.

IV. All Catholics are encouraged to pray the psalm-based Liturgy of the Hours which is at the heart of monastic and religious life.

- A. Various versions of the Liturgy of the Hours are available at Catholic bookstores.
- B. Individuals may use the following order to create their own prayer using the psalms.
 - 1. Read and meditate on a psalm that expresses what you want to say to God.
 - 2. Read and reflect on a brief Scripture passage of your choice.
 - 3. Pray one of the Gospel Canticles (Mary: Luke 1:46-55 or Zechariah: Luke 1:68-79).
 - 4. Express your needs in petitions from your heart.
 - 5. Close with the Our Father.

V. The psalms invite us into an intimate relationship with our God. However we pray

**them, we are praying on earth the songs of
God's kingdom.**

Reference: *Praying the Psalms* by Walter
Brueggemann, St. Mary's Press, Winona, Minnesota,
1986.

Suggestions for Use

Gloria provides a general overview of the Book of Psalms. This is a good introduction for those not familiar with the psalms. Those who use individual psalms in their prayer and who know that psalms are a regular part of the church's prayer will appreciate the wealth of this collection of song-prayers. Music ministers and choir members may come to a better appreciation of the root of many of the songs they sing and play. The connection to the centuries of others who have prayed these same words may give one a strong sense of the Communion of Saints. The fact that Old Testament writers had the same feelings that we have today may help some turn to the Old Testament with new interest and openness.

If the members of the group are generally unfamiliar with the background to the psalms, leaders will find it helpful to give the group some time to page through the Book of Psalms both before and after viewing the video segment. Invite group members to share a few lines from a psalm and try to pinpoint the emotion/feeling being expressed.

Leaders of groups who already have some familiarity with the Book of Psalms might ask group members to share a favorite psalm. (Since many of us have a familiarity with the psalms and yet may have difficulty recalling their numbers, it may be helpful to provide each participant with a Bible and allow them to page through the Book of Psalms.) Those who come

upon a familiar and personally meaningful psalm may share a few lines from it and try to pinpoint the emotion/feeling being expressed. In an established group with a good level of comfort among its members, sharing on a more personal level may be suggested. Those who wish to share may be encouraged to talk about times when they brought that particular emotion to their prayer.

The following or similar questions may be used for sharing and discussion.

Questions for Sharing

1. What did you learn about the psalms that you hadn't known before?
2. Gloria says that the language of the psalms speaks to the heart like all great poetry. When has a psalm or poem spoken to your heart?
3. How do you feel about expressing negative emotions in prayer? What has been your experience with this? How does such prayer fit in with your relationship to God?
4. The psalms invite us into an intimate relationship with God. What do you think an intimate relationship with God looks like? How close are you to achieving this?

For music ministers:

5. What category of psalms is your favorite? What does this reveal about your relationship with God?
6. Have you ever prayed the Liturgy of the Hours? How does/might it enhance your prayer?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 31:00 into program.)

Summary

David Haas performs his treatment of Psalm 139. This well-known and loved psalm is a hymn to our all-knowing and ever-present God. In it the psalmist reflects on the truths that God sees us wherever we are (1-6); that God is always present to us (7-12); and that God created us, knows us and loves us (13-18). In response to God's love and presence, we resolve to abhor the wicked and to sincerely follow God's way (19-24).

Suggestions for Use

Activity

1. Have participants look up and take some quiet time reading the first several verses from a few well-known psalms or provide them with copies of some verses. A sampling of some of the better known psalms might include Psalms 5, 8, 13, 23, 25, 27, 34, 51, 62, 70, 91, 98, 100, 103, 118, 130 and 139.
2. Instruct each to write the first lines of his or her own psalm, expressing a current need or feeling. This might be done with some instrumental music playing in the background.
3. Invite sharing.
4. View the *musical reflection segment* as a closing reflection. (An alternate translation of this psalm, such as found in the *New American Bible*, may be helpful for reference before or after viewing.)

Prayer Experience

1. Begin with the following or similar opening prayer:
Loving God, we long to know you intimately and to be known by you completely. In times of joy as well as sorrow, we place our trust in you. As we gather to pray, we bring to you our deepest longings and

needs. We offer them to you, confident that you will lovingly accept whatever is in our hearts.

2. Invite those gathered to spend some time in quiet reflection on what they most need to say to God at this time.
3. Explain the activity suggested above and allow time for those gathered to begin writing their personal psalms. If this activity was completed at an earlier time, invite those who are comfortable to share their psalms with the group.
4. View the *musical reflection segment*.
5. Offer a closing prayer reflecting some of the needs and emotions shared in the group.
6. Conclude with a psalm of thanksgiving such as Psalm 100 or sing a song based on a psalm that is known to those gathered.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

The best Scripture reference to learn more about the psalms is the Book of Psalms itself.

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* addresses the psalms in 2579, 2585-2589, 716 and 1093.

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- Approximate times are noted where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an "elapsed time" counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an "elapsed time" counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the "review" mode [i.e., while the VCR is in "play"] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

TEACH US TO PRAY **PRAYING THE ROSARY**

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The “Teach Us To Pray” programs are a “mini series” within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed for small groups gathering for prayer and faith formation, the RCIA, youth ministry and high school religious education. Each video explores how to pray, drawing from Scripture, Catholic tradition and the insights of teachers and authors on spirituality.

This program has been created to offer insights into a prayer that people the world around identify with the Catholic faith. Many Catholics have a strong devotion to praying the rosary. We find a richness in this Marian prayer that leads us to meditate on significant events in Jesus’ life—the mysteries of our salvation. The rosary is, as Paul VI described it, the “epitome of the whole Gospel” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 971).

Catholics acknowledge Mary’s unique role in the life of Jesus and find in her a model for discipleship. “Because of Mary’s singular cooperation with the action of the Holy Spirit, the Church loves to pray in communion with the Virgin Mary, to magnify with her the great things the Lord has done for her” (*Catechism* 2682) and for us.

The rosary is a prayer of meditation that can lead us to a deeper relationship with Jesus. The repetition allows us to be drawn into the prayer and focus on the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries. “Christian prayer tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in...the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him” (*Catechism* 2708).

Our program explores the inspiration and history behind this devotion and explains how to pray the rosary according to Catholic tradition and practice. We will hear the ordinary and extraordinary stories of people who have found the rosary a help in uniting their hearts to Christ's.

The *story segment* is the true account of Father Sigfrid Schneider, O.F.M., a missionary in China from 1931-1953. While imprisoned by the Communist government, Father Sigfrid fashioned a rosary from the thread of a sock. The story of his missionary zeal and devotion to Mary is recounted by four of his nephews who are Franciscans.

In the *witness segment*, we hear from a variety of Catholics who share what praying the rosary means in their lives.

In the *teaching segment*, spiritual writer and teacher Gloria Hutchinson traces the history of the rosary and explains—step by step—how to pray it.

Our program concludes with a prayer in music and imagery in the *musical reflection segment*. It is a prayerful meditation featuring original artwork depicting the 15 mysteries of the rosary, accompanied by instrumental versions of three traditional Marian hymns and voices in a variety of languages reciting the Hail Mary.

Viewers interested in obtaining a resource that will lead them in praying the rosary will find the audio Mysteries of the Rosary (A8351) from St. Anthony Messenger Press helpful.

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- faith-sharing, prayer and study groups;

- adults who are learning about prayer in the RCIA process; and
- high school students in their religious education classes.

STORY SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 3:00 into program.)

Summary

Our *story segment* is a documentary about Father Sigfrid Schneider, O.F.M., told by four of his nephews who are also Franciscan friars. These men begin by sharing their childhood impressions of and encounters with “Uncle Sig.” Since Father Sigfrid spent most of his years of ministry as a missionary in China and later Japan, his visits with family were limited but quite memorable to his nephews.

The Franciscans’ Chinese missions were threatened first in the 1930’s by the Japanese invasion of China, then by World War II, and later in the 1950’s when the Communists gained control of China. In May 1951, Father Sigfrid was arrested and imprisoned, spending 29 months in prison. He faced trumped-up charges of killing orphaned babies entrusted to his care in a Catholic orphanage, of being a spy for the U.S. government, and of illegal use of funds as procurator of the Catholic diocese. His eventual punishment for his “crimes” was exile from China. His missionary activities resumed in Japan, however, within several years of his exile. He died there in 1987.

What Father Sigfrid did while imprisoned and in solitary confinement is key to our story. While deprived of human contact, books and anything that had to do with the Catholic faith, he fought to keep his mind and spirit alive and active. He tried to remember everything

he had ever learned in school. He prayed from memory. He said the rosary on his fingers until that drew suspicion from the guard. He eventually fashioned a rosary by tying knots in threads unraveled from a worn-out sock. He added a cross made from a bamboo chopstick and a piece of wood from his bed.

The Communists did many things to try to break his spirit and to get him to confess to his “crimes.” He spent a total of 16 months in solitary confinement and endured hours of interrogations. He was taken before firing squads and then returned to his cell. He was given minimal food and care—just enough to prevent his suffering a martyr’s death. Through it all, he endured with God’s help. His strong faith and devotion to Mary prevailed.

His missionary zeal and story of commitment to faith in very difficult circumstances has left a mark on his nephews and, indeed, all who know of him. As one nephew shares at the end of the segment, “If we pray the rosary like Uncle Sig, we’ll be all right too.”

Suggestions for Use

This story is an illustration of a way that the rosary helped someone through a difficult time. It demonstrates the effectiveness of a familiar prayer form in coping with trial. It may be useful in leading people to reflect on circumstances when the rosary has been especially meaningful to them and/or when they might see the rosary filling a need in the future.

This story is about much more than one man’s devotion to the rosary. It could also be used to help illustrate the following topics:

- It is a story of *faith* and of how one man drew strength from his faith in time of persecution.
- It is a story about *religious vocation*. The

How to Pray the Rosary

Introduction

Make the Sign of the Cross, invoking the aid of the Trinity.

Pray the Apostles Creed, voicing our shared beliefs.

Pray the Our Father.

Pray three Hail Marys for an increase of faith, hope and charity.

Pray the Glory Be.

Each Decade

Announce the mystery for reflection.

Pray the Our Father

Pause to consider the significance of the mystery in the life of Jesus — and in your life.

Pray ten Hail Marys.

Pray the Glory Be.

Joyful Mysteries (pray on Mondays and Thursdays)

The Annunciation or Announcement of Our Savior's Conception (Luke 1:26-38)

The Visitation: Mary Visits Her Pregnant Cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-47)

The Nativity: Jesus is Born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7)

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple by His Parents (Luke 2:22-32)

The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple by His Parents (Luke 2:41-52)

Sorrowful Mysteries (pray on Tuesdays and Fridays)

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Mark 14:32-36)

The Scourging at the Pillar (John 18:28-38; 19:1)

The Crowning with Thorns (Mark 15:16-20)

The Carrying of the Cross (John 19:12-16)

The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 23:33-34; 39-46)

Glorious Mysteries (pray on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays)

The Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead (Luke 24:1-6)

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven (Luke 24:50-53)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)

The Assumption of Mary into Heaven (Song of Songs 2:8-14)

The Crowning of Mary (Revelation 12:1-6)

Closing

Pray the Hail Holy Queen.

Make the Sign of the Cross.

Kiss the crucifix.

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Schneider brothers telling the story are members of the same family and religious order as their Uncle Sigfrid.

- It is a story about the *missionary activity* of the Church.
- It is a story about *community*: family, religious order and Church. Even during months of solitary confinement, Sigfrid stayed connected to these communities by praying the rosary, a prayer meaningful to the tradition of all of the communities to which he belonged.

Questions for Sharing

1. What drew Father Sigfrid to the rosary during his imprisonment?
2. What was it about the rosary that helped Father Sigfrid to pray? How has this helped you to pray?
3. When have you found the rosary to bring you solace?
4. Sometimes the events in our lives seem to work against us spending time in prayer. How have you found yourself drawn to prayer despite challenges?
5. What aspect of the story touched you in a special way? Why do you think that is?

WITNESS SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 16:00 into program.)

Summary

This segment offers viewers testimony from a variety of ordinary Catholics who have learned to appreciate the rosary. Some have prayed the rosary all through their lives while others have only discovered it as a meaningful prayer form in adulthood. Witnesses share

that the rosary

- brings them feelings of peace and joy when distressed;
- was boring to them until they understood it better;
- is a good family prayer;
- can be used as an intercessory prayer;
- can be prayed while walking for exercise, driving to work, as an offering for Lent, while driving in bad weather; and
- is a great way to say “I love you” to God.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be useful in inviting viewers to reflect on and share about their personal experience with the rosary. In helping people come to a more complete or richer appreciation for the rosary, it is helpful to start with their own experiences. This segment may help people become comfortable with sharing from their personal experience while encouraging them to broaden their views through hearing of the experiences of others, both on the video and in the group.

Questions for Sharing

1. What is your experience with praying the rosary?
2. Do you currently pray the rosary? Why or why not?
3. Which of the witnesses shared something about the rosary that helped you to see this prayer in a new light?
4. Witnesses share how the rosary has become a meaningful prayer tool for them. What other tools have you found helpful to your prayer?

TEACHING SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 20:00 into program.)

Summary

Gloria Hutchinson, teacher for this segment, describes the rosary as a traditional Scripture-based prayer to which she and many Catholics are partial. The following is an outline of her presentation.

I. The rosary is a sacramental, a sacred sign that reminds us how we are called to holiness.

II. The rosary evolved and developed over many years into the prayer that it is today.

- A. The rosary began when Second-century Christian monks living in the Egyptian desert counted their Our Fathers on beads.
- B. The Crusaders brought the rosary from the East into Europe where it was promoted by Dominicans.
- C. The laity in the Middle Ages who couldn't read from the Book of Psalms prayed 150 Our Fathers and Hail Marys on what they called rosaries.

III. The rosary combines the rhythmic repetition of vocal prayer with meditation on the mysteries or major events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. These are divided into three sets of five—the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries.

- A. **The Joyful Mysteries** (prayed on Mondays and Thursdays)
 - 1. The Annunciation (announcement of our Savior's conception)
 - 2. The Visitation (Mary visits her pregnant cousin Elizabeth)

3. The Nativity (Jesus is born in Bethlehem)
4. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple by his Parents
5. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple by his Parents

B. The Sorrowful Mysteries (prayed on Tuesdays and Fridays)

1. The Agony of Jesus in the Garden
2. The Scourging at the Pillar
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ

C. The Glorious Mysteries (prayed on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays)

1. The Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead
2. The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
5. The Crowning of Mary

IV. Gloria explains how to pray the rosary. These instructions can be found on the reproducible handout on pages 12-13.

V. The rosary has multiple uses. It can be prayed on the road, at rest, as praise and thanksgiving, petition and intercession, alone or with family and friends.

VI. However the rosary is prayed, it should be prayed with an attentive heart.

Suggestions for Use

This segment offers both those familiar with and those new to the rosary a concise history and explanation of how to pray it. Catechists or group leaders may use

this to introduce or further explain this prayer. The reproducible handout on pages 12-13 provides a step-by-step guide for praying the rosary. It might be helpful for those new to the rosary to have a copy of this in front of them when they view this segment.

Those who are part of the RCIA process may have a particular interest in learning about the rosary. It is a prayer that is widely associated with Catholics and is connected to the misunderstanding that many have about our relationship with Mary. This explanation may fit in well at a time when inquirers or catechumens are discussing prayer or Mary and the saints. Giving them print copies of the prayers that are part of the rosary (Apostle's Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Hail Holy Queen) in addition to the **How to Pray the Rosary** handout on pages 12-13 may be a way to introduce them to many of the most common prayers of the Catholic Church and help them better understand Catholic devotion to Mary. The rosary is also a great overview of some of the significant events in the lives of Jesus and Mary.

Questions for Sharing

1. What do I now understand about the rosary that I didn't before?
2. What questions do I still have about the development of the rosary or how to pray it?
3. What set of mysteries relates best to my recent life experiences? Why?
4. Which mystery is especially meaningful to me? Why?

MUSICAL REFLECTION SEGMENT

(Begins approximately 28:30 into program.)

Summary

The *musical reflection segment* is a prayerful meditation featuring original artwork depicting each of the 15 mysteries of the rosary. The images are accompanied by instrumental versions of three traditional Marian hymns and a variety of voices reciting the Hail Mary in different languages.

Suggestions for Use

This segment can be used as a short prayer reflection to conclude a session on the rosary or within a longer prayer service. An outline for a sample prayer service follows.

1. Call the group to prayer with the following or similar words: *Praying the rosary helps us to meditate on significant moments in the life of Jesus and his mother, Mary. It can also help us to pray about significant moments in our own lives. Think about the mood of the three sets of Mysteries of the Rosary: joyful, sorrowful, glorious. Take a moment to think of current events or situations in your own life that match each of these moods.*
2. Time for silent reflection.
3. Read one or more of the scripture passages from the mysteries of the rosary (found below and on handout pp. 12-13) that are appropriate to the season or group.
4. Show the *musical reflection segment*. Invite viewers to bring their experiences to the Lord in prayer as they watch the images of the mysteries on-screen.

5. Invite spontaneous sharing of prayers of petition or thanksgiving concerning those circumstances in our lives that bring joy, sorrow or glory.
6. End by saying the Hail Mary and Our Father as a group.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation or Announcement of Our Savior's Conception (Luke 1:26-38)

The Visitation: Mary Visits Her Pregnant Cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-47)

The Nativity: Jesus is Born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7)

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple by His Parents (Luke 2:22-32)

The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple by His Parents (Luke 2:41-52)

Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Mark 14: 32-36)

The Scourging at the Pillar (John 18:28-38, 19:1)

The Crowning with Thorns (Mark 15: 16-20)

The Carrying of the Cross (John 19:12-16)

The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 23:33-34, 39-46)

Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead (Luke 24:1-6)

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven (Luke 24:50-53)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)

The Assumption of Mary into Heaven (Song of Songs 2:8-14)

The Crowning of Mary (Revelation 12:1-6)

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* makes reference to the rosary in 971, 2678 and 2708. It addresses the Assumption of Mary into heaven and her crowning as Queen of Heaven and Earth in 966 and 974. There are many other references to Mary and her relationship to Christ and the Church throughout (see Subject Index: Mary).

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TEACH US TO PRAY

PRAYING OUR QUESTIONS



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic* media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the emotional content of our faith rather than the intellectual content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video toolbox” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis

is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (*story segment*), testimony (*witness segment*) and song (*musical reflection segment*) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (*teaching segment*) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life-experience to the faith-topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence should prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader’s guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

It includes the following features.

- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** for the *story, witness and teaching segments*; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the *musical reflection segment* provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an “elapsed time” counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an “elapsed time” counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the “review” mode [i.e., while the VCR is in “play”] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

TEACH US TO PRAY

PRAYING OUR QUESTIONS

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The “Teach Us to Pray” programs are a “mini series” within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed for small groups gathering for prayer and faith formation, the RCIA, youth ministry and high school religious education. Each video explores how to pray, drawing from Scripture, Catholic tradition and the insights of teachers and authors on spirituality.

Most of us were taught not to question our elders, that it’s impertinent and disrespectful to do so. We are supposed to accept that they know best and trust in their wisdom. Many of us grow up to believe that, even as adults, we should act as well-mannered children before God. Since God is the all-wise elder, the perfect parent, we should not question but accept and trust.

Jesus invites us to become like little children but he doesn’t specify “well-mannered.” It’s part of a child’s nature to question. This is an important way they learn to make sense of the world around them.

By inviting us to become like little children, Jesus invites us to bring our questions to God. When life brings troubled times, it’s natural for us to seek answers and reasons. When these aren’t obvious, we often turn to God to help us make some sense of it all. We may ask God for direction, question why God allowed such things to happen or even ask where God is in our current circumstances.

Bringing our questions to God in prayer is a way of inviting God into our difficult moments. It’s a way of anchoring ourselves to God so that we will be able to draw on God’s strength in the stormy seas of life. It’s a way of surrendering control and opening ourselves to a

new way of looking at things.

It's natural, even necessary, to pray our questions when the answers life is handing us threaten to overwhelm us.

Probably the most frequently prayed question is "Why?" This seems to be the pivotal question. If we can live with the unanswered "why?" we can move onto the other questions—Who? What? When? Where? How? These questions can become prayers for guidance and direction. They help us in our search for meaning, a movement from simple reaction to prayerful action.

In this video program, viewers will meet several people who have learned to pray their questions. The occasions that bring them to prayer range from troubling to traumatic. In all cases, faith that God is with them is key to their ability to live with the questions.

Our *story segment* offers three fictional vignettes of people in different life situations bringing their questions to God in prayer: a young disabled woman, a married couple confronted with a work layoff, and a recently widowed man. Each is a person of faith who doesn't shy away from letting God know how he or she feels.

In our *witness segment*, we meet a married couple who share how praying their questions—individually, together and within community—helps them through difficult times.

In the *teaching segment*, Father Greg Friedman shares some of his story, and makes a biblical connection for us—to help us pray our questions.

In our concluding *musical reflection segment*, singer/composer Lori True turns to the words of Psalm 77 to help her pray her questions in the song, "I Cry to You."

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- faith-sharing, prayer and study groups;
- those who are experiencing difficult times;
- adults who are learning about prayer in the RCIA process; and
- high school students in their religious education classes.

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 4:19 into program.)

Summary

Our story segment is made up of three separate fictional vignettes. Each vignette portrays people who bring their questions to God in prayer. They don't shy away from letting God know how they feel. Their emotions are real, and often quite strong. But each of the stories portrays someone who is genuinely searching. Each character wants to be faithful to the ways God walks with us in the midst of our struggles. Each circumstance is different as is the way each person or couple prays their questions. (Note: Group leaders or teachers should preview each vignette. Since the emotions portrayed are often very honest and sometimes intense, the leader should determine the suitability of the story for the group, and alert viewers ahead of time if he or she anticipates any difficulties for the audience.)

Paula's Story: Praying Our Angry Questions

Paula is a young woman who was disabled in an

accident and uses a wheelchair to get around. We see her managing everyday tasks as she talks about her disability. She shares how she set out to prove that she could do anything she needed to, that she was no different from anyone else. She started a successful computer-based business that she runs from her home. But Paula has learned that her effort to excel may in part be a way of compensating for being disabled. Her relationships suffered when she hid her true self and needs from others.

Paula credits a group of disabled people from a local church with helping her get in touch with her feelings—and God. We learn how she shared her anger about her disability with a friend from the group and found that she could do the same with God. Paula came to know that God loves her even when she is angry and bitter. She has come to believe in God's accepting presence in the rough times and the good.

Paula freely vents her anger when she knocks a wineglass off the counter. As she turns her anger and frustration into a prayer, a neighbor stops by to see if everything is okay. Though Paula recognizes that answers do not always come when or how we'd like, she seems to hint that the presence of a caring friend is one way God answers our prayer...

Joe and Susan's Story: Questioning God's Will

A mother, Susan, and her two children come home to a suburban, middle-class house. She is surprised to find her husband, Joe, already home and preparing dinner. He informs her that he has been laid-off from his job. This comes as a total surprise to Susan, although Joe admits that he had some forewarning of impending cutbacks. He just hadn't expected them to affect him.

There is obvious tension when he mentions that the severance package won't last long with all of their

commitments. Payments for a new car and suburban home and the cost of raising two children all seem particularly burdensome to them. The kids begin to fight in the other room and the phone rings with a telemarketing call. The pressures on them begin to mount. Instead of pursuing an old argument about making too many financial commitments, they talk—first with each other and then with God. As they did on the night they became engaged when the future looked so uncertain, they turn to God again for direction on their journey...

Dan's Story: Seeking Direction and Purpose

Dan, a man who was recently widowed is tending the garden begun by his late wife, Rena. She would probably like him to keep up the garden, he admits, but he wonders why. He further questions his own purpose now that his wife is gone. As he looks at a new batch of sympathy cards, Dan silently prays questions about his own identity now that Rena is no longer around. He asks why Rena died first when she was the one with all the abilities and gifts.

Dan comments, in a later scene, that his prayer was not answered with a voice from on high. Instead, he has come to feel God's presence and love more deeply. He has found that the experience of God's presence is strong after he sits quietly and waits on God, often following his daily devotional reading.

Dan has also been invited to help out at the nursing home where Rena lived after her stroke. They are looking for people who understand what stroke victims go through. He hasn't committed yet but suspects that Rena and God would want him to. He says, "It's just the feeling I have when I sit in the quiet..."

Suggestions for Use

These three vignettes can be used separately or together in a gathering of those who are exploring the experience of bringing their questions to God. The vignettes can be used as examples of different ways that people pray their questions—in asking why, in dialogue, and in meditation and reflection. They also illustrate different questions people bring to God in prayer. The group facilitator may wish to stop the video after each vignette to allow time for discussion and/or personal sharing. The following or similar questions may be helpful.

Questions for Sharing

1. On what occasions have you asked God “Why?”
2. When difficult situations happen in your life, do you tend to turn away or toward God?
3. When has the “Why?” been most difficult to move beyond? What did you do in order to move on?
4. What is your experience with dialogue prayer and/or journaling?
5. What Scripture passages, books, music or places invite and aid your prayer of meditation and reflection?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 17:48 into program.)

Summary

Bill and Jane Frantz are our witnesses for this segment. This real-life couple brings their questions—big and small—to God in prayer. They face the normal

everyday challenges most married couples face; they have typical concerns about their children, their jobs, etc. They, like many of us, have also faced some very difficult times, times when they struggled to understand why certain challenges were placed before them. Bill was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease at age 17. Nearly 20 years later, his mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She died just a few weeks after Jane underwent thyroid surgery. Jane's surgery brought them additional cause for concern since it was done early in their third pregnancy.

Bill and Jane recognize the need to pray in thanksgiving for the many blessings they enjoy as well as bringing their questions about the difficulties of life to God in prayer. Bill and Jane had just marked the first anniversaries of Jane's surgery and Bill's mother's death when this interview took place. A summary of the insights they share follows.

- Bill shares that our first reaction to something tragic is often, "This is a terrible thing!" Praying our questions can eventually lead us to peace, but the path to peace is often through a lot of hurt. The first thing we bring to God is our hurt.
- Jane sees praying through difficulties as a "simplification process," helping her to focus on what's really important.
- The search for understanding why something bad has happened can be a long process. Bill shares that he first saw his cancer as a punishment, later a lesson. Finally he came to see it as something that had happened to him about which he had a choice—he could become bitter or turn it into good.
- Praying with Scripture helped Jane remain calm as she approached surgery during pregnancy.
- The hardest thing for Bill to take to God is his

anger. He'd prefer to put on his "best face" for God. He has come to realize that God wants all of him—the good, bad, ugly *and* angry.

- Praying as a couple and within community has helped the Frantzs through some difficult times.
- It helps Jane to remember those times in the past that didn't look like blessings but which turned out to be just that. This gives her hope, knowing that God will be faithful through her current difficulties in the same way.

Suggestions for Use

When life is challenging, we often feel very alone. We might judge that we are not up for the challenge, that we are too ordinary, too weak, too questioning to handle it. Sometimes learning of another person's struggle helps put ours in perspective. Sometimes we see people we always thought of as ordinary coping with extraordinary challenges—and not only surviving but thriving! We begin to think maybe there's more to us too. When we take our questions to God in prayer, we often find the strength to cope with and accept our difficulties even if the answers that come are not what we hope to hear.

This segment may invite personal sharing about times of difficulties that have been occasions to take questions to God in prayer. The group leader or teacher may want to give a brief summary of the circumstances which the Frantzs have faced (see above) before the group views the interview. The following or similar questions may also be helpful.

Questions for Sharing

1. What experiences of challenge or difficulty in your life have led you to bring your questions to God?

2. When have you asked God, “Why?” or “Why me?”
3. What helps you to accept difficulties? What Scripture passages or prayers have been helpful?
4. What are the hardest feelings to share with God in prayer? Do you ever feel guilty questioning God or complaining to God?
5. When have you experienced the power of prayer in community—praying with others about a common concern, praying for others or knowing that others were praying for you?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 22:24 into program.)

Summary

Our teacher, Father Greg Friedman, shares his own experience of searching for answers when life offers only questions. He relates some personal stories to stories from Scripture.

Greg begins by sharing an account of his reaction to the sudden death of his young cousin. His prayer in the car on the way to gather with his family was a plea for help. He knew that as a priest he’d be expected to act in his “professional” role but also needed to address his own needs as a grieving family member. The answer to his prayer greeted him at the door of his cousin’s home. The family’s parish priest was already there. He hugged Greg as if to say “You can just be yourself for a moment; I know you’re hurting.” This priest helped Greg be open to the feelings and questions that came next. The questions moved from “How?” and “When?” to “Why?” The question “Why?” is one Greg and his family struggle with to this day.

Questions can be an important part of prayer. Why

doesn't God prevent bad things from happening? Is a tragedy a punishment? Jesus faced some of these same questions.

In the story of the man born blind (John (9:1-41), people asked Jesus why this man was born without sight. Was he a sinner, or maybe his parents? Neither, Jesus says. He goes on to invite those gathered to a deeper faith in God.

We don't believe that God works in a petty or punishing fashion. Jesus revealed the face of God as a face of friendship and love, inviting us into deeper relationship.

Suffering and death are realities in life. When we experience pain, our own or another's, we naturally ask "Why?"

Job asked "Why?" as he tried to find a reason for the bad things that happened to him. He had lost his family, his possessions and, most of all, his sense that he knew where he stood with God. He protested. He had done nothing so sinful. Why were these bad things happening to him? The rich message of the Book of Job is that we can share our true feelings in prayer and even question God without losing faith.

Sharing our feelings with God is a genuine form of prayer. Jesus modeled this for us in the Garden of Gethsemane when he asked if the cup of suffering could pass him by. He cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" By doing so, Jesus gives us permission to pray our questions, our whys.

The Gospels also proclaim God's answer to suffering and death—the resurrection of Jesus.

Father Greg finishes with a personal example of the answer we might expect from God. Upon arriving at the home of a friend whose daughter had been killed in an automobile accident just hours before, Greg was at a

loss for words and so said, “What can I say?” His friend replied, “You don’t have to say anything except ‘I love you.’” God is waiting to say the same to us. Even if your prayer is full of complaints, strong feelings and questions, God’s response is always going to be “I love you.”

Suggestions for Use

Father Greg offers us scriptural examples of biblical figures like Job and Jesus bringing their questions to God. Those needing permission to question the actions of God or to bring their anger and anguish to God in prayer will find the models of Job and Jesus helpful.

For an activity after viewing this segment, a group may look to Scripture for further guidance or help in expressing their needs before God. Before offering the group the following Scripture passages, ask what passages have been helpful to any members of the group as they have worked through difficulties and prayed their questions. Allow brief sharing and discussion of these examples from the group.

The group may wish to examine portions of the Book of Job. Note Job’s dialogue with those who come to speak with him in his misfortune in chapters 3 through 37. In Job 38 and 39, God challenges Job in reply to enter the mystery of creation and ponder its workings. The answer almost seems to be: If you think you could handle the complexity of the world, you take over! Job backs down and apologizes to God for his complaints—but notice that the inspired Scriptures have yet preserved them for us in all the preceding chapters!

Offer the group these passages from the Book of Psalms: Psalms 13, 22, 69, 77 or 88. Briefly explain that the psalmists were not afraid to share their true

feelings with God. Point out that while many psalms of lament begin with a cry for help or a question of God's presence, they usually end with some statement of confidence in God's goodness and fidelity. Invite the group members to write psalms of their own, expressing to God their hurts, frustrations or complaints. Encourage them to conclude, if possible, with a positive expression of how God has cared for them in the past and confidence in God's continued care for them in their present difficulties. Allow sharing within the group by those who wish to do so.

Questions for Sharing

1. What is your image of God? How does this affect your comfort in bringing your questions to God?
2. What questions do you bring to God in prayer?
3. How do you feel about taking your questions to God?
4. How do you feel about expressing angry or hurt feelings to God?
5. What situations have led you to question why God doesn't prevent bad things from happening?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 30:10 into program.)

Summary

Our program concludes with a music video featuring the song, "I Cry to You" written and performed by Lori True. Using the words of Psalm 77:1-10, Lori shares a prayer of anguish, calling upon God in a time of distress. This song expresses the strong emotions of one who is deeply troubled by life events. This is

compounded by the perceived absence of God in this time of great need. The song purposely ends without resolution or comfort. Many of the questions we bring to God in prayer have no quick or easy answers; instead, many of the answers are unwelcome, difficult to accept or understand, or a long time in coming.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used in a prayer setting. A sample prayer experience follows.

1. Begin with the following or similar words: *Loving God, we are troubled by difficulties in our lives. We have many questions and too few answers. We aren't happy with some of the answers we have received. We have known your faithfulness in the past and believe, despite our difficulties, that you are in our present circumstances too. Help us to recognize your presence with us as we pray to you.*
2. Scripture: Psalm 77:1-10
3. Share experiences of turning to God in times of distress, times when God seemed absent from you.
4. View the music video.
5. Share experiences of God's presence, times when you knew God was with you—in times of trouble and times of joy.
6. Invite shared prayer and conclude with the "Our Father."

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references:

Some of the Scripture references made in this video include Psalm 77:1-10; Psalm 145:13b; Book of Job; Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42;

Luke 22:39-46; Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34;
Matthew 11:28-30; and John 9.

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

The *Catechism* covers Christian Prayer in Part 4:
2558-2865.

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TEACH US TO PRAY

BEFRIENDING GOD IN PRAYER



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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CATHOLIC UPDATE VIDEO

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the "media" of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus' time, heavily dependent on *oral* communication—to the advent of *print* communication—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic* media—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners' hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners' experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium's strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the emotional content of our faith rather than the intellectual content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the "mix of media" used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to "enflesh" an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a

group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The "pause" button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a "video toolbox" format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today's learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (*story segment*), testimony (*witness segment*) and

song (*musical reflection segment*) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more "didactic" approach (*teaching segment*) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life-experience to the faith-topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program's host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence should prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader's guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

It includes the following features.

- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.

- **Questions for Sharing** for the *story, witness* and *teaching segments*; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the *musical reflection segment* provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. (*If the VCR is equipped with an "elapsed time" counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an "elapsed time" counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the "review" mode [i.e., while the VCR is in "play"] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.*)

TEACH US TO PRAY

BEFRIENDING GOD IN PRAYER

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The "Teach Us to Pray" programs are a "mini series" within the larger Catholic Update Video series. They are designed for small groups gathering for prayer and faith formation, the RCIA, youth ministry and high school religious education. Each video explores how to pray, drawing from Scripture, Catholic tradition and the insights of teachers and authors on spirituality.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said to his disciples, "I call you friends" (John 15:15). So much is contained in those few words. Humankind had always thought of God as "Other," the "Holy," a reality or source of life beyond us. The Gospel of John bridges the gap between the God who may seem unreachable and the intimate presence of the Word enfleshed in the person of Jesus Christ.

God has befriended us. In revealing his affection for his apostles, Jesus invites us into friendship too. And so human friendship has become the model for the way God chooses each of us. In turn, lessons learned from human friendship can help us shape our response to God, especially as we seek to pray. Like God, a good friend sees us and knows us as we cannot know ourselves. With a friend we enjoy moments of closeness; occasionally we must endure times of separation. A friend wants us to grow and supports us when we need to confront our own shortcomings.

This "Teach Us to Pray" program unfolds the "friendship model for prayer." We'll begin with a story of a friendship in our *story segment*. The friendship between two women depicted there holds many of the elements we can find in friendship with God. Our

witnesses in the *witness segment* share how they have experienced God as friend and how this affects their prayer. In our *teaching segment*, Father Greg Friedman, O.F.M., recalls Jesus' words, "I call you friends," from the Last Supper scene in John's Gospel. He draws some specific connections for prayer, with examples from everyday life. Our program concludes with a *musical reflection segment* that celebrates God's wish to embrace us in a friendship that endures, as David Haas and friends sing and dance to "My Song Will Be For You Forever."

Audience

This program is intended for an adult or teenage audience. It may include

- faith-sharing, prayer and study groups;
- adults who are learning about prayer in the RCIA process; and
- high school students in their religious education classes.

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 3:23 into program.)

Summary

"A Friendship: Twenty Years of Memories" is the history of a significant and lasting friendship between two women, Janelle and Gretchen. In this relationship we find many of the elements also possible in friendship with God.

As our story begins, Janelle arrives at the home of her good friend, Gretchen. Janelle carries a brightly wrapped birthday present. Gretchen's husband, Ross,

greets Janelle at the door and indicates that the "birthday girl" is upstairs getting ready for the party.

Janelle finds Gretchen in the bedroom, looking melancholy and sad. Gretchen shares that turning 40 has given her cause to think about the passage of time, how she spends it, who she spends it with. Janelle listens sympathetically then brings out the gift.

Gretchen opens the package and pulls out an album of photographs of significant moments in their friendship. As they look at the images together, Gretchen's melancholy leaves her. Pictures from college bring shrieks of laughter as they remember the beginning of their friendship. They recall their first impressions of each other, the automatic connection they felt, building trust, lots of talking, listening and even companionable silence.

As they look at photos of events after college, it becomes clear that their friendship grew and deepened with time. They recalled good times and celebrations like graduation, weddings and baptisms; frightening times like the premature birth of Janelle's son and Gretchen's fight with cancer; and a troubled time of hurt and disagreement concerning going into business together. They acknowledge how special their friendship is to both of them and express confidence that they will remain friends into the unknown future.

Gretchen's son interrupts their time together. He announces that the guests are arriving. Janelle follows Gretchen as she leaves the room to greet her guests.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used to help viewers make the bridge between human friendship and friendship with God. Our story makes no mention of God or prayer but is designed to help people begin to see the connection

between what happens in human friendship and what can happen in friendship with God.

1. Invite each member of the viewing group to think of a friendship that has been very meaningful. Ask them to look at the span of that friendship: When did it begin? How many years does this relationship cover? Provide paper and pencils so that each person can list some of the characteristics that have made that friendship so meaningful.
2. Share the video story.
3. After viewing the story, invite sharing about characteristics of friendship—from their own lists and from the friendship between Gretchen and Janelle.
4. Now invite them to consider the span of their prayer lives: When did a personal relationship with God begin and how many years does this relationship cover? Have them identify some key memories and images in their own personal "album of friendship" with God. Have people write a word or sentence for each of these personal "images" to share with the group.
5. Use the following or similar questions to encourage sharing.

Questions for Sharing

1. What has been your experience of human friendship and love? What has it taught you about your relationship to God? How can that experience teach you to pray?
2. What are the key moments in your prayer relationship with God?
3. When have you been really thankful?

4. When has your relationship with God helped you through adversity?
5. When was a request denied or a prayer "unanswered"? How did this affect your relationship with God?
6. When did you have an experience of really knowing God was there for you?
7. Where are you now in your relationship with God?
8. What "images" are on the blank pages of your future relationship with God?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 12:07 into program.)

Summary

Ordinary Catholics share their experiences of praying to God as a friend. Some of their comments are summarized here.

- God is my best friend, my savior, my everything. I speak to God in one-on-one conversation. I can go to God when I am sad or happy and share the feelings in my heart.
- God is always there to talk to and reach out to. I don't just ask for things but I also thank him for all my blessings.
- It's nice to have somebody to talk to who is listening to your problems and will help you.
- I just to talk to the Lord, using my own language. I know that God hears me.
- I know that Jesus is in my heart all the time and is always listening to me.
- I now see God as a very close friend instead of a judge. When I have sinned, I want to say I'm sorry and make peace.

- When the pressure is on and I'm ready to lose it, I stop and think about Christ being with me. Those weak moments of my life are my closest moments with God.
- If I want to have a good relationship with God I have to make time to pray.
- You can't really love someone you don't know. When I didn't know who Christ was, I didn't really love him. Now I do and I feel like I'm walking hand in hand with him.
- The feelings I struggle to share with others are those I also struggle to share with God. I tend to want to put on my best face but have come to realize that God wants all of me.
- The Lord is my treasured friend, I am never alone.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used to invite members of the group to share about their own personal relationships with God. For many, a friendship with God is a very natural and beautiful reality. For others, the idea of friendship with God is a foreign concept. For them, God may be perceived as either too distant or too majestic to be a personal friend. A friendship also requires something more of us. It's a close and intimate relationship. In true friendships there is a healthy give and take, a sharing of self, a willingness to sacrifice, and a bond of affection. Just as we all have different experiences and expectations of human friendship, so will we have different kinds of relationships with God.

This segment is for all who seek to deepen their relationships with God—regardless of the terminology used. Our witnesses use the word *friend* to describe God.

Questions for Sharing

1. What is your image of God? Are you comfortable calling God "friend"? Why or why not?
2. How do you talk to God? What prayer form suits you best?
3. When do you feel closest to God?
4. What experiences have strengthened your personal relationship with God?
5. How important has Jesus been in helping you develop a personal relationship with God?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 16:16 into program.)

Summary

Father Greg Friedman, O.F.M., teacher for this segment, relates human friendship with our relationship with God. He says that the mystery of human friendship is a gift of God and becomes an important part of learning who God is for us. Friendship can be a model for us when we seek to reach out to God in prayer. An outline of his presentation follows.

I. The Bible is the history of friendship between people and God.

- A. Sometimes people fail to appreciate God's offer of friendship.
- B. At the Last Supper Jesus spoke about friendship with his disciples.
 1. He said, "I call you friends" (John 15:15).
 2. He equates friendship with him to friendship with God the Father (John 14:9).

3. His parting words contain the truth that, in Jesus, God has come to meet us personally.

II. Jesus is the way we come to know the mystery of God.

- A. Jesus—as both God and human—is our meeting point with the mystery.
- B. In Jesus we come to know God as friendly, gracious and loving.

III. The model of human friendship can teach us about prayer.

- A. Things we know about friendship:
 1. A friend is caring.
 2. A friend challenges me.
 3. A friend understands.
 4. A friend gives me space to grow.
- B. Qualities of friendship applied to our relationship with God can open new avenues for prayer:
 1. God cares.
 2. God challenges.
 3. God understands.
 4. God provides us space to grow.

IV. Because of Jesus, we can approach God with a new language, the language of friendship.

Suggestions for Use

Father Greg offers a list of some of the qualities of human friendship. Before viewing this segment, invite participants to jot down the qualities that their friends bring to their lives. Ask them to listen for these and other characteristics of friendship in the video segment. After viewing the segment, have them look at their lists again, this time thinking about friendship with God. Ask participants to share their lists, writing them where

all can see on a chalkboard or easel. Invite the group to think of examples from Scripture—especially the Gospels—that tell how God offers each quality listed.

Questions for Sharing

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word *friendship*?
2. Can you think of or describe a particularly lonely time in your life?
3. Has your idea of God ever seemed overwhelming or frightening?
4. What does Jesus mean to you?
5. How do you relate human friendship and friendship with God?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 24:35 into program.)

Summary

Our *musical reflection segment* is the song "My Song Will Be For You Forever." It is taken from the *Glory Day: David Haas & Friends* concert performance. It is a love song to God as expressed through love for another person. It expresses intimacy and trust, vital characteristics of human friendship as well as friendship with God.

In addition to the musical performance, three dancers, Bob, Jeanne and Sarah, use movement to help express the message of the song. Sarah is a woman who joins in the dance despite being confined to a wheelchair as the result of a disabling accident. The performers and concert audience model easy-to-learn movements for the refrain.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used in a prayer setting. An outline of a sample prayer experience follows.

1. Open the prayer experience with the following or similar words: *Loving God, you invite us into relationship, into friendship, with you. Because you loved us first, you make it possible for us to respond to your love and to love others. We desire to deepen and strengthen our friendship with you. Help us to be aware of your presence here with us as we pray.*
2. Scripture: John 15:11-17 or I John 4:7-12
3. Show the video segment.
4. Ritual: Hand out pencils and paper circles cut to 3-inch diameter. Invite each person to draw a symbol or write a word that expresses the nature of his present relationship with God on one side. On the other side of the circle, invite people to draw a symbol or write a word that expresses what they hope their relationship with God will be like in the future. Invite very brief sharing by those who wish to do so. Close by joining hands and praying the "Our Father."

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- 1) **Scripture references:** Some of the Scripture references made in this program include John 15:15 ("I call you friends."); John 14:9 ("Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."); John 14:6 ("I am the way, and the truth, and the life."); and Mark 10:21 (story of the rich young man).
- 2) ***Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:** The *Catechism* covers Christian Prayer in Part 4: 2558-2865.

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