

3rd Year Candidate & Sponsor Gathering

One and Holy

Make up for Sponsor & Candidates you need to meet and reflect on all of the following material, answering the questions and turning them in at any class session or at the latest the next Sponsor & Candidate Gathering.

Session Purpose

The Point: We proclaim our belief that the Church is one and holy.

Goals: We will come to a deeper understanding of what it means when we say that the Church is one and holy. They will reflect on ways that they feel united to the Church community and how their path toward holiness occurs within community.

Content Highlights

1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:21-22, 5:25-26. CCC 811, 814-815, 823-827, 866-867.

- In the Nicene Creed, we profess our belief that the Church is "one holy catholic and apostolic." These four essential, distinguishing characteristics are known as the marks of the Church.
- The Church is one because of her one founder, Jesus Christ; the one Holy Spirit who forms and unites the Church with all her many gifts of diversity; the one faith proclaimed and celebrated through the sacraments; and the leadership of the bishops united with the bishop of Rome, the Pope.
- The Church is holy because her founder, Jesus Christ, is holy and because the special presence of Christ can be found in her. The Church is also the way to holiness, for through her prayer and liturgy, Church members are made holy.
- In every age the Church has been and will continue to be an example of holy living in a sometimes broken, sin-filled world.

Session: One and Holy

Title for Session: Together we Stand!

Catechetical Background

The Nicene Creed describes the Church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Each of these characteristics—traditionally referred to as the four marks of the Church—captures an aspect of the Church's essence. The Church on earth, however, has not yet fully realized or embodied these characteristics.

When we gather in community and profess the Creed, we are not bragging about the accomplishments of our Church, nor are we turning a blind eye to her shortcomings. The Creed is not an expression of a sense of superiority over people of other faiths. The four marks are a challenge for the future rather than a description of what the Church has already achieved.

As Paul explained in his letter to the Corinthians, the essence of the Church is unity. We believe in one God, and we embrace the call to join in communion with God and with one another. We believe in one Spirit who dwells within all of the baptized. The Church is "one," and the Church is also "holy." To be holy is to be loved by God and to share in the communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Holiness is a gift of God's loving presence to the Church, despite her failures and shortcomings. God's gracious love is unending, constantly being poured out through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

Teaching for Discipleship

A 2005 *Newsweek/Beliefnet* Poll of 1,004 adults asked "Can a good person who isn't of your religious faith go to heaven or attain salvation, or not?"

- 83 percent of Non-Evangelical Protestants said *yes*.
- 73 percent of Non-Christians said *yes*.
- 68 percent of Evangelical Protestants said *yes*.

Ninety-one percent of Catholics said *yes*. And three out of four of those Catholics described themselves as "traditional believers."

The National Study on Youth and Religion showed that seven out of ten Catholic adolescents believe that many religions are true.

Welcome

1. Sponsor & Candidate reflect on one person they consider holy and share and write why below.

Making the Point

We named different people whom we consider holy, and we might all have different ways to describe holiness. But we might not realize that being holy is something we are called to, as individuals and as the Church community. In this session we will consider two marks of the Church: that she is one and holy.

Community Builder

Mind Map "Church"

Candidate & Sponsor, below write the word *Church* on this page. Create a mind map (or word web) around the word *Church*. Ask, "What words come to mind when you hear the word *Church*?" The Challenge is to add as many words or phrases as possible to the map or web.

Complete the Creed

Candidate & sponsor are to work together to sequence the phrases that make up the Nicene Creed. Each opening statement is followed by several phrases. The groups' task is to put the phrases in the order in which they appear in the Nicene Creed.

1. I believe in one God,

- ___ maker of heaven and earth,
- ___ the Father, the Almighty,
- ___ of all things visible and invisible.

2. I believe in one Lord,

- ___ the Only Begotten Son of God,
- ___ born of the Father before all ages.
- ___ Jesus Christ,
- ___ God from God, Light from Light,
- ___ begotten, not made,
- ___ true God from true God,
- ___ Through him all things were made.
- ___ consubstantial with the Father;

3. For us men and for our salvation

- ___ and by the Holy Spirit
- ___ and became man.
- ___ was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
- ___ he came down from heaven,
- ___ For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
- ___ he suffered death and was buried,
- ___ in accordance with the Scriptures.
- ___ and rose again on the third day
- ___ he ascended into heaven
- ___ and his kingdom will have no end.
- ___ He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
- ___ and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

4. I believe in the Holy Spirit,

- ___ the Lord, the giver of life,
- ___ who has spoken through the Prophets.
- ___ who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
- ___ who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.

Continues on next page

5. I believe in
___ catholic
___ one
___ and apostolic
___ holy
___ church
___ I confess one baptism
___ Amen.
___ for the forgiveness of sins
___ and the life of the world to come
___ and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead

Making the Point

We proclaim our belief that the Catholic Church is one and holy every time we say the Nicene Creed.

Life Experience Questions

Candidates & Sponsor write and share their answers to the following questions.

- **What groups do you belong to? What unites the groups and holds them together?**
- **What are some of the logos, slogans, or pledges that identify the groups?**
- **When was a time when you felt totally united with a group of people? What was it like?**

Leader Guide: One and Holy

Read and reflect on the *Catholic Faith Resource*.

"In the Creed we say we are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. What do you think each of these words means?" Please write your answers below.

• **one—**

• **holy—**

• **catholic—**

• **apostolic—**

- The Church is holy—through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is the way to holiness—through Scripture, the sacraments, and prayer.
- The Church witnesses to holiness—through holy men and women.

Candidate & Sponsor thinking of Catholic men and women who help you know what living a life of holiness means. These can be famous people or people known only to you. brainstorm and list these people.

Now select five people from your list.

Candidate & Sponsor Answer the following Questions:

- **What makes these people holy in your mind?**

- **What can we learn from them about what it means to be holy?**

- **Why are these holy men and women important to us as Catholics?**

Person of Faith

Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582)

You may, research additional information about Teresa of Ávila on the Internet or locate a book about saints.

Reflect:

- In Teresa's day, women usually didn't hold positions of authority, and Teresa often had to struggle against a patriarchal society and Church in her work of reform.
- Teresa was a mystic who experienced the closest union with God in prayer and contemplation.
- Pope Paul VI named Teresa of Ávila a doctor of the Church. Doctor of the Church is a title given since the Middle Ages to authors of eminent holiness and learning whose work has significantly enhanced the cause of Christ in his Church.

upon what you have read and learned about Teresa of Ávila, list different characteristics, gifts, or attributes that they feel Teresa possessed. List their ideas on a this sheet or another paper .

Candidate & Sponsor answer on the following questions:

- **How could these attributes lead someone on the path of holiness?**

- **Which characteristic or gift of Teresa do you feel you possess?**

- **Which would you like to have and why?**

Making the Point

Everyone is called to holiness, and the Church as a whole is holy. Being holy isn't being "holier than thou"; it's being authentic on our path to God. We can help each other by calling forth the best in other people and by being authentic examples and models.

Faith Sharing Questions

Living as a Disciple

Read the Living as a Disciple feature from the *Catholic Faith Resource*. Candidate & Sponsor discuss their reactions to the Living as a Disciple feature and then share their thoughts on the question posed at the end of the feature.

A Look into the Future

Candidate & Sponsor each write reflections to the following questions, and share them with each other.

Think about how you live your Catholic faith today. Project your lifestyle from today to ten years in the future.

- **What have you done to increase your own commitment to holiness?**
- **What tasks are you doing for, with, or in the Church?**
- **What tasks are you doing for or with other people in need?**
- **How do you envision these tasks and/or activities impacting your daily life? Are the tasks and/or activities themselves your daily life?**
- **What one or two traits of your Catholic faith and identity would you want the people around you to see in you?**
- **If your faith today could be a little bit stronger, what can you do to improve it so that ten years from now you'll be living more faithfully?**



THE POINT

We proclaim our belief that the Church is one and holy.

One and Holy

When we profess, "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church" in the Nicene Creed, we state our belief in the Catholic Church. We proclaim the truth that Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, makes the Catholic Church one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. We call these the four essential, distinguishing marks of the Church.

The Church Is One

The word *one* means "united together." The Church is one because of

- her one founder, Jesus Christ
- the one Holy Spirit who forms and unites the Church with all of her many gifts of diversity
- the one faith proclaimed and celebrated through the sacraments
- the leadership of the bishops united with the bishop of Rome, the Pope.

Let us consider the Holy Spirit's action as unifier within the structure of the Catholic Church. The worldwide Catholic Church consists of the Western (Roman Catholic) and Eastern (Eastern Catholic) Churches under the authority of the Pope. These two branches are organized into six main Traditions, or Rites—the Antiochene (West Syrian), the Chaldean (East Syrian), the Byzantine, the Alexandrian, the Armenian, and the Roman. A Tradition, or Rite, is a particular religious family that has its own liturgy, spirituality, and laws. These various Rites have twenty-three Churches.

The twenty-three Churches are united as one Church in several ways. First, through the action of the Holy Spirit, all Catholic Churches accept the same faith received from the Apostles of Jesus. All profess the same creed. Second, all Catholic Churches celebrate the same seven sacraments. In addition, all Catholic Churches share the same apostolic succession of ordained ministers through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. And finally, all Catholic Churches recognize the bishop of Rome

as the successor of Peter and head of the universal Catholic Church.

The universal Catholic Church encourages each of the smaller Churches to follow its own customs and practices. Diversity brings great richness to the Church, contributing to, rather than weakening, the unity of the worldwide Catholic Church.

The Church Is Holy

The word *holy* means "sacred, pure, like God." The Holy Spirit continually sanctifies the members of the Church, helping them become more and more like God. The Church is God's holy Temple because the Holy Spirit dwells within it (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Yet, she is made up of humans who are imperfect and inclined to sin.

The Church is holy because her founder Jesus Christ is holy, and the Church is where the special presence of Christ can be found. The Church is also the way to holiness. This way to holiness can be found in hearing and reflecting on the Scriptures, celebrating the liturgy—especially the Eucharist and the other sacraments—and joining in the entire prayer life of the Church.

The Church is constantly striving for holiness, even though she is made up of people and leaders who, by human nature, are inclined to sin. The Church witnesses to holiness in that, over the centuries, it has raised up countless examples of heroic and holy men and women who have shown the world what it means to be virtuous and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. In every age the Church has been and will continue to be an example of holy living in a sometimes broken, sin-filled world.



THE PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

The world is made up of different groups that tend to label other groups based on their distinct differences. Sometimes one group labels another group as an enemy. Different religious groups might make enemies out of other religions; political parties, or their members, often do the same thing. Workers sometime make their bosses, or the corporation, out to be the enemy.

As a disciple you can't change the way people view "the other" as enemies, but you can control whether you do it.

- Who have you been viewing as an enemy?
- How can you quit doing so? Is it by your words, attitudes, or actions?



PERSON OF FAITH

Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582)

Teresa of Ávila was born into a large family in Spain. Her father was from a Jewish family, but converted to Christianity. At a young age, Teresa and one of her brothers set off for martyrdom at the hands of the Moors—Muslims in Spain. Of course, they didn't get too far before being returned home. Later, in her pursuit of holiness, Teresa entered the Carmelites. However, at that time and in that place, this religious community and many others were quite relaxed in their religious observance. This was primarily because women had few options, and women unable to "find a husband" often went to a convent, more as boarders than as true vocations. Following a long illness and a "conversion," Teresa set out once more on the road to holiness. This time, she did so in the company of her religious community, which she led in reform. Over the rest of the years of her life, Teresa continued to reform Carmelite convents, while growing in faith and love. Her writings on the spiritual life have stood the test of time and are read to this day. Her convents became centers of prayer and simple living, examples for the whole Church. Teresa of Ávila is one of only three female Doctors of the Church.



LIVING AS A DISCIPLE

• **Holiness** Jesus asks us to be holy. It's a goal of discipleship. Holiness is a way to travel the spiritual path. It does not mean we have to always be perfect; that would mean we would stop being human. It does mean that we set our hearts on the things of God. It means making prayer and the Mass your common spiritual practices. It means guarding your speech, watching your language, avoiding gossip, respecting your body (and everyone else's) as a Temple of the Holy Spirit. It means sacrificing for the good of others. Holiness is not about perfection. It's more about spiritual discipline. What positive spiritual steps can you make toward your own commitment to holiness?

PRAYER: *God, lead me on your path of holiness.*