



**SEARCHING
FOR GOD**



TRUE HAPPINESS

Gallup, a leading international polling firm, found that Americans who say that **religion** is an important part of their daily lives and attend a place of worship at least every week or almost every week score significantly higher on the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index than the moderately religious and the nonreligious.

The *very religious* rate their lives more positively, are less likely to suffer from depression, and have fewer negative emotions in their daily lives. They also tend to make better health choices than those who are less religious or not religious at all. Specifically, having relationships with church friends increases life satisfaction.

Religiosity seems to improve five specific elements of well-being: career, social, financial, physical, and community.

In an earlier survey, twenty-eight percent of those who attended religious services weekly said that they were extremely satisfied with their lives compared with twenty percent of those who did not go to a place of worship.¹



religion The relationship between God and humans that results in a body of beliefs and a set of practices: creed, cult, and code. Religion expresses itself in worship and service to God and by extension to all people and all creation.

Two hands are shown from the left and right sides, holding a rectangular sign with a textured orange-to-yellow gradient. The sign contains the text 'FOCUS QUESTION' in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

FOCUS QUESTION

How can you
FIND HAPPINESS?

Chapter Overview

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Section 1 Why People Desire God

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INTRODUCTION

The Pursuit of Happiness

MAIN IDEA

You are naturally religious because, like all human beings, you search for happiness.



As a human being, you use both your heart and your mind to search for happiness. This chapter will explore some different ways that people approach the lifelong search for happiness.



NOTE TAKING

Self-Reflection. This section poses a few “ultimate” questions about the meaning of life. As you read the section, create a list like the one here and list the questions in your notebook. Add three of your own ultimate questions about the meaning of life.

Ultimate Questions about the Meaning of Life

How can God have no beginning or end?

Restless Human Hearts

Modern psychology claims that you will not be happy until a certain number of your basic needs—such as food, health, safety, love, and self-esteem—are met. However, even if you are lucky enough to have all of your needs met, do you think that you could ever be *perfectly* fulfilled? Although the church-going religious people in the survey you read about at the start of the chapter were happier than their less religious peers, they were not completely happy.

You share with all human beings the deep yearning to be happy, satisfied, and complete. Yet the truth is that nothing in this life—no matter how good—can make you fully content or perfectly happy.

Questioning Minds

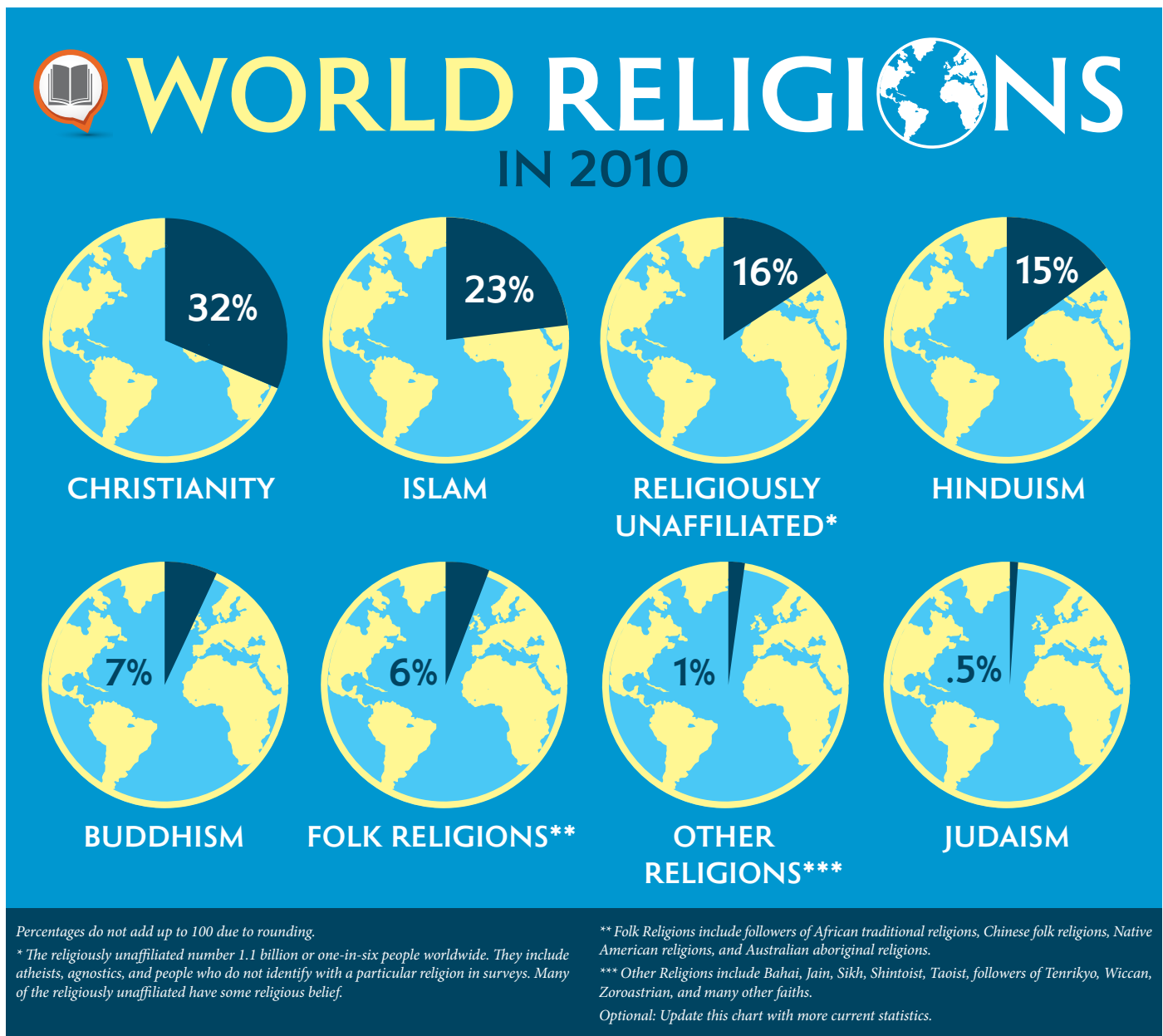
In addition to having a restless heart, you also have an active, questioning mind. Have you ever looked up at the sky on a star-filled night and wondered what is way out and beyond what you see? If you’ve experienced the death of a close friend or relative, did you question why they had to die and where they are now? Do you ever think about where your life is going? Do you wonder what will happen to you after you die? These are often known as “ultimate questions,” and many of them are religious.

You are religious by nature. Your questions lead you to searches. You are able through your own natural reason to discover true and certain knowledge about the one, true God. Because of disordered human appetites which are the result of Original Sin (see Chapter 4), you absolutely do need God's Revelation to understand the truths of religion. It is by coming to know God through natural reason that you are able to form a foundation to receive the gift of faith so as to better understand what God reveals.

Throughout history, other humans have also discovered that they are not whole or complete persons

until they are connected, bound to, or related to the **divine**. All humans have shared your search for God and have given expression to their quests through their beliefs and behavior. Countless religions through the ages have produced prayers, sacrifices, rituals, meditations, and so on to express belief in a divine being who created them and the universe. However, it is only in the salvific religion, revealed first to the Chosen

divine Relating to or proceeding directly from God.



People of the **Old Testament**, that came to fruition in the coming of a Savior, Jesus Christ, that humans can know God more accurately and intimately.

Even though you encounter **secularism** frequently in society, the vast majority of people still belong to an organized religion. The religions with the greatest number of followers are Christianity, with approximately 2.2 billion members, and Islam, with 1.6 billion followers.²

Old Testament The forty-six books of the Bible that record the history of Salvation from Creation through the old alliance or covenant with Israel, in preparation for the appearance of Christ as Savior of the world.

secularism An indifference to religion and a belief that religion should be excluded from civil affairs and public education.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the list you created to help you complete the following item.

1. Which of the “ultimate questions” you considered do you think is the most ultimate? Why?



VOCABULARY

2. Define *religion*.



COMPREHENSION

3. What does it mean to say that you are religious by nature?

SECTION 1

Why People Desire God

MAIN IDEA

Only God can satisfy your yearning for happiness.



You want to be joyful, content, and satisfied. How are most people around you searching for happiness? People search for happiness in different ways. Some chase wealth. Others try to be successful in a career, while others try to attract the perfect husband or wife by looking beautiful or handsome.

Money, a successful career, looking good, and marriage are certainly not bad goals in and of themselves. When you view these things as *the* road to happiness, however, you will be disappointed, because these “achievements” cannot make you perfectly or completely happy. A person searching for perfect happiness cannot find it in this limited, imperfect material world. He or she must look to the Divine.

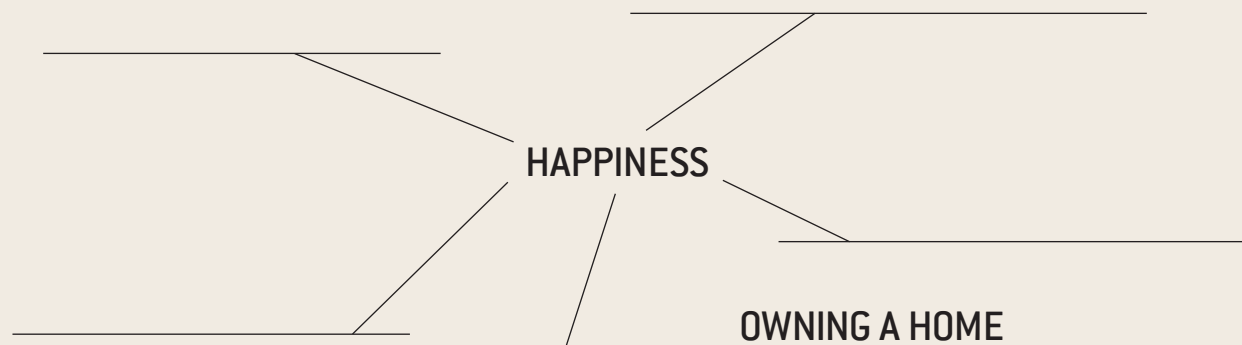
The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God. (CCC, 27)

Only God can fill your yearning for happiness. God created you with a desire for him that nothing else can satisfy so that you would search for him and find him. St. Augustine expressed his own need for God by



NOTE TAKING

Brainstorming. Create a design in your notebook like the one below. At the end of each of the spokes, write down some of the things, people, and events that many people in society think will bring them happiness. Add an asterisk to any of your examples that you think really do bring happiness.





St. Teresa of Avila said: "It is presumptuous in me to wish to choose my path, because I cannot tell which path is best for me. I must leave it to the Lord who knows me to lead me by the path that is best for me, so that in all things his will be done."

saying, "Our heart is restless until it rests in you." God created you to share in his own life of love—he wants you to be happy. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). God is the true road to happiness because he created you and he created happiness. Any other path disappoints. Only in God can you find lasting joy and peace both in this life and in the next.

The majority of people in the world are **theists**—that is, believers in God. Smaller numbers are **atheists**, meaning they do not believe in God. Yet others, known as **agnostics**, are on the fence about God's existence or believe that God's existence cannot be known.

These are a few reasons why atheists do not believe in God:

- Some have trouble believing in God because they see so much suffering in the world.
- Others look at the sins of believers and see them as hypocrites.

theist A person who believes in a personal and provident God. However, a theist may believe in one god or many gods.

atheist A person who denies in theory and/or practice that God exists. Atheism is a sin against the virtue of religion, a requirement of the First Commandment.

agnostic A person who practices a form of atheism that often expresses an indifference to the search for God. In some cases, an agnostic may make no judgment of God's existence while declaring it impossible to prove, affirm, or deny. When it rejects God and the religious and moral truths attainable through human reason, agnosticism, like atheism, is a serious sin.

- Some are too busy, lazy, or indifferent.
- Still others are afraid that if they did believe in God they would have to change their behavior.

There are several forms of atheism. The most common form of atheism—known as “practical materialism”—restricts all a person’s hopes and dreams to the particular time and place of his or her earthly life. Another version is *atheistic humanism*, which holds that a person alone determines his or her own fate. A third form of atheism preaches the liberation of humanity by social and economic means independent of religion and God.

Agnosticism also has several forms. An agnostic may profess no judgment about God’s existence, while at the same time declaring it impossible to prove, affirm, or even deny. Agnosticism is most often equivalent to practical materialism.

Atheism and agnosticism in all their forms are a sin against the virtue of religion (CCC, 2125). This sin is not only a rejection of God, but of all the religious and moral truths available to a person through natural reason.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the results of your brainstorming activity and the information in your chart to complete the following task.

1. Create a pie graph to visually indicate your own estimate of the percentage of all people who seek happiness primarily in each of the particular ways you named, including through God.



VOCABULARY

2. Define *theist*.



COMPREHENSION

3. Explain the similarities and differences between an atheist and an agnostic.
4. Name two reasons why people might have trouble believing in God.



REFLECTION

5. Why is it not possible for a person to find perfection in this material world?
6. Why do you think God created people with a yearning that cannot be satisfied during their life on earth?

SECTION 2

Knowing God through Natural Revelation

MAIN IDEA

It is possible to determine that God exists using your reason and your senses.



Christians have always believed that it is possible to use human reason to discover that there is a God. Consider how Johannes Kepler used logic to convince his friend of God's existence.

Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) was a famous German astronomer who discovered that the earth and planets travel around the sun in elliptical orbits. One of his closest friends insisted that God did not exist and that the universe began and operates by its own means.

Kepler made a model of the sun with the planets circling around it. When the friend saw the ingenious model, he commented, “How beautiful! Who made it?”

Tongue-in-cheek, Kepler answered, “No one made it; it made itself.”

His friend rejected this answer and insisted that Kepler tell him who made the model.

The famous astronomer then answered: “Friend, you say that this toy could not make itself. But listen to yourself. This model is but a very weak imitation of this vast universe, which I think you said made itself.”



NOTE TAKING

Assessing Arguments. Create a chart like the one below. As you read this section, list the proofs that God exists. Then rate the strength of each argument.

Proof	Weak	Strong
1. God is the Unmoved Mover	←	→ X
2.	←	→
3.	←	→
4.	←	→
5.	←	→

Kepler made his point. *Something* does not come out of *nothing*. There must be a creator behind everything that exists.

You can figure out that God exists through **Natural Revelation**—that is, through your senses and reason. (The word *revelation* means unveiling something hidden.) Using your senses and reason, you can uncover that God exists and identify some of God’s attributes. The bishops of the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) captured this truth:

The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the source and end of all things, can be known with certainty from the consideration of created things, by the natural power of human reason. (*Dei Filius*, chapter 2, quoted in CCC, 36)

Contemplating the magnificence of the universe and the complexity of human beings are two ways to learn about God through Natural Revelation.

Contemplate Creation

The writer of the Old Testament Book of Wisdom suggests that those who cannot determine that there is a God from his creation are fools.

Foolish by nature were all who were in ignorance of God,
And who from the good things seen did not succeed in knowing the one who is. (Ws 13:1)

From Genesis 1:1, the first verse of the **Bible**, you learn that God is the Creator of the universe. By looking at the natural universe, you can discover the Creator’s work. St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans emphasizes that humans can discover the existence of God by studying his creation:

Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity

have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. (Rom 1:20)

God gave you intelligence. Think about the beautiful world in which you live. Curiosity will lead you to ask, “Where do all of these beautiful things come from?” St. Augustine suggested this path of inquiry:

Question the beauty of the earth, question the beauty of the sea, question the beauty of the air distending and diffusing itself, question the beauty of the sky . . . question all these realities. All respond: “See, we are beautiful.” Their beauty is a profession. These beauties are subject to change. Who made them if not the Beautiful One who is not subject to change? (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 241, 2:PL 38, 1134; quoted in CCC, 32)

St. Thomas Aquinas (1223–1274) (see photo on page 9), a **Doctor of the Church** and one of the greatest scholars in the Church’s history, offered five proofs for God’s existence. Note that these are not proofs in the sense that science would define them today. Rather they are “converging and convincing arguments” for the existence of God.

Natural Revelation The knowledge of the existence of God and his basic attributes that can be derived by human reason while reflecting on the created order.

Bible Sacred Scripture; the books that contain the truth of God’s Revelation and were composed by human writers inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Doctor of the Church A title officially conferred on a saint by the pope or by a general council declaring that person to be holy, wise, learned, and therefore a source of sound theological teaching for the Church. See page 370 for a complete list of the Doctors of the Church.

I



God is the Unmoved Mover.

The world is in motion in time and space. For the world to move forward there must have been a “First Mover” who started everything. That “unmoved mover” is God.

II



God is the First Cause.

Nothing causes itself. As in Kepler’s example above, even a model requires a creator. Everything that exists results from something or someone that came before it. Logically, there has to be a first cause or “uncaused cause” that is eternal and started the universe off.

III



Everything comes from something, and God is the Something.

“Nothing” cannot create “something.” For anything to exist, there must be a necessary, eternal being (God) who always existed and brought other beings into existence.

IV



God is the Supreme Model.

You can recognize different degrees of goodness, truth, justice, beauty, and so on in the world. Think of the words “good, better, best” or “most beautiful.” You can only speak of such different qualities by comparing them to a supreme model or reference point: God.

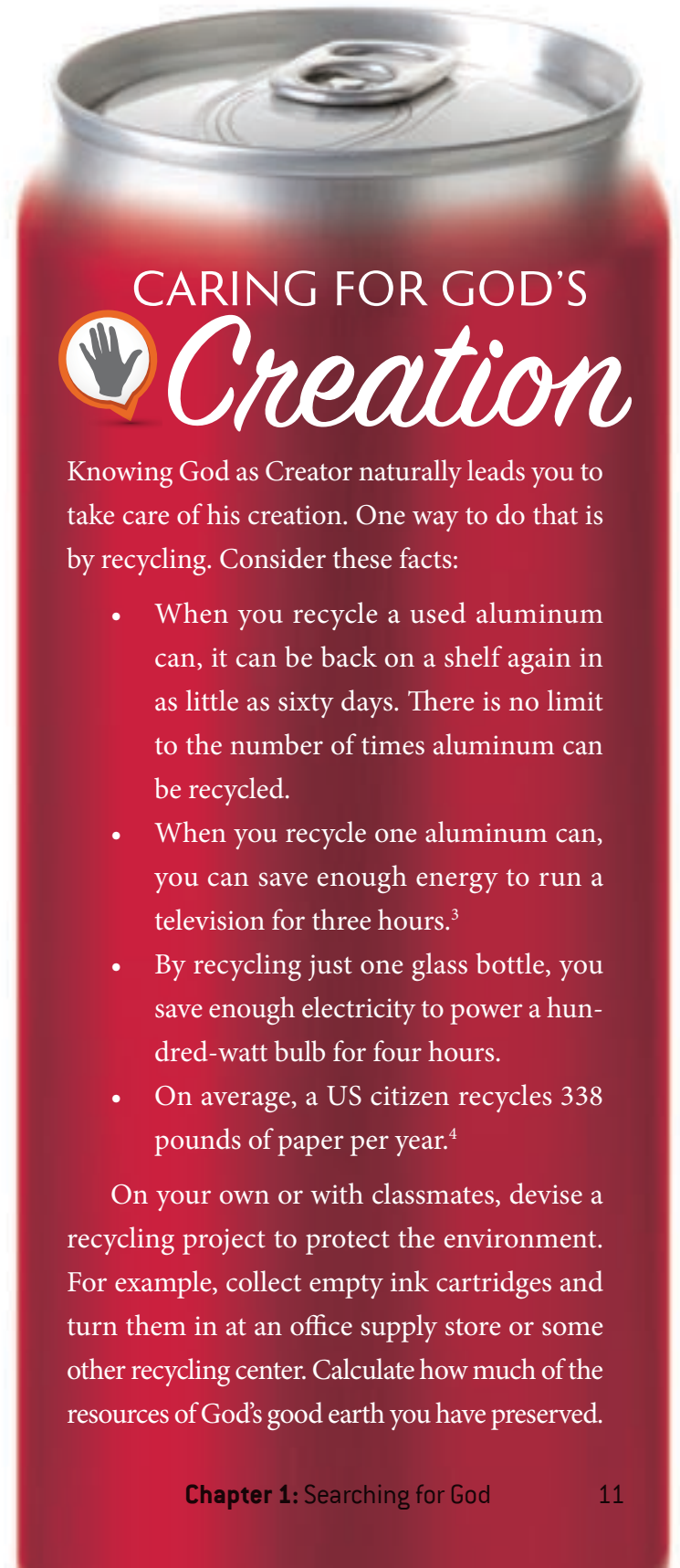
V



God is the Grand Designer.

The world contains beauty, symmetry, order, and power that only a Grand Designer could create. Prominent scientists marvel at the statistical impossibility of human life forming in the universe out of chance alone. Someone must have put the laws into nature that make human life in a well-ordered universe possible. That Someone is God.

Some scientists remain skeptical that God created the universe. Not one of them, however, has been able to prove that the universe just created itself or evolved from matter. There is more evidence that God is the Creator than there is that he is not.



CARING FOR GOD'S



Creation

Knowing God as Creator naturally leads you to take care of his creation. One way to do that is by recycling. Consider these facts:

- When you recycle a used aluminum can, it can be back on a shelf again in as little as sixty days. There is no limit to the number of times aluminum can be recycled.
- When you recycle one aluminum can, you can save enough energy to run a television for three hours.³
- By recycling just one glass bottle, you save enough electricity to power a hundred-watt bulb for four hours.
- On average, a US citizen recycles 338 pounds of paper per year.⁴

On your own or with classmates, devise a recycling project to protect the environment. For example, collect empty ink cartridges and turn them in at an office supply store or some other recycling center. Calculate how much of the resources of God’s good earth you have preserved.



Contemplate the Human Person

Of course, when you think about God’s creation, you must also think about the human person. Is it an accident that human beings possess a longing that the material world cannot satisfy? You probably sense that life has meaning because *your* life has meaning. Your study, hard work, self-discipline, and desire to develop your talents all mean something because they help you become the person God created you to be. Contemporary arguments based on your openness to several of the following elements of your humanity are other ways to lead you to God:

- *Beauty and truth.* God gives you a taste of Heaven here on earth. Think of a beautiful piece of music or some song lyrics that seem to take you out of yourself. Your experiences of joy in the presence of beauty and your insights into truth are but hints of what God’s beauty and truth are like. God is the source of beauty and truth. In Christ, “the whole of God’s truth” is brought to light (CCC, 2466).
- *Moral goodness, voice of conscience, and freedom.* Inside of you, you feel the call to do good and to avoid evil. As you look within, do you sense a God of goodness and justice who teaches you how to act as a being created in his image and likeness? This voice of conscience serves as an inner moral compass that explains, for example, why you feel

disgusted and angry when you hear of thieves who defraud poor people or terrorists who kill innocent civilians. You sense deep inside that some behaviors are simply wrong because they go against how God made people. Accompanying the right to act in conscience is the gift of freedom to be able to make personal, moral, and just decisions.

- *Love and intelligence.* Along with free will, these are spiritual realities that cannot be explained by the existence of the material universe alone, but must come from a Supreme Being.

You know that you are not God. You may, however, get the sense that you are part of something bigger than you are. This “aha” is another way to realize that there is a God.

Though honest thinking can help you discover God’s existence, the human reason and senses that can help you learn about God can also confuse you. Your mind is hampered from discovering naturally knowable truths by passion, imagination, and sin. Sin can lead you to persuade yourself that one of God’s revealed truths is actually false. In order to avoid these dangers and enter into an intimate relationship with God, you need the help of God’s grace. Building on what you discover through human reason, with God’s grace, you can freely accept God’s Revelation of himself by faith.



Finding God in Nature

Nature is essential to human life. Without air, sunlight, water, and the food that the earth provides, you could not live. God created the natural world to sustain humanity and for humanity's enjoyment. Nature also helps you to discover God because he is its Creator.

Take a walk by yourself in a favorite place outdoors. On your walk, become aware of God's presence. Take note of all that you see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. Enjoy God's goodness in nature: his beauty, power, creativity, majesty, love.

Take some photos of objects or scenes that strike you—such as a flower, an interesting rock formation, grass blowing in the wind, or a majestic tree.

Develop a collage with your photos. Use the collage to help you write a prayer. For example, you might praise God for his goodness in the natural world or thank him for giving you the gift of sight to see his splendor in creation. Share your collage and prayer with your classmates.



SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the chart you made to help you answer the following questions.

1. Which proof of God's existence do you think is the strongest? Explain why.
2. Which proof of God's existence do you think is the weakest? Explain why.



VOCABULARY

3. Define *Natural Revelation*.



REFLECTION

4. How do you know God wants you to be happy?
5. How can your own sense of moral goodness, voice of conscience, and freedom lead you to believe that God exists?
6. When you think about the meaning of your life, does the meaning extend beyond you or is it limited to you? Explain your response.



COMPREHENSION

7. Explain what St. Thomas Aquinas meant in describing God as the Supreme Model.

SECTION 3

Knowing God through Divine Revelation

MAIN IDEA

God must reveal himself to you for you to go beyond simple knowledge of his existence.



It is clear that you can know on your own that God exists. You can also identify some of God's qualities through Natural Revelation. However, left to yourself, you cannot get a true and complete picture of who God really is. When you try to talk about God, you recognize that human language is inadequate to describe him. God transcends, or goes beyond, all creation and creatures. God is a mystery beyond human understanding. Human intellect and language can provide insight about God, but always fall short of describing who God really is.

Luckily, God does not leave you to your own limited knowledge from Natural Revelation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that “God willed both to reveal

himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation of faith” (CCC, 35). God speaks to you through Divine Revelation. The next section offers further definition of and insight into Divine Revelation.

What Is Divine Revelation?

Amazingly, the all-powerful and infinite God wants to make himself known to you and to invite you into relationship with him. God not only created you; he wants to communicate his own divine life to you. By doing this, God makes it possible for you to know him, respond to him, and love him beyond what you could ever do on your own. He never stops calling you to him, even if you forget about him.

God broke into human history to reveal himself; this unveiling is called **Divine Revelation**. A synonym for Divine Revelation might be “Supernatural Revelation,” not in a paranormal sense, but rather indicating that God shares with you his mysterious Self at a level that you could never discover through nature or natural means.

Divine Revelation The way God communicates knowledge of himself to humankind, a self-communication realized by his actions and words over time, most fully by his sending us his divine Son, Jesus Christ.



NOTE TAKING

Summarizing Main Ideas. Develop an organizer like the one below in your notebook. As you read this section, list at least one quality each for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

God the Father	→	Creator
God the Son	→	
God the Holy Spirit	→	

Salvation History and the Holy Trinity

God revealed himself gradually to humanity, preparing people to welcome Jesus Christ, the perfection of his Revelation. Of course, God did not reveal himself to humanity for his own sake! If that were the case, he would resemble some of the ancient Greek or Roman gods, who only wanted humans to worship and serve them. Instead, God revealed himself to enter into relationship with you.

The real God could not be more different from the ancient gods of myths who fought among themselves and imposed retribution on the lives of humans who displeased them. Instead, God is not only a God of love, God is the **Holy Trinity**: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There are Three Divine Persons in one God. The Holy Trinity is also often referred to as the “Blessed Trinity.”

The Trinity is a mystery of the highest kind, but try thinking of it this way: since God is love, does it make sense that he would be just one, alone? Love is active. Two people, such as a married couple, have an exclusive love. Other people are not part of this relationship. When the couple has or adopts a child, for example, the two need to open their exclusive love for each other to include the child. Becoming a family encourages each person to become more outward and selfless in his or her love. The mystery of the Holy Trinity is one way to understand that God loves in an outward and selfless way.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal and have existed for all eternity, meaning that the Holy Trinity has no beginning or end. Humans have attempted to describe the roles of the Three Persons:

- God the Father created the world and directs all of **Salvation History**.
- God the Son saved the world from sin and death.

- God the Holy Spirit sustains the Church now that Jesus is not physically on earth.

More information on the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity follows.

God the Father

This course will invite you to learn more about and come into closer relationship with each person in the Trinity. People did not come to know about the Trinity overnight. Although all Three Persons always acted together, the Bible talks about God the Father’s work during the story of Creation and throughout the Old Testament. The Israelites, God’s Chosen People, were unique because—unlike their neighbors who were **polytheistic**, meaning they worshipped multiple gods—the Israelites were **monotheistic**, or believed in one God.

You have probably heard or read the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis and learned about the consequences of giving in to the temptations of the devil, the enemy of God and humankind, and disobeying God. As that Scripture account shows, God the Father created the first humans to live in a state of holiness and justice (see CCC, 375), but they sinned. Right away, the Father promised that he would redeem their descendants so that he could give them eternal life after death.

Holy Trinity The central mystery of the Christian faith; there are Three Divine Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation History The story of God’s saving action in human history.

polytheism The belief, in opposition to Christian doctrine, that there are many gods.

monotheism From the Greek words *monos* (one) and *theos* (God); the belief in one all-powerful God. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are the three great monotheistic religions.

From the beginning, it was clear that sin damages relationships. As the human family grew, God saw that sin was shattering relationships—primarily through **idolatry**. With relationships damaged by sin, people kept hiding from God out of fear, as did Adam and Eve, and fleeing his call. Noah, however, was a righteous man. After saving Noah, his family, and pairs of creatures from destruction by flood, God made a **covenant** with Noah in which he promised never again to destroy the world by flood. This covenant was an early sign that God wanted to save *all* peoples (nations) from the punishment of sin.

Later, God called Abram from his homeland, promising that Abram would be the father of a great nation, and renamed him “Abraham.” Abraham would have descendants who would be stewards of God’s promises to him. God later reaffirmed the promise he made to Abraham with Abraham’s son, Isaac, and grandson Jacob, who was renamed “Israel.” The People of Israel are the priestly People of God, the first people whom God called and the first to hear his Word.

idolatry Worshiping something or someone other than the true God.

covenant A binding and solemn agreement between human beings or between God and people, holding each other to a particular course of action.

Incarnation The assumption of a human nature by Jesus Christ, God’s eternal Son, who became man in order to save humankind from sin. The term literally means “being made flesh.”

Christ A Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means “anointed one.” It became the name proper to Jesus because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission of the priest, prophet, and king, signified by his anointing as Messiah, “Christ.”

Resurrection The rising of Jesus from the dead on the third day after his Death on the Cross. Jesus was able to conquer death because he is God.

When Abraham’s descendants, the Israelites, became slaves in Egypt, God freed them, created a covenant with them on Mount Sinai (called the *Sinai Covenant*), and gave them his Law so that they could serve him faithfully and prepare for the arrival of his Son. He gave them a land of their own and protected them from their enemies, except when they were unfaithful to him. When the Israelites fell into sin, God sent prophets to further form his people so that he could save them and prepare them for a New Covenant written on their hearts. The prophets called God’s People to purification and redemption and announced that God wanted to save all people. The prophets spoke of Jesus’ coming centuries ahead of his birth.

The last and greatest prophet was Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist. Through his preaching and baptizing of many, and later through his martyrdom, John paved the way for Jesus’ own ministry. The Holy Spirit worked through him and in him so that the people would be ready for the Lord. John was able to announce that the prophecies he spoke of would occur in his lifetime. He initiated the restoration of humanity into God’s “divine likeness,” a process that sin had interrupted early on.

God the Son

The **Incarnation** is a second mystery of faith that you cannot fully grasp with a limited human mind: “The Church calls ‘Incarnation’ the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it” (CCC, 461). Jesus, the only Son of God the Father, was born into the world of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. His followers called Jesus “the **Christ**” because they realized that he was the Messiah, the “anointed one” for whom the Jewish people had been waiting. Jesus had enemies, primarily among the Jewish leadership, and they convinced the Romans that Jesus could cause a riot, so the Romans crucified him. Nevertheless, he rose from the dead, and this **Resurrection** is the key to

JESUS IS THE WORD

In American English slang, “Word” has had several meanings. Some years ago, people used “Word” to indicate agreement, as in “That test was hard!” with the response, “Word.” The Bible and Christian **theology** use “Word” to mean Jesus Christ in a way that also bears some explanation. John’s Gospel opens with this verse [bracketed text added].

In the beginning was the Word [Jesus]
and the Word [Jesus] was with God,
And the Word [Jesus] was God. (Jn 1:1)

Jesus is the Word, the *Logos* in the original Greek text. In Greek philosophy, the *Logos* was reason, the controlling principle of the universe. To some of Jesus’ Jewish contemporaries, the *Logos* meant divine wisdom, which shows itself in all of creation. God inspired the author of John’s Gospel to write that Jesus is the divine wisdom in creation and that he had always existed with God the Father.

theology The study of the nature of God and religious truth. Theologians are people who conduct this study.

Notice in the following quotation how the author of the Letter to the Hebrews connects *Logos* and speech:

In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe,

who is the refulgence of his glory,
the very imprint of his being,
and who sustains all things by his mighty word. (Heb 1:1–3)

Jesus is the perfect Revelation of God. Everything that God revealed in the Old Testament prepared the way for the *Logos*, the Word, God’s greatest Revelation.

your Salvation. After the Resurrection, Jesus’ followers understood that Jesus is God.

There will be no further Revelation now that Jesus has suffered, died, risen from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. This does not mean that God stepped

out of human history after Jesus’ Ascension, but rather that Jesus has fulfilled the goal of Salvation History by redeeming all human beings. Now, the Church is the means for humans to connect with God.



“Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them” (Acts 2:3).

Pentecost A Greek word that means “fiftieth day.” On this day, the Church celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the Apostles. It is often called the “birthday of the Church.”

Apostle A term meaning “one who is sent.” Jesus called twelve of his disciples to become his Apostles, chosen witnesses of his Resurrection, and the foundation on which he built the Church. As Jesus was sent by the Father, so he sent his chosen disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world.

God the Holy Spirit

Immediately after the Romans crucified Jesus, his followers hid because they were afraid. While they were hiding, the Holy Spirit came to them on **Pentecost** (see Acts 2). The Holy Spirit filled the **Apostles** with courage, the ability to speak publicly, the authority to baptize, and the enthusiasm to share the Good News or Gospel about Jesus Christ. After a time, the early Christians came to understand that the Holy Spirit was divine as well.

Jesus had told his followers that he and the Father are one (see Jn 10:30). In some mysterious way, the early Christians realized that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, yet distinct from each other. Early Christian leaders articulated the theology of the Trinity at the First Council of Constantinople in 381, though the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit was still a question at that point.

The Trinity and You

The results of Salvation History are the reason you are sitting at your desk or lounging on the couch, reading this book. The Father created you. The Son saved you from sin. The Holy Spirit works in your life, inspiring you to love. This is another way of saying that all Three Divine Persons are involved in the work of Creation, Redemption, and Sanctification. These special roles attributed to the Father (Creator), Son (Savior), and Holy Spirit (Sanctifier) are known as the divine missions of the Blessed Trinity. You need to learn about each person of the Trinity, but especially about Jesus Christ: because he is fully human and fully divine, Jesus *perfectly* reveals to you who God is. His goal is for you and every other person to come into communion with the Trinity. God wants to share his powerful divine love with you. You can experience it now. You can experience it for eternity.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the characteristics of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that you identified to complete the following item.

1. Describe the Trinity.



COMPREHENSION

2. What made the Chosen People different from their neighbors?
3. Who is the last and greatest prophet?
4. What is the key to your Salvation?
5. How did the coming of the Holy Spirit affect the Apostles?



CRITICAL THINKING

6. Why is Jesus God's perfect Revelation to human beings?



REFLECTION

7. Describe a time when you have experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit.

SECTION 4

Handing Down Divine Revelation

MAIN IDEA

As successors of the Apostles, the bishops preserve Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition for all the faithful.



Are you interested in your own family's story? When did you, your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents or beyond come to live in this country? Where did they come from? Why did they leave their native countries? What were their jobs and accomplishments once they arrived? You can learn the answers to these and other questions about your family's story by talking to relatives, viewing photos and letters, researching your family tree, and reading family diaries.



NOTE TAKING

Supporting Main Ideas. As you read this section, jot down at least three examples that illustrate the importance of trust between members of the Church.

How do you learn about the story of Salvation History, a narrative that grounds the Catholic faith yet occurred thousands of years ago? After the Father revealed himself fully through his Son, Jesus Christ, Jesus then entrusted Revelation or the **Deposit of Faith** to his Apostles. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles handed the Revelation on to the early Church leaders and their successors (see image at left).

The Church's Deposit of Faith consists of both **Sacred Scripture** and **Sacred Tradition**. Both flow from the same source (God) and have the same goal (human Salvation through Christ). (See, also, pages 362–365 in the Appendix: Catholic Handbook for Faith.)

Sacred Scripture

The early Christians passed on the Good News of Jesus Christ orally as well as in writing. Sacred Scripture is the written form of the Good News that the Apostles and the early Christians preached. (Chapter 2 presents a full overview of Sacred Scripture. Chapter 3 explains how and why important aspects of the oral preaching were put into writing.)

You can be confident that when you read Sacred Scripture you are reading God's Word. As an introduction, you can think of Sacred Scripture, or the Bible, as

Deposit of Faith "The heritage of faith contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, handed down in the Church from the time of the Apostles, from which the Magisterium draws all that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, Glossary*).

Sacred Scripture The *written* transmission of the Church's Gospel message found in the Church's teaching, life, and worship. It is faithfully preserved, handed down, and interpreted by the Church's Magisterium.

Sacred Tradition The *living* transmission of the Church's Gospel message found in the Church's teaching, life, and worship. It is faithfully preserved, handed down, and interpreted by the Church's Magisterium.



The modern body of Catholic Social Teaching began with Pope Leo XIII's (left) encyclical *Rerum Novarum* ("of revolutionary change") in 1891 and continues through Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical on the climate, *Laudato si'* ("Praise Be to You").

the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. . . . The books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to Sacred Scriptures. (*Dei Verbum*, 11, quoted in *CCC*, 107)

Sacred Scripture recalls the events of Salvation History and the covenants God made with humanity. Sacred Scripture includes the Old Testament and the **New Testament**.

The forty-six books of the Old Testament recall the history of God's Chosen People, the Israelites. They tell of God's promise to send a Savior, which you know is Jesus Christ. The twenty-seven books of the New Testament tell the story of God the Father's saving action through his Son and the Holy Spirit's work through the early Church.

New Testament The twenty-seven books of the Bible written by the sacred authors in apostolic times, which have Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God—his life, his teachings, his Passion and glorification, and the beginnings of his Church—as their central theme.

Sacred Tradition

Although the Bible speaks to people's hearts today, it remains a collection of writings by and about people who lived two thousand or more years ago. Christians have not added to the Bible over the centuries. Circumstances have changed greatly over time, however, meaning that the Church has needed to interpret the Good News in ways that were not relevant in biblical times.

For example, teachings came from Church councils in the first centuries of Christianity defining the theology of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Saints lived holy lives and the Church recognized their stories as important for other Christians to know about and follow. The Church determined the best way to celebrate the Mass and the proper ritual for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Although much of Sacred Tradition is based in Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition is a body of written literature that grows over time as times change. Its major teachings do not change, but the application of these truths evolves and expands.

The word *tradition* in Sacred Tradition means "handing down" rather than custom or common practice. The Church's responsibility through the ages is to "faithfully preserve, expound, and spread . . . by their

preaching” (*Dei Verbum*, 9, quoted in CCC, 81) the gift of faith given to the entire Church.

Apostolic Succession

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven, he commissioned his Apostles to proclaim the Good News to all nations, not just in the first century AD but for all times. Jesus meant the Gospel to be the source of saving truth and moral discipline. The early Christians spread the Good News first orally and later in writing.

In their later years, the Apostles passed their teaching authority to their successors—the **bishops**—to ensure that the Gospel would be spread until the end of time. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the bishops preserve the Sacred Tradition (including doctrine,

practice, and worship) they receive. The Holy Trinity supports the bishops in this stewardship and sustains the People of God in belief century after century.

The Magisterium of the Church

Although God specifically charges the bishops to be stewards of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, the heritage of the Catholic faith belongs to the whole People of God. God asks the bishops together with the bishop of Rome, the pope, to interpret God’s Word authentically in the name of Jesus Christ. When they do so, they act as the **Magisterium**—that is, the teaching authority of the Church.

bishop One who has received the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which makes him a member of the episcopal college and a successor of the Apostles. He is a shepherd of a particular church entrusted to him.

Magisterium The official teaching authority of the Church. Christ bestowed the right and power to teach in his name on Peter and the Apostles and their successors. The Magisterium is the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the bishop of Rome (the pope).



The Church’s magisterial teaching can be found in encyclicals, pastoral letters, sermons, and the like. Because Christ gave the hierarchy the right to teach, Catholics give religious assent to magisterial teaching through prayerful listening and obedience.



LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THE **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FOR**

Sacred Tradition!

I. THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

- Nicene Creed
- Teachings about the Holy Trinity and the Church

II. THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

- The Seven Sacraments

III. LIFE IN CHRIST

- Moral Teachings
- Ten Commandments
- Beatitudes

IV. CHRISTIAN PRAYER

- Prayers from Scripture and Tradition
- Our Father
- Devotions to Mary and the Saints

It is important to emphasize that the bishops do not simply interpret Scripture and Tradition on their own: they have God's help. As stewards, they carefully consider God's Revelation and receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Christ told his Apostles that people should listen to them as if they were listening to him. The People of God have the same responsibility to listen to the bishops because they are the Apostles' successors.

The People of God are called to listen to all that the bishops teach, most especially when they teach dogmas. Dogmas are truths contained in or connected to Divine Revelation. You must believe dogmas. Dogmas are close to the heart of the Faith; other truths are related to and based on these central teachings. Dogmas strengthen your faith, and your faith strengthens your ability to receive, understand, and live dogmatic truths.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Use the examples you collected of the importance of trust between members of the Church to complete the following item.

1. Identify a reason why trust is important for handing on the Faith. Explain.



VOCABULARY

2. Use *Magisterium* in an original sentence.
3. Define *Sacred Tradition*.



COMPREHENSION

4. What are the two elements of the single Deposit of Faith?
5. What is the relationship between the Apostles and the bishops?



CRITICAL THINKING

6. Why is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* a good example of Sacred Tradition?

SECTION 5

Faith: Your Response to Divine Revelation

MAIN IDEA

Faith is the free acceptance of Divine Revelation and God's love.



When a friend does something kind for you, you naturally say “thank you.” It is natural and right to show gratitude for good things that happen to you. So it is with the Good News of your Salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a privilege to hear the Good News, especially when you live it within a community of believers, the Church. Gratitude naturally leads to a positive response to God's invitation that is called **faith**.

To have faith means that you take a leap of sorts. Your belief now extends beyond what you can discern with your senses to include the supernatural—that is, God, who transcends the material world. In Scripture, faith is defined as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).

faith One of the theological virtues. Faith is an acknowledgement of an allegiance to God.

Personal Faith

Faith is both a human act and a gift from God. Prior to your yes to faith, the Holy Spirit has already been at work in you, opening “the eyes of your mind” so that you can accept and believe the truth. However, your human will and mind need to cooperate with God's grace and the Holy Spirit's work.



NOTE TAKING

Understanding Concepts. As you read through this section, create a chart like the one here and list what faith enables you to do. Choose three examples, identify the one that most interests you, and explain why it does.

Faith enables me to . . .	Example
believe in God and all that he has revealed	The birth of my nephew was inspiring.

What does faith enable you to do? Simply, it enables you to respond yes to Divine Revelation. In addition, faith

- enables you to believe in God and all that he has revealed;
- makes it possible for you to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord;
- helps you imitate Jesus and put his teachings into practice;
- enables you to partake of the life of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens you as to who Jesus is;
- opens up the gates of Heaven to you—faith is necessary for your Salvation;
- helps you accept Church teaching; and
- enables you to commit yourself totally to God with both your intellect and your will.

When you use the gift of faith and live a Christ-like life, you are on the path to eternal life—a life of union with God. It is important to emphasize that God does not force you to have faith. Divine Revelation is God's gift, as is our free will. This means that you are free to accept or reject God's love. By responding affirmatively to Divine Revelation through faith in Jesus Christ, you position yourself for happiness both in this life and forever in eternity. You will not need to constantly search for happiness.

The Faith of the Church

With the help of the Holy Spirit, all members of the Church support the bishops in understanding and passing on revealed truth. The *sensus fidei* is the truth that the Church faithful as a whole—laypeople to bishops—cannot be wrong about matters of belief. The People of God, guided by the Magisterium, follow the faith of the Church and apply it to everyday life.

Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Faith of the entire Church grows. The presence of the Holy Spirit helps each person in the following ways:



- You pray about and study the faith of the Church that scholarly research and thought explain.
- You bring your spiritual experiences to your reading of the Bible and understand those experiences better from having read Scripture.
- You hear the preaching of bishops who preach the truth (see image on page 26). Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium support one another. With the help of the Holy Spirit, they provide what you need to gain eternal life.

SECTION ASSESSMENT



NOTE TAKING

Refer to your chart listing all that faith enables you to do to answer the following question.

1. Which achievement do you find most compelling? Why?



ANALYSIS

2. What meaning do you find in the expression “the eyes of your mind”?
3. Explain the meaning of the following Scripture verse: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).



REFLECTION

4. Describe a faithful person whom you know personally. How does that person manifest the gift of faith?





Section Summaries



Focus Question

How can you find happiness?

Complete one of the following:


-  Name some ways you can discover happiness through a relationship with God.
-  Why do you think some religious people choose to live in fear rather than happiness?
-  Make assumptions based on the happiness level of religious people versus nonreligious people. What types of things make each kind of person happy? What is your opinion of each type of happiness?
-  How can prayer and faith in God help you at times when you feel down because of a problem at home or at school?



INTRODUCTION (PAGES 3–5)

The Pursuit of Happiness

You are naturally religious because you, like all human beings, search for happiness. The search for happiness, however, can lead you to realize that you are neither whole nor complete until you are in relationship with God. Knowing that the majority of people worldwide are religious also supports this reality.


-  Although nothing in this life can make you completely happy, some people, places, or things in your life can help lead you to God. Name at least two and explain how they help you grow closer to God.



SECTION 1 (PAGES 6–8)

Why People Desire God

Only God can fill your yearning for happiness. People often seek happiness through material things that do not really satisfy. Who knows better how to make you happy than the One who created you? God is relational and wants to extend himself to you, his own creation.

-  People will often consult an owner's manual for a vacuum or car, yet rely on themselves to figure out how to best live their lives. Why do so many people not seek the help of God to figure out the best course for their lives?



SECTION 2 (PAGES 9–13)

Knowing God through Natural Revelation

It is possible for you to determine that God exists using your reason and your senses. Creation and the human person are hard to explain without a God. There are several persuasive rational arguments for God's existence. While it is possible to know that God exists and deduce some of his attributes, our understanding of God remains limited.



Name the two rational arguments for God's existence that most clearly resonate with you.



SECTION 3 (PAGES 14–19)

Knowing God through Divine Revelation

While you may be able to figure out that there is a God on your own, God must reveal himself to you for you to go beyond knowledge of his existence. Divine Revelation means that God breaks into the human world to reveal himself. The subject of Divine Revelation is the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



Why did God break through into the human world to reveal himself?



SECTION 4 (PAGES 20–24)

Handing Down Divine Revelation

As successors of the Apostles, the bishops preserve Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, the Deposit of Faith. Therefore, you can be confident that Catholic teachings stay faithful to Divine Revelation. The bishops, as successors to the Apostles, preserve, interpret, and teach Divine Revelation.



How do you think the bishops' communion with one another resembles and differs from the collaboration of business colleagues?



SECTION 5 (PAGES 25–27)

Faith: Your Response to Divine Revelation

Faith is your free acceptance of Divine Revelation and God's love. After learning about God's Revelation, a person can say yes to this Revelation or reject it. Faith is both a divine gift and a human act. The Holy Spirit works in the human heart, preparing it to be open to Revelation, but a person's will must also assent.



Share at least three practical ways a person says yes to the gift of faith.

Chapter Assignments

Choose and complete at least one of these assignments to assess your understanding of the material in this chapter.

1. Assess the Happiness Survey



Take some time to further assess the happiness survey referred to on page 1. Follow the directions below:

1. Search and examine the results of the latest Gallup poll on happiness mentioned on page 1.
2. Compare elements of other surveys on happiness you are able to discover. Include information like the following as the basis of your comparison:
 - Date(s) administered
 - Number of people interviewed
 - Pool of people interviewed (a survey of American women will differ from one for men and women, for example)
 - Criteria used to determine happiness
 - Questions asked
3. Research and cite challenges to the Gallup poll results.
4. Summarize: What do you think is missing from the Gallup poll on happiness? What are some other questions you could use to gauge happiness? Answer these questions and develop a summary of your research, concluding with your own reflections.

2. Capture “the Search”

Chapter 1 describes the search for happiness as a shared human quest. It also mentions an emptiness that causes people to search.



Create a multimedia collage about “the search.” Include a mix of music, Internet or print headlines that you can scan, photos (either your own or others), and other visuals you can find or create. Make sure that your collage has a clear theme, such as the human search in general, teens and the search, or your own search for happiness. Include at least ten visual elements in your presentation.

3. A Visual “Proof” of God’s Existence

In order to help his friend understand that God exists, Kepler made a model of the sun with the planets circling around it. Think of a three-dimensional way that you could help someone who does not believe in God begin to believe. If you have a friend who does not believe, try to understand the reasons why he

or she does not believe. If you do not know an unbeliever, choose the obstacle(s) to belief yourself. It is important that your model or process challenge the stated doubts directly.



Create your 3-D object, sketch it, or explain it in detail if it does not lend itself to imagery.

Write a one-page summary of how this object could help promote belief in God.

Faithful Disciple

Blessed John Henry Newman

John Henry Newman was born on February 21, 1801, in London, the eldest of six children. At an early age, Newman read classic novels and works by philosophers such as Voltaire, David Hume, and Thomas Paine. At age fifteen, Newman read works from the English Calvinist tradition and became an evangelical Calvinist who believed that the pope was an evil force in the world.

John Henry Newman later joined the Church of England (the Anglican Church), became a deacon, and then was ordained an Anglican priest. He became a curate or assistant priest at St. Clement's Church in Oxford.

Newman was a leader in the Oxford Movement, a group of influential Anglicans who wished to return the Church of England to many of its former Catholic beliefs and practices. Newman suggested that Anglicans' concerns about Catholicism were a response not to the true creed of Roman Catholics but rather to misinformation about Roman Catholic belief.

His proposal that Anglicans reconnect with the Roman Catholic Church understandably put Newman at odds with the Anglican Church. Newman subsequently withdrew to live in an Anglican monastery. There he wrote *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in which he withdrew his former negative critique of Roman Catholicism. In 1845, Newman left the Church of England to become a Roman Catholic. Unfortunately, this conversion cost him relationships with his family members and friends. A year later, in Rome, he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest.

At this time, anti-Catholicism in England was on the rise. People attacked Catholic priests as well as Catholic churches. In response, Newman gave nine lectures demonstrating the false origins of anti-Catholic ideology and advising Catholics how to respond to anti-Catholicism.



On September 19, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI declared that “venerable Servant of God John Henry, Cardinal, Newman priest of the Congregation of the Oratory, shall henceforth be invoked as Blessed.”

John Henry Newman became rector of the newly established Catholic University of Ireland, now University College, Dublin, and published *The Idea of a University*, a philosophy of education. He was an important figure in the late nineteenth century Catholic Church in England and was named a cardinal.

Today, many non-Catholic colleges and universities have “Newman Centers” modeled on a Catholic center originally founded at Oxford University in England. These centers offer Masses, other sacraments, and social opportunities for Catholic students. Check these centers out when you visit colleges.

Cardinal John Henry Newman died in 1890 after a bout with pneumonia. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on September 19, 2010, during his visit to the United Kingdom.



Reading Comprehension

1. When Bl. John Henry Newman was an evangelical Calvinist, how did he view the pope?
2. In which two churches was Bl. John Henry Newman a priest?
3. What is an area of theology that Bl. John Henry Newman wrote about after he became a Catholic priest?



Writing Task

- During Bl. John Henry Newman’s life, strong anti-Catholicism in England arose from misinformation. Do similar attitudes exist today? Why?

Explaining the Faith

Isn't the Bible just another piece of literature?



While the Bible contains many literary forms and types of literature—poetry, history, stories, letters, Gospels—it is not just another piece of literature. The Bible is the inspired Word of God. God is the author of Sacred Scripture; he inspired its human writers to compose the biblical books. His inspiration ensures that the Bible is the truth.

Christians value the Bible as Divine Revelation and as the living Word of God, rather than as being relevant only at the time the biblical authors wrote. By reading Sacred Scripture, people encounter God and grow in relationship with him.

Reading the Bible accurately today, however, requires being attentive to the Holy Spirit, who inspired the original writers and guides your understanding today. Understanding what God wanted to reveal through the biblical authors is essential to your faith.

There are several means by which the People of God grow in faith through Scripture. Biblical scholars use *exegesis* (a detailed study or explanation of a biblical book or passage) to better understand and explain the meaning of Sacred Scripture in terms of the Bible's formation and editing, historical and cultural context, and literary genres. They do so in service of the whole Church. In addition to scholars, individual believers experience spiritual realities that help faith grow in the Church. Preaching by bishops also helps people understand the Scriptures in greater depth.

Ultimately, the task of interpreting the Word of God is the responsibility of the Magisterium—the pope and the bishops in communion with him. The Magisterium, Sacred Scripture, and Sacred Tradition work together to lead people to Salvation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Reflection

- How does being an active, practicing Catholic help you to read the Bible?

Prayer

Prayer of Praise

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord;
cry out to the rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with a song of praise,
joyfully sing out our psalms.
For the Lord is the great God,
the great king over all gods,
Whose hand holds the depths of the earth;
who owns the tops of the mountains.
The sea and dry land belong to God,
who made them, formed them by hand.
Enter, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the Lord who made us.
For he is our God,
we are the people he shepherds,
the sheep in his hands.
—Psalm 95:1–7

