



Faith Formation Session on Apostolic Tradition: LEADER'S GUIDE

4 on the Archdiocese of Dubuque's Top Ten Gifts of the Catholic Faith!

Faith Formation Leaders: Please review all materials and select those most effective for your presentation. You may copy and distribute any of the materials.

Introduction:

The faithful of our archdiocese appreciate the two thousand year history of our Catholic faith. Many noted the Catholic Church began when Christ handed Peter the keys to the kingdom. Others wrote of the importance of "apostolic succession," "our bishops," or "going back to Christ." Included in this reason are the terms, "pope," "papacy," and "priesthood," which made a very strong showing on their own. As Catholics, we value the continuous leadership and unity from the time of Christ to the present.

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, send your Spirit to open our hearts to Jesus.
Guide us to a deeper conversion.
Grant us a greater appreciation of the beauty and truth of our Catholic faith.
Give us the courage and confidence to joyfully share our faith with others.
May your Church be a beacon of light for all who seek your loving presence.
Be with us now as we explore the gift of Apostolic Tradition.
Mary, faithful Mother of God, intercede for us.
We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Scripture:

Matthew 16: 13-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

When Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Opening Song: (or choose your own)

Rosary Musical: *Who do you say that I am?*: <http://safeshare.tv/w/JaKPUPPBgy>

Section I: The Papacy

Video # 1: Faithful of the Archdiocese of Dubuque

<http://youtu.be/-aF0Zk41-no?list=PLuecT6iWKYSzhfk1IEx7siJkpoBKmJL-N>

We believe the Church was founded on the powerful witness of the first apostles who followed Jesus: they lived with him, listened to his words, broke bread with him, and eventually suffered for him. They were the ones to whom Jesus asked the provocative question, “Who do you say that I am?” According to Scripture, it was Peter (inspired by the Holy Spirit) who answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Christians believe it was that moment when Jesus gave authority to Peter to lead—to serve—the Church.

We believe when Peter was handed the keys, we were given assurance the Church will continue until her mission on earth is complete—no matter what evil, opposition, or oppression it may experience. “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.” (Matt 16:18,19).

The pope, most notably known as the Bishop of Rome, is in the long line of what we call “apostolic succession.” The Church, through this unbroken line of leadership, can be traced back to the early apostles. Cardinal Donald Wuerl relates the story of a young boy inquiring, “So you mean that you know someone who knew someone, who knew someone, who knew someone, who knew Jesus?” Yes, that is exactly what we believe! For Catholics, this identification with Peter as the head of the Church is so strong, that we believe when the pope speaks, Peter speaks—who speaks for Jesus.

In the fictional movie, *The Shoes of the Fisherman*, there is tension between a cardinal and the newly elected pope, played by Anthony Quinn. In a scene filled with conflict, the cardinal eventually defers to the pope with these compelling words, “You are Peter.” not, “You are in the shoes of St. Peter,” or “You are in the line of Peter,” but “You are Peter.”

The unbroken succession is visible when visiting the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, where one can view the portraits (with historical dates) of 265 men who have served as pope, beginning with Peter. We believe from the time of Jesus, each succeeding pope receives the keys from St. Peter, speaks from the chair of St. Peter, guides with the staff of St. Peter. The chair of St. Peter also represents the location of unity within the Church.

Vatican Radio summarized Pope Francis’ comments on apostolic succession during his weekly General Audience on October 16, 2013, in St. Peter’s Square. “His catechetical remarks focused on the Church’s Apostolic character and nature: through the chain of leadership from Peter and the 12 that has remained unbroken down to the present day and that shall remain unbroken until the end of time; through the Church’s care for and transmission of the whole teaching of Christ; through the Church’s accomplishment in history of the mission of teaching and baptizing all nations, with which Christ entrusted the Apostles and their successors.”

Please break into small groups after watching this video presentation to discuss the following questions.

Discussion Questions:

- Many of the faithful of the Archdiocese of Dubuque gave witness to their favorite pope. Who is your favorite pope? What attributes do you admire in him?
- When we speak of Apostolic Tradition, we naturally think of Apostolic Succession, with the importance of Peter, and thus the Church, being given the keys to the kingdom. What value do you see in this? What real difference does this make for us as Catholics?
- Imagine Christianity without a pope; how would our faith, and our world, be different?

Section II: The Role of the Bishop

Video #2: Archbishop Michael O. Jackels and Catholic News Service story on Bishops Receiving the Pallium from Pope Francis

<http://youtu.be/plnkk5h-pAA?list=PLuecT6iWKYSzhfk1IEx7siJkpoBkmJL-N>

An excited, bright-eyed, second-grader ran into the living room on the Sunday after his first holy communion. "Mimi, guess what? I received my second communion from the Bishop of Ghana, which is just like receiving it from the pope!" "You're exactly right, Freddy!"

"The bond with St. Peter and with his successor, the pope, is emphasized by the Vatican keeping the pallium near St. Peter's tomb" said Archbishop Cordileone. "It's a very poignant sign of the communion we share -- the bishops throughout the world with the head of the College of Bishops, the pope, going all the way back to the time of the Apostles. Catholic News Service reported on the ceremony in which thirty-four archbishops from around the world received the pallium from Pope Francis on June 29, 2013, the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, which is known as the feast for Christian unity (as is St. Peter's Chair)

Testimony of the ceremonial use of the pallium dates back to the first half of the fourth century. The pallium, signifying papal authority, was conferred to bishops by the sixth century to denote union with Rome. "The modern pallium is a circular band about two inches wide, worn about the neck, breast, and shoulders, and having two pendants, one hanging down in front and one behind. The pendants are about two inches wide and twelve inches long, and are weighted with small pieces of lead covered with black silk. The remainder of the pallium is made of white wool, part of which is supplied by two lambs presented annually as a tax by the Lateran [Canons Regular](#) to the Chapter of St. John on the feast of St. Agnes, solemnly blessed on the [high altar](#) of that church after the [pontifical Mass](#), and then offered to the [pope](#)".

Archbishop Jackels, who received the pallium shortly after becoming Archbishop of Dubuque, commented, "To be quite honest, I was kind of hoping that maybe he would send the pallium by way of FedEx and say, 'Save the money and give it to the poor! I love Rome, but it's a hassle to travel and to be away from the archdiocese since I've only been there a month," he said. However, he reconsidered after hearing the story of the blessed lambs and the religious sisters who make the pallium and the underlining meaning of the archbishops' connection to Rome.

"This notion of the lambs' wool being placed over the shoulders of an archbishop is reminiscent of Jesus, the good shepherd, carrying the sheep back to the fold," he said. It reminded him of Pope Francis' talk to nuncios a week earlier about the qualities needed in candidates for the role of bishop: "someone who is patient, gentle, merciful, like that image of the Good Shepherd carrying his sheep." Archbishop Jackels said that in receiving the pallium he would pray to be "more patient, gentle and merciful."

U.S. born Archbishop Grusas told CNS that receiving the pallium from the pope is a reminder that the archbishop is "placed in charge of the herd, but they aren't yours, they are entrusted to you." The 51-year-old archbishop said the pallium ceremony also is "a symbol of our unity with the pope and of the universality of the church. We all tend to focus on our parish, our diocese, our nation, but the pallium emphasizes our direct tie with the pope." Archbishop Tobin of Indianapolis commented, "By keeping our people connected with the Holy Father and with the center of the Catholic Church, we're also being connected with the world"

Please break into small groups after watching this video presentation to discuss the following questions.

Discussion Questions:

- What connection do you see between your parish, the diocese, and Rome?
- What makes certain Church rituals and traditions important and valuable? What are some rituals that are misunderstood or unnecessary today (for instance, the ritual of wearing of red shoes by the pope to symbolize the blood of the martyrs)?
- What are some of your favorite Church rituals?

Section III: The Priesthood and Diaconate

Video #3: Priests and Deacons from around the Archdiocese

<http://youtu.be/zu4tqsslaKk?list=PLuecT6iWKYSzhfk1IEx7sjkpoBKmJL-N>

From Pope Francis' catechesis on the Sacraments during his weekly General Audience in St. Peter's Square on March 26, 2014.

"Holy Orders, articulated in the three ranks of episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate, is the Sacrament which enables the exercise of the ministry, entrusted by the Lord Jesus to the Apostles, to feed his flock, in the power of his Spirit and according to his heart. To feed Jesus' flock not with the power of human strength or with one's own strength, but with that of the Spirit and according to his heart, that heart of Jesus which is a heart of love. The priest, the Bishop, the deacon must feed the Lord's flock with love. If he does not do it with love, it is useless. And in this sense, the ministers that are chosen and consecrated for this service prolong Jesus' presence in time, if they do so with the power of the Holy Spirit in the name of God and with love.

A first aspect. Those who are ordained are placed at the head of the community. They are 'at the head' yes, but for Jesus it means to put one's authority at the service of, as He himself showed and taught the disciples with these words: 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45). A Bishop who is not at the service of the community does 'no good,' a priest who is not at the service of the community does no good, he errs.

Another characteristic that always derives from this sacramental union with Christ is passionate love for the Church. ... In virtue of Holy Orders the minister dedicates his whole self to his community and loves it with all his heart: it is his family. The Bishop and the priest love the Church in their community, they love her intensely. How? As Christ loves the Church. Saint Paul says the same about matrimony: the husband loves his wife as Christ loves the Church. It is a great mystery of love: this priestly ministry and that of matrimony, two Sacraments that are the way by which persons usually go to the Lord.

A last aspect. The Apostle Paul recommends to his disciple Timothy not to neglect, but rather to revive always the gift that is in him. The gift that was given to him for the imposition of hands (cf. 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). When the ministry is not nourished -- the ministry of the Bishop, the ministry of the priest --, with prayer, with listening to the Word of God, and with the daily celebration of the Eucharist and also with the frequentation of the Sacrament of Penance, one ends inevitably by losing sight of the authentic meaning of one's service and the joy that stems from profound communion with Jesus."

Please break into small groups after watching this video presentation to discuss the following questions.

Discussion Questions:

- When and how have you experienced the care of a priest as a good shepherd?
- What attributes do you most value in a priest?
- When have you witnessed incredible service from a priest or deacon?
- In what specific ways can we support our parish priests to do the work of God?

Conclusion: Please be sure to make time for large group discussion:

What did you learn about Apostolic Tradition?

What did you like best about the session?

What is one thing you will share with someone at home or in your sphere of influence?

*** What difference does it make in one's faith life to believe in Apostolic Tradition?

Finish the session by playing an appropriate song, followed by the concluding prayer:

Closing Song (Choose one or choose your own):

The Servant Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdmgpMfnjdU&index=121&list=PL323D9781654AF975>

Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Gift of Apostolic Tradition

Loving God, you have called each of us to be formed in your image.

Thank you for the gift of your living presence in the leadership of the Church.

May our pope, archbishop, priests, and deacons pour out their lives in loving service to your people.

Give them the strength to "be for us" and to go "before us" in all ways.

Grant us the grace to respond to the guidance of our good shepherds.

Mary, Blessed Mother of the Word Incarnate, intercede for us.

We make this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.

One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Additional Resources:

To find additional resources (including books, DVDs, online resources, and more) on the Apostolic Tradition, please contact the Education Resource Center (ERC) of the Archdiocese of Dubuque at 563-556-2580, ext. 214 or dbqcmcd1@dbqarch.org.