

## Catholic Identity: Celebrate the Difference

### Session 1 Participant Handout

#### A Catholic Understanding of the Human Person: Eight Truths

Text: *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults (USCCA)* – online version is posted at:

<https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/uscca/files/assets/basic-html/page-1.html#>

**PRE-SESSION ASSIGNMENT:** *please have a copy of this handout for Session 1 and written answers to the reflection.*

- Read: *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, Chapter 1.
- Reflection: *What are you looking for in life? What are your goals and ideals?*

#### **LECTURE:**

- **TRUTH #1: *The Human Person is Created in the Image & Likeness of God.*** (Book of Genesis)
  - Catholic belief: To be created in the image of God means three things for the Catholic: intellect, free will and self-determination.
  - Catholic belief: To be created in God's likeness: we are destined to be people of love.
  - *Reflection: The Catholic faith teaches that life is a journey with the ultimate destination of heaven. As one who teaches & models the faith to your students, give an example of how your life reflects your journey towards God.*
- **TRUTH #2: *The Human Person has a Body that is to be Respected.***
  - Our body is good; goes against the popular culture from one extreme (cult of the body/glorification of one body over another/objectification) to other (the body as enemy to the soul).
  - *Reflection: Why is important to understand the Church's teaching of the human body as a teacher of the faith?*
- **TRUTH #3: *The Human Person has a Soul, which is of God and eternal.***
  - Pre-Christian understanding (Plato, Aristotle and Socrates) believed that the soul left the body at death and went to an eternal punishment or an eternal reward. Foundation for Catholic belief.
  - *Reflection: With the image of "God's breath within us" how would you explain the human soul to your students as unique and joined to the body at the time of conception?*
- **TRUTH #4: *The Human Person is Called to Community.*** (Book of Genesis)
  - The human person needs others; depends on others; is fulfilled by others.
  - The individualism and selfishness of our time violate the nature of the human person.
  - *Reflection: Name some social conditions that influence your students towards isolation or individualism. How does our Catholic faith present a different way of life in community?*
- **TRUTH #5: *The Human Person is Called to be a Moral Being.***
  - Our human nature "knows" right and wrong; Moral relativism rejects this natural law.
  - Things are not right or wrong because the Church says it; the Church says it because they are right and wrong. Conversion stories tell us that people can change. (St. Augustine, etc.)
  - *Reflection: When it comes to living a moral life in Christ, why are the lives of the saints important?*
- **TRUTH #6: *The Human Person has a Capacity for Reason & Knowledge- Faith is "Reasonable!"***
  - Contemporary Culture defines faith as unreasonable, superstitious; promotes "Emotivism" or acting purely out of emotion.
  - Catholic faith is reasonable; filled with mystery, yes, but mystery is something understandable over time, including eternity.
  - *Reflection: Why does Fr. Walsh insist that we not only reject but teach against emotivism?*
- **TRUTH #7: *The Human Person as a Steward of Creation.*** (Book of Genesis)
  - Animals/pets are good; but not people. Act on instinct; people, think!
  - God named humans as the highpoint of creation; are "stewards" of creation- care and concern for earth and all creatures.
  - *Reflection: How does the Catholic perspective of stewardship for the earth differ from a secular viewpoint?*
- **TRUTH #8: *Our Destiny in Glory/We are Meant for Glory.***

**REMINDER:** Complete Pre-Session assignment on Session 2 handout and have a copy for class.

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