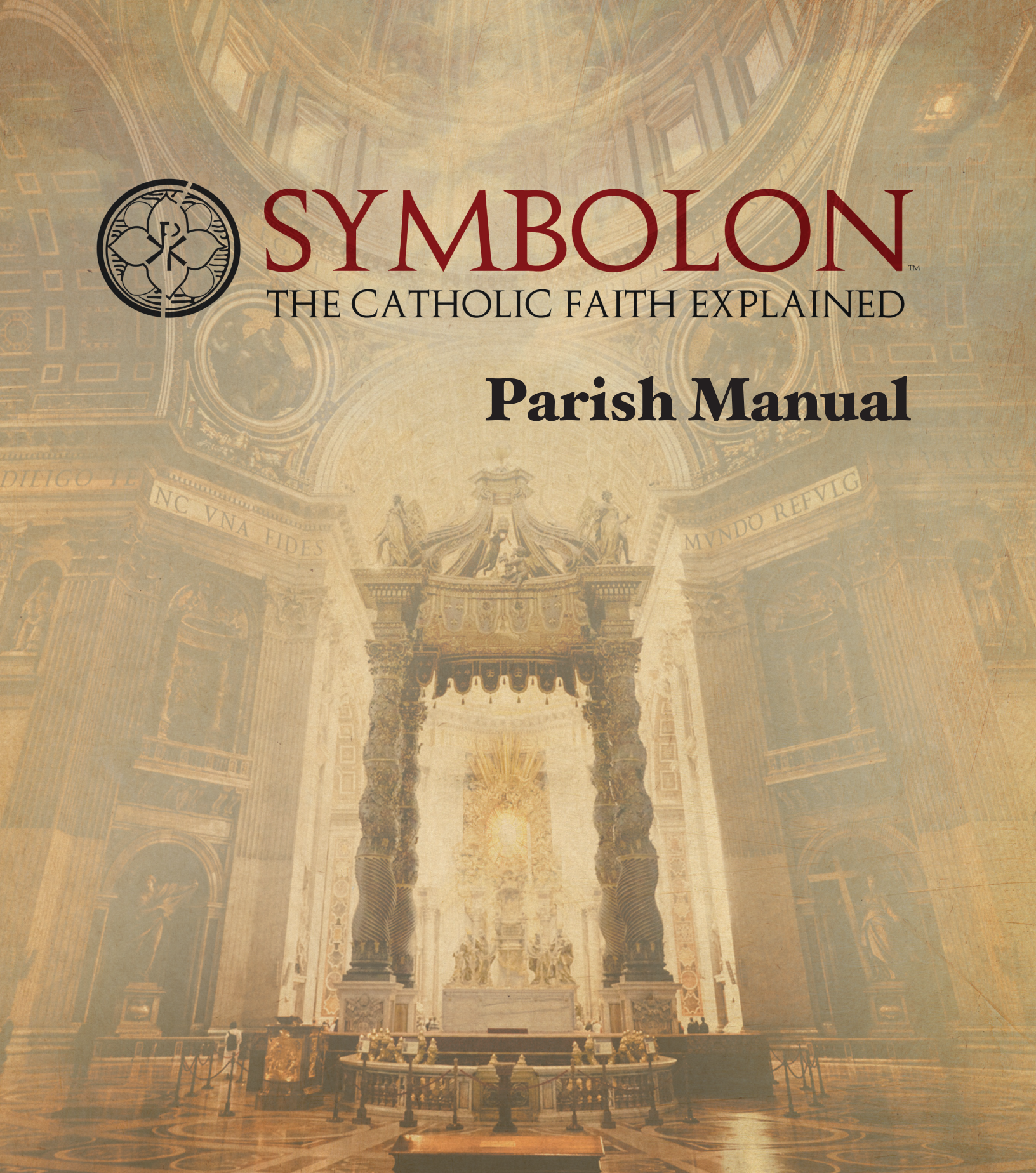




SYMBOLON™

THE CATHOLIC FAITH EXPLAINED

Parish Manual



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE

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Dear Parish Subscriber,

Greetings in Christ! We would like to warmly welcome you as your parish begins its journey with *Symbolon*.

This manual provides important information about the purpose and mission of *Symbolon*, and explains how to promote and use it in your parish.

Offering a bold vision for adult evangelization and using state-of-the-art technology, *Symbolon* engages adults in a systematic presentation of the faith that can be used in the parish and at home. It is our aim to empower your ministry leaders and the adults in your parish to encounter and share the Catholic faith in a way that transforms them on all levels: how they think, how they pray, and how they live.

Symbolon is versatile and adaptable. Through our digital platform, *Symbolon* is available online, around-the-clock, to support all faith formation efforts at your parish—and to bring dynamic faith formation into every parishioner's home and anywhere they are.

We know *Symbolon* will be an invaluable resource for your parish in bringing adults into a deeper communion with Jesus Christ and his Church, and we look forward to helping you form disciples for the New Evangelization.

Sincerely in Christ,

Lucas Pollice, M.T.S.

Associate Director

Symbolon Adult Faith Formation & RCIA



WHAT DOES “SYMBOLON” MEAN?

When we go on a journey, we want to make sure we are going in the right direction. In our walk with God, how do we know that we are following what Jesus and his apostles really taught? The way the early Christians did this was by developing a short statement of faith called the Creed, which summed up core Christian beliefs that had been passed on to them.

This creed served as a sign of unity between believers, connecting them with the beliefs of the early Church. The Christians described their creed as a symbolon. Now, this term *symbolon* may seem ancient and somewhat mysterious, but I can't think of another concept that more beautifully describes the importance of the Creed and what it means to us today.

The Greek word *symbolon* often described a clay seal that was broken in half and given to two people, serving as a sign of recognition between them. For example, if I left a valuable possession or made a financial deposit with a shopkeeper, we would break the seal and he would keep one half and I would take the other. When the two pieces were drawn together and matched up perfectly, it confirmed both my identity as the true owner and my relationship with the shopkeeper.

So when Christians described their creed as a symbolon, they meant that it was a sign of Christian identity and communion between all believers. When the creed you recited matched up with the Creed of the early Church, you could know with confidence that you were sharing in the same faith proclaimed by Jesus and the apostles.



MISSION

Symbolon is an immersion in the faith for the whole parish. It aims at transforming adults on all levels—how they think, how they pray, and how they live—by immersing them in instruction about the Word of God and the Catholic faith.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Our resources have the following at their foundation:

Immersion

For faith formation to be effective, it must aim at opening the person to an encounter with Jesus Christ—one that awakens a hunger to know Christ more deeply and to live as his disciple. Therefore, it is vital that this presentation of the faith extends beyond a weekly catechetical session and finds its way into people's homes, that it becomes an integral part of their lives. This requires accessibility.

For example, while the 20 catechetical sessions can be viewed at the parish, they can also be easily integrated and reinforced in a parishioner's daily life. Our live stream model allows individuals to study the Sacred Scriptures and immerse themselves in the Deposit of the Faith wherever they may be—in the home, at work, over a morning coffee, etc.



New Evangelization Teaching

Symbolon is an initiative of the Augustine Institute. The Augustine Institute serves the formation of Catholics for the New Evangelization.

The New Evangelization requires more than Catholic orthodoxy. It also requires an ability to reach across the cultural threshold as witnesses capable of bringing the Gospel alive in a post-Christian culture.

That is why *Symbolon* continuously highlights the importance of a faith that engages the culture by proclaiming the Gospel in a way that challenges today's secular, relativistic worldview.

Compelling Instruction

It is vital that the presentation of our Catholic faith be very engaging, with high quality production that is rich in content and relevant to the lives of people today.

Symbolon was designed with all this in mind by a team of veteran religious education professionals from around the country, led by Dr. Edward Sri of the Augustine Institute. Use of state of the art media makes it possible to optimize the presentation of our Faith to capture people's hearts and minds. It also empowers ministry leaders, small groups, families, and others to facilitate great discussions about what we believe.

The curriculum emphasizes the following:

- ***Systematic Catechesis*** – Teaching the faith from the heart of the Catholic Church
- ***The Beauty of the Tradition*** – Sacred art and Sacred churches from Rome and the Holy Land help tell the story of the Catholic faith
- ***Call to Conversion*** – Invites participants not just to know the Faith, but also to surrender their lives more to Jesus Christ in their daily lives
- ***Not just the head, but the heart:*** – Symbolon not only explains what the Church teaches, but shows how to live it as witnessing disciples of Jesus Christ

CURRICULUM & DOCTRINAL CONTENT

With around-the-clock access, *Symbolon* is designed to support all adult faith formation efforts in the parish. The list below lays out the doctrinal content of each session.

SYMBOLON: KNOWING THE FAITH



1. JOURNEY OF FAITH: TRINITY, FAITH, & THE GOD WHO IS LOVE

- Why Did God Make Us?
- The Holy Trinity: One God, Three Divine Persons
- Faith as Our Response to God
- Prayer



2. DIVINE REVELATION: GOD SEEKING US AND THE COMPASS FOR OUR LIVES

- How Does God Reveal Himself?
- Jesus is the Fullness of God's Revelation
- The Transmission of Divine Revelation
- Sacred Scripture & Sacred Tradition
- Apostolic Succession and the Teaching Authority of the Church



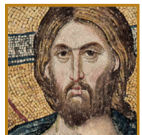
3. THE BIBLE: GOD'S LOVE LETTER TO HUMANITY

- What is the Bible?
- God is the Author of Scripture
- The Bible Tells One Story of Salvation
- The Canon of Scripture and Its Development
- Interpreting the Bible



4. THE STORY OF SALVATION: CREATION, FALL, & REDEMPTION

- The Story of the Father's Loving Plan of Salvation
- Creation
- The Fall: Original Sin
- God's Gradual Plan of Salvation in the Old Testament
- Redemption in Christ
- The Church as the Reunited and Redeemed Family of God



5. WHO IS JESUS?: JUST A GOOD MAN OR LORD OF OUR LIVES?

- Jesus is Fully Divine and Fully Reveals God
- The Miracles of Jesus
- Jesus is Fully Human
- Jesus Heals and Restores Our Human Nature



6. THE PASCHAL MYSTERY: THE MYSTERY OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- Why Did Jesus Die?
- Christ's Sacrifice Fulfills and Surpasses All Old Testament Sacrifices
- Jesus' Descent Into Hell
- The Resurrection of Christ
- Embracing the Crosses in Our Lives and Living the Paschal Mystery



7. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE LIFE OF GRACE: GOD'S DIVINE LIFE WITHIN US

- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- The Holy Spirit and the Life of Grace and Sanctification
- The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- How Are We Saved?
- Living in Relationship with the Holy Spirit



8. WHY DO I NEED A CHURCH?: THE MYSTERY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- The Church is Instituted by Christ Himself
- The Church as Both a Human and Divine
- The Church as One, Holy, Catholic & Apostolic
- The Gift of the Church in Our Lives



9. MARY AND THE SAINTS: OUR SPIRITUAL MOTHER AND THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

- Who are the Saints? Why Do Catholics Pray to the Saints?
- Mary's Unique Holiness & Role in Salvation & the Church
- Mary as Mother of God
- The Immaculate Conception
- The Perpetual Virginity of Mary
- The Assumption of Mary
- What is Devotion to Mary?



10. THE LAST THINGS: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE?

- How Does the Church View Death?
- The Particular Judgment
- Heaven & Hell
- Purgatory & Praying for the Souls in Purgatory
- Indulgences

SYMBOLON: LIVING THE FAITH



11. THE SACRAMENTS: BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

- What is a Sacrament and What are The Seven Sacraments?
- What is Baptism?
- The Effects of Baptism & the The Rite of Baptism
- Why Infant Baptism?
- What is Confirmation?
- The Effects of Confirmation & the The Rite of Confirmation



12. THE EUCHARIST: SOURCE AND SUMMIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

- The Eucharist in Sacred Scripture
- The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- The Eucharist as Sacrifice and Memorial
- Preparing to Receive the Eucharist and Who Can Receive the Eucharist?
- The Difference the Eucharist Makes in Our Lives



13. A WALK THROUGH THE MASS: EXPLORING THE SACRED LITURGY

- The Mass as the Source and Summit of the Christian Life
- Why is Sunday Mass an Obligation?
- The Mass as Rooted in Scripture and Tradition
- The Liturgy of the Word and The Liturgy of the Eucharist
- How to Prepare for Mass
- The Difference the Mass Makes in Our Lives



14. PENANCE AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK: GOD'S MERCY REVEALED

- Christ Instituted the Sacrament of Penance
- The Sacrament of Mercy
- Why Must I Confess My Sins to a Priest?
- The Effects of the Sacrament of Penance
- Preparation and How to Make a Good Confession
- What is the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and What are the Effects?
- Who Can Receive Anointing of the Sick?
- The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and Preparation for Death



15. MATRIMONY AND HOLY ORDERS: THE SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE & COMMUNION

- The Sacraments of Service and Communion
- Marriage as a Visible Sign of Christ's Love for the Church
- Why Is Marriage Indissoluble?
- What Is an Annulment?
- What Is Wrong with Cohabitation and Gay Marriage?
- What Is Holy Orders and What Are the Three Levels of Holy Orders?
- Christ Present and Working Through Orders
- Holy Orders and Celibacy
- Why Can't Women Be Priests?





16. A CATHOLIC MORAL VISION: VIRTUE, GRACE AND THE PATH TO HAPPINESS

- Morality Is the Path to True Happiness
- The Problem of Moral Relativism
- Law and Happiness
- Virtue and Freedom
- The Moral Act
- Conscience and the Formation of Conscience
- Living in the Freedom of Christ



17. A LOVE THAT LASTS: DISCOVERING AUTHENTIC LOVE

- What Is Authentic Human Love?
- The World's Understanding of Love and Why It Leaves Us Unsatisfied
- The Relationship Between Eros and Agape Love
- The Call to Self-Giving Love



18. A LOVE THAT LASTS: GOD'S PLAN FOR SEXUALITY

- The Sexual Union Expresses Marital Love
- The Sexual Union Is Meant to Reflect Christ's Love for the Church
- Contraception vs. Natural Family Planning
- Pre-Marital Sex and Cohabitation
- Sterilization and In-Vitro Fertilization
- Pornography and The Battle for Purity



19. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: BUILDING A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

- What Is Catholic Social Teaching?
- Building a Society Where All Human Persons Flourish
- Participation and Responsibility in Society
- Social Justice and Our Solidarity with the Human Family
- Living Social Teaching: Our Responsibility to Serve the People in Daily Lives



20. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: PROTECTING THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

- Protecting All Human Life: Abortion, Euthanasia, Human Person, etc.
- Economic Activity and Social/Political Responsibilities
- Love and Care for the Poor
- The Call to Serve the Common Good
- The Family as the Fundamental Cell of Society
- The Principle of Subsidiarity

LEADER & PARTICIPANT GUIDES

(Premium Access required for download)

Parishioners can purchase physical Leader Guides and Participant's Guides for *Symbolon: Knowing the Faith* and *Symbolon: Living the Faith* when logged into the digital platform. These can be used in a variety of settings. Interactive Participant Guides can be downloaded **for free by all parishioners** if your parish purchased a Premium Subscription.

Leader's Guide

With practical instruction on how to lead the RCIA or Adult Faith Formation sessions, these guides will help leaders effectively walk through a session. The video is the launching point that will help leaders with deeper catechesis, small group discussion, and personal testimonies.

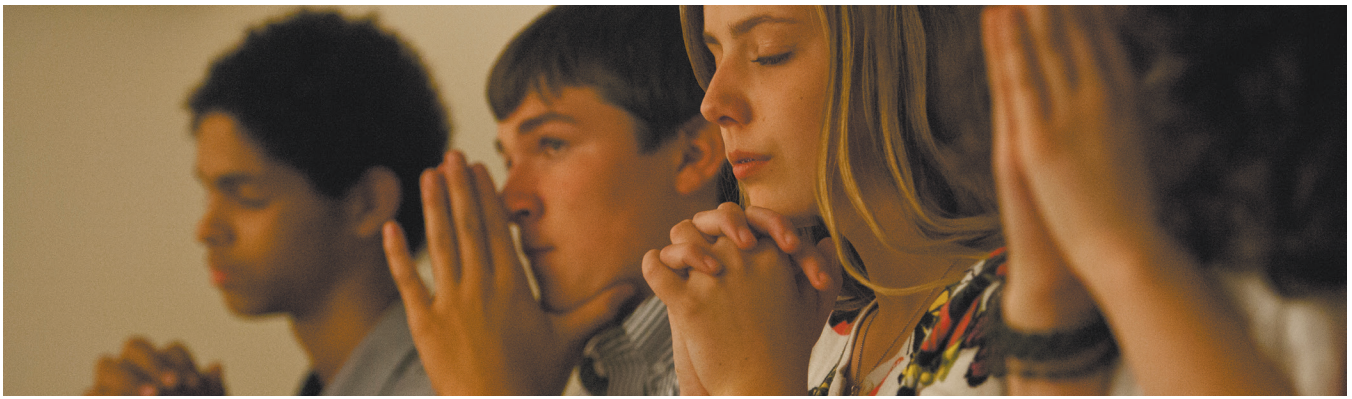
Participant's Guide

These guides lead adults to prayerfully reflect upon what they have heard about the Catholic faith and to begin to express it in their words and actions. They include resources that participants can use to continue to deepen their understanding.

Online Resources

Each session includes additional online resources from the Catholic world that give you more in-depth information to help answer questions and enrich your faith. Premium subscribers also have access to audio mp3 files from Lighthouse Catholic Media on a variety of theological and catechetical topics.





HOW TO USE SYMBOLON IN YOUR PARISH

Symbolon is designed to support faith formation efforts in your parish. It can be used in a variety of ways and in a wide range of settings. Our aim is that *Symbolon* be versatile to serve the specific needs of each individual parish.

Here are some of the ways that *Symbolon* is being used in parishes today:

RCIA Catechumenate: Using the 20 catechetical sessions as a frame of reference to help catechumens and candidates discover what it means to believe and live the Catholic faith

RCIA Dismissal Sessions: To help catechumens begin to more deeply understand the Sacred Scriptures and begin applying them to daily life

Men's/Women's Groups: For groups of men and women within the parish to grow in their faith through study, discussion, prayer, and service

Before/After Mass: To enrich understanding of Catholics in the Mysteries they participate in each Sunday. To enhance efforts for ongoing conversation during Advent and Lent

Catechist Training: For those who teach the faith throughout the parish, to help them to have a more complete and cohesive understanding of the Catholic faith and to help them express it more clearly to those whom they teach

Parent Sessions: To help parents fulfill their role as the first educators of their children in the Faith

Individual Families: As an in-home tool to help parents make lifelong disciples of their children

Small Christian Communities: To deepen the growth of parishioners as they participate in a variety of subgroups and apostolates within the parish

Bible Studies: Those who are gathered to study Scripture can use *Symbolon* to see how Scripture is so closely connected to the Catholic faith and how to better understand Scripture in light of Catholic doctrine

SIX STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING SYMBOLON IN THE PARISH

Below are six steps that are recommended in order to successfully implement *Symbolon* in your parish and to get as many parishioners as possible to use and study *Symbolon*.

It is important to know that *Symbolon* is like the mustard seed—it will start small and then grow to make a very large impact in the life of the parish. By following these six steps and gradually integrating *Symbolon* into the life of the parish, parishioners will become familiar with the program and will become more interested in using it at home and in their daily lives. Realistically, it **may take at least one year to fully implement** *Symbolon*, so careful planning and patience is important.

Step 1: The Most Important Step—Staff/Volunteer Training Session(s)

- An overview of this most important step:
 - The Pastor, parish staff, and key volunteers need to meet together to be trained on how *Symbolon* works and how it can be used in the parish
 - If the parish staff and key volunteers are not familiar with *Symbolon* and don't know how to use it, it is unlikely the parishioners will
 - One or more training days need to be offered as needed to get the parish staff and key volunteers on board
- Preparation: What you need for the parish staff/volunteer training
 - Leader's Guide for each staff/volunteer being trained
 - Participant's Guide for each staff/volunteer being trained
 - Handout with the parish's registration link so that each staff/volunteer can access *Symbolon*
 - Extra laptops or computers so that staff and volunteers can practice logging into the website after they have each created an account
 - Copies of the *Symbolon* Parish Manual

- Introduction to *Symbolon*: Begin by going through the Parish Manual and covering the following:
 - What is a Symbolon?
 - The Mission and Core Principles of *Symbolon*
 - The Sessions of *Symbolon* and Their Content
 - The Leader's and Participant's Guides (go through what is contained in each and how they can be used)

- How *Symbolon* Can Be Used in the Parish
 - Begin with discussing what is suggested in the Parish Manual
 - Do a brainstorming session with the group on any other ways Symbolon can be used in your particular parish
 - Review and Discuss the FAQ page

- Tour of the *Symbolon* Website—Hands On Experience
 - It is very important to have everyone on the staff and every volunteer practice logging into website themselves
 - Have multiple computers/laptops available so everyone can practice
 - Take everyone on a tour of the *Symbolon* website and have everyone practice how to:
 - Log into the *Symbolon* website using the parish access codes
 - Access individual *Symbolon* videos
 - Access the Leader's and Participant's guide
 - Access the additional online resources
 - Access the FAQ page

- Parish Implementation Discussion
 - Discuss the Seven Steps for Implementing *Symbolon* in the Parish Manual
 - Identify key groups in the parish that can begin using *Symbolon* or how *Symbolon* can be used to supplement current parish programs. (Step 2)
 - Discuss communication with these groups and when to do training sessions with them.
 - Begin discussions of when to do the *Symbolon* Sunday Announcement and Parish Rollout. (Step 5)

Step 2: Have Key Groups in the Parish Begin to Use Symbolon

- Once key groups are identified, invite the group leaders to participate in *Symbolon* and conduct training sessions with them using the same process as above
- During the training sessions, brainstorm with them the best way to get the members of the group involved in doing *Symbolon*
- As these key groups begin to roll out *Symbolon*, keep up communication with them in regards to what is working/not working, ideas for implementation, etc.
- Getting a “beachhead” in the parish through these key groups using *Symbolon* will help get the word out to the other parishioners and help get the program established in the wider parish

Step 3: Prepare for Symbolon Sunday Announcement and Parish Rollout

- Once the key groups in the parish have been using *Symbolon* for a while, begin preparations for the wider parish rollout.
- Choose a Sunday to be the Symbolon Sunday Announcement/Parish Rollout day
- The wider parish rollout will encourage parishioners to study *Symbolon* and also invite parishioners to participate in a Symbolon session at the parish that meets weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly—whatever works best for you
- The following promotional materials have been provided to you through the *Symbolon* website and should be prepared for the parish rollout:
 - Bulletin Inserts (add registration link and parish access code)
 - Promotional Flyers (add registration link and parish access code)
 - Promotional Posters (add registration link and parish access coden)
 - Sample Bulletin Announcements (add registration link and parish access code)
 - Sample Email Blasts (add registration link and parish access code)
 - Announcement Script for the Priests
 - *Symbolon* Promotional Video (to be shown at all Masses during the Sunday Announcement and Rollout)

- Create a *Symbolon* page on the parish website that includes information about *Symbolon* as well as the *Symbolon* parish promotional video
- Include powerful testimonies from the groups/parishioners who have already been using *Symbolon*
- Choose various Sundays for *Symbolon* Announcements and Rollout
- Encourage parishioners to access and use *Symbolon* at home/outside of the parish
 - Email the registration link to every parishioner to make it as easy (and as likely) as possible that they will take advantage of *Symbolon*. You may also find it helpful to use a tool like FLOCKNOTE that allows you to communicate via email, text, Facebook and Twitter updates, and voice messaging, all with one push of a button
 - Encourage parishioners to listen to the Lighthouse audio downloads. Busy parishioners are often more willing to start the journey by listening to something about their faith while driving or doing other things, and this can serve to increase their desire for the great content contained in *Symbolon*

Step 4: Symbolon Sunday Announcement and Rollout

- Good promotion is critical. To do this, you will want to encourage use of *Symbolon* in multiple ways.
- For the Sunday Announcement and Rollout, have all promotional materials in place (bulletin inserts, flyers, posters, bulletin announcement, etc.)
- The pastor or priest announces the start-up of *Symbolon* in the parish after communion (using the announcement script provided)
- Have a parishioner who has already reviewed or used *Symbolon* give a testimonial on their experience
- Show the *Symbolon* parish promotional video. Also put the promotional video on the website
- If possible, have staff members or volunteers available after Mass with information about *Symbolon* available. At the table also have
 - A flyer with information about the *Symbolon* parish group
 - A laptop or TV showing *Symbolon* video clips
 - All *Symbolon* materials for parishioners to view
 - Several laptops to show parishioners how to login to the website and access *Symbolon* videos (if possible)

Step 5: Continue Symbolon Announcements/Promotion

- Continue to have *Symbolon* announcements and the *Symbolon* table during Masses over the next several Sundays. Continue to promote the *Symbolon* group at the parish
- Again, a tool like FLOCKNOTE would be extremely helpful to use to promote *Symbolon* by using email blasts, Facebook, Twitter, text messages, etc. to encourage parishioners to use *Symbolon*
 - It's ok to share the registration link through emails and Flocknote; but the registration link cannot be shared on Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest, etc.
 - Parishes are allowed to link to the parish webpage

Step 6: Ongoing Encouragement of Parishioners/Families to Study Symbolon

- Along with the *Symbolon* group that meets at the parish, the pastor can also use Seasons and Feasts of the Church's liturgical year to encourage parishioners and families to study *Symbolon*. FLOCKNOTE would be an excellent communications tool for the pastor and the parish staff to use to encourage parishioners to use *Symbolon*. Here are some suggestions
 - Encourage families to study *Symbolon* during the seasons of Advent and Lent
 - Encourage parishioners to study *Symbolon* for a "virtual" parish mission covering specific sessions of *Symbolon*, such as the Creed, or the Sacraments of Initiation, etc.
 - Use Solemnities or Feasts of the Church to encourage the study of a particular *Symbolon* session, such as Mary for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, or The Eucharist for Corpus Christi, or The Holy Spirit for Pentecost
 - The pastor can also encourage parishioners and families to study all 20 sessions of *Symbolon* by publically congratulating parishioners and families who have completed *Symbolon* at Mass or in the bulletin, and presenting them with a Certificate of Completion signed by the pastor

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is Adult Formation so Important?

Adult Faith Formation is absolutely crucial and necessary for the full and lasting implementation of the New Evangelization. Adults must be re-evangelized in order to become compelling witnesses of Jesus Christ, and through their testimony and example shed the light of Christ on every aspect of society and culture.

There are many challenges to the formation of adults in our modern culture of which we need to be aware as we go forth teaching and spreading the Gospel. Like Jesus who met the woman at the well, we can engage modern men and women in our current cultural context and understand the many different “soils” in which the seed of the Word of God will be sown.

We also need to recognize that our modern day and age gives us great opportunities and tools to evangelize and catechize adults. We must be confident that their great spiritual hunger and search for the meaning of life can only be satisfied by the truth and life of Jesus Christ.

As Pope St. John Paul II stated:

“To continue the series of receivers of catechesis, I cannot fail to emphasize now one of the most constant concerns of the synod fathers, a concern imposed with vigor and urgency by present experiences throughout the world: I am referring to the central problem of the catechesis of adults. This is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. The Christian community cannot carry out a permanent catechesis without the direct and skilled participation of adults, whether as receivers or as promoters of catechetical activity. The world, in which the young are called to live and to give witness to the faith which catechesis seeks to deepen and strengthen, is governed by adults. The faith of these adults too should continually be enlightened, stimulated and renewed, so that it may pervade the temporal realities in their charge.” —Catechesi Tradendae, 43

What is in each Leader’s Guide?

Each session comes with a Leader’s Guide that is designed to be an easy-to-use guide for any catechist or volunteer to lead a dynamic and engaging Symbolon session. The 10-step guide can be used in a variety of settings and can also be adapted for a variety of timeframes to effectively present the catechetical topic that is being covered.

Following the Leader Preparation Overview, which informs the leader about the topic in advance, these 10 steps are presented for each session:

Step 1: Opening Prayer

Step 2: Introduction to the Session

Step 3: Video Part I: Introduction of the topic

Step 4: Proclamation: A summary of the doctrinal points that are being covered

Step 5: Video Part II: Systematic catechesis on the topic and life application

Step 6: Break

Step 7: Discussion Questions

Step 8: Optional Catechist Summary (time for the catechist to summarize)

Step 9: Call to Conversion

Step 10: Closing Prayer

The Leader's Guide also includes recommended reading from the Catechism, and other magisterial documents, books, and resources that will enrich the leader in leading the sessions. These can also be recommended to the participants for their further learning and study.

What is in each Participant's Guide?

Each Participant's Guide contains the information that each participant would need in order to fruitfully participate in a Symbolon session. It is meant to be used as an effective tool for the participants to learn, understand, and apply each catechetical topic to their lives.

Each Participant's Guide includes:

1. An introduction to the topic
2. The points that will be covered in the session
3. The Opening Prayer
4. Discussion Questions
5. The Call to Conversion
6. The Closing Prayer
7. Scripture Verse for the Week
8. Additional resources for further reading and study

How can Symbolon be used in the RCIA process?

Symbolon was designed specifically to be used during the period of the catechumenate, where it is crucial for the catechumens and candidates to receive a systematic and organic catechesis in the entire Catholic faith. *Symbolon* provides a “suitable catechesis” that not only provides a complete catechesis in the faith, but does it in a way that engages the culture and brings the catechumens and candidates into the fullness and beauty of the Catholic faith.

One specific feature of *Symbolon* that is particularly effective for the RCIA process is the Call to Conversion—challenging the catechumens and candidates to not just know the faith but to live it out in their everyday lives.

Another specific feature is that each session of *Symbolon* also comes with suggested readings for a Celebration of the Word of God to take place at the beginning of each session. These readings are specifically tied to the doctrine that is being covered in that session. Using them allows the Word of God to drive the catechetical teaching and opens each session with an encounter with Sacred Scripture.

Each session of *Symbolon* is also designed to be used in a half-hour RCIA session using prayer, video, discussion questions, catechist summary, the call to conversion, and a closing prayer. This follows the Ecclesial Model for catechesis, which is recommended and commonly used in the RCIA process.

How can Symbolon be used in small groups?

Symbolon is an ideal resource to be used in a small group setting, and the digital platform and 24/7 access make it available anywhere there can be a computer or laptop. Parishes can encourage existing small groups to study *Symbolon*, or form new small groups to begin studying *Symbolon* to not only evangelize and catechize young adults and adults, but also to form prayerful communities of faith throughout the parish. The easy-to-use Leader’s Guides make it possible for practically anyone to lead a small group session.

How can Symbolon be used in the family?

Many parishes that are using the *Symbolon* digital platform have found *Symbolon* to be an excellent and effective resource for families to study the Catholic faith together. Parents, teenagers, and even older children can understand and benefit from the content of *Symbolon*, and the videos often foster great family discussions about the Catholic faith. Plus, the videos and easy-to-use Leader's Guides take a lot of pressure off parents who might feel inadequate in teaching the faith to their children and allow the family to learn the faith together.

How can Symbolon be used as an outreach to fallen-away or non-practicing Catholics?

Symbolon is a great resource to use to reach fallen-away/non-practicing Catholics. Parishes can do a postcard campaign to those they identify as not attending and invite them to come to Mass and to rediscover their Catholic faith by watching *Symbolon*—add registration link and parish access code. It is also a great resource to use for those who actually come back to the Church in Welcome Home sessions at the parish. It is a non-defensive and compelling way to reach out to those who do not attend Mass. You can also give out postcards advertising *Symbolon* at Christmas or Easter Mass when many attend Mass who normally don't, inviting them back to weekly Mass and to learn more about their Catholic faith.

How can you use Symbolon to form your catechists?

Symbolon is also an excellent resource for parish catechists to receive a basic doctrinal formation so they can more effectively hand on the Catholic faith to their students. Using the digital platform, catechists can watch the *Symbolon* videos in their own timeframe, and over the year receive excellent doctrinal formation. Catechists can also use the *Symbolon* videos to help them plan and prepare for catechetical lessons. *Symbolon* is a great and easy way to form your parish catechists!

How can Symbolon be used to form parents in children's religious education programs?

Symbolon can be used in a variety of ways to form parents in conjunction with children's religious education programs. *Symbolon* can be offered for parents at the parish during the children's religious education classes to help them to not only better understand their faith, but to assist them in passing on the faith to their children. Parents can also be encouraged to watch the *Symbolon* video that corresponds with that week's lesson with their children during the week as a way of handing on the faith at home as well. The *Symbolon* videos are also an excellent resource to use for First Penance and First Communion parent formation meetings within the sacramental preparation program for children.



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