

1: MADE FOR GOD

"Do you believe in
God the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth?"



Catechist Preparation

YouCat 1-6, 20-24

For more details:
CCC 27-49; 142-184

Further Reading:
Peter J Kreeft:
Catholic Christianity,
pp. 15-43

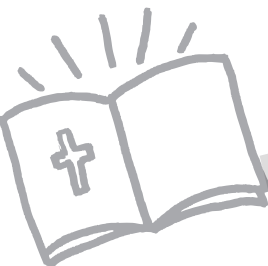
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Candidates will be able to:

- ✓ Recall a definition for reason.
- ✓ Recall a definition for faith.
- ✓ Summarise why God created us.
- ✓ Argue for the existence of God from the evidence of Creation and of the human person, and defend their own belief in God.
- ✓ Critique reasons for not believing in God.
- ✓ Reflect on how they can give God first place in their life, and consider what obstacles to God are present in their life.

LESSON PLAN

Liturgy of the Word & Proclamation	10 mins
Small Group Activity	10 mins
Video Clips 1 & 2 and Catechesis 1	10 mins
Key Points & Small Group Discussion	15 mins
Whole Group Activity	10 mins
Catchesis 2 & Spritual Journal Reflection	10 mins
Small Group Activity 2	10 mins
Time of Prayer	20 mins



Liturgy of the Word
& Proclamation
Timing: 10 mins

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Exodus

Exodus 33:7-10, 18-23; 34:4-9

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And every one who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose up, and every man stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the door of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at his tent door. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.



GOSPEL

A reading from the Gospel of St. John

Jn 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROCLAMATION

From the beginning, God the Father wanted to share his endless joy with us. He sent his Son and his Spirit to draw us into his love. We are made for God.



Opening Activity
Timing: 10 mins

What you'll need:

Various objects such as:

- a watch
- an iPhone
- kitchen utensils
- scissors
- gardening tools
- keys
- toothbrush

Large pieces of paper
for brainstorming

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY: Why do we exist?

Have a selection of different objects that have different purposes: E.g. a watch, an iPhone, kitchen utensils, scissors, gardening tools, keys, toothbrush... etc.

? **What are each of these things for?**

Finally, a human being (bring up one of the candidates)

? **What is his purpose? What is he for?**

In groups, brainstorm on large pieces of paper: Why do we exist?

Explain that all the objects we looked at exist for something greater than themselves.

But we human beings - the highest level of all the visible things that are created - are the only creatures God created for our own sake. We exist for something greater than ourselves, but in a different

way. We exist for God - not because he needs us, but because this is where we find our purpose - in giving ourselves to him.

God created us so that we could share in his endless joy with him. We are made for God.



Video Clip & Catechesis 1
Timing: 10 mins

What you'll need:

laptop / projector to play
the video clip

**VIDEO CLIP 1 (www.transformedinchrist.com):
Is it reasonable to believe God exists?**

Although human beings are made for God, it is hard for us to know that he exists.

Option One: Does God Exist?

Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists of the 20th Century, proves to his teacher through a logical argument that God exists. His argument is that evil is simply an absence of good: it is not evidence that God does not exist.

Option Two: The Kalam Cosmological Argument

Whatever begins to exist has a cause; the universe began to exist; therefore, the universe has a cause.¹

Catechist Notes: Already candidates may be thinking of the many reasons that could be given to prove that God does not exist. This film clip is an initial response to some of these reasons. Decide which clip will be most useful to your candidates – the second is more scientific.

**CATECHESIS 1:
On how we can reason God's existence**

Why do you believe in God?

Ask the candidates to write their answer in the box of **page 8 of their workbook** shown below, then share with the person next to them.

¹ There is a transcript available at www.reasonablefaith.org

? Why do you believe in God?

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Someone asks you, 'Why do you believe in God?'
What would you say to them?

Get some feedback.

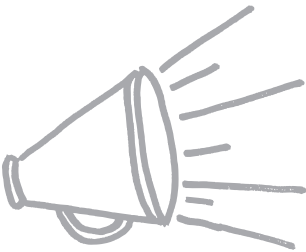
? What do you need to believe in God?
Faith.

? How do we get faith?
It is a gift from God. But did you know we can know that God exists just through our reason?

If God's existence was self-evident, this would be easy. If something is self-evident, everyone knows it to be true without need for proof. For example, the fact that time passes – from one minute to the next. If God's existence were self-evident, everyone would believe in him.

But it is not. So, we need to use our reason to discover that he exists.

? What is reason?
Does it mean investigating scientifically, measuring data and then concluding that indeed God exists? No. God cannot be the object of scientific investigation. He is not a "thing" that can be measured and investigated empirically. God is different from everything else that is. Therefore, the reason we must use is philosophical reason - **"the use of the mind to discern truth."** This means having a questioning mind: looking at all that exists, including ourselves, to determine what is the truth about our existence. We can know that God exists through looking at the evidence of Creation and looking at the evidence of ourselves. Firstly, let's think about Creation.



Catechesis 1



VIDEO CLIP 2 (www.transformedinchrist.com):
The Beauty and Order of Creation

Show film clip: "The Mountain"

The beauty of Creation points to an awesome Creator. Creation itself worships God - just by being itself. *Ask the candidates to look up Psalm 19:1: "the heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork."*

Secondly, let's think about ourselves. Science can tell us how humans exist. But can it tell us why humans exist? No. We can begin to reason why we exist - but only God can reveal the whole truth about why we exist. Yet we can know that we have deep desires in us - for happiness, for fulfillment, for love. What makes you happy? Often, it's being with people who love you. But even the people who love us can't fill the deepest longings in our heart. The only One who fills this deepest longing is God.

CATECHESIS 1: KEY POINTS

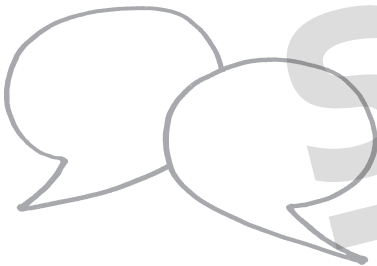
The existence of God is not self-evident - we need to use our reason to discover that He exists.

Direct the candidates to fill in the key points.

Key Points &
Small Group Discussion
Timing: 15 mins



Recap the key points with the candidates while they fill in the blanks in their workbooks.



Guide the Candidates while discussing these points in small groups. Ask them to note their thoughts in their workbooks.



KEY POINTS

(page 9)

The existence of God is not self-evident - we need to use our reason to discover that He exists.

DEFINITION

REASON: the use of the mind to discern truth

We can know God exists through the evidence of Creation and the evidence of the human person.

Write out Psalm 19:1: The heavens declare the glory of God,
the vault of heaven proclaims his handiwork

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:
Why do you believe in God?

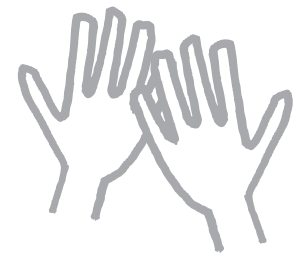
In small groups, discuss the following questions.

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1. Why do you think some people do not believe in God? What are some of the challenges to your faith? What responses are there?

2. Some people might say that we cannot 'prove' God's existence and therefore it is pointless to believe. Is this a reasonable thing to say?

Catechist Notes: One point candidates might raise that challenge their belief in God is evil and suffering in the world. The world is beautiful but also evil things happen. Why does God allow evil things to happen? See CCC 309 ff. "Only Christian faith as a whole constitutes the answer to this question: the goodness of creation, the drama of sin and the patient love of God which comes to meet man by his covenants, the redemptive Incarnation of his Son, his gift of the Spirit, his gathering of the Church, the power of the sacraments and his call to a blessed life..." In other words, there are no easy answers - we will understand this mystery fully only when we understand God's whole plan of salvation. However, what we can say is that, because he loves us so much, God has given us complete moral freedom. We have freedom to choose the good, but it also leaves open the possibility of choosing evil.



Small Group Activity
Timing: 10 mins

What you'll need:

Prompt cards containing 'devil's advocate' arguments (download these from www.transformedinchrist.com)

WHOLE GROUP ACTIVITY: 'Devil's Advocate'

Two candidates sit at the front to act as 'devil's advocate' while the rest of the candidates defend God's existence using the arguments they have been learning. Give the 'devil's advocate' candidates some prompt cards, e.g.

There is too much evil in the world for God to exist.

Creation just came into existence through the Big Bang - why do we need to believe it was God?

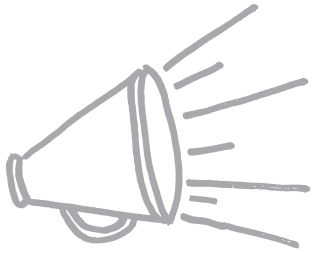
Everything else that exists, we can prove it exists - but it's impossible to prove that God exists.

CATECHESIS 2: Faith - What is it?



VIDEO CLIP 3 (www.transformedinchrist.com): How can I have faith?

Some people's answers.



Catechesis 2 &
Spiritual Journal Reflection
Timing: 10 mins

What you'll need:

laptop / projector to play the video clip

Begin with a "trust fall" demonstration. For a young person to fall back, what do they need? They need to know you and trust you even though they can't see you.

Ask the candidates to look up YouCat 21.

Faith is knowledge and trust. It is a gift from God, and everyone is offered this gift. God gave this gift to you when you were baptised. When we say 'I believe in God' we plunge into a very profound mystery. It's not like saying, I believe in gravity or I believe in magic. When I say 'I believe in God', I am saying I believe in the one, almighty, ever-living God who is my loving Father - a real Person. I am saying 'I believe in you'.

? How do we feel if someone says to us 'I believe in you'?
It means they trust us, they have put their hopes in us.

This is what we can do with God because he is personally interested in us and cares about us. When we have faith it is a real and personal commitment to God that encompasses our whole person.

Ask the candidates to fill in the blanks.

Recap these key points with the candidates while they fill in the blanks in their workbooks.

! KEY POINTS

(page 10)

YouCat 21: Faith is Knowledge and trust.

When we say, "I believe in God", it is not like saying, "I believe in some force or creative power that is unconcerned with us."
We believe in a heavenly Father.



**Spiritual Journal
(to prepare for time of prayer)**

Read YouCat 34. Do I want to put God in first place in my life?
Think of one way you are going to put God first in your life this week.

*“I would not believe if I did not realise
that it is reasonable to believe.”*

*– St Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) –
One of the greatest theologians of the Church.*



Time of Prayer
Timing: 20 mins

TIME OF PRAYER

Prepare the church with quiet music and candles.

When the candidates have settled, begin with this reading from the Book of Exodus (continuation of the reading from the Liturgy of the Word). Explain that Moses asked the Lord to show him his glory. Here is what the Lord replied:

“I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD’; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live.” And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.”

And the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear



Leaving Activity

What you'll need:

*Paper for the Candidates to
write their answers on*

the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” And Moses made haste to bow his head toward the earth, and worshiped.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Lead the candidates in a time of thanksgiving: Lord, as Moses came close to you, we come close to you in the tabernacle. We cannot see your face, but we believe you are here. We thank you for the gift of faith you have given us. We ask you to awaken the faith that is in our hearts. We ask you to strengthen it.

Invite the candidates to reflect on what holds them back from stronger faith in God. Ask them to write this down on a small piece of paper and place it in the basket on the sanctuary step. Play quiet music as they do this.

Finish with a few moments of silent prayer, and then a concluding prayer together and a blessing from the priest.

LEAVING ACTIVITY: Recall...

Candidates complete a one-sentence summary on a small piece of paper on their tables in answer to the question,

‘Why did God create us?’

Catechist Notes: This is a quick, optional assessment activity, to ensure the main learning objective is met.

FURTHER MATERIAL ¹

Q. Faith involves our mind and our will. Are we free when we submit our mind and will to God?

A. If someone tells us something about themselves, or if they promise something, is it contrary to our dignity and freedom to believe them? No! When we say Yes to God - accept his revelation and his promises - it is a free choice, and leads to our true freedom. God is the truth (Jn 14:6). God does not force us. He leaves us free to choose, Yes or No, for him or against him.

Q. Is faith a feeling? What if I don't feel like I believe in God?

A. Where do feelings come from? From outside us, e.g. The way people make us feel, music, films, our surroundings. Our faith is a gift given inside us, in our soul. Our feelings are often unfree - sometimes we can't control what we feel. But our faith is free. We make decisions which either strengthen or make us lose our faith.

Q. Is everyone offered the gift of faith?

A. Yes. The question is, how free are we in choosing to accept it? If we don't know the faith, how can we freely choose to accept it? To the extent that we know it, we have the free will to accept or reject it.

HOW AWESOME CREATION IS...

The first thing that should amaze us about the universe is its size. Earth itself is huge in comparison to the tiny beings called humans, but if the Earth were reduced to the size of a peppercorn, the extent of our solar system (from the Sun to Uranus) would be about half a mile! Then if all the Solar System were reduced to the size of a coin, the nearest star in our galaxy would be two football fields away. In our galaxy alone (the Milky Way) there are several hundred billion stars (all at similar distances from each other), and in the whole universe, there are several hundred billion galaxies... If your brain isn't fried at the thought of the scale of the universe,

¹ For more on these points, see Peter Kreeft, *Catholic Christianity*, pp. 22-23

it should be. But leaving size aside, consider how finely-tuned the whole thing is. The laws of physics are observed regularly wherever you are in the universe and there are basic 'constants' (like the speed of light, or Planck's constant) which form part of these laws. If the values of these constants were ever so slightly different, the universe would be a very different place, and would not be able to support life. So it's not just the size of the universe that's awe-inspiring, it's that out of all the billions of possible universes (with different constants and laws), the one that actually exists is one that can support life. The chances of such an outcome are vanishingly small, and seem to point to a divine Creator. An even more basic reason to be awestruck by the created universe, though, is the simple fact that it exists at all. 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' is a question we should return to again and again when we doubt the existence of God. The universe doesn't need to exist, but it does, and it didn't create itself, so we look, naturally, for a Creator.

