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# Welcome

Welcome to the Crossing Paths packet for December and Catholicism! In addition to exploring Catholicism, this packet also engages our youth with December’s theme of “What Does it Mean to Be a People of Mystery?”

My most vivid memory of the “Church Across the Street” program, way back in the early 1960’s, was of visiting our local Catholic church and attending Mass. Growing up UU had isolated me from Christianity and as a naive 13-year-old, I had never heard of communion. I don’t recall any preparatory notes from Mr. Means, our charismatic, convertible-driving Sunday School teacher. We simply arrived. I totally panicked when I realized we were in line to say something and eat something. My friends and I mumbled through the Eucharist trying to mimic our predecessors and hoping we weren’t causing the Catholic church to be in trouble by feeding us the body and blood of Christ. Then we headed back home and never discussed our experience. All of which is to say that I’m extra grateful for our more intentional Crossing Paths approach this month!

And I’m grateful for a number of reasons, not just that we ensure our youth are prepared and don’t feel awkward. We also want our youth to see the beauty of this faith and connect with it. Sometimes that’s not easy since Catholic practice is so different than ours and its theology is quite complex. To deal with that, we’ve worked hard to help our youth identify the common human needs underneath Catholic rituals and practices. I think especially of the way we’ve presented the practice of praying to the saints. Behind this practice is, of course, the idea that we all need help sometimes and feel like we can’t face challenges on our own. I’m also excited about the way this packet makes Catholic theology accessible through the use of fun metaphors and games. Just wait until you read the section explaining the Catholic doctrine of salvation described as “drop-able and sticky!”

Besides sending you into this packet with excitement, I also want to offer one quick reminder:

**Scrapbooking Your Journey:** Throughout the sessions, we remind you and the youth to take pictures of your activities and visits. In the spring, one of the main wrap-up activities will be for the youth to create a scrapbook, memory wall or video of their entire Crossing Paths journey. So, please be vigilant about grabbing these photo opportunities and collecting the photos along the way. Be sure to have photo opt-out permission slips signed by the families.

Finally, we want you to know you are in our thoughts this month. May your holiday season be rich with the mystery of creative chaos that always seems to magically work itself out. Also, as you help our young youth sit back and wonder at the many gifts all around us, may you to find yourself visited by those same moments of gratitude and awe.

With gratitude for the many gifts you offer our youth,

***Katie, on behalf of the entire Soul Matters team***

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**Week 1**

# Map Sunday

# Taking in the View through Our Lenses

## 

## Purpose

* Introduce youth to Catholicism using the Crossing Paths binoculars/lenses

## Preparation & Leader Notes

#### Remembering Humility

The aim of Map Sunday is to “get a glimpse” of each religion. There is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religions in a session or two. So today is about impressions and partial views and learning a bit about the faith tradition before your visit. So as a leader you will need to help your youth remember that there is still a lot about each religion left to explore and we need to have humility about what we are learning. Remember the blind men and the elephant? We should never let our exposure to one small part of the elephant lead us to believing we have full understanding. It might also help to remind your youth about our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

#### Dinner and Drive Time Tip (Email to parents ahead of time):

***Before:***

* *As always, we will begin our first week by having our youth write their first impressions and initial knowledge about each religion on our graffiti board. To help get your youth thinking, share with them your first impressions and initial knowledge of Catholicism. What comes to mind when you think of Catholicism? What was your first experience of it? What do you admire about the faith? What have your Catholic friends taught you about faith by the way they live?*
* *One of the distinctive things about the Catholic faith is the role of the Pope. We’ll be taking about it, so it’s a perfect time to connect with your youth by watching the Netflix movie about the current Pope - Pope Francis - called, “Call Me Francis”:* [*https://www.netflix.com/title/80117627*](https://www.netflix.com/title/80117627)

***After:***

* *In our session, we will explore the way Catholics view salvation differently than Protestant Christians. We called it the “Drop-able and Sticky View of Salvation.” Ask your youth to share the game we played to illustrate the concept.*

***For You:***

* *Expand your knowledge of the current Pope and how he’s shifting Catholicism. Here’s are some links to explore:*

###### <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9CrBwtyz6E>

###### <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N6xw_w3Hgw>

###### <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rHL4P1_GFM>

* *You might not be able to get your youth to watch it with you, but one way or another you should definitely make time to watch the powerful film, Of Gods and Men. Learn more about it here:* [*https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/of\_gods\_and\_men*](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/of_gods_and_men)*.*

#### Pre-Session To Do List:

* Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
* Create this week’s graffiti board. Core question: What is Catholicism?
* Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
* Choose which option you will offer during the Worship. **Order Flash Paper** or locate tea lights.
* Choose “Sticky Salvation” activity options and prepare supplies.

## Session

## Getting a View of the Terrain:

## Catholicism

### I. Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

As youth enter the room invite them to engage the graffiti board. Encourage symbols, words, drawings. These can be representations of Catholicism, words or feelings and experiences that youth have in relationship to Catholicism.

*This Month’s Core Question:* ***What is Catholicism?***

### II. Gathering & Centering - Worship (15 min)

###### **TO DO AHEAD OF TIME:** To prepare for this worship, you need to decide which “sending our hearts and hopes” (“up in smoke”) option you will do. This will require you to purchase one of two types of supplies: 1. [Flash paper](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gTydv7CQ2w) (order from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/MilesMagic-Magic-Flash-Paper-Sheets/dp/B07BTRCGNZ) or find in a local store) or 2. tealight candles for each group member.

##### Centering Sound

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying “Amen” or blessing words of your own.

##### Lighting the Chalice

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us*

*back to our deepest self,*

*back to each other,*

*And back to life’s gifts and joy.*

##### Welcome & Lead-In to Centering

Leader talking points:

* Welcome to Map Sunday and our exploration of this month’s religion: Catholicism.
* Map Sunday is when we “survey” the religion and use our Crossing Paths “binoculars/lenses” to get a glimpse of the religion before we make our visit and experience it directly, and more fully.
* To begin getting a glimpse of Catholicism, we’re going to use some Catholic meditative music to center us. This music is called “Gregorian Chant.” It is a sung prayer done by catholic monks through the ages, even today. Monks in Catholicism are men who devote themselves to living in community and prayer.
* The first thing you will notice is that It is hauntingly beautiful. The next thing you will notice is that it has the quality of sound echoing. It’s like the voices are bouncing off the stone walls and floating in the air. This is exactly what they intend. It is music designed to create the feeling of sending one’s prayers “up to the heavens.” Monks talk of feeling like their hearts are soaring up to God as they sing.
* So, as we listen, let’s also think of a hope, wish or even prayer that we want to “send into the universe.” If it’s helpful, think of those times you “cast a wish in to the world” by throwing a penny into fountains. But instead of throwing pennies, we are going to help our hopes and wishes float into the sky by using…. [Pick one of the following two options]
* FLASH PAPER OPTION: As you think of the wish or hope you want to float up and out into the world, write it down on these little white sheets of paper. (Pass out the flash paper and a pencil or marker). This is special paper that we will light on fire afterward and let it dissolve into the air. When you are finished writing your hope or wish on the paper, simply hold on to it until the song is done. Keeping thinking about why the wish is important to you.
* CANDLE OPTION: After you’ve thought of the wish or hope you want to float up and out into the world, take one of these tea lights from the basket, lit it and then place it down on the table. Spend a few seconds watching the flame and imagine your wish or hope floating into the air as you continue to listen to the chant.

##### Centering

Start the music and invite the youth to begin the meditation activity of sending their hopes and wishes into the world.

Monks singing Gregorian Chant in a Catholic Benedictine Seminary

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBwh1OXw6uI*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBwh1OXw6uI)

##### Sharing

If you used the [flash paper](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gTydv7CQ2w) option, light a candle and place it on a fire safe plate or in a fire safe bowl. Then have the youth take turns setting the paper on the flame and watching it disappear into the air. Invite the group to share what they wrote, if they wish.

If you used the candle option, invite the youth to take turns blowing out their tealight - i.e. “blowing their wish or hope into the world.” Invite them to share their wish, if they wish.

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone’s sharing and for the mysterious way that sending our wishes into the world gives us greater hope that they will happen. Consider making a reference to our ropes by saying something about how expressing our wishes helps us embody the third rope of feeling connected to life and life’s joy.

##### Closing Words

“In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other, and may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

##### Extinguish the Chalice

Leader note: If you use a real flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

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### III. Reflecting - Graffiti Board Sharing (5 min.)

Invite reactions to the graffiti board. Instead of asking everyone to say more about what they put up, first ask the group if they see things they don’t recognize? Then ask the person who wrote it on the board to explain. Help the group notice commonalities. Invite those who have Catholic connections to share their knowledge.

### IV. Taking in the Terrain - A Glimpse of Catholicism though the Crossing Paths Binoculars:

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### Leader Background - general background to get yourself familiar with the faith

* Catholic vs Protestant Comparisons:
  + <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/naturalwonderers/catholics-protestants/>
  + <https://voice.dts.edu/article/7-key-differences-between-protestant-and-catholic-doctrine-del-rosario-mikel/>
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhBR-JH5vJw>
  + <https://www.dw.com/en/the-main-differences-between-catholics-and-protestants/a-37888597>
* “Ask a Catholic…”: <https://rachelheldevans.com/blog/ask-a-catholic-questions>
* Catholic Faith in 30 Seconds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLj2N2qiZ4A>
* Top 5 Facts about Catholic Women: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=46&v=jSUdyMMMGCE>
* What's the Difference Between Friars, Monks, and Jedi?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwBiBQztbYA>

* Stephen & Patricia Heaton Have A Catholic Throwdown (starts at 1:50)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIIxYLyUTC8>

### Introduction (3 min.)

Leader notes: Explain that the focus of today is to “get a glimpse” of the world of Catholicism. Stress that there is no way to capture the fullness of these rich religions in a session or two. So today is about impressions and partial views and learning a bit about Catholicism before our visit. Remember the blind men and the elephant? We should never let our exposure to one small part of the elephant lead us to believing we have full understanding. Also remember our second practice of welcoming: “always be curious” - i.e. always be open and never assume you understand something fully.

Go on to share that:

1. We will focus only on a handful of the lens/binoculars, both to honor the time-constraints and to focus on the lenses that get at Catholicism's most central characteristics.
2. We will have fun!

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## Sizing Up the Terrain

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## Locating it on the Map (3 min)

You can keep this simple or get creative. The easiest and more time-efficient approach is to just share the basic facts. If you want to take it to the next level, consider getting a map for your room to capture and compare the size and location of the various religions. Use different colored push pins to represent the various religions and have each push pin represent some sizable increment, for instance 500,000 adherents. Place the push pins at the location of the religions origin or spread them out to represent where it is most practiced today.

When

“The history of the Catholic Church begins with Jesus Christ and his teachings (c. 4 BC – c. AD 30), and the Catholic Church is a continuation of the early Christian community established by Jesus. The Church considers its bishops to be the successors to Jesus's apostles and the Church's leader, the Bishop of Rome (also known as the Pope) to be the sole successor to Saint Peter, who ministered in Rome in the first century AD, after his appointment by Jesus as head of the church.” - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313>

How Many?

There are an estimated 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in the world, according to Vatican figures. That’s roughly equal to all the people in China (1.3 billion) or 430 times the population of the United States (300 million). Yes, 430 times our population! There are 200,000 UU in our UUA, so Catholics are 6,000 times larger than us. Or to put it another way, for every single UU, there are 6,000 Catholics! More than 40% of the world's Catholics live in Latin America - but Africa has seen the biggest growth in Catholic congregations in recent years. - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313>

Where

“Latin America accounts for 483 million Catholics, or 41.3% of the total Catholic population. Of the 10 countries in the world with the most Catholics, four are in Latin America. Brazil has the highest Catholic population of any country. The figure was put at 123 million in the last Brazilian census and as high as 150 million in 2010 figures compiled by the World Christian Database. Italy has the most Catholics in Europe, with 57 million, while DR Congo has the biggest Catholic population in Africa, ranking ninth in the world with almost 36 million.”  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-21443313>

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## Symbol - The Crucifix (3 min)

#### Explain

Share and explain the difference between the cross and the Catholic crucifix.

Start first with how they look different, with a cross being a simple “t-shaped” symbol representing the instrument that was used for Jesus’ crucifixion and a crucifix being the cross with Jesus’ body (known as the corpus) depicted on it.

Note that protestants tend to focus more on the symbol of the cross and Catholics tend to focus more on the symbol of the crucifix. Explain that the cross focuses on Jesus’ resurrection and is a symbol of triumph (Jesus overcame the cross and death). Whereas the crucifix focuses one on the suffering of Jesus, helping people remember that following Jesus often involves suffering and sacrifice. As one [Catholic teacher](https://www.catholicdoor.com/why-are-crucifixes-important-to-a-catholic/) puts it, “The crucifix reminds us that the Christian journey is not all comfort and success. It involves very real sacrifice. Like Jesus, we must sacrifice our time, our money, our possessions, and sometimes even our lives.”

**The Action of Signing The Cross**

In addition to the crucifix, Catholics also place a great emphasis on a hand motion that signifies the cross. It’s called the [Sign of the Cross](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=autaIzGDcy8).

* Here are videos to help you tease out the meaning and history of the sign of the cross: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZUH6X0K5DI>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpRzqXG1dhc> (Beware: it’s a good talk, but you will have to endure some “puppet interruptions.” Hang in there; it’s worth it.)
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIR8S46pvXg>

Practice making the sign of the cross. We practice this because we will want to make the sign of the cross as a way of respecting their traditions when we visit the Catholic Church.

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## Leadership & Authority - The Pope (5 min)

### Leader Background

Background on the Role and Authority of the Pope

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kF8I_r9XT7A>
* <https://people.howstuffworks.com/papacy1.htm>

Background on Pope Francis

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9CrBwtyz6E>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N6xw_w3Hgw>

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rHL4P1_GFM>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oe0z9cn6Ug>

#### Explain

Authority and leadership in the Catholic religion is a very complex topic. For our youth, it can be simplified to focus on two distinctive things about Catholicism:

1. Catholics are led by one central figure, The Pope
2. Unlike Protestant Christians who see the Bible alone as the guide to religious belief and action, Catholics lift up both the Bible and church teachings (as approved by the Pope) as their guides to belief and action.

Even with this simplified approach, challenges exist. Helping independent-minded and free-thinking UU youth engage this authority-based approach with respect can be a challenge. We suggest two approaches: Engage their empathy and expand their view.

1. **Empathy**: Instead of asking, “Do you agree with the idea of a Pope being able to tell everyone what to believe?”, consider asking, “Can you imagine why people would find an authoritative spiritual guide helpful? Especially, someone with lots of training and many years of proving themselves as they’ve slowly risen to that place of authority? Maybe compare Catholics granting authority to the Pope to the way we grant authority to a doctor, elected official or even our UU minister.
2. **Expand:** The other way to ensure a respectful and helpful conversation is to expand the youth’s understanding of the Pope. Remind them that Catholics don’t just see him as the final authority on Catholic belief, but they also see him as a spiritual model and even symbol that unites them (kind of how the Queen of England is a symbol that unites the U.K.). Remember, the Pope doesn’t simply “tell people what to believe,” like any good spiritual leader, he reminds people of their better selves and inspires them by his example. If you have time, you might want to use one of these videos of the current Pope, Francis, to show why many Catholics admire him and are moved by his example:

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oe0z9cn6Ug>
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N6xw_w3Hgw>
* [https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=bRbUTfSds0U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRbUTfSds0U)

**NOTE:** Despite these points of respectful connection, real concerns about Catholic and Papal authority exist. Crossing Paths is about helping our youth find what is beautiful and inspiring about each of the religions we explore. At the same time, we encourage you as leaders to wrestle with how to best engage points of significant concern and critique. Clearly there are some troublesome aspects to Catholic authority (i.e. clergy sexual abuse, women excluded from the priesthood, the continuing stance against LGBTQ). Consider making time to sit down with your RE Leader or Minister to discern how to best achieve this balance in your context. And don’t forget, many of the same things UUs struggle with about Catholic authority are the same things that Catholics struggle with and are critical of too. Maybe that is the most important point to leave our youth with!

## The Problem and The Solution (30 min)

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### Sin & Salvation

#### Explain

The main point to get across to our youth is that Catholics agree with other Christians that sin is the central problem of the world, but their understanding of salvation is different. This difference has to do with the historical split between Protestants and Catholics. Protestants believe that salvation is a one ***event*** that happened when Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross for humanity’s sins. In contrast, Catholics see salvation as a [***process***](https://chnetwork.org/2017/07/05/saved-catholic-response-common-protestant-question/)***.*** They agree that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross saved us (“justified us in God’s eyes”) but they also see believe that salvation is something that one [can lose](https://carm.org/catholic-salvation-attain). Unlike Protestants who see it as ***an event*** that ***happened*** to and for us, Catholics see it as [***a substance***](https://voice.dts.edu/article/7-key-differences-between-protestant-and-catholic-doctrine-del-rosario-mikel/) that is ***given*** to us, and that we can “drop” or “lose.”

This distinction between an event one needs to know about and notice verses a substance that one is given and needs to hold on to is why Protestants believe in “salvation by faith alone” and Catholics believe in salvation by faith and works. If salvation is a substance you have to continually struggle to hold on to, then one needs some tools to hold on to it and also pick it up when they drop it. And these tools, for Catholics, are good works and doing the [sacraments](https://www.britannica.com/list/the-seven-sacraments-of-the-roman-catholic-church) (sacred rituals) of the Catholic church.

We are, of course, simplifying things with these metaphors of dropping and picking up. But we recommend this frame to help your youth get this complex theological distinction. There’s a big difference between noticing something that has happened to you (Protestant view) and holding on to something that has been given to you (Catholic). It’s why Catholics take things like weekly confession and eucharist so seriously. They are tools to pick up what they’ve dropped. And other tools - like the rosary and prayer - well, you might say they are tools to keep one’s hands sticky, so you don’t drop the gift of salvation you’ve been given!

### Engage

Here’s super fun game to drive home and help your youth remember the Catholic “drop-able” and “sticky” view of salvation:

Sticky Person Salvation (based on: <http://egadideas.com/1990/01/sticky-guy/> )

Materials:

* A few rolls of duct tape (the small rolls of tape that only have about 20 feet on them)
* Two bags of different colored water balloons (25 balloons at least).

Step One: Ask for a volunteer to be “A Good Catholic”

Step Two: Remind the youth that Catholic practices like prayer and the Rosary are ways Catholics “keep their hands sticky” so they can hold on to salvation. Then tell the group to imagine themselves to be Prayer and the Rosary. Just as prayer and the rosary keep one sticky, the group then takes the roll of duct tape and wraps the single volunteer (The “sticky person”) in duct tape with the sticky side out. No tape on the head at all!

Step Three: Divide the rest of the youth into two teams. Remind the youth that Catholics see the sacraments (like weekly confession and Eucharist/Communion) as tools to “pick up” salvation again after one has dropped it by poor behavior or unkind thinking. Honoring this, have each team pick which sacrament they want to represent, ending with one team declaring themselves “Team Confession” and the other “Team Communion.”

Step Four: Hand out a pile of single colored balloons to one team and then a pile of different colored balloons to the other team. On the count of three, each team has five minutes to blow up as many of their “salvation balloons” as possible and stick them to the “Sticky Person”.

Step Five: At the end of five minutes, the adult leader counts the balloons to see which team was able to stick the most.

Step Six (optional): The adult leader declares that they are “sin” and either pulls the balloons off or pops them with a pin, reminding the youth that the Catholic journey of faith is one of salvation constantly “falling off” and having to be stuck back again and again.

Optional “Sticky Salvation” activities:

* Serve sticky cinnamon rolls. Have some fun while you make it a teachable moment. How sticky is “salvation” on your roll? Notice how easily the raisins fall off. And how easy it is to not be our best selves And also notice how easy it is to stick them back on again and again (as long as you observe the 3 second rule!)
* Straw sucking game: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_D_xoaWeRk>

Another game to engage the idea of picking up salvation - Paper slips represent salvation, and the straw represents the sacraments picking up salvation!

### Graffiti Board - Filling in the Gaps (3 min.)

Invite the youth to add a picture or word to the graffiti board, picking one thing that engaged them most about today’s session. What did they learn that they think is most important to add.

Remember to use markers that are a different color than was used to fill or the board at the start of the session, so you can continue to track learning over the sessions.

### Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min)

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth what is happening next week and make sure they know what they have to do ahead of time. Note one thing that you are particularly looking forward to.

### Closing Words (1 min)

“In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

*Extinguish the chalice if you haven’t already done so.*

# Week 2

# Tack Sunday

***Exploring What Catholics Believe about being a People of Mystery***

## Purpose

* Introduce and engage the monthly theme of mystery.
* Explore how Catholicism thinks about and engages mystery.

## Preparation & Leader Notes

#### Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

***Before:***

* *This coming Sunday is “Tack Sunday” - a time when we explore the relationship between our church’s monthly theme (mystery) and the faith we are studying. Take some time to talk with your youth about your own understanding spiritual mystery and the role it plays in your faith.*

***After:***

* *During our session this week, we will talk about the mystery of intercession and how Catholics pray to Christian Saints. Ask your youth which of the Catholic saints was their favorite and why.*
* *We will also make “UU mystery bracelets” as part of our exploration of the mystery of the rosary. Ask your youth to share what the beads on their mystery bracelet represent.*

***For You:***

* *We work hard to focus on what is inspiring and beautiful about the faith traditions we explore. Part of that sometimes involves exploring how the faith bravely struggles with its shadow side. One of the shadow sides that Catholicism is struggling to face is clergy sexual abuse. If you’ve not watched it already, this month would be a good time to watch Spotlight, the award-winning film that explores this hard but important topic. Here’s a link about it:* [*https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/spotlight\_2015*](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/spotlight_2015)

#### 

#### Pre-Session To Do List:

* Send out the Dinner and Drive Time Tip. See above.
* Make sure you have the technology needed to play the YouTube videos that are part of this session.
* Decide on the Patron Saint activity options and collect supplies.
* Collect yarn and 4 different colored large “pony” beads in orange, yellow, purple/black and red, enough for each group member.

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## Session

## What Does It Mean to be a

## People of Mystery... for Catholics?

### Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

*Same Core Question: What is Catholicism?*

As youth enter the room, direct them check out the graffiti board as a way to remind themselves of what they’ve been learning. Using a new color for the markers, invite them to add a new item or embellish an item they’ve already put up.

### Gathering & Centering - Worship (10 min)

***“Silence in the Face of Mystery””***

##### Centering Sound

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying “Amen” or blessing words of your own.

##### Lighting the Chalice

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us*

*back to our deepest self,*

*back to each other,*

*And back to life’s gifts and joy.*

##### Welcome

* Today we continue to learn about Catholicism by exploring how it relates to our monthly theme here at our church: A people of mystery.
* One of the central ways Catholics are a people of mystery has to do with the mystery that happens for them every week in worship as they share communion together.
* Unlike Protestant Christians who see the communion sharing of bread and wine as a *reminder* that Jesus sacrificed his body and blood for humanity, Catholics believe that the bread and wine mysterious *is* or *turns into* the body and blood of Jesus, right there on the altar.
* I know that sounds incredible, almost unbelievable. Catholics actually feel that way too. But unlike us, they accept that it really happens. They see it as a great and wonderful mystery that can’t be explained.
* And like any great mystery one comes face to face with, Catholics believe that the proper and inevitable response is to fall silent. So during communion, the priest holds up the bread and wine and says “[This is the mystery of faith.” Then he stops talking](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3T9Itq3bR4), symbolizing that the “proper” response to mystery is silence.
* It’s a reminder about what mystery does to us all and a guide to how to be more open to mystery. Instead of rushing to doubt or explaining mystery away, sometimes mystery invites us to just be silent and open. In fact, the word mystery, comes from the Latin word “[muo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3T9Itq3bR4)” which means “to shut the mouth.” It’s also where we get the word “mute” from. Cool, huh?!
* To honor this and to relate it to our own experience, we’re going to forgo our usual musical reflection and just sit in silence for a minute.
* As you sit in silence, close your eyes and try to think of a time that you encountered something so mysterious, amazing or wonderful that you just fell silent and had no words, just amazement and gratitude. For instance, it might be the time you first saw the Grand Canyon or when your parents brought your baby sibling home. Or even a sad time, when you first saw the dead body of someone you loved. Or maybe it is a mysterious thing you experienced but couldn’t explain, like a “real” haunted house or the sound of the wind that you swear contained a voice!

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##### Centering - 1 or 2 minutes of silence, inviting closed eyes or light a candle to focus on.

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##### Thematic Check-in

Invite the group, if comfortable, to share the mystery they thought of during the silence.

##### Closing

“In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. and may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

##### Extinguish the Chalice

Leader note: If you use a flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

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## Exploring Catholic Mystery

## I. The Mystery of Intercession: Praying to the Saints (25 min)

### Leader Background

* Frequently Asked Questions about Saints: <https://www.catholic.org/saints/faq.php>
* Why pray to the saints? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJZfutPhYGY>
* On Satellites and Praying to the Saints: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWDJRnvnIBY>

#### Explain

Catholics are given a hard time for their mysterious practice of praying to the saints. Other Christians criticize them for treating the saints like Gods and coming dangerously close idolatry. Non-religious people (and some religious too!) criticize and make fun of the practice of intercession as superstitious.

It is important for you as a leader to note this and then go on to help the youth see how these attitudes are both unfair and mask the deeper common human experience beneath this Catholic practice.

Here are the primary points that lead to a more respectful and meaningful understanding of praying to the saints:

1. Catholics are really asking the saints to pray to God on their behalf. They are not skipping over praying to God; they are asking for extra help. Kind of like people do when they ask people to “pray for me.”
2. While you can say it’s superstitious, you can and should also recognize that people do it because they want to be reminded that they are not alone. And all of us can relate to that! When we feel that something is all up to us and we’re not up to the task, we all secretly hope (pray?) that circumstances or other people will help us, even come to our rescue.
3. It’s also simply a way to be humble and in touch with the fact that we all need help. It’s tempting to tell yourself that you don’t need to rely on anyone. In fact, sometimes our UU faith emphasizes our individual power and potential so much that it can seem like we’re saying you can handle anything one your own. This Catholic practice of praying to the saints counters that. It is a way to be honest about the times in our lives when we feel we need a little extra help.

#### Engage - How do you need a little extra help?

Suggested Script: “To learn a bit more about the Patron Saints of Catholicism and to honor the way praying to them is a way of admitting how we all need a little support and help, I’m going to read some common issues that Catholic Teenagers have and which saints they pray to when they have those issues. But here’s the catch: after I read the issue, I’m going to pause and invite anyone who wants to raise your hand if you identify with that struggle. After that, I’ll name the saint that is on your side.”

Instructions: Use the following “Struggles and Saints List” to do this activity. First read the issue in bold type, then invite youth to raise their hand if they identify with it. Allow and encourage some discussion around it. Then read the saint and the notes about them.

***Struggles and Saints List***

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_patron_saints_by_occupation_and_activity>

**Toothaches and fear of the dentist** - Saint Antipas (known for casting out demons who caused pain. Patron Saint of dentists.)

**Learning to ski or fear of skiing** - Saint Bernard of Menthon (St Bernard “ski rescue dog” named after him. Patron Saint of Skiers.)

**Fear of flying** - Saint Bona of Pisa (lead many people to safety over mountains, especially people with fear of mountains and heights. Patron Saint of Flight attendants.)

**Trying to find inspiration to keep writing or singing music** - St Cecilia (She was beheaded for being faithful, which led many people to write music in her honor. She helps people find their inspiration to keeping making music. Patron Saint of musicians)

**Needing help with a test or a hard class** -Saint Gemma Galgani (Endured lots of suffering in her life but also had the gift of levitation. As we all know, studying is suffering but it results in “levitation”! Patron Saint of students)

**Trying to learn a sport or getting ready for a big sporting event** - Saint Sebastian (Had the ability to recover after being tortured for his faith. All good athletes have to endure pain and pick themselves up after loses.)

**Searching for a treasure or wanting a new adventure** - Saint Helena (Took a great journey and discovered a sacred cross associated with Jesus. Patron Saint of travelers)

**Hopeless cases and for those wanting to attempt the impossible -** Saint Jude Thaddeus (one of the 12 apostles (not Judas), brother of Jesus. Tradition talks of him being overlooked, which relates to overlooking the things that can help you make the impossible possible. Patron Saint of Lost Causes.)

**Lover of cooking but also love being a comedian** - Saint Lawrence (In the midst of being burnt at the stake, legend says he cheerfully shouted: "I'm well done on this side. Turn me over!" Thus becoming the Patron Saint of cooks and comedians)

**Not so great at dancing** - Saint Vitus – (Was put to death to scare other Christians into giving up their faith, but instead his Christian friends rebelled by dancing in his honor after he was dead. Patron Saint of dancers, but interestingly also prayed to by those who oversleep!)

**Hoping to be blessed with the gift of good desserts** - Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (Would bake bread and sneak it to the poor. Suggests that God doesn't mind if you sneak into the kitchen and steal another piece of cake! Patron saint of bakers.)

**Some Extra Saint Activities**

If you have time, here are a couple of additional activities you can do to explore the mystery of intercession and praying to the Saints:

### Find Your UU Patron Saint

Use this BuzzFeed quiz (created by our very own Katie Covey) to help the youth identify their UU Patron Saint:

Who is your UU Patron Saint?

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/katiecovey/who-is-your-uu-patron-saint-3cuz6>

After they have found their UU Saint, use Handout #3 in the appendix of this packet to have them offer up a UU version of praying to the saints. Here’s the wording in the Handout: “O, [name of saint], in whose name I glory, pray ever to the Spirit of Life for me, strengthen my resolve, establish me in dialogue, guard me against conflict that I may discern my path with humility and clarity.”

### Create an Image or Prayer of Your Patron Saint

A Prayer

Once everyone has decided on who their patron saint might be, invite them to create a prayer to that saint.

Use the template in Handout #3 and modify it with their own words:

O, [name of saint], in whose name I glory, pray ever to the Spirit of Life for me, strengthen my resolve, establish me in dialogue, guard me against conflict that I may discern my path with humility and clarity.

Icon

You may know the word icon as a symbol on your computer, like the trash can which means “throw out.” A religious icon is a religious symbol, often painted on wood.

Examples of icons: <http://www.bridgebuilding.com/index.htm>

Using playdough, or modeling clay, create a sculpture or a medal of your patron saint.

Or Draw an icon - often on wood, with gold paint.

Or find a Coloring Page on the Web, such as <http://orthodoxeducation.blogspot.com/2011/12/orthodox-christmas-coloring-pages.html>

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## II. The Mysteries of The Rosary (20 min)

### Leader Resources - Background

* Overview & Additional Links: <https://bustedhalo.com/video/the-rosary-in-two-minutes> (the printed article includes the words of the actual prayers)
* Video: The Rosary in 2 minutes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=76&v=GuT7HI7ZvfA>
* Why Pray the Rosary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjFYu2p_KlU>

### Explain

Using the Leader Resources above (and possibly a real rosary you bring in), explain the practice of praying the rosary to your youth, with special attention to the four different types of mysteries that the rosary invites reflection upon.

After explaining the four types of mysteries signified in the rosary, talk about the general idea of mystery for Catholics: that it is a moment when divinity or the supernatural shines through or breaks into ordinary experience and reveals an important truth. This may sound very different from UU belief at first, but upon closer look, it’s not. UUs also believe that there are moments when ordinary events seem to “shine” with extra or special meaning. We also believe these moments “reveal” things. For example, the mystery of a sunset making us feel connected to all of nature. So, it’s just the content of that revelation is different for us. The revelation that we UU’s discover most often in the face of wonder and mystery is that we are more deeply connected to the universe and others than we thought, and the life is more precious than we often allow ourselves to feel. With this in mind, one could argue we have our own versions of the four types of rosary mysteries.

Tease this out for the youth using the following examples:

**The Glorious Mysteries (The mysterious Connection to that which is greater than us.)**: For Catholics, these include the most wonderous miracles associated with Jesus’ gift of restoring humanity’s connection to God. UUs also have a long list of things that leave them feeling awe, wonder and the feeling of deeper connection to that which is greater than them. Think about how we feel when we stand before a beautiful sunset or a natural wonder like the Grand Canyon. We often have this moment of, not just beauty, but deep connection.

**The Luminous Mysteries (Seeing the divinity in others)**: For Catholics, these include the mysterious and miraculous moments that revealed that Jesus was God’s son. UUs also have moments when we deeply and mysteriously feel the divinity that rests in all human beings. Think about how we talk about the inherent worth and dignity of all people. There are mysterious moments when we sense that very strongly, even when dealing with those we disagree with.

**The Joyful Mysteries (The mystery of hope)**: For Catholics, these include the moments that announced Jesus presence and mysteriously made people feel great hope, even despite the evidence. UUs also believe in moments that mysteriously instill us with inexplicable hope. Think of the way a newborn can make us feel hopeful about the future.

**The Sorrowful Mysteries (The revelation of life’s preciousness)**: For Catholics, these include the moments in Jesus journey where he suffered and died for humanity, which he did because of how precious human beings are to him. UUs also have mysterious moments when we are suddenly struck by how precious life and others are. And often these come at sorrowful moments, like at the funeral of a loved one.

### Engage

Having explained the mysteries of the rosary and made it relatable to experiences in the youths’ lives, invite the youth to create their own “UU Mystery Bracelet.” Relate it to the Catholic rosary, but don’t use the name “UU rosary” out of respect for the Catholic meaning.

Use some yarn and 4 differently colored large “pony” beads to create the bracelet. Hand out the yarn. Place the four differently colored beads in four bowls.

Explain that the colors match up with the four different mysteries:

Glorious = orange beads (think sunset)

Luminous = yellow (think the color of a halo)

Sorrowful = purple or black

Joyful = red (Christmas)

One by one, name the four mysteries and ask the below guiding questions to help the youth identify the mystery in their own life that fits each category. After they name the glorious, luminous, sorrowful or joyful mystery in their own life, have then take the appropriate colored bead to represent it and place it on their bracelet.

Guiding Questions:

**Glorious Mysteries (The mysterious Connection to that which is greater than us.)**: When have you experienced something in nature that left you with the feeling of wonder and the feeling that you are part of something greater than yourself?

**The Luminous Mysteries (Seeing the divinity in others)**: When have you most strongly had the feeling of your own or another’s inherent worth?

**The Sorrowful Mysteries (The revelation of life’s preciousness)**: When did something sad remind you that every day is precious and not to be taken for granted?

**The Joyful Mysteries (The mystery of hope)**: When have you mysteriously felt hope, even despite the evidence?

### Graffiti Board - Filling in the Gaps (3 min.)

Invite the youth to add a picture or word to the graffiti board, picking one thing that engaged them most about today’s session. What did they learn that they think is most important to add?

### Remember to use markers that are a different color than was used to fill or the board at the start of the session, so you can continue to track learning over the sessions.

### Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min.)

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth that next week is THE VISIT! Share a bit about where you are going, go over logistics and stress any rules that will need observed-e.g., let them know about clothing expectations.

Tacking up our Eight Practices of Welcome

Hand out the list of the Eight Practices of Welcome. Remind the youth that we are using them during our visit next week and will be reviewing how well we do. So ask them to please make time to think about them during the week. Which one do you particularly need to remember and work on for yourself.

### Closing Words (1 min.)

“In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

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# Week 3

# Summit Sunday

## (The Visit)

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## Purpose

* Explore a Catholic church.
* Engage and use our Eight Practices of Welcoming

## Preparation & Leader Notes

#### Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

***Before:***

* *Talk to your youth about the 8 practices of welcoming and how they might use them in their visit.*
* *Remind youth to bring an offering. We recommend an amount of $ \_\_\_\_\_.*
* *Remind the youth about dress requirements.* ***[Leader note: tailor this bullet to the visit]***

***After:***

* *Ask your youth to share their favorite part of the visit.*
* *Reflect with them on your own experiences with and understanding of Catholicism. Be sure to talk about how your understanding and attitudes have changed over the years. Be sure to model a gracious spirit and talk about what you appreciate about Catholicism. Consider telling them about the first time you attended a Catholic service or had a Catholic friend.*

***For You:***

* *Have some fun and watch the comedian and talk show host Stephen Colbert have a “Catholic Throwdown” with one of his guests:* [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIIxYLyUTC8*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIIxYLyUTC8) *(starts at 1:50)*

#### Pre-Visit To Do List:

* Arrange for and prepare the drivers. Make sure the drivers:
  + Have the address of the destination and a phone number to call if there are problems.
  + Have a list of who is in their car and their emergency contact numbers.
  + Are familiar with and comply with congregational safety guidelines, such as a license and proof of insurance on record.
* Make sure to collect signed permission slips from group members, with all relevant contact information and emergency numbers. Make a copy to leave at the church, and a copy to bring on the trip.
* Let parents know the approximate time of return and post it on the door of your meeting room.
* Prepare to post a “We Will Return Soon” note in case someone comes late, such as “Sorry we missed you. The Crossing Paths group is visiting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We will return at \_\_\_\_\_.
* Bring offering money for each group member or remind them to bring some
* Consider purchasing or bringing a gift for your host. Perhaps an interfaith [poster](https://www.scarboromissions.ca/product/golden-rule-across-the-worlds-religions) or [calendar](http://www.multifaithcalendar.org/pages/2018-Wall-Calendar.php).

Make sure you have collected and clarified all the rules & expectations for your visit. You will share this information before you leave your church on Summit Sunday. Rules and expectations include:

* + the name of the faith community you are visiting. (e.g., First Congregational Church of…)
  + the religion’s name for their house of worship. (e.g., temple, church, mosque…)
  + what the religious leader is called and how they should be addressed (e.g., “They are call a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.”)
  + other behaviors that should be observed (e.g., expect dress, silence in certain spaces, when one can and when one shouldn’t participate in a ritual, etc.)
  + When and if it is appropriate to take pictures with phones. (Remember that we want to have some select moments when photos are gathered so they can be used in the end of year scrapbook or video)

## 

## Session - Visit

### Before You Go

Before you leave, gather as a group at your home church and do the following:

Remembering to be a Good Guest:

Leader reviews basic information and guidelines about how to be respectful during the visit:

1. Share the name of the faith community you are visiting. (e.g., First Congregational Church of…)

2. Share the religion’s name for their house of worship. (e.g., temple, church, mosque…)

3. Tell them what the religious leader is called and how they should be addressed (e.g., “They are called a minister and they should be addressed as Rev. Jones or Pastor Jones.”)

4. Review other behaviors that should be observed (e.g., silence in certain spaces, when one can and when one shouldn’t participate in a ritual, etc.)

5. Make sure everyone’s dress is appropriate and honors the expectations of the tradition you are visiting. If someone has forgotten, address the situation according to the understandings you’ve made ahead of time.

6. Share when and if it is appropriate to take pictures with phones. (Remember that we want to have some strategic moments when photos are gathered so they can be used in the end of year scrapbook or video)

7. Share expectations about texting and use of smartphones.

8. Remind them that they are guests and will be representing Unitarian Universalism to your hosts

9. Go over the travel plans and rules:

* Assign participants to a car and make sure they know to return in the same car.
* Be respectful of their drivers and cars.
* Give emergency contact numbers to drivers.

10.Send the Interview questions ahead of time to the faith leader, optional.

**Packing Up Our Eight Practices**:

Stand together in a circle and share a blessing based on the Eight Practices of Welcoming.

We recommend that you print out this blessing, so the youth have the Eight Practices physically available. Here’s one version of a blessing you could do. Do it as a group by each person taking turns reading one line:

*Leader: Let us take a breath and pause before we go.*

*[PAUSE IN SILENCE]*

*With our feet firmly grounded here at our church home, we are grateful.*

*Here we find community and comfort.*

*Here we also encounter the call to go out, explore and become more.*

*On our journey today, let us take our practices and values with us*

*so we can notice and receive all the gifts offered to us.*

*May we remember to...*

*1. Be fully present*

*2. Be curious*

*3. Be open to being changed*

*4. Be comfortable with discomfort*

*5. Be an appreciative listener*

*6. Be light-hearted*

*7. Be gentle when mistakes are made*

*8. And, be ourselves*

*With all these commitments tucked tightly in our hearts and heads, Amen, Let’s go!*

### The Visit

Have a great time! Don’t forget about collecting pictures for our future scrapbook/memory wall/video project. At the very least get a picture of the youth standing in front of the house of worship.

*Have the youth text or email you 1-2 of their favorite pictures that they took. Save for the spring scrapbook/memory wall/video project.*

### After the Visit (just before everyone heads home)

Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min.)

Thank the youth for their participation. Praise something about how the youth handled themselves. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the visit.

Remind the youth that next week is Lake Sunday. Lift up anything they need to do or think about ahead of time.

Closing Words

“In the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. And may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

# Week 4

# Lake Sunday

## Reflecting on Visit

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## Purpose

* Reflect on the visit.
* Review our use of the Eight Practices of Welcoming

## Preparation & Leader Notes

#### Dinner and Drive Time Tips (Email to parents prior to the meeting):

***Before:***

* *Talk with your youth about what they plan to write on the Thank You Card that will be sent to the faith community they visited last week. This will help them prepare, give them a chance to reflect more on the visit and better enable them to write something meaningful.*

***After:***

* *Ask your youth to share which of the 8 Practices of Welcoming were hardest them personally.*
* *Ask them to share something about the graffiti board. They have been adding to each week. Ask them how the board has changed? What’s interesting about how it has changed and grown? How does it show that the group’s understanding of Catholicism has evolved?*

***For You:***

* *Talk with your spouse/partner or a friend about how your own view of Catholicism has evolved over the month as a result of your conversations with your youth.*

#### Pre-Session To Do List:

* Make or purchase a thank-you card for everyone to sign.
* Find small pieces of paper and pens or markers for worship, one for each group member to write a note to the faith leader.
* Set up technology to play the Centering Song.
* Gather white copy paper and sharp scissors for snowflake making.
* Choose games and become familiar with how to play them.
* (optional) Invite a guest with a Catholic background or experience, perhaps identified in the Parent Orientation, or from a request to the congregation at large. Share Handout #2 with them and let them know the youth will be asking them the questions listed, optional.
* (optional) Make plans to attend the adult service or part of the service as a way of exploring the monthly theme of mystery.

## Session

### Entering - Graffiti Board Writing

Using the same graffiti board from past weeks, invite those entering to add words, pictures or impressions that represent what stuck out for them about last week’s visit.

### Gathering & Centering - Worship (15 min)

###### **TO DO AHEAD OF TIME:** To prepare for this worship, you need to find a thank-you card and enough small pieces of paper and pens for each group member to write a note. These notes will be included in the thank-you card.

##### Centering Sound

Invite everyone to calm and center themselves. Use whatever ringing vessel you have chosen (chimes, bowl, bell). Ring the bell/bowl/chimes. Once the sound ends, pause for a moment of silence and then end by saying “Amen” or blessing words of your own.

##### Lighting the Chalice

*We light this chalice in gratitude for the path we share, a path that guides us*

*back to our deepest self,*

*back to each other,*

*And back to life’s gifts and joy.*

##### Welcome

Leader Talking Points:

* Welcome everyone to Lake Sunday!
* Lake Sunday is about coming back from our journey, back down the mountain, and reflecting on our trip.
* I’m excited for us to talk about our visit.
* As a way of getting ready for our discussion, our centering song this morning is named “Let the Mystery Be.”
* It’s about putting aside the desire to explain life’s mysteries and instead just celebrating the mystery of being alive and all of life’s gifts.
* By focusing on gratitude, it’s a perfect song to play as we pass around the thank-you card for you to sign and a small sheet of paper to each person to write a few words to the faith leader if you wish.
* As the song plays, you can also start thinking about mysteries you may have experienced and how you responded to them. It might be the mystery of what happens after we die, or the mysterious sense of wonder when we gaze at the stars at night.

##### Music and Activity For Centering

Let the Mystery Be - Iris Dement

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlaoR5m4L80*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlaoR5m4L80)

##### Thematic Check-in

Invite the group to share, in a sentence, what mysteries they may have experienced and how they responded to them.

After the sharing, leader expresses gratitude for everyone’s sharing and for the many ways our church welcomes us and makes us feel at home.

##### Closing

“In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with you.** May we stay close to our deepest and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. and may we remember to lean into life’s joy. Blessed be. Amen”

##### Extinguish the Chalice

Leader note: If you use a flame, our advice is to extinguish it now to prevent accidental tipping over or pyro play with hot wax. If you use a tea light, you may wish to extinguish it at the end of the session during the closing words.

### Reflecting on the Visit (15 min)

Questions to guide the discussion:

## Initial Reactions

**1. What surprised you?** What was completely new? What didn’t you expect?

**2. What was the most interesting part?** What was “cool”? When were you having the most fun?

**3. What didn’t you fully understand?** What confused you? What do you want to learn more about (Leader note: Answer the questions/confusions if you can. Or see if the group can help. If time, look up the answer on a computer/phone. If no time for that, encourage the youth to look it up with their parents or promise to look it up for them)

## Personal Application

**4. How did it make you think about your own life differently?** How do you wish your life was more like the Catholics you met?

Lead the group in discussion about their personal takeaways. Invite them to think about how the visit and the past few weeks of learning gave them a challenge for their own life. Give them some example questions to help them reflect:

* Did the idea of salvation as something you need to hold on to and not drop make you think about a virtue that you want to hold on tighter to?
* We talked about how the crucifix reminds Catholics that sacrifice is central to faith. What belief would you be willing to sacrifice for?
* Do you think the Catholic saints will come to mind when you are needing help?

Consider sharing your own personal takeaways first to model and help them think about this. How did the visit and learning invite you to think differently or want to make a change or add something more to your life?

## Playing with Mystery:

## Fun and Games As We Finish Our Journey (20 min)

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### Craft

Chalice Snowflakes - Some simple cuts reveal a mystery inside!

From the UUA Worship Web

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/image/chalice-snowflake-instructions>

A paper cutting craft resulting in a snowflake with chalices! You never know what the pattern will reveal!

### Games to Explore Catholic Obedience: the mystery of how following rules helps us find ourselves

Walk and Stop

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmcmffiXgFY>

Jump In, Jump Out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6bHltjIYzE>

In Catholicism there are rules to follow. Try this mind-boggling game and see how you follow rules.

Around the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmcmffiXgFY>

Catholicism is all over the world. Play this game and see if you can travel around the world.

Leaning Tower of Feetza

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmcmffiXgFY>

There really is a Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, the same country as the Vatican.

### Games to Explore the Mystery of Silence

Silence Game

Who can remain quiet the longest?

Night Guard at the Museum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL422uXvYBY>

Start at minute 2:58.

Silent Ball

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=144&v=UY2sYFh6lwM>

Variation: Silent Trees! Start with players sitting on the ground, when a player makes a mistake, s/he stands up and becomes a tree. Trees must remain planted, i.e. they cannot move his/her feet. The tree can re-enter the game by deflecting or intercepting a pass. The person who was unsuccessful at making a pass becomes a tree.

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### Engaging the Graffiti Board - Stepping back to see how far we’ve come! (5 min)

* Gather around the graffiti board or take it down and bring it into the circle.
* Pause to see if there are any last things to add.
* Invite reactions and discussion

1. **What strikes you as you look at all the colors?** Were there some weeks where we seemed to learn more than others? Are their more words than pictures? What does that mean?
2. **Is there anything on the board that needs corrected?** Any “understanding” that was incomplete or misunderstood?
3. **What 2-3 things seem to best describe the essence of Catholicism for you?** If you had to explain Catholicism to someone else, which 2-3 items on the board would you talk about?

* Take some selfies! Individual and as a group. Remember to remind the youth that we will be using these pictures in the spring to create a scrapbook, memory wall or video to document our journey this year.

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### Eight Practices Review (8 min.)

Remind the youth that Crossing Paths is not just about visiting and learning about other religions. It’s also about learning skills and practices to better engage new people and new ideas throughout our entire life. So explain that you are reviewing how well the group used the 8 Practices not just to “grade ourselves” but also to push ourselves to develop them as “life practices.”

There are a number of ways to review the practices:

1. **As a group**: Have the group evaluate itself as a whole by going through the list one by one and asking the group to share when they did each practice well and when they could have done it a bit better.
2. **As individuals:** Ask each person to pick one practice they feel they did well and one practice they wish they had done better and want to work on. Take turns having each youth share their answers.

### Looking Ahead - What to do ahead of time or expect (1 min.)

Thank the youth for their participation this week. Note one thing that you particularly appreciated or enjoyed about the session you just did with them.

Remind the youth what is happening next week and make sure they know what they have to do ahead of time. Note one thing that you are particularly looking forward to.

### Closing Words (1 min.)

“In the rest of our time together and in the days ahead, **May the ropes be with us**. May we stay close to our inner and truest selves. May we keep connected to each other. May we remember to lean into life’s joy. - Blessed be. Amen”

*Extinguish the chalice if you haven’t done so earlier.*

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## Add Ons for Groups with More Time

Leader Note: Any of these options might be used as part of the 5th Sunday (Valley Sunday.)

### Option #1 - Interview

If you have time, consider inviting a congregant with a background in Catholicism to visit and talk with the youth. You can do this after or before you reflect on your visit - both have advantages and disadvantages. Use Handout #2 “ Interview Questions.”

### Option #2 - Attend the Adult Service on Mystery

“Visiting” your own worship service can enrich the experience tremendously. If you usually meet during the service, consider changing and expanding your schedule for Lake Sunday, attending the service first then staying after to do the Lake Sunday session. You can go even deeper with this by asking your minister or ministers to come talk with the youth after the service about what they appreciate about Catholicism and how they see UUs and Catholics being similar and different when it comes to belief and their understanding of what it means to be a people of mystery.

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## Handout #1

## The Eight Practices of Welcoming Differences

1. Be fully present

2. Be curious

3. Be open to being changed

4. Be comfortable with discomfort

5. Be an appreciative listener

6. Be light-hearted

7. Be gentle

8. Be yourself

## 

## 

## Handout #2

## Interview Questions

1. How has Catholicism helped enrich, heal or deepen you?
2. We learned that Catholics often prefer the crucifix to the cross. Does one of these symbols have more meaning to you than the other?
3. How has Catholicism influenced your understanding of “God”? How has being a Catholic led to you talking about God differently than others?
4. Who is your favorite saint? And do you pray to them?
5. What is your favorite service, ritual or holiday of the Christian year?
6. We listened to a Gregorian chant during one of our worship services. Do you ever listen to chants? Or sing them yourself?
7. We learned about the rosary and how it helps people reflect on the Christian mysteries. How does praying the rosary help you? When you do use it?
8. What sound or taste do you most associate with Catholicism?
9. What are the major misconceptions out there about Catholics? What do you wish others better understood?
10. Our church’s monthly spiritual theme is “How are We a People of Mystery?” What does “Being a Person of Mystery” mean to you? How has your Catholic faith influenced that?
11. Is there a particular Catholic belief or perspective that you think is especially relevant to our culture and political climate right now?
12. What’s your favorite thing about being a Catholic?

## Handout 3 - Prayer to Patron Saint

###### Add your own words below each line.

### O, [name of saint],

### 

### in whose name I glory,

### 

### pray ever to the Spirit of Life for me,

### 

### strengthen my resolve,

### 

### establish me in dialogue,

### 

### guard me against conflict

### 

### that I may discern my path

### 

### with humility and clarity.

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