

# DISCIPLESHIP

# Quad

## GUIDEBOOK, PART 1

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## ABOUT THE DISCIPLESHIP QUAD GUIDEBOOK

Over 35 years ago, Greg Ogden discovered the powerful potential of “micro groups” while completing his Doctor of Ministry degree. Although he originally believed the way to make disciples was the one-on-one model demonstrated by Paul and Timothy in the New Testament, his advisor suggested that he consider a variety of other models. He did so, testing the micro group of 3-4 people, one-on-one discipleship, and small groups of 6-10. He discovered that the environment created with 3-4 people provided for a powerful “hothouse” of growth that was not present in the one-on-one model or a traditionally-sized small group. He documented all of this in his book, *Transforming Discipleship*.

The Discipleship Quad Process was created based on that model but is driven by new content that reflects the beauty and teaching of the Catholic Church. Numerous years of research and testing by a collaborative team went into the development of the Discipleship Quad Process. The Guidebook was written and designed by Dr. Bob Rice, Professor of Catechetics at Franciscan University of Steubenville. Kristina Scheerbaum, who served at the Steubenville Conferences for over a decade, was the Chief Researcher and Editor. Mark Joseph, Vice President for Outreach and Evangelization at Franciscan University, oversaw the project.

The Discipleship Quad Process is a means through which the Holy Spirit will help us fulfill the mission Jesus gave to St. Francis to “Rebuild my church”... one disciple at a time.

This Guidebook is part one of four. More information about the Discipleship Quad Process can be found at [steubenvilleconferences.com](http://steubenvilleconferences.com).



Since three other people will have the same Guidebook as you, it is always good to put your name in it!

## FOREWORD

In the ninth chapter of St. Luke there is an interesting heading that lays out the conditions for being a disciple of Jesus. It seems to me that we should probably pay attention to this.

Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). There is a lot in that verse and much has been written on it, but what I want to focus on is one word. The first word: *If*.

Before Jesus lays out the conditions for being a disciple he says "*If* you want to follow me." It is essential that we start there. Jesus isn't mandating, forcing, or manipulating anyone into following him. Rather, he asks *if* you want to follow him. We need to be clear here, it is totally, one-hundred percent up to you. But it is also one-hundred percent necessary that each and every Catholic Christian answer this most basic question. Do you want to follow Jesus, do you want to be a disciple? Do you believe Jesus is who he says he is? Is he your hope, your life, your Savior? Do you believe that he is the way to the Father and to eternal life?

Hopefully, your heart stirs and you cry out, "Yes, this is what I want!" That's what St. Francis did when he heard the invitation to be a disciple. He declared, "This is what I want, this is what I've been looking for with all my heart."

But what to do next? The Holy Spirit stirs in our heart the desire to follow Jesus, but what then? It is a very frustrating experience to want to do something, to feel called to do something and not know how to do it. This is why I am so excited about the Discipleship Quad Process from Franciscan University. The materials contained in this book will provide you and others the necessary steps to be a faithful disciple of Jesus. Many people at Franciscan University have spent countless hours in study, discussion and prayer to provide this material. There is no doubt in my mind that if you utilize the materials provided you will grow in your relationship with Jesus, you will be a more confident disciple of Jesus.

Please know of my prayers as you continue in your walk with Jesus.

Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR  
President, Franciscan University of Steubenville

# DISCIPLESHIP

## GUIDEBOOK, PART 1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
THE 7 CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE	10
HOW TO Q	15
DISCIPLESHIP QUAD COMMITMENT	20
WEEKS 1 & 2: PERSONAL TESTIMONIES	
WEEK 3: WANTED BY GOD	
WEEK 4: A NEW CREATION	
WEEK 5: MADE WITH A PURPOSE	
WEEK 6: PROBLEM OF SIN	
WEEK 7: WORD BECAME FLESH	
WEEK 8: CROSS & EMPTY TOMB	
WEEK 9: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE	
WEEK 10: ADOPTED!	

# INTRODUCTION

Catholics today have no shortage of excellent resources to grow in their faith. There are numerous conferences, books, videos, podcasts, blogs, television shows, on-line courses... the list goes on. A couple decades ago, it was easy to lament over the lack of faithful and engaging materials about Catholicism. Now there are almost too many to choose from! I must confess my own bookshelf has many great books that I've yet had the time to get through.

So, what is this "Discipleship Quad" about, and why is it necessary? Is this just another item on a long list of good resources? Another book on the shelf that we might not get to?

No. It is something different. I can attest to that as someone who has spoken at conferences, written books, been in videos, produced podcasts, written blogs, hosted television shows, and taught on-line. The Discipleship Quad Process addresses a serious need in the body of Christ that few of them even try to address. What is that need?

*Shoulders.*

Let me explain.

The most accurate way to describe my body type would be *scrawny*. I wasn't into playing sports or working out. I was drawn to the arts, especially music and theater (and musical theater). For most of my life, I didn't know where a gym was, let alone what to do in it. The few times I lifted weights I hurt myself! However, I loved to run. I loved to be outside. I also enjoyed doing races, whether they be 5K, 10K, half-marathon, or even a marathon. That was how I stayed in shape and healthy.

Unfortunately, I eventually developed a condition called *plantar fasciitis*. I think that is Latin for, "my foot really hurts." I had to stop running as I figured out what was going on and how to recover from it. During that time, I developed another condition called

*getting fat*. My wife suggested I find a different way to work out that didn't involve running.

I found a video workout routine that seemed manly and didn't involve dancing. It used weights and had four videos a week that focused on the following areas: chest/triceps, back/biceps, legs, and... *shoulders*? Honestly, I had never thought about working out my shoulders before. I also wondered why there was only one video focused on both chest *and* triceps (which I wanted) but another video was entirely dedicated to my shoulders (which I didn't care about). Since I was used to running three times a week, I initially decided to skip it. But when the "legs" video caused my foot pain to flare up (yes, I started skipping legs day—don't judge), I had no choice but to give "shoulders" a try.

It is hard to describe how difficult, and humbling, those first shoulder workouts were. Each video had a small woman in the back of the gym who did variations on the exercises for those who couldn't handle the actual ones. I could barely pull off half the weight that she was using. And I was so sore the next day!

Then I started noticing a difference. Not just in my shoulders, but in my back, neck, and arms. To state what should have been obvious to me, the shoulders connect all those things. I also learned how important strong shoulders were to prevent muscle injuries in other parts of the upper body. Having big biceps or large pectoral muscles might look good, but if you don't have shoulders to match, they aren't very useful.

All of this led me to reflect on how our shoulders also have a figurative meaning. They can be an image of equality and community, when we stand "shoulder to shoulder" with one another. They can be an image of compassion, such as having a "shoulder to lean on" or a "shoulder to cry on". One beautiful image from the Gospels is Jesus as the Good Shepherd, carrying the lost sheep on his *shoulders*. They can also have a negative connotation: resentful people can have a "chip" on their shoulder; or an uncaring person gives a "cold" shoulder. Whether good or bad, all of these images are used to reflect the way we are in relationship to others.

To apply this to the “body” of Christ, the Church, I propose we need to work on our shoulders. We need to work on how we live in fellowship with each other. We need to help carry each other’s burdens. We need to lift each other up.

The Discipleship Quad Process is more than a book, more than a Bible study, and more than a catechesis on Catholic doctrine. At its heart, it is about brothers helping brothers and sisters helping sisters become more joyful disciples of Jesus Christ. Through this, your faith will grow stronger. Your prayer will grow deeper. Your witness to others will be more fruitful.

How can I say this with such boldness?

First, I have confidence in the power of the Word of God, as expressed both in Scripture and Tradition. Each week, you will dive into the Bible and read reflections driven by Catholic doctrine. The Holy Spirit will give you new insights, even if it is a text you have read before, because “The Word of God is living and active” (Hebrews 4:12). However, the Spirit will not only speak to you through the written Word but also through others in the group, for we are all vessels of the Holy Spirit. In my own experience, I have been continually blown away by how he inspired others in my Quad. Some of the greatest inspirations I’ve received have come through them!

Second, this manual you hold is the fruit of many years of research. We’ve combed through every session, scrutinized every question, and gotten feedback from many participants. More importantly, we have seen the fruit of this process in our own lives and in the lives of others. Even those who have been in faith sharing groups before have shared that by keeping the group small (only four people), meeting every week, and changing the participants about every year, the Discipleship Quad Process has provided an opportunity to reach out to new people, build new relationships, and strengthen the overall community of faith. Furthermore, as you get used to having regular conversations of faith within your Quad, you will find yourself more comfortable

talking about the faith with others.

I hope you go to Catholic conferences. I hope you read Catholic books. I hope you watch Catholic videos and listen to Catholic podcasts. A Discipleship Quad is something different. Not necessarily greater, but complementary. Like my first experience with working out my shoulders, it might be difficult at first, and you may not really appreciate what is going on until you are in the process of doing it. Many have found this process to be a “missing piece” in their own spiritual lives and a source of renewal in their communities.

I pray you will be blessed by it, and that through it you will be a blessing to others.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Rice". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

# The 7 CHARACTERISTICS of a DISCIPLE

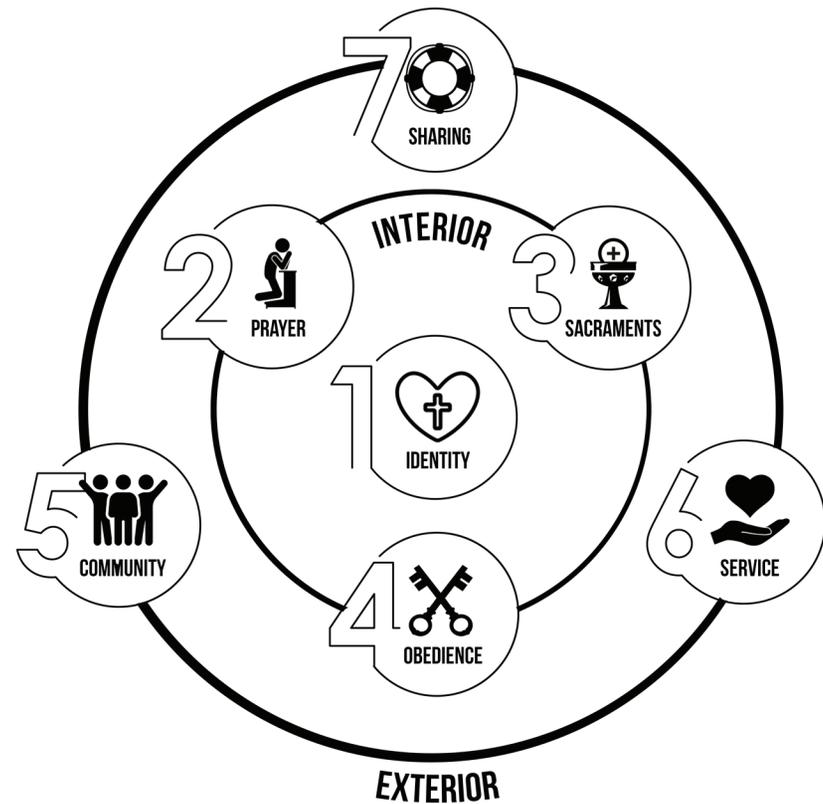
St. James wrote, “if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like” (James 1:23-24). I must confess that I often do that. I read an inspirational book, I have a great time of prayer, and then I go off and act like my old, sinful self. The path of discipleship is difficult. We need the grace of God and the support of others to truly live out our faith.

We know in the words of St. Paul that we “have been saved by faith... not by works” (Eph. 2:8-9) and we know from James that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). There is no contradiction here. Faith is a gift of God’s grace. We cannot earn it by doing good deeds. But good deeds naturally spring from this gift of faith and act as a way to measure how alive our faith truly is.

Too often we leave religion in the realm of our imagination. Our minds can easily trick us into thinking we are holier, or more sinful, than we actually are. Though measuring our spiritual growth is not an exact science, there are indicators that we can use to know if we are heading in the right direction. We call them, *The Seven Characteristics of a Disciple*.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines a characteristic as “a distinguishing trait”. It is what makes us different. A characteristic of an NBA player would likely be how tall he is. A characteristic of a math professor would be her ability to work with numbers. In a similar way, disciples of Jesus Christ have characteristics that set them apart from those who do not follow him, those of whom Jesus bluntly told us, “Do not be like them” (Matthew 6:8).

Each session of the Discipleship Quad Process is focused on one of these seven characteristics, all of which are rooted in Scripture and Tradition. Though they are numbered one through seven,



this isn’t meant to be a “to-do” list where you have to cross one off before moving to the next. There is an organic unity within them. Growth in one area brings about growth in others. Some characteristics are more present in our interior lives than what we do exteriorly, but God comes to us through all of them. For example, some people have a powerful experience with service (#6) that nourishes their prayer life (#2). Others find becoming more obedient to the Church (#4) inspires and equips them to be more bold in sharing the faith with others (#7). As it is said, “A rising tide lifts all boats.”

For a body to be healthy, it needs all of its parts to work properly. For a disciple to be alive in faith, he or she needs all of these characteristics present. Most people look at this and recognize areas of strength and areas that could use growth. Throughout this process, we will give practical challenges in each of these characteristics and provide opportunities of self-assessment so you can see how God is helping you grow stronger in your faith.

More importantly, you won't be doing this alone! The others in your Quad will be an incredible source of encouragement and accountability. This is often the missing element for many who love the Lord but are stagnant in their spiritual lives. "Iron sharpens iron; one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). This isn't optional. We *need* each other. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis shared this simple truth: "Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples" (173). God uses others to help us grow to greater depths of holiness than we could ever get to on our own.

The Holy Spirit will help you grow in these seven characteristics through what is offered in this resource: prayerful reflections of Scripture, practical explanations of Church teaching, and the encouragement and accountability of three fellow disciples. Here is a brief overview of each one.



*Our identity is rooted in being a child of the Father, redeemed by the Son, and alive in the Holy Spirit. We are loved because of who we are, not what we do.*

"See what love the Father has lavished upon us, letting us be called children of God. For that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1). This characteristic is at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. It is an entirely different way of understanding who we are and why we are valuable. The world would have us base our identity on how successful we are, the numbers in our bank account, or the numbers on a scale (just to name a few). Scripture tells us that our "value" is not based on any material thing, but on the love that God the Father has for us. The depths of that love can be seen on the cross, for "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son" (John 3:16).

Having our identity rooted in the love of God changes everything. Our decisions, our relationships, our values, our actions... *everything*. It opens our eyes to a spiritual reality about the meaning of life and the dignity of others. Though the numbers assigned to the characteristics aren't meant to imply that one is better than the others, this one can rightly be called *first*. The first ten sessions are focused on this characteristic.



*We have an active, daily life of prayer, both individually and communally, where we glorify God and seek His will. It becomes the air we breathe.*

The *Catechism* describes prayer as our "vital and personal relationship with the living and true God" (2558). Our life of prayer manifests itself in different ways. The silent time we take each day to be present to Jesus, the sufferings we offer up, the opportunities to pray with others in need, and the celebration of the Mass are all examples of how we live out St. Paul's exhortation to, "pray without ceasing" (1 The 5:17).



*We prayerfully encounter Jesus on a regular basis through the sacraments of the Church and live in the power of the grace we have received through them.*

A Catholic disciple of Jesus Christ understands that sacraments aren't just "a" way of receiving God's grace, they are "the" way! We are made children of God through Baptism. We are forgiven of our sins through Reconciliation. We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus through the Eucharist. Jesus instituted seven sacraments for the sake of our salvation, so that the power he displayed in his public ministry would continue through the sacraments he gave to the Church. A disciple of Jesus frequently receives and calls upon the graces he or she has received through the sacraments.



*We seek to understand and obey the teachings of Christ as passed on to us through the Apostles and now living in the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.*

The Church is our mother and she shares with us the revelation of Jesus. The disciple understands there is not a difference between what Jesus taught and what the Church teaches, just as a head cannot be separated from the body. He or she humbly seeks to learn more about what God has revealed through the Church and live in obedience to it.



*We participate in our parish community and foster deeper relationships with individuals with whom we can share and grow in our faith.*

A disciple knows that one's faith is not meant to be lived in isolation. We are a part of a family. "We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Disciples of Jesus actively seek each other out and look for opportunities to celebrate the love of God together, whether that be at Mass, on retreat, at a restaurant, at work or school, or even at a football game.



*We devote our time, talent, and treasure to our parish, our community, and to those in need, encountering Jesus in "the least of these."*

Jesus could not be clearer: he is present in the poor and needy, and we will be judged by how much we loved him through them. St. James wrote, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?" (James 2:15-16). A disciple actively serves those in need.



*In both words and action, we share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and we commit ourselves to helping others be His disciples.*

Pope St. Paul VI wrote, "it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 24). A disciple takes the command of Jesus to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19) seriously, knowing Christianity is not just a philosophy, but a matter of eternal salvation. Jesus said, "A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The Good News is not just life changing but life *saving* (hence the icon of a life saver) and a disciple is eager to share that message with others.

# HOW TO

The Discipleship Quad Process is a 44-week program made up of two elements: a weekly gathering and reflections on Scripture and Catholic doctrine to prepare for that gathering. Some "weeks" might take two weeks, depending on the group and how much they want to discuss the topic.

The first two weeks are a chance for each member of the Quad to share his or her personal testimony and to get to know each other. Week 3 is when the Scriptural and Doctrinal reflections begin.

## SCRIPTURAL AND DOCTRINAL REFLECTIONS

The weekly readings are broken up into a number of sections so that they can be spread throughout the week.

**FRONT PAGE:** Each session starts with a "Front Page" that is meant to be read and reflected upon every day. It contains the main topic, the main Scripture verse, a prayer that connects that session to one of The Seven Characteristics of a Disciple, intentions for the other Quad members, and a goal for the week. The Quad takes a look at this page together at the beginning of their gathering and closes by looking at the Front Page of the following week.

**THE DAILY BREAD:** These are five Scriptures that reflect the main topic that can be spread throughout the week. There is a space after each verse to write down any thoughts or inspirations you have while reading them.

**FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING:** St. Anselm famously described theology as "faith seeking understanding." It introduces the topic through Scripture, wisdom from the Saints, and quotes from the Catechism. There are two questions reflecting on that content.

**SCRIPTURE:** This is a longer reading from the Bible, often with a brief

introduction. The two questions that follow are an opportunity to write down what stood out to you and perhaps help you look at the Scripture in a different way.

**FAITH INTO LIFE:** This section attempts to apply the topic into our daily living. Like the other sections, it has two questions for reflection.

**GOING DEEPER/DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTION:** Some topics have additional material that either gives more information about the topic (Going Deeper) or provides more ways to apply that topic to our lives (Discipleship in Action).

## MAKE TIME TO PREPARE

There is a popular saying that goes, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” The content of the Guidebook is focused on the life-changing truth revealed in Scripture and Tradition, but if you rush through it quickly at the last minute you might miss something that God wants you to hear—or something important to share with others.

People usually spend about ten to fifteen minutes each on the Faith Seeking Understanding, Scripture, and Faith into Life, and about three to five minutes on each of the Bible verses from The Daily Bread. If you add that up, it takes about an hour if you did it all at once. And sometimes with work, school, and family that might be the only time to do it!

However, it is better if you can spread it throughout the week. If you pray every day, you can make it a part of your prayer time. If you don't, this might be a great chance to start! Take a few minutes every day on the Front Page to pray for those in your Quad, think about how you might accomplish the weekly challenge, and reflect on the topic and main Scripture. Depending on when your Quad meets, you could choose to do Faith Seeking Understanding on Mondays, Scripture on Wednesdays, and Faith Into Life on Fridays, with Daily Bread verses spread throughout. You will have a chance to make a schedule at the Week 2 Quad Gathering. Speaking of that...

## THE QUAD GATHERING

This is the best part! It is not just a chance to share how the Holy Spirit inspired you through the Scriptures and doctrine you spent the week reflecting on, but also to hear the Spirit speaking through your brothers or sisters. For each gathering, one person will act as a “facilitator. His or her main role is to try to keep the conversation on track and within the time allotted. It is important to rotate that position as you go through the process (we will talk about this more at the Week 6 Gathering).

The Quad gathering lasts for ninety minutes and is broken down into three parts: recall, reflect, and resolve.

**RECALL** (20-30 minutes): Begin with the Front Page of the week you just finished. Read the Scripture out loud, pray the prayer together, and share with each other how the Lord has worked in your lives over the past seven days. Since you've also got the list of intentions right there, it would be good to share if any of those prayers got answered! You can also discuss how you put the that week's resolution (“This Week I Will”) into practice.

**REFLECT** (50-60 minutes): Walk through your answers from the six questions from the week, as well as any additional insights you received from The Daily Bread and a Going Deeper/Discipleship in Action (if there was one). This isn't a “report” as much as a reflection, because as you or others share you may be inspired with even deeper insights into the topic, and it is good to talk about those as well. Remember, the questions are just a means to an end. The goal is building community and encouraging each other in the journey of faith. Some topics might really speak to a member of the Quad. If so, don't worry about the time, just let him or her share. You can either move quickly through the remaining questions, or decide to pick up the conversation at the same place next week.

**RESOLVE** (10-15 minutes): The meeting ends with a time of prayer and a challenge. Go to the Front Page of the next week and write down how you will answer that challenge in the “This Week I Will” section at the top. Ask the group what they need prayer for and

write those intentions in the space provided. Finally, look at next week's topic, and read the main verse and prayer together.

There are sometimes variations to the above, but that is the general idea. The most important thing is that you come to the Quad gathering prepared by reflecting on the material and questions ahead of time and have an open heart and ears to receive God's grace and love. It is time to give your "shoulders" a work out!

The first two weeks don't follow this format, since they are focused on sharing personal testimonies. You will begin with the Week 3 "Front Page" at the end of your second Quad Gathering.

### **ITS GOING TO BE A GREAT YEAR!**

Most Quads take about a year to complete the curriculum. When we first started the Discipleship Quad Process, many were concerned that was too long. It can be intimidating to commit to something for an entire year. However, after the first groups completed the entire curriculum, the overwhelming feedback was that being in a Quad for a year was the right amount of time to really get to know others in the Quad and recognize personal spiritual growth.

Instead of being a detriment, the length of the process is one of its greatest strengths! We all desire a quick fix. We want Jesus to be a plastic surgeon, but really he is more like an orthodontist who gives us braces and makes subtle tweaks as time goes on until we have the perfect smile. Wait... does that mean this resource is like a retainer?

Perhaps a more biblical analogy would be better. St. Paul compared our spiritual lives to running a race. Some approach their faith like a sprint: high energy, then a crash. A more appropriate metaphor would be that of a marathon. It is more about distance and perseverance than speed.

The following page is the Discipleship Quad Commitment that will be signed at your first Quad Gathering. Let's go be disciples... and then go make them!



“Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.”  
—Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 173

# DISCIPLESHIP *Quad* COMMITMENT

*For the Quad to be a life-changing experience for yourself and others, it is important that everyone is committed to the Quad to the best of their ability. At your first meeting, you and the other members will discuss and sign the following agreement:*

In order to grow toward maturity in Christ and be empowered to be a disciple and disciple-maker, I commit myself to the following:

1. Complete all assignments/readings on a weekly basis, prior to my Discipleship Quad, in order to fully contribute.
2. Meet weekly with my fellow Discipleship Quad members for approximately one and one-half hours to share life and dialogue over the content of the assignments.
3. Offer myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated transformation during this discipleship period.
4. Contribute to a climate of honesty, trust, and personal vulnerability in a spirit of mutual up-building.
5. Give serious consideration to continuing the discipling chain by committing myself to invest in three other people and participate in another Discipleship Quad following the completion of this one.

*To be signed at your first gathering.*

**YOUR SIGNATURE:**

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**SIGNATURE:**

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**SIGNATURE:**

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**SIGNATURE:**

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**WE STARTED ON:**

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**WE FINISHED ON:**

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# PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

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The first two weeks are a chance for each member of the Quad to share his or her personal testimony. The first meeting will have two testimonies and the second will have the other two.

Sharing this journey is more than just about people's first encounter with God's love; it is also a sharing of key moments in their lives that have formed them into the people they are today. Therefore, it may be helpful for you to prepare for this time of sharing by focusing on key times in your life where you had moments of encounter with God's love.

To lead up to those moments, share with the Quad what your life was like before those moments of encounter with God, what happened in your encounter with Christ, and how your life was changed after that encounter. You may have had a one-time encounter that changed everything or you may have had many small encounters that have slowly transformed your life to get you where you are today.

Maybe you have had an encounter with Christ that is not as profound as others', but you are at a place where you are seeking a deeper encounter. That is perfectly fine! You can share that experience. Plan to share for 20-25 minutes. It is best to go in the chronological order of your life. Here are some questions to help to guide you in preparing to share your journey:

## CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY BACKGROUND:

- Where were you born and where did you grow up?
- How would you describe your childhood?

- What was your family like? How many siblings do you have? Where are you in the birth order?
- What are your most impactful childhood memories that made you into who you are today?
- How important was faith in your childhood?
- Did you experience any moments of encounter with God's love as a child?

## POST HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE/CAREER:

- How did your faith develop through college/post-high school (touch upon challenges and moments of encounter with God's love)?
- How did you choose your school and/or profession?
- What do you like and dislike about your work/career?

## IF MARRIED:

- How did you meet your spouse?
- How has marriage/kids impacted your life and faith journey?
- How would you describe your relationship with your spouse?

## IF ORDAINED:

- When did you first hear the call to the diaconate/priesthood?
- How has your ordination changed your life?

## OTHER LIFE MOMENTS:

- What were other major occurrences in your life that had an impact on where you are today?
- How would you describe your relationship with God/spiritual life at this time?
- Why did you decide to become a part of this Discipleship Quad? Why do you see this as important at this time?

## YOUR TESTIMONY

It is not very often we have a chance to share our stories like this, and it isn't uncommon to feel a bit nervous doing it. Don't worry—the others in your Quad probably feel the same way! Many people find it helpful to write down some notes before sharing. Feel free to use the space below or use a separate piece of paper.

## QUAD TESTIMONIES

An important part of listening is remembering. Use the following pages to write down important parts of the testimonies of the others in your Quad, or perhaps details you don't want to forget, such as the name of their spouse or kids. Do this after they share so that you can give them your full attention while they are talking.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**QUAD TESTIMONIES**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**QUAD TESTIMONIES**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

# FOR YOUR GATHERING

## WEEK 1

**INTRODUCTIONS (20 MINUTES):** The facilitator can begin with an opening prayer, like this:

“God, thank you for calling the four of us together in this Discipleship Quad. We open our hearts to you today and ask for your blessing upon our time together. *(Take a quiet moment.)* Give us the grace to share about our lives with one another in vulnerability and trust.”

Quad members can briefly share their occupations, family statuses (e.g., married, single, number of kids/ages), and reasons why they are excited about being in this Discipleship Quad. They can also share what they thought about the introductory materials (7 Characteristics of a Disciple, How To Q, etc.)

The facilitator goes over the Discipleship Quad Commitment, briefly commenting on each of the points and allowing time for any comments or questions. Then everyone signs their own copy and also the copies of the others.

**REFLECT (50 MINUTES):** Two of the Quad share their personal testimony, each one lasting 20-25 minutes.

**RESOLVE (20 MINUTES):** When that is done, the facilitator can close with a prayer such as this one:

“Thank you for this time together and giving us the opportunity to hear about one another’s lives. We ask your blessing upon us. Be with us as we face all the ups and downs of this next week.”

Feel free to share any intentions from the Quad and any additional prayers, such as an Our Father, Hail Mary, etc. Verify where and when you will be meeting next week.

# FOR YOUR GATHERING

## WEEK 2

**RECALL (20 MINUTES):** The facilitator can begin with an opening prayer, like the one from Week 1. He or she will then hand out copies of the Discipleship Quad Commitment that was signed last week.

The Quad can briefly share about the past week.

- What are some blessings for which you are thankful this week?
- If it was a difficult week, what made it difficult?

**REFLECT (50 MINUTES):** Two of the Quad share their personal testimony, each one lasting 20-25 minutes.

**RESOLVE (20 MINUTES):** When that is done, the facilitator says, “We are now going to start reading the Scriptural and Doctrinal reflections that we will discuss every week. But first, let’s talk about how we might schedule that into our busy lives.”

Look at the next two pages together (“Scheduling for Success!”) for different scheduling ideas. Each member of the Quad can share what schedule will work best for them and write that down in the space provided.

Then the facilitator has them turn to the “Front Page” of Week 3. At the top it says “This Week I Will.” The challenge this week is to do what you just scheduled! Then each member of the Quad can share something they would like prayers for, while the others write them down in the space provided.

The facilitator then introduces the topic for the next week (it is the headline, “Wanted By God”). Then he or she says, “Let us take a moment to listen to the living Word of God,” and reads the accompanying Scripture, followed by a moment of silent reflection.

The session closes with the Quad saying the prayer for the next week together, followed an Our Father and a Hail Mary.

## SCHEDULING FOR SUCCESS!

Now that you've started to get to know each other and had a chance to share your testimonies, you will start doing the weekly Scriptural and Doctrinal reflections that make up the majority of the Discipleship Quad Process.

As mentioned earlier, there are three main sections that usually take about ten to fifteen minutes each: Faith Seeking Understanding, Scripture, and Faith Into Life. There are also five brief Scriptures in The Daily Bread. Doing them all at once could take around an hour. If you plan to do that, decide what day of the week is best (and preferably not right before the Quad gathering!). On the blank schedule on the next page, write down when the Quad will meet and what day you will set time aside to do the readings. Be sure to look at the Front Page every day (perhaps when you wake up?), if only to pray for the members of your Quad and to be mindful of the week's topic and Scripture.

If you can spread out the readings (which we recommend), then you could create a schedule like this:

<b>MONDAY</b> <i>Meet w Quad, Do Front Page of new week</i>	<b>TUESDAY</b> <i>Front Page, #1 Daily Bread, Faith Seeking Understanding</i>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <i>Front Page, #2 Daily Bread</i>
<b>THURSDAY</b> <i>Front Page, Scripture</i>	<b>FRIDAY</b> <i>Front Page, #3 Daily Bread</i>	<b>SATURDAY</b> <i>Front Page, #4 Daily Bread, Faith Into Life</i>
<b>SUNDAY</b> <i>Front Page #5 Daily Bread, Going Deeper (or other)</i>	<b>MONDAY</b> <i>Meet w Quad, Do Front Page of new week</i>	

The most important thing is to do them prayerfully and with an open heart!

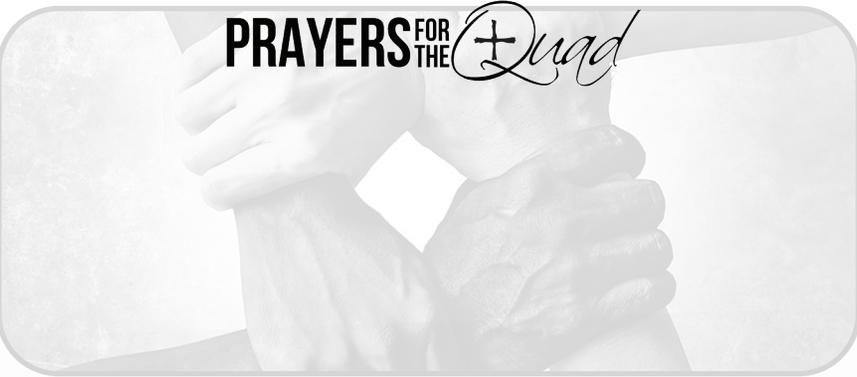
## MY SCHEDULE

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>MONDAY</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>
<b>SATURDAY</b>	

THIS WEEK  
I WILL

WEEK 3

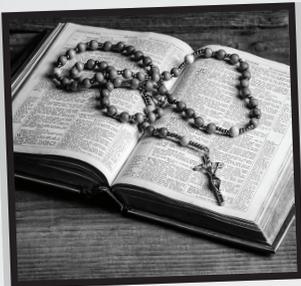
PRAYERS FOR THE *Quad*



# The Daily Disciple

## WANTED BY GOD

God does not call us because we are *worthy*, but because we are *wanted*.



Do not fear, for I have  
redeemed you; I have called  
you by name: you are mine.  
– Isaiah 43:1

CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Heavenly Father, help us to see us as you see us. Not by what we do, but who we are—your beloved children. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.



# THE *Daily* BREAD

The call of Isaiah: **Isaiah 6:1-13**

The call of Jeremiah: **Jeremiah 1:4-10**

The call of Matthew: **Matthew 9:9-13**

The call of the “rich young man”: **Mark 10:17-22**

The Annunciation: **Luke 1:26-38**

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



In the gospel of Mark, when Jesus calls the twelve apostles, Jesus, “summoned those he wanted and they came to him” (Mark 3:13). The gospels do not mention the credentials of these twelve men to explain why they would be worthy of such a calling; they only mention that Jesus wanted them. In fact, when you look at the backgrounds of these twelve men—some fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot, and one who would betray him—you could argue that Jesus could have done better. But that is precisely the point. It has been said that “God does not call the qualified, he qualifies the called.” His apostles are not described as “those who were worthy” but “those he *wanted*.” God loves us and wants us to be with him in everything we do.

His love for us is not dependent on our talent, for there are plenty of “untalented” people that God calls throughout the scriptures. The book of Judges tells a story of how a man named Gideon called the Israelites to rebel against their Midianite captors. When 32,000 soldiers showed up, the Lord told Gideon, “You have too many soldiers with you for me to deliver Midian into their power, lest Israel vaunt itself against me and say, ‘My own power saved me’” (Judges 7:2). So, he dwindled the number of soldiers down to just 300! Those were the ones God used to free the Israelites. (If you’d like to read the story, it is in Judges 7:1-22.)

## NOT CALLED FOR OUR TALENT

When the Israelites wanted to have their own king, they chose Saul: “There was no other Israelite more handsome than Saul: he stood head and shoulders above the people” (1 Samuel 9:2). When that didn’t work (as God said it wouldn’t), the Lord sent the

prophet Samuel to the house of Jesse to show him who the real king should be. At first, Samuel came across Jesse’s oldest son, who he immediately thought would make a great leader. But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance. The Lord looks into the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). The Lord guided Samuel to anoint the youngest of the sons, a shepherd boy who had no status within the family. His name was David, and he became the greatest king of Israel.

By now you are noticing a pattern, one that will continue throughout these weekly readings. It is almost as if God *intentionally* chooses the weakest so that when they do something amazing, God is glorified—and they share in his glory! This flies in the face of a culture that is obsessed with talent, achievement, and appearance. Many of us come from families or environments where we feel we must achieve something to receive recognition or love. It is almost impossible for us to comprehend that God would love us and want us, in spite of our sins, weaknesses, and failures.

## WE ARE CHOSEN

We conclude with the words of Henri Nouwen:

The greatest spiritual battle begins—and never ends—with the reclaiming of our chosenness. Long before any human being saw us, we are seen by God’s loving eyes. Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we are heard by our God who is all ears for us. Long before any person spoke to us in this world, we are spoken to by the voice of eternal love (*Life of the Beloved* 48-49).



# FAITH *into* LIFE

One of Caravaggio's famous paintings is "The Calling of St. Matthew." In it, Caravaggio modernizes the scene (so they are dressed in 16th century clothing). St. Matthew and his colleagues are in a dirty back room, counting money on a table. Jesus points to the well-dressed tax collector. St. Matthew's right hand is on his money, but his left points to his heart. His face bears a surprised expression, as if to say, "Are you really calling me?"

St. Bede wrote of St. Matthew's calling: "Jesus saw Matthew, not merely in the usual sense, but more significantly with his merciful understanding of men. He saw the tax collector and, because he sees through eyes of mercy and by choosing, he said to him: Follow me. This following meant imitating the pattern of his life—not just walking after him." The phrase of St. Bede, "he sees by eyes of mercy and by choosing," was the motto that Cardinal Bergoglio chose for his papal motto (*miserando atque eligendo*) when he took on the name and title of Pope Francis.

## TRANSFORMING SINNERS INTO SAINTS

When Jesus calls us, it is common for us to initially question his decision or question if we even heard the calling at all. We might think that holiness and sainthood is for someone else and nothing we can do on our own. Yet Jesus looks at us, not through the eyes of the "world," but through eyes of mercy and love. He chooses us, just as he chose to create the world. He who has the power to separate darkness from light and the land from the sea has more than enough power to transform a sinner into a saint.

One of the most famous saints of our faith is St. Augustine, who

was from Hippo, a city in northern Africa. He was born in the middle of the fourth century and died in 430 AD. He was a brilliant scholar but wasn't very interested in living a Christian life (much to the sorrow of his mother, St. Monica, who continued to pray for his conversion). He had a child with a mistress, engaged in many vices, and explored many different religious ideas until, later in life, he converted to Christianity. He became one of the greatest theologians in the history of the Catholic Church. He wrote of his own conversion:

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new,  
late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was  
outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my  
unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you  
created. You were with me, but I was not with you. Created  
things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you  
they would not have been at all. You called, you shouted,  
and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you  
shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your  
fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you.  
I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You  
touched me, and I burned for your peace (*Confessions*).

## GOD INVITES ALL OF US

Notice in both stories the tension between created things and God's call. Just as St. Matthew had one hand on money and another on his heart, saying "yes" to God means we have to leave something behind. St. Matthew left his tax booth. St. Augustine left his sinful way of life. Yet they did not do this on their own—nor could they! God made the invitation and they accepted it. This was more than an invitation to serve; it was an invitation to experience the incredible love of God, a love so strong that St. Augustine said, "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us to be loved."



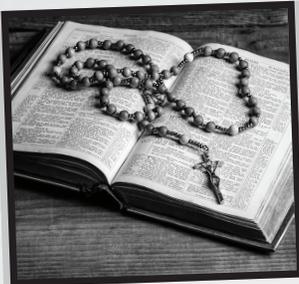
# THE *Daily* BREAD



## The Daily Disciple

# A NEW CREATION

Being a follower of Jesus is not about *changing* your life, but about living a new life.



**So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. All of this is from God.**  
 – 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

### CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Heavenly Father, creator of all things, you don't just "fix" us, you make us new. Through the power of the Spirit, help us turn away from our old ways and embrace the new life you invite us to live. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.



Being a "new creation": **2 Corinthians 5:11-21**

God is doing something new: **Isaiah 43:1-20**

St. Paul's conversion: **Acts 9:1-22**

The prophecy of a "new covenant": **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

A "new heaven and a new earth": **Revelation 21:1-7**

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



There are choices that people make in their lives that might change the way they label themselves. For example, a person who gives up eating meat would be called a vegetarian. A person who passes the bar exam would be called a lawyer. These titles designate a change in behavior but not necessarily in *identity*. People aren't different because they have changed their eating habits or because of the careers they have chosen.

However, being "Catholic" should be more than about changing a few aspects of one's behavior. It is not just about being nicer to people we don't like or putting more in the collection basket at church (or even going to church more). Those are all *external* things. And while becoming a committed disciple of Christ does involve a change of our behaviors, the real transformation is what occurs on the inside.

## A NEW CREATION

St. Paul wrote, "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." St. Paul had some experience with this. Early in his life, he persecuted Christians, even to their death. After a vision of Jesus, his life was changed, and he became one of the greatest evangelists in the history of the Church.

In his letters, St. Paul frequently wrote that the change wasn't something *he* did, but that *God* did: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

*God changes lives.* Perhaps you have had a conversion like St. Paul's, from one extreme to the other. But most people don't have that kind of dramatic story to tell. There are a lot of people who were already trying to live good lives before they encountered

Christ in a deeper way. In some ways, those who were "good" can have a more difficult time conceptualizing being a "new creation." "I'm not so bad," they might say to themselves, "so why change everything?"

## MORE THAN JUST A "FIX"

When I was teenager, I inherited my grandfather's 1976 Cutlass Supreme Oldsmobile. It was a big yellow boat that was built like a tank. I really loved that car, but it had one problem after another. Every few months I was back at the garage, paying for another repair. Finally, the mechanic said, "We can keep doing this for the next few months or even years, but honestly... you just need a new car." It was a hard decision to give it up—it would have been easier if the car had completely stopped working and I had no other choice!

This is why those whose lives have hit rock bottom are often more open to God transforming their lives than those who are still fooling themselves that they just need "a little fix." Jesus doesn't just want to *fix* us; he wants to make of us a "new creation." He desires to not only restore us to the life he intended for us in the first place, but also to elevate us to live a life we could have never dreamed on our own.

Why? Because God loves us. He made us out of love. He made us *for* love. He made us *to* love. He wants us to experience the fullness of love, both in this life and in the next: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

## BEING CATHOLIC IS BEING A DISCIPLE

There are many who consider being Catholic like a kind of ethnicity or activity. Jesus wants it to be more than that. Being Catholic is being a disciple of Jesus Christ. It is having an intimate relationship with the One who made us. It is not about getting a new paint job on the house; it is changing the foundation. This is not something we could possibly hope to do on our own—it is the work of the Holy Spirit.



# FAITH *into* LIFE

Jesus invited Simon to “put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” This request went against everything that Simon had been trained to do as a fisherman. If he could not catch fish in shallow water before the sun rose, there was no way he would be able to do so in deep water in the middle of the day. I am so impressed by Simon’s faith that led him to do what Jesus asked him to do. If it were me, I might have said something like, “Jesus, I love the religious stuff you talk about, but leave the fishing to me.”

Often, we want to compartmentalize our faith into something we do every once in a while, like when we are on a retreat or maybe on Christmas and Easter. Do we bring Jesus into our places of work, our families, our thinking, or our spending? This is the kind of “foundational shift” to which Jesus is inviting us. Catholicism can’t be an “add-on” to our already busy lives. Nobody has time to “add on” Jesus to his or her life... which is why we need a new life!

## BREAK AND GROWTH

This kind of transformation of our hearts is known as “conversion,” or in Greek, *metanoia*. There are always two things involved in conversion: *break* and *growth*. We see this in the calling of St. Peter. In order to follow Jesus, he had to *break* with something he was currently doing. In his case, it was being a fisherman. Scripture tells us that when he got back to the shore, he “left everything and followed him.”

However, there was also *growth*. Notice the way Jesus invited Simon to be his disciple: “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” By inviting Simon to be a “fisher of men,” Jesus wasn’t denying everything that Simon had been doing up to that point. He could have said, “Simon, I don’t really need fishermen, so let’s start over.” Instead, he took something about which Simon was knowledgeable and passionate and *grew* that into something

even greater.

We also see this in the conversion of St. Paul. He had to *break* from his persecution of Christianity—that was obvious. However, there was also *growth*. St. Paul had always loved the scriptures and preaching the faith. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus transformed his heart so that he would do it the right way.

## BOTH ARE PRESENT

In all of our conversions, there are elements of break and growth. For some, the *break* is the more dominant action, such as in the conversion of St. Augustine. For others, it is more about growth, such as in the story of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, a young girl in France who was raised in a religious family and joined the Carmelites at the age of 15 (look up her story if you are not familiar with it!). Though one may be more dominant, both are always present.

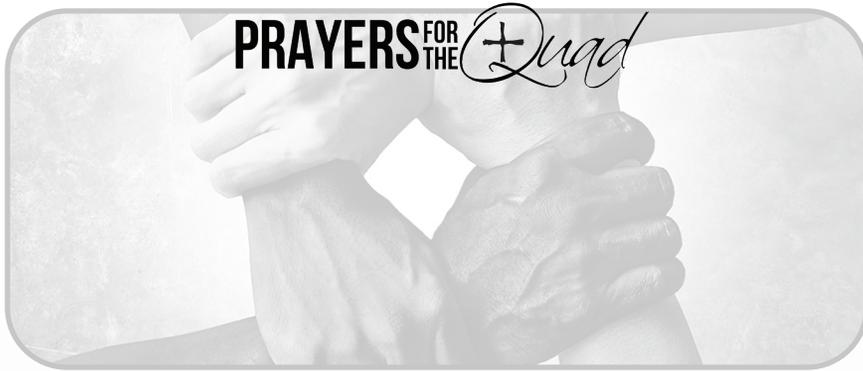
Break and growth are also parts of any kind of serious, intimate relationship. As I fell more deeply in love with the woman who would become my wife, I had to break from other things—relationships with other women, behaviors that offended her, etc.—in order that we might grow in our relationship. God’s desire is that we would be in a love relationship with him. Falling more deeply in love with him is at the heart of true conversion.

## GOD’S WORK, NOT OURS

Reflect on the last phrase of the verse to memorize this week: “All of this is from God.” St. Paul emphasized this when he wrote, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Though we need to cooperate with God’s grace, it is *his* work, not ours. No surgeon, no matter how skilled, could give himself or herself a heart transplant. When we surrender to the Divine Physician, the Healer of our souls, he can make all things new.



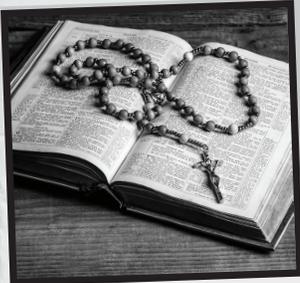
# THE *Daily* BREAD



## The Daily Disciple

# MADE WITH A PURPOSE

You are not an accident.  
God has an amazing plan and purpose for your life.



**“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you... plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.”**  
– Jeremiah 29:11

### CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Father, creator of heaven and earth, give us wisdom to humbly understand what it means to be made “very good” and to trust in your plan for our lives. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.  
Amen.



God “loves all he has made”: **Wisdom 11:21-12:1**

Nature is the art; God is the artist: **Wisdom 13:1-9**

God’s answer to Job’s complaint: **Job 38**

Humility brings blessings: **1 Peter 5:5-11**

Trusting in God: **Matthew 6:25-34**

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



Have you ever felt like God was out to get you, or that he didn't have your best intentions in mind? This temptation is as old as the Garden of Eden and we still struggle with it today. There are many who are afraid of God's will, thinking it will ruin them. The classic Catholic example is the person who is afraid that if they get serious about God, he will want them to become a priest or nun (as if that were a bad thing).

The word of the Lord spoken through the prophet Jeremiah tells us his plans are for our "welfare and not for woe." Jesus told his followers, "I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). While it is true that being a disciple of Jesus involves a "death" to ourselves, it is only to receive the "new life" he is offering—a life that promises a "future full of hope."

God's will in our lives is not something foreign to us. In fact, we were *made* for it. Take, for example, the fact that humanity, from the beginning, has instinctively worshiped some kind of god or gods. Our hearts long for the divine. Our souls tell us there is more to this life than what we see.

## PROOF THAT GOD EXISTS

Though atheists claim there is no "proof" of God, the evidence can be seen in the millions of different places of worship around the world that are filled with billions of believers.

I have no sense of smell, so I take people at their word when they tell me that there is such a thing as odor. I would certainly be mad to think it was some kind of mass conspiracy or hallucination. I think it is accurate to say that humanity was created to perceive the world not just through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell,

but also through faith. The experience of faith is strongly evident throughout the many millennia of human history. For an atheist to say we must prove God using only the senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell would be like someone asking you to prove a scent exists while you plug your nose, or prove the stars exist while you close your eyes.

Another proof that God exists is that *we* exist. Sir Fredrick Hoyle, a famous mathematician, calculated that the chance of human life on earth "accidentally" happening was about the same as having a tornado hit a junkyard and produce a fully functional jumbo jet. No one in his or her right mind would look at a statue by Michelangelo and think the rock was naturally formed that way. Unfortunately, because our culture insists that we can't talk about God in public schools or other places in the public square, many of us didn't get to hear the most logical reason for how we came to be: we were *made*.

## YOU ARE NOT AN ACCIDENT

Instead, many of us have been told we were accidents. We got lucky beyond any rational possibility. We flipped a billion pennies and they all landed on heads on the first try. Though we might celebrate that we won the lottery of all lotteries or the perfect hand in the cosmic game of bridge (it would actually have to be about ten perfect hands in a row), this mindset leaves us with another problem: If we are an accident, then what is our purpose? There is none. Darwin's evolutionary model of "survival of the fittest" then becomes a personal philosophy: "I must beat others to succeed in life."

From the first page of the Bible, God reveals to humanity that this is not true. We were intentionally created out of love by God. And he has an amazing purpose and plan for our lives.



# FAITH *into* LIFE

God created the land and sea and he saw that “it was good.” He created flowers and stars and saw that “it was good.” But after creating humanity, he looked at all he made and found that it was *very good*. I don’t know if you have ever marveled at the beauty of the stars in the night sky, the imposing height of a mountain range, or the vastness of the ocean. There are so many things in creation that can take our breath away, and yet of all of these incredible things, God finds *us* the most beautiful. We make the world “very good.”

Both stories emphasize that humanity is different from everything else in creation. In the first chapter of Genesis, we read that God created man and woman in his “image and likeness.” In the second, God breathed his life into the dust to create Adam and Eve came from his side. The Hebrew word for “breath” is *ruah*, which is also “spirit.”

## THE EQUALITY AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF MAN AND WOMAN

Though modern readers might be concerned at chauvinism in the text, the scriptures here are surprisingly feminine, considering the historical context. At a time when women were often considered in the same category as property or livestock, God revealed that both man *and* woman are made in his image and likeness. Eve came from Adam’s side, which showed equality. If she came from his head, it would have implied dominance; if she came from his feet, it would have implied servitude. St. Thomas Aquinas proposed that the creation of Eve was the high point of God’s creation (“first in intention, last in execution”); after God created woman, he created no more.

These scriptures reveal that Adam and Eve, and therefore all

humanity, were made out of love. Since God made us in his image and likeness, and “God is love” (1 John 4:12), it means we were created *with* love, *by* love, and *to* love. This is as true now as it was in the beginning! Not only that, but God created humanity with a great purpose, one more significant than anything in all creation. Adam was to cultivate and care for the land God made for them, with Eve as his “helpmate” (a title also used for God later in Scripture). The world was theirs, a gift from a loving God.

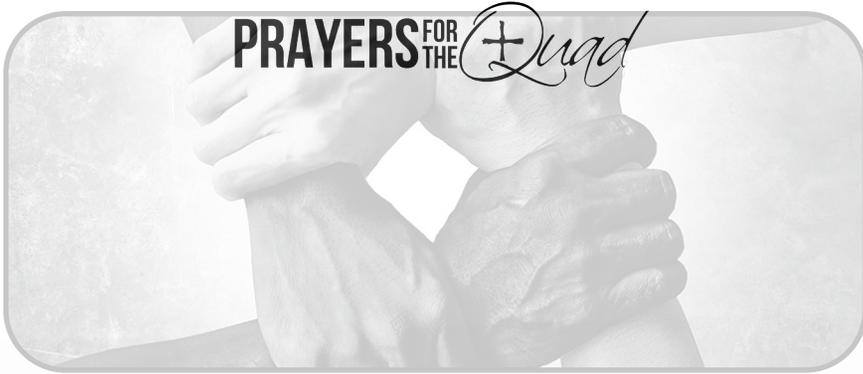
## WE NEED REST (IN GOD)

The first creation narrative concludes by saying that God rested on the seventh day. We were made in the image and likeness of a God who *rests*. This is worth considering for those of us who live busy, fast-paced lives. This idea of resting (which becomes the foundation for the commandment, “Keep holy the Sabbath”) is not an afterthought of the story of creation but its conclusion. We can rest in God because we are loved by God. He is God; we are not. Much of our anxiety occurs when we forget this basic truth. When we think everything is up to us, we rarely find time to pray, and we lose sight of God.

A proper understanding of who God is and who we are is known as *humility*. Humility is truth and we cannot pray to God without it. Humility misunderstood and taken to extremes looks like one who demands things of God because she thinks herself equal or one who won’t speak to God because he thinks himself worthless. As we can see in these scriptures, God *desires* a special relationship with humanity. Though sin destroyed the harmony of the paradise of Eden, God will never stop pursuing us.

This message is so important that it is one of the first things the Bible tells us. We are not an accident. We were made by a loving God who has an amazing purpose for our lives. We were made for something greater than sin and the shallowness of the world. We were made for greatness in the kingdom of God.





## The Daily Disciple

# THE PROBLEM OF SIN

“Sin constitutes man’s misery.” —St. John Paul II



No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.

– 1 Corinthians 10:13

### CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Father, reveal to us the misery of sin and free us from the lies that keep us in bondage to it. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.



The sin of King David: **2 Samuel 11:1-17**

The repentance of King David: **Psalms 51**

Sin leads us to do things we don't want: **Mark 6:17-29**

Jesus came for sinners: **Luke 5:27-32**

The mercy of Jesus: **John 8:1-11**

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



Perhaps you've heard the message of Jesus referred to as the "good news." What makes it "good?" To say something is good implies there was something bad that came before it. The third chapter of Genesis (which you are about to read) tells us the story of the "bad news," also known as "sin."

## ATTITUDES ABOUT SIN

Our culture has two attitudes regarding sin. The first is to think that it doesn't really exist, at least as far as our own actions are concerned. We might make "bad choices" or some "mistakes," but nobody's perfect, right? We deflect responsibility for our actions, using phrases like, "I didn't know better," "Everybody does that," "They deserved it," or, "I'm only human." Ironically, though we might be slow to recognize sin in our own lives, we can be quick to point it out in others' (if you don't believe me, go to the Internet).

The second attitude is that sin is *fun*. Getting drunk or high, being wasteful with money, and being sexually promiscuous are often glorified in our culture. Advertisers will promote food by saying it is "sinfully delicious." We get the impression that holiness is for uptight and boring people, but the sinners really know how to party.

In the beginning of the gospels (which literally means "good news"), John the Baptist pointed toward Jesus and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Were he around to say that today, some would reply, "No

need; I have no sin." Others would say, "No way; I like my sin!"

## SIN IS THE SOURCE OF OUR MISERY

The problem is that many don't understand what sin really is. St. John Paul II wrote, "Sin is the source of man's misery." We think it brings us happiness, but it doesn't. It is a temporary fix that leaves us worse off than before. Jesus said, "A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). What an incredible statement! Many people have the impression that Jesus came to "ruin" their fun. Instead, Jesus said that many of the things we do that we think will give us happiness are actually thieves that "steal and slaughter and destroy"—we've got it all backward! He who is the author of our lives has come so that we may have life to the full.

God doesn't give us meaningless commands that we should follow "because he said so." He *wants* us to live an abundant life. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (a book that summarizes what the Church believes—we will be quoting a lot from it in these lessons) defines sin as "an offense against God as well as a fault against reason, truth, and right conscience." There is a natural and supernatural element to it. It isn't just about doing something that upsets God; it is also doing something that goes against the way we were made to live.

God hates sin because God loves us and sin separates us from his love and his plan for our life. God is the source of our love; sin is the source of our misery.



# FAITH *into* LIFE

In the first verse we are introduced, symbolically, to the devil. He is a constant figure throughout the scriptures, from Genesis to the gospels to the book of Revelation (spoiler alert: he loses!). We will have a lesson dedicated to him later in this Guidebook. Until then, there are three important things to know about the devil. First, the devil actually exists—he is not a metaphor. Second, he is not God’s equal. Like all things in the universe, he was created by God. The devil was an angel who chose to rebel against him, and since he cannot harm God, he tries to harm the ones whom God loves (us). Third, he cannot control our actions.

This last point is essential, and it is the reason for this week’s main verse. Corinth was a city known for its debauchery and vice. In his letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul wanted to let them know that, though they were surrounded by sin, it would never be more than what they could bear: “No trial has come to you but what is human.” We all face temptation, no matter where we are. He reminded them that “God is faithful.” God won’t let us be tempted beyond our ability to resist, and when we are tempted, he provides a way out. He *always* gives us his help (another word for God’s help is “grace”).

## THE DEVIL CAN’T MAKE US DO ANYTHING

We can never say, “The devil made me do it.” This is what Eve tried to tell God, but our first mother wasn’t telling the whole truth. Sin is not the fault of the devil; it is the fault of humanity who wanted to believe the devil’s lies.

And what was the lie? “You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be open and you will be like gods, who know good and evil” (Genesis 3:4-5). In this context, “knowing” good and evil wasn’t about learning what was right and wrong—Adam and Eve already knew that. It was about “choosing”

what was good and evil, a power that belongs only to God. This is how they were to be “like gods.” They wanted to make the rules.

The Bible clearly shows that Eve found the tree “desirable for gaining wisdom” and that is why she ate it. But it was not only *her* sin. Her husband was with her and he did not complain when she handed him the fruit. They both ate of it and sin entered the world.

The Catechism summarizes what happened:

Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God’s command. This is what man’s first sin consisted of. All subsequent sin would be disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness (397).

Even though God had provided everything they needed, Adam and Eve wanted more. They didn’t trust that God had their best intentions at heart. They thought sin would make them happy. They quickly learned how wrong they were.

## THE EFFECTS OF SIN

Things started to immediately fall apart. First, they realized they were naked and felt shame about it. Then they felt shame toward each other. When God appeared, they hid from him. Finally, they were removed from paradise because of their sin. Like a stone thrown at a pane of glass, the cracks spread until the whole thing fell apart. Then, as it is now, one sin led to another.

Many theologians have reflected that, though humanity was made in the image and likeness of God in chapter 1 of Genesis, Adam and Eve’s sin made us lose that “likeness,” for you can’t be *like* God and sin at the same time. This condition into which we are all born is called “original sin”—we are no longer born in union with God.

God did not immediately inflict on them the punishment of death of which he warned them in the previous chapter. There were serious consequences for their sin, such as hard work for food, inequality between man and woman, and pain in childbirth. However, we also see God’s love. He took their roughly made fig leaf loincloths



## FOR YOUR GATHERING

**RECALL** (20-30 MINUTES): Begin with the Scripture and the prayer from the Front Page of the week. Then the Quad shares with each other how their week was, with a particular emphasis on how they experienced God working in their life. How did everyone do on the “This Week I Will” challenge?

**REFLECT** (50-60 MINUTES): The Quad shares how he or she answered the six questions from the lesson, as well as any inspirations he or she received from “The Daily Bread” or their daily meditation on the main verse for the week.

**RESOLVE** (10-15 MINUTES): The facilitator says, “St. John Paul II made a radical statement about how sin disrupts our relationship with God when he wrote, ‘Original Sin attempts to abolish fatherhood’ (*Crossing the Threshold of Hope* 228). God is our Father and therefore wants what is best for our lives. Adam and Eve didn’t trust that God had their best intentions at heart and they thought sin would make them happy. **In what ways (big and small) do you try to choose happiness for yourself rather than trusting in God’s fatherly care and providence for your life? This week, what can you do to surrender one of these things and trust in God as your Father?**”

Allow for a moment of silence and then discuss. Write down those resolutions on the “This Week I Will” part of the Front Page of the following week. Then the Quad shares what else they would like prayer for and writes those intentions down in the space provided.

**Discuss who will facilitate the next session and fill out the “Facilitation Schedule” on page 14.**

The current facilitator then introduces the topic for the next week. Then he or she says, “Let us take a moment to listen to the living Word of God,” and reads the accompanying Scripture, followed by a moment of silent reflection.

The session closes with the Quad saying the prayer for the next

# ROTATE!

Let’s begin with a big “thank you” for the one who has facilitated these sessions so far! It is an important job, but it is also a simple one. By now, you can see that the Guidebook provides everything you need to know in order to facilitate the weekly discussions. One of the benefits of the Discipleship Quad Process is that everyone will experience being the facilitator. This gives an opportunity for shared leadership. It also provides a chance for everyone to experience facilitating so each person feels more comfortable starting a new one in the future. Rotating the facilitator is important. Don’t skip this step!

Decide amongst yourselves how you would like to schedule facilitators going forward. Some groups like changing every week. Others do so every month. Because there are four Guidebooks you might be tempted to have a facilitator per book, but we would *not* recommend that. In our listening sessions with successful groups, they all said having a more constant rotation of facilitators keeps everyone better engaged.

There are four simple keys to being a successful facilitator:

**KEEP AN EYE ON THE TIME:** Others can be engrossed in the conversation, but the facilitator needs to be aware of how much time is left and try to keep the conversation on schedule. That doesn’t mean you need to cut someone off if they are sharing something personal, or if a conversation about the topic seems really fruitful. After all, that is the point of this group! So if the topic generates a lot of sharing and discussion, you extend the discussion for another week. Many Quads find they occasionally (or even frequently, depending on the group) spend two weeks discussing one topic.

**STAY ON TOPIC:** Do your best to keep the conversation on topic and not let the group drift off into other topics (or tangents). If another

topic comes up, it is okay to say, “That is important, but not what we are talking about today. Let’s get back to our discussion questions.” Staying on topic is also a great way to stay on time.

**FACILITATE, DON’T TEACH:** One of the great things about facilitating a Quad is that you don’t need to have any kind of theological expertise—that is taken care of in the readings. Your role is to facilitate the discussion of the topic, not reteach the subject. If there is a need to correct someone who may have said something that wasn’t accurate or incorrect, then the facilitator (or anyone in the group) can suggest that the Quad members look up the information and come back next week with more information on the topic.

**ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO SHARE:** Some people are comfortable sharing what they think or feel, others aren’t. Some have the gift of being articulate, while others struggle to find the right words. It is okay to have periods of silence when you meet—that might be the time someone else needs to share something important. You don’t have to fill that space with words. And if one person is not sharing as much, the facilitator can ask them specifically what their thoughts are on the question and give everyone an opportunity to share equally.

We have intentionally avoided the word “leader” because, as you have already experienced, this isn’t about one person leading three others. The four of you are on a journey together. The Holy Spirit is the real leader of the group, and the written resources provide numerous opportunities to learn and reflect about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. The facilitator is there to have an eye on the time, keep the conversation on topic, let the content do the teaching, and encourage equal participation in the group.

*Each Guidebook will begin with a place to write down who will facilitate the Quad Gathering each week, as seen on the next page. Determine how frequently you would like to rotate facilitation, and write down the facilitator(s) for the next four weeks.*



## FACILITATION SCHEDULE

WE PLAN TO ROTATE FACILITATION EVERY \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Week, Three Weeks, Month, etc.)*

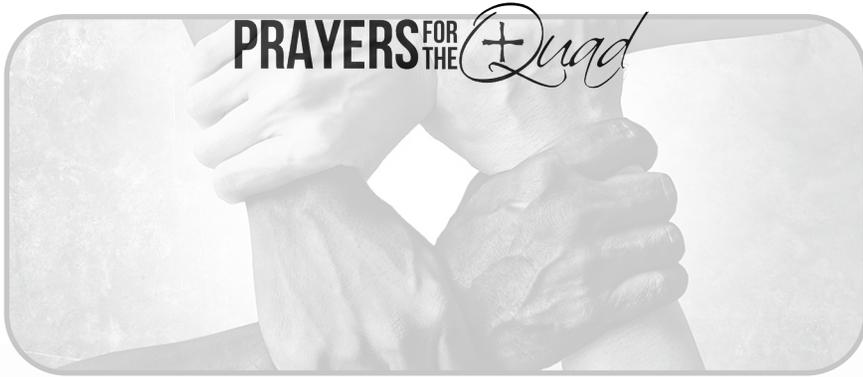
WEEK 7 \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK 8 \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK 9 \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK 10 \_\_\_\_\_

# THE *Daily* BREAD



## The Daily Disciple

# WORD BECAME FLESH

The Second Person of the Trinity became human for love of us.



In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son.  
—Hebrews 1:1-2

### CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Father, you loved us so much you sent your Son so that we might not perish from sin but have eternal life. Help us to know the depths of your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.



Teaching with authority, even over demons: **Mark 1:21-28**

“Who but God can forgive sins?": **Mark 2:1-12**

The call of Matthew: **Matthew 9:9-13**

All were created in him: **Colossians 1:15-20**

Jesus, the source of life: **John 15:1-17**

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



In the first chapter of the first book of the collection of works we now call the Bible, God created the world. In the second chapter, we get a closer look at the creation of humanity. In the third, humanity turned away from God, and he promised to find a way to get them back to the garden.

The rest of the Bible is about God fulfilling that promise.

## THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

He did this by focusing on one group of people, the Hebrews, so that they could be the salvation for the rest of the nations (the Hebrews called those from other nations “Gentiles”). It began with Abraham, our “father in faith.” Though he was old and childless, the Lord promised him descendants as numerous as the stars. When you consider that Christians, Muslims, and Jews consider Abraham as their “father,” that promise has certainly been fulfilled!

Hundreds of years later, when the Hebrews grew numerous and fell into slavery to the Egyptians, God raised up an exiled Hebrew, Moses, to perform signs and wonders to set his people free. However, their freedom was accomplished not just by escaping Egypt, but also through the gift of the law, the heart of which was the 10 Commandments. This is what made them God’s people.

Generation after generation struggled to be faithful to God’s law. They were often lured away by religions from other cultures and fell back into captivity. God continued to raise up leaders (known as “judges”) to free them from their captors and return them to the faith.

## ONGOING STRUGGLES OF THE HEBREWS

God anointed a king named David, who, by the end of his life, brought peace and prosperity to Israel. His son Solomon was considered to be a wiser king than any who came before him. But even Solomon’s heart was turned from the Lord, and the kingdom split after his death. As the Hebrews were divided amongst themselves (the Israelites to the north and the Jews to the south), other nations swept in and sent them all off into exile.

In that difficult time, God spoke even more loudly than before through his prophets, such as Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, he said, “I know the plans I have for you” (Jeremiah 29:11, remember?). Through Jeremiah, the Lord said that he would give a new covenant—a new way of living in God’s love. The old covenant was written on tablets of stone; however, “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel... I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts” (Jeremiah 31:33).

Hundreds of years passed. Many of those who had been dispersed returned to Jerusalem and it became a prosperous city once more. Unfortunately, it was under Roman rule (as was the whole region). The temple that was destroyed was being rebuilt to be even more glorious than before. Yet God’s people were still divided into factions, and many argued about the right way to follow God’s law. Like in Egypt, God’s people were oppressed, not just by the Romans, but by sin.

## A PROPHECY OF HOPE

The last words of the last prophet of the Old Testament are, “Now I am sending you Elijah the prophet, before the day of the Lord comes, that great and terrible day” (Malachi 3:23). He was the one to “prepare the way” for the Messiah, the Savior. John the Baptist fulfilled that role, and he pointed to Jesus.

Since the dawn of time, God had reached out through every kind of person imaginable to save his people: men and women, the poor and rich, kings and shepherds, prophets and priests. This time, God would come himself.



# FAITH *into* LIFE

“In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son” (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus is God made flesh, fully God and fully man, like us in all things but sin.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke slowly reveal this truth. Jesus didn’t begin by saying, “Hello, I’m God!” He started doing “godlike” things, such as healing the sick and raising the dead. He taught with an authority that no one could refute, and he even dared to “complete” the law that was given through Moses. Jesus made bold statements, such as, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:8). He forgave sins, which is something only God can do. He rose *himself* from the dead. After that, Jesus commissioned his followers to “baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

The gospel of John, written later than the other gospels and intended for an already Christian audience, emphasized his divinity right away: “The Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). At the Last Supper, Philip (one of the apostles) asked if Jesus would show them the Father. Jesus’ response must have shocked him: “Have I been with you for such a long time and you still do not know me, Philip?” (John 14:9). After the resurrection, Thomas saw the wounds of the risen Jesus and proclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). Jesus didn’t respond by saying, “No, Thomas! I’m just a man!” Instead, he talked about the blessing given to those who believe.

## JESUS IS GOD AND ALWAYS WAS

Jesus is God and was God from the beginning. This is something clearly proclaimed in Scripture. At Christmas we celebrate the

second Person of the Trinity, the Word, becoming flesh for us. He was named “Jesus,” which literally means, “God saves.” He did not become less divine by becoming human, nor was he less human for being divine. Furthermore, Jesus is still human and will be forever—he did not take off his humanity like a costume placed on a hook. He chose to be like us so that we can be like him.

If Jesus was not God, then he was either intentionally lying or he was crazy. As C.S. Lewis famously wrote, “Either he was a raving lunatic of an unusually abominable type, or else He was, and precisely is, what He said. There is no middle way” (*The Problem of Pain*, pg. 13). You can’t leave it at “Jesus was just a good teacher.” Would a good teacher claim to be God?

Some suggest that his *followers* claimed Jesus was God, not Jesus himself. This, quite simply, is nonsense. We did not know Jesus; they did. Most of them died gruesome deaths, proclaiming Jesus to their last breath. We can’t accept *some* of what they said, as if 2,000 years later we know better. The gospels are either right or they aren’t. Like Jesus, “there is no middle way.”

## THE TRUTH CAN BE HARD TO ACCEPT

This can be difficult to accept for two reasons. The first is that it is hard for our minds to fathom. We ask questions about the nature of God and man and wonder what it would be like to be both. The answers give some explanation but never fully resolve the issue; it is hard enough to fathom a human being, let alone God himself!

Another difficulty in accepting the divinity of Jesus, and perhaps the most difficult, is all that it implies. If Jesus is God, we can’t pick and choose what he says. We can’t take his example of love “under consideration.” Jesus didn’t say he was “one of many ways, a possible truth (depending on your point of view), and a potential lifestyle.” He made definitive statements about life and death, heaven and hell, sin and grace, and God and humanity.



## FOR YOUR GATHERING

**RECALL** (20-30 MINUTES): Begin with the Scripture and the prayer from the Front Page of the week. Then the Quad shares with each other how their week was, with a particular emphasis on how they experienced God working in their life. How did everyone do on the “This Week I Will” challenge?

**REFLECT** (50-60 MINUTES): The Quad shares how he or she answered the six questions from the lesson, as well as any inspirations he or she received from “The Daily Bread” or their daily meditation on the main verse for the week.

**RESOLVE** (10-15 MINUTES): The facilitator says, “To save us, God became us. He dwelt among us. He showed us a new way to live and a new way to love. God wanted to be more than a distant voice from the heavens, but wanted to speak to us with a human face and a human name: Jesus. He became a human person so he could be *personal* with us. What is the best way to know him? Read the Gospels. This week’s challenge is to prayerfully **read the Gospel of Luke, chapters 1-12.**”

The members of the Quad should write down “Read Luke, chapters 1-12” in the “This Week I Will” box in the Front Page for the next week. If they are curious as to why the Gospel of Luke (as opposed to the other Gospels), see the next page. Then the Quad shares what else they would like prayer for and writes those intentions down in the space provided.

The facilitator then introduces the topic for the next week. Then he or she says, “Let us take a moment to listen to the living Word of God,” and reads the accompanying Scripture, followed by a moment of silent reflection.

The session closes with the Quad saying the prayer for the next week together, followed an Our Father and a Hail Mary.

## WHY READ A WHOLE GOSPEL?

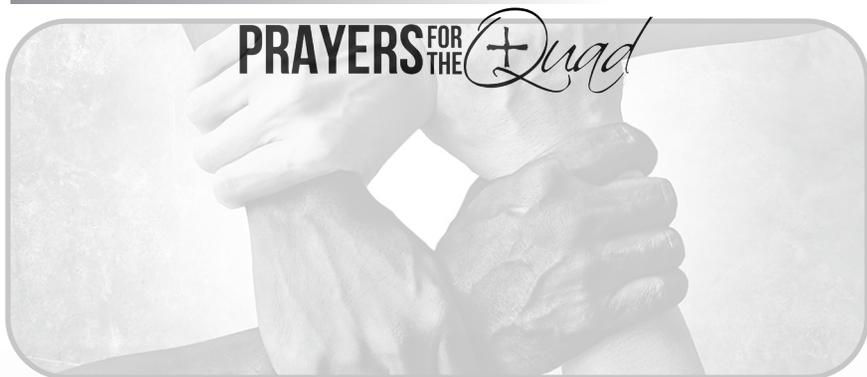
The Gospel was written as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Nobody would purchase a novel and then read a little bit from the fifth chapter, then some from the ninth, then some from the fourth, and so on. Yet this often happens with the Gospels! The Mass attempts to tell the stories of Jesus over the course of the liturgical year. Sadly, most of us struggle to remember the gospel reading by the time we receive the Eucharist, let alone what was read the previous week or month.

The beauty of reading a Gospel in its entirety is that you get a deeper experience of who Jesus is as a person. The individual stories are like pieces of a puzzle; the Gospel puts them all together to form a picture. Spending time with the Gospels is like spending time with a friend.

The principle source for the life and teachings of Jesus Christ are the gospels. There are no better books! This is the heart of all of Scripture and our source for knowing who Jesus is and what he did for us. Many Catholics have heard pieces of the gospels in the Mass, but few have ever read one from beginning to end.

The goal of the Discipleship Quad Process is to help you be a disciple of Christ, and the best way to know Christ is by reading the gospels; it is that simple. Not only is there no better way, it could be argued that there is *no other way*, since any other way of coming to know Jesus would have to be rooted in what was revealed in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Your goal for this week and next is to read the Gospel of Luke. Why that Gospel? Luke was written for Gentiles (non-Jews) and has a great blend of the teachings and miracles of Jesus. There are also a number of things unique to Luke that are wonderful sources of reflection, such as the expanded infancy narrative, the parable of the prodigal son, and the “good thief” on the cross. Before you begin reading, say a prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help you know Jesus more. Then take some time reading about Jesus, the Incarnate Word, the Eternal Love, the God who became flesh and died for you so that you could live forever with him.



# The Daily Disciple

## CROSS & EMPTY TOMB

“Jesus Christ loves you, he gave his life to save you, and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, and free you.” – Pope Francis



**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

– Romans 6:23

### CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

(From the Chaplet of Divine Mercy)



### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, CH. 1-10

Each gospel shares Jesus from a different viewpoint. If you wanted to know me better, you could ask my wife. You could ask one of my kids. You could ask someone with whom I work. You could talk to my mom. They would all say something similar, but you’d get some different stories and perspectives along the way.

Luke was a “physician,” which didn’t just mean in the medical sense, as we use it today, but also that he was a scholar. His gospel begins by explaining, “I have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus” (which means, “friend of God”—that’s you!), “so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received” (Luke 1:3-4). In some ways, you can compare Luke to an investigative journalist who conducted many interviews with people who had encountered Christ. Luke is also the author of the book of Acts, which is a kind of “sequel” to his gospel.

As you prayerfully read through these words, remember that this is the same text that has changed the course of human history, been proclaimed in every corner of the world, and transformed sinners into saints for 2,000 years.

Read chapters 1-12 this week, and 13-24 next week. There are no reflections for the following week (Week 9), all the questions are based on your experience of reading the Gospel (you can flip ahead to see what they are).

Prepare to be blessed!

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



If you could have chosen to be born wherever, whenever, and to whomever, what would you have picked? Perhaps you are happy with your own life (and I hope you are!). But I think even those of us who are grateful for the family into which we were born might still wonder what royalty must be like. None of us were able to choose the circumstances into which we were born. Were we given the choice, I think it is safe to suggest that none of us would have picked what God picked when he became human: born in poverty, in a scandalous situation (Joseph had not yet taken Mary into his home), amid an oppressed people, in a difficult time in human history.

But what about death? If you had control over your death, what would you choose? I imagine most of us would choose to die peacefully in our old age, surrounded by loved ones. None of us would choose the death Jesus endured: rejected by his own people, at a young age, abandoned by friends, accused of a crime he did not commit, tortured brutally, and publicly executed, while people stood mocking.

## THE CRADLE AND THE CROSS

Jesus chose the manner of his birth and the manner of this death by coming into the world. As Bl. Fulton Sheen said, “You cannot separate the wood of the cradle from the wood of the cross.” The brutality of his death was prophesied 500 years earlier by the prophet Isaiah, as was the reason why he did it:

So marred were his features,  
beyond that of mortals,  
his appearance, beyond that of human beings...  
He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye,  
no beauty to draw us to him.  
He was spurned and avoided by men,  
a man of suffering, knowing pain,  
like one from whom you turn your face,  
spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our pain that he bore,  
our sufferings that he endured...  
He was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity.  
He bore the punishment that makes us whole.  
by his wounds we were healed (Isaiah 52:14, 53:3-6).

By dying on the cross, Jesus paid the “wages of sin.” We sin to be free from suffering; Jesus suffered so we can be freed from sin. He substituted his obedience for our disobedience. St. Paul wrote, “For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Death was the one thing an eternal God couldn’t experience, so he took on our life to die our death. He took on our blood so he could bleed for us. He took on our heart so he could “love us with a human heart” (Catechism 478).

## GOD BECAME LIKE US

In our sin, humanity turned away from the likeness of God, so God became like us in everything but sin. He did not suffer the punishment of sin (which is separation from God—since he cannot be separate from himself), but he took on the pain of it so that he might be in solidarity with all sinners.

At the Last Supper, Jesus told the apostles, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you” (John 15:13). If you want to marvel at God’s power, look to the mountains or the stars. If you want to marvel at God’s love, look to the cross.

“God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). He didn’t wait for us to be holy first! When we were at our worst, he was at his best. Jesus said that his mission was “to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Are you a sinner? Then Jesus died for you!

He did this because *he loves you*. There is no greater way he could show his love than by becoming flesh and dying on the cross.



# FAITH *into* LIFE

There is an empty tomb in Jerusalem, and it cannot be silenced.

On the third day, when some women went to care for the body of Jesus, it was gone! Then Jesus appeared, first to Mary Magdalene, then to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, then to the twelve apostles. He also appeared to St. Paul and many others. Christianity spread to all corners of the Roman Empire with the proclamation that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead.

There is no other explanation for it. Had Jesus not died, trained executioners would have broken his bones to finish the job. Had the body been stolen, Rome would have executed those they thought were responsible. Had those who said he had risen been lying, then why would they go to their (often gruesome) deaths, proclaiming Jesus had risen from the dead?

## THE TOMB CANNOT BE SILENCED

There is an empty tomb in Jerusalem, and it cannot be silenced. Saul, a Jewish Pharisee, led a movement to kill Christians because he thought they were blasphemers, only to be converted into one of the greatest evangelists of all time: St. Paul. The leaders in Rome tried to persecute Christians, only for it to become the center of the Roman Catholic Church. The world continues to rebel against God and cause his followers to suffer, but Jesus said, “Take courage, I have conquered the world” (John 16:33). We have confidence that “he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end” (Nicene Creed).

This is not a myth. This is not a fairy tale. As St. Peter declared to the same group of people who condemned Jesus, “The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses” (Acts 3:15). He also declared, “There is no

salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved” (Acts 4:12).

## JESUS IS THE WAY

No salvation through anyone else? But what about the other religions of the world? The Bible makes it clear: Jesus is *the* Way, there is no other. If there was another path to our salvation, why would God make it so difficult for himself? This is not to say the Church believes that all non-Christians are going to hell: “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation” (Catechism 847). All who are saved are saved through Jesus, whether they knew him in this life or not. It is the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ that opened the gates of heaven for all believers. As St. Paul joyfully proclaimed, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). We need not fear sin, death, or hell—Jesus Christ has saved the world!

This moment of our salvation is known as the “paschal mystery.” *Pasch* refers to the Jewish feast of Passover, where they sacrificed a lamb and used its blood to protect them from God’s wrath. Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb of God whose blood on the cross saved us from our sin. When we go to Mass, we participate in that mystery. We hear the words of Jesus, we sit next to the apostles at the Last Supper, we mourn at the foot of the cross with Jesus’ mother, and we joyfully go forth from the empty tomb, filled with the Holy Spirit and the message of salvation for all mankind. As Adam and Eve “ate” the sin that brought death to the world, so we “eat” our salvation in the Holy Eucharist.

There is an empty tomb in Jerusalem, and it cannot be silenced. It has echoed louder and louder over the past 2,000 years, and 2,000 years from now it will echo louder still (if Christ has not returned by then!). It is time to add your voice to this joyful chorus. God did all of this for us because he loves us. Jesus did all of this for you because he loves *you*.







# FOR YOUR GATHERING

**RECALL** (20-30 MINUTES): Begin with the Scripture and the prayer from the Front Page of the week. Then the Quad shares with each other how their week was, with a particular emphasis on how they experienced God working in their life. How did everyone do on the “This Week I Will” challenge?

**REFLECT** (50 -60 MINUTES): The Quad shares how he or she answered the six questions from the lesson based on the Gospel of Luke.

**RESOLVE** (10-15 MINUTES): The facilitator says, “These past two weeks, we have been blessed to read one of the principle sources of the life and teaching of Jesus. We have gotten to get to know him in a more personal way. He is inviting us, not just to be one of his followers, but a part of his family. **Our challenge this week is to memorize the main verse for the next topic, 1 John 3:1. ‘See what love the Father has lavished upon us that we may be called children of God—for that is what we are!’**”

Allow for a moment of silence and then discuss ideas for memorizing the Scripture (see next page). If you have time, you can all write out the verse together. For “This Week I Will” write down, “Memorize 1 John 3:1.” If they were unable to finish the Gospel of Luke, they can put that in there, too. Then the Quad shares what else they would like prayer for and writes those intentions down in the space provided.

The facilitator then introduces the topic for the next week. Then he or she says, “Let us take a moment to listen to the living Word of God,” and reads 1 John 3:1, followed by a moment of silent reflection.

The session closes with the Quad saying the prayer for the next week together, followed an Our Father and a Hail Mary.

## CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK: MEMORIZE 1 JOHN 3:1

We often fill our minds with sports statistics, song lyrics, and movie quotes, but what about God’s Word? Psalm 119 says, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” In a culture that is full of lies, memorizing Scripture is a powerful way of keeping his truth close to us at all times.

From time to time, we will recommend Scripture verses to memorize. Next week’s verse is a profound reminder of our true identity: “See what love the Father has lavished upon us that we might be called children of God—for that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1). This is a great verse to “hide in your heart”, especially when we are tempted to root our identity in the things of this world: things we’ve done, the job(s) we do, or what we look like.

Here are three great ways to memorize Scripture. The first is to put it to a song you already know. This verse goes well with the tune for Gilligan’s Island:

*See what love the Father has  
Lavished upon us  
That-we might be called children of God  
For that is what we are!*

Another way to memorize Scripture is to write it out. The action of writing something makes a stronger impression on your brain. Use the below lines to write out the verse.

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But the most important thing is *repetition*. Frequently repeat the verse to yourself everyday. God wants you to do this, so ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember his Word!

PRAYERS FOR THE *Quadrant*



# The Daily Disciple

## ADOPTED!

Through the Blood of Jesus, we have been adopted by the Father and given the Holy Spirit.



See what love the Father has lavished upon us that we may be called children of God—for that is what we are!

– 1 John 3:1

CHARACTERISTIC OF A DISCIPLE: IDENTITY

Father, when our sin made us orphans; your grace made us your sons and daughters. Help us to realize “that is what we are!” through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.



# THE *Daily* BREAD

*This week culminates in a renewal of Baptismal promises, and the following Scriptures are reflections on the different parts of that prayer.*

“I reject Satan”: **Matthew 4:1-13**

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty”: **Matthew 6:1-15**

“I believe in Jesus Christ”: **Philippians 2:1-11**

“I believe in the Holy Spirit”: **1 Corinthians 2:6-16**

“I believe in the holy catholic church”:  
**Matthew 16:13-20, Matthew 28:16-20**

# FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING



The Catechism shares four reasons why the Word became flesh (456-460):

## TO BE RECONCILED

The first reason was so that we might be reconciled to God. Sin and death entered into the world through our first parents, Adam and Eve, so the Father sent the Son, that he might bear the burden of our sin and be reconciled to him: “By his wounds we were healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

## TO KNOW GOD’S LOVE

Knowing what he did for us isn’t as important as knowing why he did it. The second reason the Word became flesh was to show us God’s love: “For God so *loved* the world he sent his only son” (John 3:16). He showed us the depth of his love by his death upon the cross. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

## TO BE A MODEL OF HOLINESS

Now that we know what he did and why he did it, what do we do? This is the third reason; the Word became flesh so that we might have a model of holiness. Jesus showed us that holiness is more of a “yes” than it is a “no.” It goes beyond not breaking one of the 10 Commandments, though that is an important part of it. It is living a life of love. It is putting others before yourself. It is contrary to many of the things the world tells us we need to find happiness, as beautifully expressed in the Prayer of St. Francis:

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Holiness is living in the joy and peace that only God can give! But how can we live this way?

## TO PARTAKE IN THE DIVINE NATURE

This is where it gets even more incredible. The fourth reason that the Word became flesh was to make us, in the words of St. Peter, “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). St. John wrote, “See what love the Father has lavished upon us by calling us children of God—for that is what we are!” We are adopted into God’s family through the blood of the cross.

## THE BEAUTY OF “ADOPTED” LOVE

Of my seven children, one of them is adopted. I have never felt closer to the heart of God the Father than I did through that experience, even though I had been a father many times over before it happened. After having five children from my wife, I was worried how I might love a child that was two and a half years old and looked nothing like me.

When I saw him for the first time, my heart leapt, and I began to weep. *This is my son*. I was more emotional at seeing him for the first time than I was at the births of my other children! One beautiful element of “adopted” love is that it is love without obligation. If you are responsible for a physical birth, you can’t just abandon the baby. If I had gotten a woman pregnant but then taken off, I would be known as a “deadbeat dad.” However, if I hadn’t adopted this boy, no one would have critiqued me. No one would have said, “I know you’ve got a bunch of kids already, but don’t you think you should fit one more bed in that house?”

## GOD CHOSE US TO BE IN HIS FAMILY

When we read the scriptures and see all the horrible ways humanity has treated God and each other, it is evident that no one would have blamed God if he would have started over somewhere else. The only obligations he had toward us were the ones he made himself, through *covenants*. In the language of Scripture, a *covenant* is different than a *contract*. A contract is about a business deal; a covenant is about becoming family with each other (as in marriage). In this last covenant, this “new covenant” given through Jesus, we are given the greatest gift of all: sharing in his divine life.



# FAITH *into* LIFE

To adopt my son, my wife and I had to go through numerous months of tests and paperwork: blood tests to make sure we were healthy, psychological tests to make sure we were sane, and home tests to make sure our house was a safe place to live. We had immigration officials and lawyers produce countless documents to give us legal “possession” of our child. It was a tremendous amount of bureaucracy!

God adopts us in a different way. He makes us born again.

## ADOPTED THROUGH REBIRTH

In the third chapter of John, Jesus told the rabbi Nicodemus, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” The rabbi was confused by this statement: “How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother’s womb and be born again, can he?” (John 3:3-4). Yet that was exactly the plan. The Church would be the mother, and the rebirth would happen through the sacrament of Baptism. For just as we all enter into this world through the waters of birth, so we are brought into God’s family through the waters of Baptism.

I don’t think of my adopted son as any different than my other kids, but since he is from Haiti and the rest of us are white, it is easy to win at the game, “One of these things is not like the other.” I can give him everything but my DNA.

In the adoption of God, he does something we simply cannot. Through our baptism, God infuses his spiritual DNA into us. We are *reborn* into his family. Being a child of God is not just a pious sentiment, but a new reality: “For that is what we are!”

## NOT ONLY SAVED, BUT “DIVINIZED”

This means that Jesus came not only for our *salvation*, but for

our *divinization*. We become “partakers of the divine nature.” You might remember that humanity lost the “image” of God through sin. But through Jesus, this is not just restored, but elevated! We don’t just look *like* God, but we *become* God. This is what Adam and Eve wanted in the garden. What they tried to steal through sin, God gives us freely in his love.

I’ll let some Church fathers explain it in their own words.

*St. Augustine:* “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.”

*St. Athanasius:* “For the Son of God became man so that we might become God.”

*St. Thomas Aquinas:* “The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.”

## WHY THE DIVINE BECAME HUMAN

The divine became human so the human could become divine. It sounds preposterous, even heretical! The Father loves us so much that he sent his Son, so that through the blood and water that flowed from his side we might be reborn, through Baptism, into the life of the Trinity and receive the first fruits of our inheritance in the Holy Spirit.

“Becoming God” does not mean we are the eternal creator of all things, arbiter of all that is right and wrong. It means we are reborn, through our baptism, into a loving family. It means we can receive things that only those who have God’s DNA can, like an indwelling of the Holy Spirit or receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. It means doing things that we couldn’t before, such as loving our enemies or recognizing Christ in the face of those in need. It means being, in the words of St. Paul, a “new creation.”

“For that is what we are!” All of the other titles we could ever hope to attain pale in comparison to the gift of being a daughter or a son of God.

5. What stood out to you in the reading?

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6. All of us hold many “titles” in this life that we often use to introduce ourselves: “I’m a writer.” “I’m an accountant.” “I’m a mother.” We can end up identifying ourselves with those and miss the greater gift. What titles in your life compete with being a son or daughter of God?

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**At your DQ Gathering this week, you will have the opportunity to renew your Baptismal promises! Make sure to leave some extra time at the end of the meeting for that. Also, print out the next DQ Guidebook and bring that to your gathering.**

## FOR YOUR GATHERING

**RECALL** (15-20 MINUTES): Begin with the Scripture and the prayer from the Front Page of the week. Then the Quad shares with each other how their week was, with a particular emphasis on how they experienced God working in their life. How did everyone do on the “This Week I Will” challenge? Who can say 1 John 3:1 from memory? **Keep an eye on the time! Everything this week is a bit shorter to make room for the renewal prayer.**

**REFLECT** (30-40 MINUTES): The Quad shares how he or she answered the six questions from the lesson, as well as any inspirations he or she received from “The Daily Bread” or their daily meditation on the main verse for the week.

**RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES** (15-20 MINUTES): The facilitator says, “We become children of God through the sacrament of Baptism. Most Catholics received this sacrament as a baby. Therefore, many of us have not been given the opportunity to make a deliberate decision to accept what Jesus has done for us and fully commit ourselves to be his disciple. Even for those of us that have, this decision needs to be renewed in our lives every day. In doing this, we accept that we are not called to do this alone, but we need God’s grace and strength of his Church to live as Christians who are fully alive. **What specific struggles do you face in giving your life fully to Jesus and allowing him to be at the center of your daily life?**”

Give one minute for silent reflection. Then take turns going through the following “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” prayer.

Have one person share some of the things that came to mind during this reflection on the above question. Then have another person pray out loud for that person, mentioning the things that he or she has shared.

The prayer could go something like this:

“We pray for *(name)* today and offer up the following things he/she feels keep him/her from giving his/her life entirely to you *(briefly mention some of the things shared)*. We ask you to give him/her the grace to allow your love and mercy to help him/her give his/her life to you.”

Then the person renewing their baptismal promises prays the following out loud:

“I reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God’s children.  
I reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin.  
I reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness.  
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.  
Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner in need of your love and forgiveness. Today, I choose to give my life to you and invite you more fully into my life than ever before.”

The person that prayed out loud for this individual should end the prayer, saying something like this:

“Thank you for *(name)*. We ask God to give him/her the strength for his/her actions to follow his/her words of commitment today. We ask for Mary’s intercession as together we pray, Hail Mary...”

Then that person leads the prayer for the next person. Repeat this

process for each person in the Quad.

(Note: If someone in the Quad has never been baptized, this renewal of baptismal promises can still be done as a personal prayer, though it does not replace the sacrament of Baptism. Please contact your local Catholic Church to find out more about the process of being baptized.)

**RESOLVE (5-10 MINUTES):** Then the facilitator says, “When we read the Gospel of Luke last week, Jesus said there is more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than for ninety-nine who are holy (Luke 15:7). Though people often associate Catholicism with fasting, we are also about feasting! **What is one thing you can do this week to celebrate that you have renewed your baptismal promises and have a new life as an adopted child of God?**”

Allow for a moment of silence and then discuss. Write down those resolutions on the “This Week I Will” part of the Front Page of the following week (which can be found in the next DQ Guidebook). **An additional challenge for this week is for everyone to find out what day they were baptized (if they don’t know it) so they can celebrate it in the future.** Then the Quad shares what else they would like prayer for and writes those intentions down in the space provided.

The facilitator then introduces the topic for the next week. Then he or she says, “Let us take a moment to listen to the living Word of God,” and reads the accompanying Scripture, followed by a moment of silent reflection.

The session closes with the Quad saying the prayer for the next week together, followed an Our Father and a Hail Mary.

**Don’t forget to fill out the “Facilitation Schedule” at the beginning of the next Guidebook, so you know who will facilitate the next week!**

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bob Rice loves being Catholic. He is married with seven children and lives in Steubenville, Ohio where he is a candidate for diaconal ordination (God willing, November 2021). He is a professor of Catechetics at Franciscan University of Steubenville and received his PhD in Theology from Liverpool Hope University in 2016. Bob is the author of numerous books and articles, including *The Discipleship Quad Guidebook* and *Between the Savior and the Sea*. He is the co-host of a popular podcast with Fr. Dave Pivonka called, “They That Hope”, and also hosts a less popular podcast called “Speaking with Deacons.” Bob Rice has been leading tens of thousands of people in worship every year at the Steubenville Summer Conferences, and has released many albums featuring original music. You can find out more about him at [bob-rice.com](http://bob-rice.com).

# WANT TO READ A GOOD BOOK?

*Between the Savior and the Sea* is a novel that tells the Gospel story through Simon Peter’s eyes. It not only brings to life the famous moments of the Gospels, it also goes where they are silent: What miracles occurred when Simon Peter and the other disciples were sent off two by two? How did he know that Jesus was the Christ? And when Christ hung on the cross, where was Simon Peter? Led to experience things beyond his wildest imagination, Simon Peter felt torn between being a fisherman and a “fisher of men,” caught between the Savior and the sea. Available in print or e-book at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

