

God's Story, Our Story

An Introduction to Christianity

Lesson 1: The Gospel Message



God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. (CCC 1)

Jer 31:3, Jer 29:11, 2 Pet 1:4

Deut 30:19-20

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). Ps 14:2-3, Ps 51:5

Gen 2:17, Ex 32:33, Is 59:2, Ezek 18:4, Dan 12:2, Rom 3:23

"There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death" (Prov 14:12). Jer 17:5, Ps 33:16-19, Ps 127:1

Ex 20:2-3

Lev 17:11

Jn 3:16

CCC 457-460

Is 53:5-6

Jn 14:6

Lk 10:16

1. The world around us
 - a. The beauty and goodness of creation
 - b. The beauty and goodness of the human person
 - c. The problem of evil and suffering
2. God's love for creation: God's plan is to share in His own life with every person.
3. God made us free to receive his life and love or to reject them.
4. Because we have the freedom to choose "not God", sin enters the world. Sin causes a break in our relationship with God.
5. The wages of sin is death.
6. We are not capable on our own of repairing the break between God and us.
7. The Torah: keeping commandments was not meant to be a way to earn salvation.
8. In the Bible, forgiveness is obtained through blood atonement
9. Jesus the Messiah has come to show us the way back to God
10. Four reasons why Jesus came to us:
 - a. To save us by reconciling us with God
 - b. To show us the Father's love
 - c. To be our model of holiness
 - d. To make us share in God's life
11. By dying, Jesus conquered sin and death
12. By rising from the dead, he opened the way to heaven and eternal life
13. Jesus chose the apostles to continue his work on earth. When they received the Holy Spirit, the Church was born. Bishops are the successors of the apostles.

<p><i>Jn 3:5, Mk 16:15-16</i></p>	<p>14. We have to be born again to enter the kingdom of God. The new birth is faith in Christ and baptism through which we become members of his Body, the Church.</p>
<p><i>1 Tim 3:15</i></p>	<p>15. Through the Church we partake of the way, the truth and the life that Jesus came to give us.</p> <p>16. We receive God's life especially in the liturgy and sacraments of the Church.</p>
<p><i>1 Tim 2:3-4</i></p>	<p>17. We must choose and accept Jesus and his message to receive the fullness of God's plan. Jesus calls us to join his Body, the Church, to help us grow in his likeness until we are ready to share his life in heaven forever.</p>

The Gospel in a Nutshell

1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.
2. Sin separates us from God. We are not capable of repairing this break on our own.
3. Jesus has come to reconcile us with God and give us eternal life.
4. Jesus has given us the Church through which he shares with us the way, the truth and the life.
5. God calls us to *repent*, to *choose* to follow Jesus and to *join* ourselves to his Body, the Church.

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you see reflections of God's love around you? Where?
2. Is our freedom a good thing? Why is freedom important? Would it be better for us not to be free?
3. What are some obstacles to God's love that we see around us?
4. What are some of the ways people try to bridge the gap between them and God? Do they work?
5. How is Jesus different from all other religious leaders?
6. What does God ask of us?
7. Why is the Church important?
8. Why do many people choose to reject Jesus?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) can be accessed online at <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>