

FAITH CHALLENGES: A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS PROGRAM

Faith Challenges is a Catholic Christian apologetics series for youth and young adults. This program is intended to help prepare high school and college age students for challenges to their faith that they are facing or will likely face in the future, especially from an increasingly secular Western society.

The eleven sessions in the *Faith Challenges* catechetical program are:

Intro. What We Believe: Facing the Challenges Ahead

1. Does God Exist? (Part 1 - The Scientific Evidence)
2. Does God Exist? (Part 2 - The Inner Evidence)
3. Is Evolution Compatible with Faith in God?
4. Is There Scientific Evidence for the Design of Life?
5. Is Jesus Really the Son of God?
6. Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?
7. How Do We Attain Eternal Salvation?
8. Why Go To Mass?
9. Why Would a Loving God Allow Evil, Pain, and Suffering?
10. What is the Purpose of Life?

The *Faith Challenges* program has two objectives. The first is to help those who are searching for their own answers to these “big questions” in life. The second objective is to equip young people to be able to better respond to St. Peter’s challenge to “*always be prepared to give an answer* to everyone who ask you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15). In other words, these sessions are intended to help Catholics ***strengthen their faith***, as well as to be able to explain and ***defend their faith***.

These custom-developed sessions are dynamic and interactive, featuring modern multi-media presentations (i.e., Microsoft PowerPoint® with embedded video clips) with lots of discussion and small group activities.

For more information, please email Steve Hemler at srhemler@yahoo.com or call (540) 827-4705.

EXCERPTS OF PERSONAL TESTIMONIES FROM SOME ATTENDEES OF THE “FAITH CHALLENGES” PROGRAM

“I would like to wholeheartedly support and recommend this outstanding program. The program is comprehensive and correctly presents Catholic belief and supports those beliefs and their points of conflict with other belief systems with informative and convincing arguments. This program prepares all its participants to answer questions both from others and from within themselves, wherever current science and culture seem to challenge Catholic beliefs. This program addresses challenges to their faith that they are likely to encounter from the non-Catholic world: challenges from mainstream scientific evidence and challenges to the theological beliefs of our Catholic faith.”

“In today’s world we often speak about the ‘need to know.’ Who among us cannot defend vigorously our position in our chosen career field? We are a competitive lot and it is expected, particularly among the best and brightest, that we know our material inside and out and can sell it to others. Why should this not be so for our faith? This series addresses these fundamental issues in a critical way opening the door for healthy discussion and thoughtful reflection.”

“I’ve really enjoyed the Faith Challenges program. It has been very informative and has enhanced my faith and understanding of Roman Catholic teachings. Each session has been clear and understandable, providing clarification of the profound and complicated questions addressed in the program. The sessions offered on science and faith were aligned with Pope Benedict’s teaching that faith and reason are not incompatible and the sessions on the divinity of Jesus and salvation were very powerful for me personally and a valuable reminder of the principles of our faith.”

“For young people to more easily fit in, they often have to downplay their belief in God in order to be more like their peers. That is why the Faith Challenges program is so important. It gets them to think about their faith and how to not be afraid to say they believe in God when many of their friends may believe otherwise.”

“We’ve been lifelong Catholics but learned more by rote than by questioning, challenging, and probing. The Faith Challenges program has served as a meaningful guide that has helped put the puzzle pieces together. The material presented has been invaluable in re-opening our eyes to rediscover our faith and reinforce many of the basic tenets. This program should be mandatory training every few years or so for all Catholics.”

“Apologetics should really be an important part of any parish’s program to educate their youth, young adults and anyone striving to strengthen their faith, wanting answers regarding their faith, and anyone facing difficulty standing up for their faith.”

“What I liked about the sessions was that they gave me a good insight into questions about our faith. The topics were well selected and thought provoking. Each session had a plan that encompassed both lectures and videos, which I thought was brilliant.”

“There is now more clarity in my life concerning the fundamentals of faith and that has totally changed my perception and insights on subjects such as the purpose of life, the design of life, the creation, the Resurrection of Christ and so on so forth, and it continues to broaden as days go by. I keep perusing the material you gave us and find new treasures each time I visit them. It has become an integral part of my devotional reading which helps me justify my faith in all spheres.”

“We would like to thank you for leading us through some of the most fundamental questions on God and our relations with Him. By helping us to explore these questions by using Catholic theological explanations, our understanding of Catholic teachings is greatly enhanced. This series is an essential program to ignite the faith among Catholics.”