Prepare the Way: An Advent Journey for Your Parish

SYMBOLON: *Knowing the Faith*

Week 1 – The Story of Salvation (Session 4)

▶ God, who is infinitely perfect and happy in himself, freely created man to make him share his own goodness and love.

▶ Union with God brought harmony to the human family.

▶ Man and woman disobeyed God and refused to give themselves in love.

▶ This sin broke our relationship with God, broke the harmony between man and woman, brought death into the world, and wounded our human nature, leaving us with the inclination to sin.

▶ God sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins—offering on our behalf the perfect gift of love that restores us to the Father—and to send the Holy Spirit to fill us with his very life.

▶ Jesus established the universal "Catholic" Church to gather the broken family of man into the united family of God.

▶ The Catholic Church passes on the teachings of Christ and, through the Sacraments, dispenses the graces he won for us on the Cross to enable us to live like Christ on earth and with him forever in Heaven.

Week 2 – Who is Jesus? (Session 5)

▶ God spoke to his people through the prophets during the Old Testament times, but in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son.

▶ Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is one divine Person who possesses two natures. He is truly God and truly man, not part God and part man. This profound and awesome teaching is called the hypostatic union.

▶ As both God and man, Jesus is the one and only mediator between God and man.

▶ Jesus became human to help us know God's love, to reconcile us with God and save us, to model a holy life, and to make it possible for God to live within us.

FORMED®

Week 3 – The Paschal Mystery (Session 6)

▶ Fully human, Jesus can represent the human family and offer a gift of love on behalf of all humanity. Fully divine, his gift of love takes on infinite value—offering the perfect, redemptive sacrifice for all.

▶ When we say Jesus "descended into hell" in the Creed, this does not refer to the place of damnation, but the realm of the dead. Jesus in his human soul, united to his divine Person, went to the realm of the dead and opened Heaven's gates for the just who had gone before him.

▶ By his Death, Jesus liberates us from sin. By his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to new life in him that we may become sons and daughters of God and have eternal life.

▶ By his Ascension into Heaven, Jesus precedes us into his Father's glorious kingdom in Heaven.

▶ Jesus invites us to participate in the mystery of his Death and Resurrection by uniting our entire lives—our daily works, joy, and sufferings—with the Cross of Christ.

Week 4 – The Last Things (Session 10)

▶ Every person will receive a "particular judgment" at their death. If they die in the state of grace, in friendship with Christ, they receive entrance into Heaven (whether immediately or through purification). If they die out of friendship with Christ, never accepting his loving mercy, they remain separated from God for all eternity.

▶ We cannot be united with God unless we choose to love him. The definitive self-exclusion from unity with God is called Hell.

▶ Heaven is the perfect communion of life and love with the Trinity and all the angels and saints. This perfect communion with God, where we see him face-to-face, is the fulfilment of every human desire and the state of complete happiness.

▶ There are some who die in friendship with God, and their souls are assured of Heaven, but they first must undergo a purification of all attachment to sin before entering full communion with God in Heaven.

▶ Catholics pray for the dead so that their loving intercession might contribute to the purification of souls and hasten their union with God in Heaven.

▶ At the end of time, Christ will come again in glory, our bodies will be resurrected, and all humanity will face the Last Judgment, in which the truth of each man's relationship with God will be made known and the consequences of each person's actions will be revealed.

FORMED®