

Scope and Sequence of the Course

Chapter 1 of *God Loves: Jesus Christ Enters the World* explains how Christ is true God and true man in one Divine Person. The Church was concerned in the first few centuries with questions about Jesus's historical existence. She was charged with naming and defining from his life core theological doctrine about the Incarnation, his divine and human natures, the development of Trinitarian theology, and the unique role of Jesus's Mother, Mary.

As the fullest Revelation of God, Jesus is best able to teach what God is like. Chapter 2 explores the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. This chapter delves into God's judgment and justice while considering perennial questions of suffering and the meaning of life. The text explores God's providence, his absolute power, and his never-ending mercy. Chapter 3 expands on gospel evidence of the Blessed Trinity with material on how the early Church came to understand this mystery and defend it against early heresies.

The Incarnation and events of the life of Jesus can be placed in a definite place and time. Chapter 4 draws on the student's scientific mindset by focusing on the historical evidence from the period when Jesus walked the earth.

Chapter 5 is devoted to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the first disciple. Mary shares in the mediation between God the Father and humanity, thus becoming an image of her Son. Her special place of honor is described early on in the Gospels. In defining belief in Jesus, the Church also defined several truths about Mary, most importantly that she is the Mother of God.

A human person's response to God's Revelation through Christ is faith. Chapter 6 examines the idea of personal faith and how faith is preserved and passed on through the Church. Proceeding naturally from this discussion, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 define discipleship and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Chapter 8, in particular, looks at several spiritual practices to help a human person align their life in Christ.

Chapter 1: Jesus Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Focus Question

How is Jesus both true God and true man?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: God Reveals Himself to Us

Section 1: How Is Jesus True God?

Section 2: How Is Jesus True Man?

Section 3: Historical Evidence and Beliefs about Jesus from Outside of Christianity

Section 4: The Truth of Christ Is Preserved in the Church

Chapter 2: Jesus Reveals What God Is Like

Focus Question

What did Jesus reveal about God the Father?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: God Is Father

Section 1: God the Father Is Love and Truth

Section 2: God the Father Is Almighty

Section 3: God the Father Is Just

Section 4: God the Father Carries Out His Plan

Chapter 3: Jesus Reveals More about God in Three Persons

Focus Question

How can we understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: One God, Three Persons

Section 1: The Church Teaches about the Blessed Trinity

Section 2: Understanding More about the Relationship between God the Father and God the Son

Section 3: Tracing an Understanding of the Holy Spirit

Section 4: Entering the Life of the Blessed Trinity

Chapter 4: Jesus's Own Life Reveals More about the Nature of God

Focus Question

What can we learn about God from the human nature of Jesus?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: God Enters History in the Person of Jesus Christ

Section 1: The Cultural and Historical Context of Jesus's Life

Section 2: Jesus Was Formed in the Jewish Faith and Tradition

Section 3: Events in the Life of Jesus

Section 4: We Know Jesus through the Gospels

Chapter 5: Jesus's Own Mother Leads Us to Him

Focus Question

How does Mary lead us to her Son, Jesus?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: Mary Is an Image of Her Son

Section 1: Mary Is the Mother of God

Section 2: The Life of Mary from Scripture

Section 3: The Church Teaches about Mary

Section 4: Honoring Mary with Prayer and Devotion

Chapter 6: Jesus Calls Us to Faith

Focus Question

How does a Catholic's faith mirror the life of Jesus Christ?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: The Necessity of Faith

Section 1: Faith Is a Virtue

Section 2: I Believe: Faith Is Personal

Section 3: We Believe: Faith Is Communal

Section 4: Faith Leads Us to the Church

Chapter 7: Jesus Calls Disciples

Focus Question

What does it mean to be an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: Becoming a Disciple (or Not)

Section 1: What Did Jesus Teach about Discipleship?

Section 2: Commitment to Jesus Is Associated with Friendship

Section 3: Disciples Help to Spread the Gospel

Section 4: Jesus Taught His Disciples How to Pray

Chapter 8: Jesus Calls You

Focus Question

How does the light of Christ shine through me?

Chapter Outline

Introduction: Jesus Christ at the Center of Your Life

Section 1: What It Means to Be Human

Section 2: What It Means to Gain Salvation

Section 3: What It Means to Be Happy

Conclusion: What It Means to Live for Jesus

The Importance of Reading the Student Text

High school theology teachers have a twofold challenge of both engaging their students' faith through living examples of prayer, practice, and personal witness *and* covering rigorous theological academic content required by protocols and curriculum standards. Having students read their course textbook can help with both purposes. Student reading of a textbook improves comprehension of the subject, deepens vocabulary, engages critical thinking skills, helps to synthesize and apply the content, and much more. A textbook can serve as a "second teacher" by presenting necessary content as well as suggesting ways for the students to apply their faith. But in order to utilize the textbook to assist with these purposes, students must complete assigned readings! Yet, according to several recent studies, only 20 to 30 percent of undergraduate students complete the required textbook reading assignments.¹ Similar percentages are cited among high school students. This begs the obvious question: How can you get students to complete their textbook reading assignments?

There are many reasons why students don't complete textbook reading assignments. Among these are unpreparedness, lack of motivation, lack of time, an underestimation of the textbook's importance, a belief that the teacher will cover all that is necessary for tests and quizzes in classroom lectures or presentations, and an overall belief that the textbook reading does not weigh in with enough significance in grading.

Therefore, a first strategy to improve student reading is for the teacher to show enthusiasm for the textbook. You may have experienced coaches who open the box with new team uniforms and equipment as if opening gifts on Christmas morning. Or art teachers who revel at a new arrival of canvas and paints, or music teachers gushing over new instruments. Their students can't help but be excited. Though perhaps not as glamorous as these items, treat the textbooks that will accompany your course in something of the same way. Explain why you or your theology department chose this textbook. Do a cursory look through the textbook, pointing out some of the key features. Highlight one or two of your favorite features.

Explain how the textbook will be used as part of the structure of your course and how much weight textbook reading will factor into grading. In fact, connecting assessments and grading to the reading is cited as the most effective technique for getting students to read the textbook.² Determine a percentage of the students' overall grade (e.g., 15 to 30 percent) of the final grade that will be connected with reading-related assignments (e.g., quizzes, section assessments, oral responses). Surveys also reveal that any of these same reading-related assignments that are not connected with grades will likely be regarded as unimportant.

Reading Strategies

Do you prefer to give a textbook reading assignment to preview or review your classroom presentation on the topic? Either strategy is suitable as long as you establish the purpose of the reading assignment *before* it takes place, remind students of what to accomplish *during* the reading, and devise a way to gauge (and grade) the reading *after* the completion of the assignment. For example, *before the reading assignment*, identify the key point you have covered or will cover in your presentation. How does the reading support or enrich that point? Preview the reading by noting key photos, vocabulary terms, and highlighted text. Remind the students of assessment items for which they will be responsible after completing the reading.

During the reading assignment, provide students with several models of making connections between the text and your presentation, summarizing the main ideas of the text, and offering interpretations and responses to the text. See the graphic organizers in the section "The Importance of Reading the Student Text" below and online at <https://resources.avemariapress.com/resources> for specific ways for students to outline reading.

There are several options for determining whether the students completed the assignment *after the reading*. For example: Assign and grade the comprehension questions included in the Student Text. Ask students to write a two-sentence reaction to a specific topic, photo, vocabulary term, or character mentioned in the reading on a slip of paper. Collect and grade the paper. Similarly, randomly call on one or more students to offer a verbal reaction to the same items. Grade their responses based on the detail and clarity of their answers.

Some specific reading strategies follow.

SQ3R System

The acronym SQ3R is a student formula that stands for survey, question, read, recite, and review.

The *survey* portion involves perusing the title and subtitles of a section, reading the introduction, noticing any photos and graphics, and focusing on any boldface or highlighted words.