

CONNECTED

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOR THIS GENERATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is *Connected*, and what makes it unique?

There are many divisive issues in society facing our teens today, and it is challenging for teachers to present the truths of the Catholic Faith in a way that will engage and inspire students. *Connected* is a new program for middle school and high school teens that addresses the challenging topics of Catholic Social Teaching through an authentic Catholic perspective.

Connected brings together a diverse lineup of the most talented and inspiring Catholic presenters and youth leaders in the Church today who approach the topics in a story-driven manner, focusing on real world examples of Catholic Social Teaching in action. The powerful and engaging videos and the dynamic Student Workbook are designed to capture the attention of teens and present the social teachings of the Church in a way that connects to their everyday lives.

Each lesson of this 5-part program features one or two particular themes of Catholic Social Teaching, which students will experience through examples and stories of today's Church in action as well as through learning about the story of a particular saint. The *Connected* program provides an exciting journey through Catholic Social Teaching, which will inspire the students and progressively call them to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and a commitment to Christian discipleship.

2. Who would benefit from *Connected*?

Connected was developed primarily for Catholic middle school and high school-aged teens (for use in parishes and schools). However, with its amazing videos and engaging written materials, *Connected* can be effectively used in a variety of settings. The program can fit into virtually every corner of school, parish, and family life, including youth groups, school and parish religious education, whole-family catechesis, RCIA, home use, or any setting that calls for engaging and inspirational catechetical teaching.

3. Why should teens study Catholic Social Teaching?

Teens are already talking about these issues, mostly getting their information from quick sound bites on social media. At best, teens may think the Church is simply not a relevant part of the conversation, and, at worst, teens may feel the Church is in opposition to progress and science. Teens need answers to the tough social questions that often challenge Church teaching. The goal of *Connected* is to open the minds and hearts of Catholic teens to the truth and beauty of the Church's social teachings. By approaching these topics in a story-driven manner, and by focusing on actual real-world examples, we seek to disarm misguided preconceptions and start lively discussions. Ultimately, the goal is to lead teens to embrace more fully their relationship and commitment to Christ and to the Church, to not only become stronger believers, but to become passionate evangelizers and disciples of Christ.

4. Who are the presenters in the *Connected* videos?

Connected brings together a diverse lineup of the most talented and inspiring presenters and Catholic youth leaders in the Church today.

Fr. Joshua Johnson is a priest in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. He has led many retreats and spoken at conferences for teenagers and adults, sharing his conversion experience and proclaiming a message of hope and restoration of dignity of the human person. He is a presenter in *Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed* and *Rejoice!* and has a podcast on Ascension Presents..

Mari Pablo has degrees in theology and psychology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. She is a presenter in *YOU: Life, Love, and the Theology of the Body* and has frequently appeared on Ascension Presents and numerous other Catholic programs. She has worked in youth ministry for over 15 years, including serving as a youth minister for Life Teen. Mari currently teaches theology at St. Brendan Catholic High School in Miami and travels throughout the United States and Latin America speaking to young people about the heart of Christ and the beauty of the Catholic Faith.

Taylor Tripodi is a Catholic musician, singer, songwriter, and worship leader. She has a degree in Catechetics and Theology from Franciscan University and has performed throughout the United States as well as internationally, including in the Holy Land. She also writes blogs for Ascension Presents. Whether through her recordings, live performances, or writing, she hopes to open people's hearts to the presence of God in their lives.

Richara Krajewski has a B.A. in History and Philosophy from Rutgers University and an M.A. in History from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a leadership consultant for Catholic Leadership Institute and is a board member of the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia. She currently serves as Pastoral Associate at St. Raymond of Peñafort Catholic Church in Philadelphia where she leads formation and evangelization outreach to youth and families.

Chika Anyanwu is an international Catholic Speaker currently based in Anaheim, California.

Chika was a parish Confirmation Coordinator and Young Adult Minister for eight years in Southern California, is a two-time alumna of the National Evangelization Teams Ministries (NET Ministries, USA), and currently serves as an area contact for the Life Teen youth ministry movement while still spreading the Gospel full-time.

Bob Lesnefsky is Assistant Director of Household Life at Franciscan University and the founder of Dirty Vagabond Ministries. Based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Dirty Vagabond has been sharing the hope of God's love with inner-city kids since 2006. Bob, aka RIGHTEOUS B, is also an award-winning Christian hip-hop artist and speaker, using rap music as an engaging outreach to teens. Bob and his wife, Kate, are both Franciscan University alumni and live in Steubenville with their seven children.

Chris Stefanick is an internationally acclaimed author, speaker, and television host who has devoted his life to inspiring people to live a bold, contagious faith. He is the author and host of the award-winning program *Chosen: Your Journey Towards Confirmation*, which is used in thousands of parishes around the country. Chris's live seminars reach more than 85,000 people per year, and his reality TV show, videos, and radio spots reach millions of people. Chris is also the founder and president of Real Life Catholic, a non-profit that operates as the headquarters for Chris's various initiatives.

Paul Kim is one of the most sought-after Catholic speakers in America. The way he presents is a rare gift to witness and has impacted people of all ages in 48 states and in 16 countries over the past decade. Moving his audiences from laughter in one moment, to deep reflection and prayer in the next, Paul utilizes his many talents

(i.e., music – beatboxing, comedy, and inspirational talks) to communicate the Gospel message of Christ to people in a way that is engaging, entertaining, and altogether life-changing.

Dr. Ansel Augustine is the Executive Director of Cultural Diversity and Outreach for the Archdiocese of Washington D.C. and is also on the Faculty of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana. He has served on the board of directors for the National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA) and the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM). He began his career in ministry over 20 years ago and has presented workshops and keynotes around the country.

5. Who are the authors of *Connected*?

Colin and Aimee MacIver are coauthors of *Theology of the Body for Teens: Middle School Edition*, the *Chosen Parent and Sponsor Guides*, and the *Belonging Parent’s Guide*. They both teach theology at St. Scholastica Academy in Covington, Louisiana, and have extensive experience teaching teens. Colin is also the author of *The Catechist’s Field Guide to Confirmation* and travels nationally and internationally bringing a message of purpose and purity to youth. Aimee also writes blogs and articles for various Catholic websites and publications.

6. What topics are covered?

The topics of the *Connected* program correspond to the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching outlined in the USCCB’s Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework (found in Option C: Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in Society, III. Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching). In that document the themes are listed as follows:

- A. The dignity of human life
- B. Call to family, community, and participation
- C. Responsibilities and rights
- D. Preferential option for the poor
- E. Dignity of work and the rights of workers.
- F. Solidarity: individuals should work for the common good
- G. Stewardship of God’s creation

These seven themes have been **divided into five lessons** and reordered with the aim of creating an effective and engaging introduction to Catholic Social Teaching. The themes build upon one another, providing a solid framework of catechesis, starting at the very beginning with the Book of Genesis and the creation story.

Lesson 1: God’s Creation and Stewardship

Since God is the Creator, all of creation is good. He entrusted us to be the stewards of the earth and its resources, which are destined for the common good of present and future humanity. In this lesson, students will be challenged to develop a proactive attitude and lifestyle toward the environment and all of creation, centered on their relationship with Christ and the Church.

Lesson 2: The Dignity of Human Life

Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, possesses an inherent, inalienable, and inviolable dignity. Justice is a virtue that means treating others in the way that they fairly deserve, and charity is a supernatural virtue that allows us to love God because he is God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. As Christians, we are called to uphold the dignity of human life and assist others in achieving their full human potential at every stage of development from conception until natural death. In this lesson, students will be

challenged to move toward Christian discipleship and to promote the dignity of human life by practicing justice and charity.

Lesson 3: Solidarity, Race, and Responsibilities

Solidarity is a moral virtue and foundation of Catholic Social Teaching that unites people of every nation, race, and belief in a universal bond. Stereotypes can lead to prejudice, which can then lead to discrimination, which denies of the dignity of the human person, and all forms of discrimination violate God’s command to love our neighbors as ourselves. Racism can be systemic (present in laws, practices, and situations that are shaped by past and present racial bias) and interior (present in our own hearts and attitudes). The protection of human rights is a responsibility that is shared by the Church, the civil state, and each of us individually. Jesus instructed his Apostles to make disciples of all nations, and, in the Catholic Church, all cultures, languages, and ethnic groups are united into a single communion in Christ. As followers of Christ, we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Lesson 4: Poverty and the Dignity of Work

According to the principle of the universal destination of goods, the earth and its resources were created by God for all of humanity. While the right to private property is essential to human freedom and dignity and is a way to meet our daily needs, it is subordinate to the universal destination of goods. The preferential option for the poor means that we must prioritize concern and action for the poor, the vulnerable, and the oppressed, and work toward meeting their needs and establishing a more just society. Our possessions are related to our stewardship of creation, and we are obliged to help those in need, who are Christ in the distressing disguise of the poor. Work is a right and a duty that proceeds from our creation in the image and likeness of God, and workers have a right to receive a just wage for their labor.

Lesson 5: Family: The Foundation of Society

The human family, which has its divine origin in the Most Holy Trinity, is at the foundation of all social life—and healthy, loving families are the key to societal freedom, security, and fraternity. Therefore, governments and civil authorities are called to recognize and protect the dignity of families. Marriage is the foundation of the family, and husbands and wives are called to express their love through a free, total, faithful, and fruitful gift of themselves to each other.

The Catholic vision for marriage and the family have been under attack since the beginning of time. These challenges continue today, but we are called to engage in protecting and promoting the dignity of both our own family and the family in the larger culture.

7. What are the components of *Connected*?

A **5-Part DVD Set** provides three video segments (approximately 5–10 minutes each) for each of the 5 lessons in *Connected*. These dynamic presentations, which are led by a diverse lineup of the most talented and inspiring presenters, give students a broad overview of the Church’s social teaching, with a special emphasis on discipleship. Each lesson features a video presentation on the life of a saint who exhibited the virtues of Catholic Social Teaching covered in that lesson.

The **Student Workbook** is designed to accompany the video presentation, providing an integrated learning experience for students. The beautifully illustrated and highly engaging workbook includes discussion questions, objective quick quizzes, prayers, vocabulary, stories of saints, a “Challenge of the Week,” take-home assignments, *Catechism* and Scripture references, and much more.

The **Leader’s Guide** provides leaders with all the material they need to present the *Connected* lessons. The easy-to-follow structure for every lesson enables leaders to utilize each component of the *Connected* program to fully engage the students as they learn about Catholic Social Teaching. The Leader’s Guide also contains a program overview, planning and scheduling resources, leader’s notes and instructions, lesson overviews, lesson objectives, small-group discussion questions, an answer guide, and much more.

Online Course access for students is included with each workbook purchase and can also be purchased separately for those interested in a digital-only option. The Online Course includes all of the lesson videos, a digital version of the Student Workbook, and interactive online quizzes. (Online access is available for one year from the time of purchase.)

Online Leader Access is included with each Leader’s Guide purchase and can also be purchased separately for those interested in a digital-only option. Online Leader Access includes all of the lesson videos, a digital version of the Leader’s Guide (which includes the Student Workbook), interactive online quizzes, and additional leader resources. (Online access is available for one year from the time of purchase.)

8. How are the lessons structured?

The Leader’s Guide provides a basic 10-step format for each lesson, which can be easily adapted to best suit your particular groups’ needs. Depending on your class time and teaching goals, additional features like in-class activities and service projects are also provided and can be added or substituted.

Sample outlines are provided for 45, 60, 90, and 120-minute classes.

10-Step Lesson Format

Step 1	Scripture/ Opening Prayer Lead the class in the Scripture reading and opening prayer. (Lesson Guide notes for introducing the Opening Prayer are provided in the Leader’s Guide.)
Step 2	Dive In Lead the class in this short exercise to get students engaged and introduce the lesson topic.
Step 3	Video Segment 1 Play the first video segment, which is designed to grab the attention of the students and show the lesson’s topic in action in the real world. Have students fill in the content questions after the video. Review the questions and then lead the students in a small group discussion as time permits. (Small group questions for each video segment are provided in the Leader’s Guide.)
Step 4	Video Segment 2 Follow the same flow as Step 3.
Step 5	To the Heart Lead the class (or assign for homework) the “To the Heart” section of the Student Workbook, which presents “the heart” of the Church’s teaching on the topic. If read during class, follow up with small group discussion as time permits. (Small group questions for this section are provided in the Leader’s Guide.)

Step 6	Video Segment 3 Follow the same flow as Step 3.
Step 7	Saint Profile Have students read (or assign for homework) this section in the Student Workbook, which provides more information and insight to the saint profiled in Video Segment 3.
Step 8	Quick Quiz Have students fill in this short quiz, provided to check on the students' comprehension and retention of the content of the lesson. This can be done in class or assigned as homework as time permits.
Step 9	Talk it Out Lead the class in discussing these small group subjective questions, which are intended to spark conversation and encourage students to think about how the main ideas of the lesson impact the world around them and apply these ideas to their daily lives.
Step 10	Closing Prayer Remind students about any assignments and lead the class in the Closing Prayer.

9. What features are included in the Student Workbook and Leader's Guide?

STUDENT WORKBOOK FEATURES INCLUDE:

- **Scripture Reading** – Students are invited to open their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit so as to better understand what God wants to share with us through his Word.
- **Opening Prayer** – The opening prayer reflects the main theme of the lesson and helps set the tone for the content that follows.
- **Dive In** – This section serves to kick off the lesson and get the students' attention through some quick and engaging questions.
- **Video Segment 1 “The Church in Action”** – Introduces the topic and shows organizations from around the country that live out the Church's teachings.
- **Video Segment 2 “The Heart of the Teaching”** – Fr. Josh Johnson and Mari Pablo present an introduction to the catechesis of the lesson.
- **To the Heart** – This written section seeks to get “to the heart” of the Church's teachings on the themes of the lesson.
- **Memory Verse** – A relevant Bible verse that pertains to the themes of the lesson.
- **In-Class Activities** – Several optional activities are presented that can reinforce the main themes of the lesson and address different learning styles.
- **Video Segment 3 “Saint Profile”** – This video segment features a dynamic, gripping animation created exclusively for the program along with a presenter who connects the dots to our lives today.

- **Saint Profile** – This written piece compliments and dives deeper into the life of the saint that was introduced in Video Segment 3. This piece is designed to give witness to how a disciple of Jesus can live out the lesson’s teachings in his or her everyday life.
- **Quick Quiz** – This short multiple-choice quiz allows you to assess your students’ comprehension of the material presented in the lesson.
- **Talk It Out** – This section includes subjective questions intended to spark conversation and encourage students to think about how the main ideas of the lesson impact the world around them and apply to their daily lives.
- **Food for Thought** – These are relevant quotes from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the subject of the lesson.
- **Call to Action** – This section is intended to help students put what they have learned into action through a conversion of their own hearts and minds so that they can go out into the larger community to bring Jesus and his teachings to the world.
- **Closing Prayer** – Each lesson has the same closing prayer so that the words can remain with the students.
- **Glossary** – Definitions of key words used throughout the lesson.
- **Second Saint Profile** – A quick look at another modern saint whose life is relevant to the topic.

LEADER’S GUIDE FEATURES INCLUDE:

- **Student Workbook Content** – The Leader’s Guide includes the entire Student Workbook content with wrap-around margins for leader notes and guidance.
- **Lesson Format and Outlines** – A basic 10-step lesson format is provided, which can be easily adapted, as well as outlines for 45, 60, 90, and 120-minute classes.
- **Leader Overview** – A brief introduction for leaders, which summarizes the lesson’s content and places it within the structure of the overall program, helping to outline how the lessons and themes build upon one another.
- **Lesson Objectives** – Six learning objectives are provided for each lesson, which include references to Scripture, the *Catechism*, and Church documents.
- **Video Outlines** – Written outlines are provided for each video segment to assist leaders in preparing for and reviewing lessons.
- **In-Class Activities** – Several activity options are provided that can be incorporated into the lesson to increase student engagement and retain attention.
- **Service Projects** – Parish and community-oriented service project options are provided that relate to the themes of the lessons so that students can put the truths they have learned into practice.
- **Group Discussion Questions** – In order to give leaders the most flexibility, the Leader’s Guide provides sample discussion questions for several different parts of the lesson. Leaders can decide where discussions will best work for their class. Discussion questions are provided for each video segment as well as for the written “To the Heart” section and the written saint profiles. The Leader’s Guide also provides talk notes and sample answers for the “Talk it Out” questions in the Student Workbook.

10. What saints are included as examples of Catholic social teaching?

A diverse lineup of inspiring saints who exemplify the themes are featured both in the videos and in the workbooks.

	Lesson	Video + Workbook	Workbook
1	God's Creation and Stewardship	Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati	St. Kateri Tekakwitha
2	The Dignity of Human Life	St. Teresa of Calcutta	St. Josephine Bahkita
3	Solidarity, Race, and Responsibilities	Ven. Augustus Tolton	St. Anna Wang
4	Poverty and the Dignity of Work	St. Oscar Romero	St. Martin de Porres
5	Family: The Foundation of Society	Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin	Bl. Carlo Acutis

11. How long does the *Connected* program take to complete?

The suggested format for *Connected* is five lessons. There are lesson plans available for 45, 60, 90, and 120-minute lessons. The step-by-step Leader's Guide gives all the material needed to guide group leaders in presenting highly engaging lessons that will help students to open their hearts to be disciples and see the relevance of Catholic Social Teaching to their everyday lives.

12. Are digital or on-line versions available?

Online Course access for students is included with each workbook purchase and can also be purchased separately for those interested in a digital-only option. The Online Course includes all of the lesson videos, a digital version of the Student Workbook, and interactive online quizzes. (Online access is available for one year from the time of purchase.)

Online Leader Access is included with each Leader's Guide purchase and can also be purchased separately, for those interested in a digital-only option. Online Leader Access includes all of the lesson videos, a digital version of the Leader's Guide (which includes the Student Workbook), interactive online quizzes, and additional leader resources. (Online access is available for one year from the time of purchase.)

13. Has *Connected* received a *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur*?

Connected is currently under review for the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur*.

14. Is *Connected* available in Spanish?

Connected is not currently available in Spanish.

15. Has *Connected* been reviewed by the USCCB? Is it on the USCCB's Conformity List?

The Conformity List published by the USCCB is the result of a process that assesses basal series textbooks and sacramental preparation textbooks submitted to the USCCB for their completeness and coherence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. In a document linked here the Subcommittee on the Catechism explains that it does not review videos, nor does it evaluate materials that, "focus specifically on individual topics, teachings or devotions."

Connected is a supplemental program and is not eligible for review by the USCCB, but the program has been reviewed by theological experts as well as Catholic experts working in the fields of the specific topics covered. It is also currently under review for the *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur*.