

Love Is Our Mission

The Family Fully Alive

Chapter 9: Mother, Teacher, Family: The Nature and Role of the Church Reading Guide

If you have not yet done so, please watch the introductory video for Chapter 9. It will give you a window into the chapter and make your reading and study of the catechesis more fruitful.

It will be beneficial for you to spread your reading of the chapter over a number of sessions. Take time, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, to consider in your mind what these things might mean (Lk 1: 29) and then ponder them in your heart (Lk 2:19 & 2:51).

1. Before reading

Begin your reading time with a prayer, asking for God's help to understand what you are about to read. Here is a traditional Catholic prayer asking the Holy Spirit for assistance:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

2. Reading the catechesis

Rather than reading the chapter straight through, read it one section at a time. For example, in chapter nine there are five sections, each with its own heading. The first is "The Church is our Mother; we are her sons and daughters" and it covers paragraphs 174-176.

Begin by asking yourself what the subheading probably means. Then read and reread the section from start to finish at a rate comfortable for you. While doing so, underline what you consider to be especially important statements and write questions and comments in the margins. These are great active reading techniques.

3. After reading a section

After reading the section, take some time to "digest" what you have just read. One way to do this is by responding to the text.

We recommend you answer in writing, *one* of the following generic questions or *one* of the directed questions. The generic questions can be asked of any section of this book. The directed questions pertain to the section specifically.

Generic questions

- What did you think the heading meant before you read the section? Has your understanding of it changed after reading?
- What most surprised or impacted you in this section?
- What most confused you or what did you disagree with the most in this section?
- If you were to summarize this section, what would you say it was about in one or two sentences?
- What action does this section call you to take? Does this change seem possible to you? What barriers do you think would stand in the way of you taking this action?

The following are directed questions for each section of Chapter 9. Choose one of them to answer in writing if you don't select one of the generic questions. A space is provided for you to write your response.

The Church is our Mother; we are her sons and daughters

Directed questions

- Why is the Church a mother, specifically “our” mother?
- What does “born from above” (§ 175) mean in terms of “identity” and how are we “born from above”?

Your response:

How and why the Church is holy

Directed questions

- This chapter uses the word “identity” a lot. What is its meaning here?
- What is the “constitution” of the Church (§178)?
- Why are penance and renewal the Church’s “path” in this life (§180)?

Your response:

When Catholics sin, it does not erase what is holy about the Church

Directed questions

- How does being in a covenant protect the holiness of the Church?
- Why is the Church worth believing in even though there is not one perfect Christian on earth?

Your response:

The Church's teaching authority and responsibility

- What is the pastoral duty of the Church?
- What is the job of the Magisterium of the Church?

Your response:

How married couples and families carry out the Church's witness

- How are Christian spouses their most persuasive as teachers?
- What does it mean to say that the sacraments, including the Sacrament of Matrimony, "are not decorations in life" (§185)?
- How can you make your matrimonial witness more persuasive in terms of your openness to new life, warmth of mutual love, readiness of hospitality, and environment of love and mercy (§186)?

Your response: