THE CHURCH C·E·L·E·B·R·A·T·E·S

The Liturgical Year and Sunday

Catholic UPDATE VIDEO

LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Catholic Update Video

The Use of Video in Faith Formation 3

Introduction to the Series 5

THE CHURCH C·E·L·E·B·R·A·T·E·S
The Liturgical Year and Sunday

Overview of the Program 8

Audience 9

Small Group Process 10

Story Segment
- Summary 12
- Suggestions for Use 14
- Questions for Sharing 15

Witness Segment
- Summary 15
- Suggestions for Use 16
- Questions for Sharing 16

Teaching Segment
- Summary 17
- Suggestions for Use 20
- Questions for Sharing 20

Musical Reflection Segment
- Summary 21
- Suggestions for Use 21

Resources for Further Study
- Scripture 23
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 23
- St. Anthony Messenger Press 23

Catholic Update Video

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the "media" of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus' time, heavily dependent on *oral communication*—to the advent of *print communication*—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic media*—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners' hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners' experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium's strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the *emotional* content of our faith rather than the *intellectual* content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the "mix of media" used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the viewing experience.

Catechists must realize that *they* control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to "enflesh" an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a

group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The "pause" button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

*Catholic Update Video*s are dynamic new media designed for use with today's adult learners. Use them in RCIA, faith formation, liturgical and pastoral ministry, faith-sharing groups, and sacramental preparation. *Catholic Update Video* offers catechists and pastoral ministers multimedia resources to enhance teaching, presentation and training efforts.

Catholic Update Video's four segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection—are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (story segment), testimony (witness segment) and song (musical reflection segment) with

images and the emotions they carry. But a more "didactic" approach (teaching segment) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life-experience to the faith-topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. *(This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.)*
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment.**

The program's host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence may wish to prepare their own lead-in. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader's guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program.

It includes the following features:

- **Small Group Process** incorporating all four segments in a single session.
- **Summary** and **Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** for the story, witness and teaching segments; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the musical reflection segment provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. *(If the VCR is equipped with an "elapsed time" counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an "elapsed time" counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the "review" mode [i.e., while the VCR is in "play"] to find the gray screen and* Catholic Update Video *logo that indicate the start of a segment.)*

The Liturgical Year and Sunday

Overview of the Program

Most of our lives are governed by a calendar—whether a traditional planner or an electronic version. Many of us complain about following a schedule; we'd like to be free to structure our own days. Despite our desire for freedom, most of us will admit that having some order to our lives is helpful. It's freeing in itself, since within that structure we can accomplish not only the things we *need* to do but also the things we *want* to do.

This *Catholic Update Video* is about the Church's way of structuring time—our "liturgical year" and the regular Sunday celebration of the Mass. Many viewers, especially those participating in the RCIA, may not be familiar with the word "liturgical." This word refers to the "liturgy," which is simply the way the Church prays. And by Church, we mean the whole Church, not just the priest leading the prayers at Mass. All of us are called to participate in the liturgy, this important work of the Church as it gathers to praise God.

In many ways, the Church's liturgical year is like our personal calendars. If you were to look over a year's worth of dates in a person's calendar, you'd find the story of that person's life. The Church's calendar is full of stories as well: stories of Jesus and the Church, and our own stories of faith. Far from being artificial or imposed, it's a structure that grew out of the experiences of real people—from Abraham and Sarah in the Hebrew Scriptures, to Jesus himself, through the earliest Christians, down to our present day.

This program points out that the liturgical year is structured around the biblical stories read at Sunday Mass throughout the seasons of the year. The most

important of those stories is of the Resurrection of Jesus. The Resurrection is the center of our faith, making Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, the center of the liturgical year. Every Sunday—which we call the Lord's Day—the Church keeps the memory of the Lord's Resurrection alive as we gather to celebrate the Mass.

This program has four segments which explore the Church's liturgical year and the Sunday celebration.

- In our *story segment*, we meet a couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. As they reflect on the rhythms and cycle of their married life we find a real-life parallel to the way the Church year relates to our daily lives.
- In the *witness segment*, we meet real-life Catholics who talk about how the celebrations of the liturgical year and Sundays affect their faith lives.
- In the *teaching segment*, Franciscan Father Tom Richstatter provides an overview of the liturgical year and an explanation of the important place Sunday holds in it. His presentation revolves around the central statement that, "The Church year is the way we read the Bible."
- In the *music video reflection*, singer-composer David Haas builds on a familiar biblical image with the song "As Water to the Thirsty."

Audience

This program is intended for an adult audience. Its primary audience is those participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) who are being introduced to the Church's liturgical year. Other uses include groups of adults with an interest in learning more about the Church's liturgical year (e.g., worship commissions, liturgy planners, small groups).

Small Group Process

While many groups may choose to use the segments in separate sessions or out of sequence, we provide here a sample outline for a small group process incorporating all four of the video segments into a single session. This outline is designed to help volunteer catechists/facilitators who may need assistance in planning group sessions and for those professionals who like to adapt a sample plan to meet their own needs.

Suggested Process

1. Setting the Environment

A central table may be set with a Lectionary, a Bible, a traditional calendar or planner, an electronic planner/organizer, a Sunday bulletin—all around a lit candle representing the presence of Christ.

2. Gathering

Invite participants to gather around the table for an opening prayer or song. If using a song, we suggest playing a recording of a song related to the theme and providing those gathered with the lyrics. The leader may choose to use the following or similar opening prayer: *Loving God, we gather today as women and men who desire to know you better. Help us to find you in the ordinary and extraordinary events of our lives. Open our hearts and minds to learning more about how your story and the story of your Church are related to our own stories. Guide us to your life-giving water. Guide us to your truth. Amen.*

3. Sharing My Story

- Invite personal reflection and group sharing on the question, "When have I had an experience of God through an event or person in my life?"
- View the *story segment* and invite participants to name the patterns or rhythms that appear in the Haines' story, or in nearly anyone's story that spans many years. Invite reflection and sharing on the difference Bill and Mary's faith appears to have on how they've handled the ups and downs of their years together.
- View the *witness segment* and invite participants to share about what it means to have God walking beside them on the journey of their lives. What difference does this make in the way they live their lives? What difference does this make in the way they handle the ups and downs of life?

4. Relating My Story to the Church's Story

Show the *teaching segment* and discuss the liturgical year not as an artificially imposed structure but as a structure that derives meaning from and adds meaning to the life of the Christian community. Help participants to see the connection between the stories of Scripture, the cycle and seasons of the liturgical year, and their own stories. Use discussion questions on page 23.

5. Responding in Life and Faith

Use the *musical reflection segment* as a closing prayer. (If time permits, consider using or modifying the sample prayer experience outlined on page 25 of this guide.)

Story Segment

(Begins approximately 04:11 into program.)

Summary

With its Sunday celebrations, special seasons and feast days, the Church year seems natural to Christians who move with its rhythms and identify with its moments of light and darkness. We embrace the Scripture stories and wear our community's memory of Jesus like we wear our baptismal robes, putting on Christ each day of our lives. Our own human stories—the stories of our personal lives and the stories of our families—parallel what the Church celebrates throughout the year.

As Bill and Mary Haines mark a milestone in their lives and the lives of their family—their 50th wedding anniversary—their story helps us understand the rhythms of the Church year. Family photographs and home movies, as well as video footage of their anniversary Mass and reception, further enhance their story.

Planning their 50th wedding anniversary celebration gave them the opportunity to reflect on important moments and themes in their life together.

Bill admits that his realization of the need for God's presence in their marriage grew over time: "I can remember taking the marriage lessons from the chaplain at the base but I don't think I had any idea of where God fit into that picture…We found out that we needed God's help. And we became closer to him. And we started doing the things he was asking of us. And we celebrated those on Sunday and said, 'We'll go back out there and try it again for another week.'"

For their anniversary celebration, they chose to begin with Mass because, as Mary says, "that's the way our marriage began, at Mass." As members of the

parish community for 43 years, they chose a regular parish weekend Mass in order to include other members of the Church.

The high point was renewing their vows, particularly in front of their adult children. Several of their nine children offer bits of wisdom gained from their parents or life lessons that guide them:

- Just being there in the everyday things of life really matters.
- It's not just going to Church or taking part in the sacraments, it's daily life.
- I could always count on my parents to be there for me, even when I made mistakes.
- Patience and a calm approach to parenting was a gift.
- Keep God first in your life. As long as you look to God for answers and guidance, everything will work out.
- Their commitment to the sacrament of marriage is a model to the community and to us children—one we hope our kids will carry on through the next generation.

The admiration goes both ways. Bill says, "These kids have become our best friends. And when they come over for a Sunday afternoon meal…, we get to listen to their story and they get to listen to ours. And those are special times."

Looking through photos and watching home movies in preparation for their anniversary celebration brought back memories of special times and times of difficulty as well. Births, baptisms, first communions, graduations, camping trips, Christmas and Easter celebrations are all highlights of their family memories.

Mary's father's death was a time of challenge but also a time of hope. Her dad took a turn for the worse during Holy Week. She was with him on Good Friday,

reflecting on how difficult it is to be present to others when they are dying, connecting with the apostles who fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane while Jesus prepared for his death. Her father died during Easter week, and, in the midst of loss and grief, Mary and her family focused their hope on the Resurrection.

A recurring theme that has run through Bill and Mary's life is that of letting go to allow for new beginnings and growth. Their oldest son spoke of this in his toast at their anniversary dinner. Mary recalls a booklet their children gave them for their 40th anniversary that included a saying comparing children to kites. Both children and kites require some effort at first to get them to fly, but once they're ready, they need to be allowed to soar. Their children thanked them for "letting us go." Bill and Mary "felt good about that."

Suggestions for Use

Use this segment in either of the following ways:

- as a way to help those participating in the RCIA process or any group of adult learners to begin to relate the cycles, rhythms and events of their own lives to the Church year. Use the following or similar questions to encourage discussion.
- as a marriage preparation or enrichment resource. If showing it for these purposes, you may wish to start the viewing after the brief introduction by Father Greg Friedman that connects this story to the liturgical year.

Questions for Sharing

1. What is a theme in Bill and Mary's story that you also find in your own story?
2. What patterns or rhythms appear as you listen to the Haines' story or to nearly anyone's story that spans many years?
3. What difference does Bill and Mary's faith appear to have on how they have handled the ups and downs of their years together? What difference does/might faith make in your life?
4. While sitting at her father's bedside in his final days, Mary came to better understand the apostles who fell asleep while Jesus prayed before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. When has a life experience shed new light on the meaning of a Scripture passage for you? When has a Scripture passage shed light on the meaning of a life experience?

Witness Segment

(Begins approximately 16:01 into program.)

Summary

The celebrations of the Church's liturgical year and of each Sunday in the parish help to focus the lives of Christians. Some real-life Catholics share how their faith has grown through these celebrations. The following summarizes their sharing.

- We come together as community sharing all aspects of human life.
- The cycle of the Church year walks us through many phases that we actually experience in our lives.

- This is a journey, an ongoing cycle. We need to trust God to help us walk that journey.
- In Catholicism, I get the sense of looking forward to things and a sense of completion that I never had before I became a Catholic.
- Jesus always has something to say to us, no matter what's going on in our lives or world. It's always good to receive the Word of the Lord in our lives.
- Celebrating the Resurrection each Sunday is important to me. Sometimes it's easy to get overwhelmed, and it seems like nothing's going right. But in celebrating the Resurrection, I know God is in charge and will triumph.
- It's uplifting to share my faith with others, to say, "Jesus is risen Lord. He's already here. He's already conquered, and any pain and suffering that we're having, the Lord has already taken that burden."
- When we participate in Sunday Mass we feel good for the rest of the week. We feel that we receive the nourishment we need for the rest of the week.

Suggestions for Use

Use this segment to encourage personal reflection and sharing among participants. The following questions may facilitate this.

Questions for Sharing

1. Based on what may you already know of the Church year, what seasons of the Church or stories from the Bible can you best relate to right now in your life?
2. What does it mean to you to have God walking beside you on the journey of your life? What difference does this make in the way you live your

life? What difference does this make in the way you handle the ups and downs of life?

3. Have you ever had a personal experience of God speaking to your heart through the Bible? What was the occasion? What special meaning did the Bible passage have for you at that time?
4. How important is it to you to gather with others for Mass on Sunday? In what other ways do/can you keep the Lord's Day holy?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 19:39 into program.)

Summary

Father Tom Richstatter is an author and teacher of liturgy and sacraments, training future clergy and lay ministers for service in the Church. In this presentation he shares some key points about the importance of the Church's liturgical year and of the Sunday celebration for the parish community.

I. Just as our natural world has seasons, so does the liturgy, the prayer of the Church.

A. The seasons of the Church, the liturgical year, are not strictly determined by the weather.

B. The Church year is the way we read the Bible.

II. Like any book, we can read the Bible in two ways:

A. We can start at the beginning and read to the end.

B. We may read passages or stories that are meaningful for us at certain times.

III. In the liturgy we read the Bible in both of these ways.

A. During most of the year we read the books of the Bible in a semi-continuous fashion.

1. On most Sundays we read one of the Gospels more or less "beginning to end."
2. One year we read Matthew, the next Mark, and the third year Luke.

B. There are also times when we want to read some of our "favorite stories," and we select passages of the Bible because of theme.

C. These "theme" times are the two great seasons of the liturgical year: Easter and Christmas.

1. During the Easter season—and its time of preparation, Lent—readings are chosen which speak of the Paschal Mystery—the passion, death and Resurrection of Christ.
2. During the Christmas season—and its time of preparation, Advent—readings are chosen which speak of the Incarnation and the coming of Christ.

IV. When we place the liturgical cycle in the context of our 12-month civil calendar, we have:

A. Advent/Christmas beginning at the end of November or the first days of December and extending through December 25th and into January.

B. This is followed by "non-seasonal" time (the time "throughout the year," sometimes called Ordinary Time) when we read the Bible in a semi-continuous fashion.

C. In March or April—depending on the moon and the spring equinox—we have Lent/Easter.

D. June or July through November we have a second period of "ordinary" or non-seasonal time when we again read the Gospels of Mathew, Mark and Luke in a semi-continuous fashion. (The Gospel of John is featured during the seasonal times.)

V. The bishops at the Second Vatican Council sought to impart new vigor to Christian life by restoring the Bible to its proper place.

A. The first Vatican II document was the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy*.

1. Sacred Scripture is of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy.
2. It is essential to promote a warm and living love for Scripture.
3. A more representative portion of Scripture will be read in the course of a prescribed number of years.

B. The *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy* emphasizes the importance of Sunday.

1. On the day we call the Lord's Day, the Church keeps the memory of the Lord's Resurrection.
2. Each of the Gospels insists that Jesus rose from the dead on the day we call "Sunday." Because the Resurrection is the center of our faith, Sunday is the center of the liturgical year.
3. Sunday is a day of assembly, a day of gathering for the Eucharist.

VI. The way we view Sunday is colored by the way we view the Resurrection.

A. Do you believe in the Resurrection as a present reality?

B. In the midst of oppression, poverty, pain and injustice the Resurrection is God's great cry of triumph!

C. The Resurrection is the reason that Sunday is the "foundation and core of the whole liturgical year."

Suggestions for Use

Use this segment to give viewers a basic introduction to the Church's liturgical year and the importance of Sundays within it. This presentation provides the essential foundation on which a catechist can build and fill in details of the structure as the Church year progresses. It would be helpful to have a liturgical year calendar as a reference for viewers. Liturgy Training Publications (LTP) produces circular liturgical year calendars that are both attractive and affordable. They come in a large size for hanging and a smaller size for individual use.

It is hoped that viewers will come to see the liturgical year not as an artificially imposed structure but a structure that derives meaning from and adds meaning to the life of the Christian community. Use of the story and witness segments prior to viewing the teaching segment will facilitate this appreciation. Use the following or similar questions to elicit a response to the presentation.

Questions for Sharing

1. What experience do you have of the Bible? What is a Bible story with which you're familiar? What message might it have for your life?
2. Easter and Christmas are two major events in the life of Jesus that Catholics celebrate every year. What major life events do you remember in some way

every year? Why is it important to you to return to that remembrance annually?

3. What favorite family stories get retold again and again? Relate this to the way the most important stories of the Bible, particularly those about the life of Jesus, get told each year.
4. What do you do on Sundays? What does Sunday mean to you? Why is Sunday so important to Christians?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 30:04 into program.)

Summary

Like the Hebrews of old who were led by God in the desert to life-giving water, all of us, thirsting for the life-giving water that Jesus offers us, come together each Sunday to allow the Spirit to refresh us. Building on this familiar biblical image, singer-composer David Haas offers a *music video reflection* on the song, "As Water to the Thirsty."

This musical reflection offers a multitude of images of who God is for us and how we experience God in our lives. It is a gentle song of praise for our Lord who is present and personal. Accompanying this song are images of various ways we celebrate God's presence among us in the seasons of the Church year and as we gather each Sunday throughout the year.

Suggestion for Use

This segment may be used on its own as a prayer or as part of a longer prayer experience. An outline of a sample prayer service follows.

1. Open the prayer with the following or similar words: *Loving God, we are each journeying through the deserts of our own lives, seeking you and your life-giving water. Accompany us and shepherd us so that we will not be afraid to look around, to see the goodness of our fellow travelers and the blessings of this world you have created. Help us to look for you in each person we meet and find you in every season of life. Grace us with your presence when we feel most alone and unworthy. Help us to remember that light always follows darkness. Bring us peace and help us to be a source of peace and hope to others we meet on our way. Amen.*
2. Scripture: John 14:1-7
3. Invite participants to reflect on the message of Jesus in the selected Gospel reading. Ask them to think of their lives right now and consider what message of hope, comfort or challenge God is offering to them through this Scripture passage to help them along life's journey. Encourage sharing as participants feel comfortable doing so.
4. Introduce the music video with the following or similar words: *We are always being offered an invitation to follow where God leads—to accept Jesus as the way, the truth and the life. When we truly accept this invitation, we learn to trust that God walks with us through all of the joys and challenges of life. Let's open ourselves to the many different ways God is revealing Godself to us as we join in this music video reflection.* View the *music video segment*.
5. Close by praying the "Lord's Prayer" (have copies available for those who are still learning this prayer) and then by offering each other a sign of peace.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) **Scripture references:** Psalm 16:7-11; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; John 14:1-7

2) ***Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:** Liturgical Year and Seasons (1163-73, 1193-95, 1095) Sunday: The Lord's Day (2174-2195)

3) **Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press:**

   PLEASE SEE OUR CATALOG AT http://Catalog.AmericanCatholic.org for additional print (magazine, newsletter, book and pamphlet), audio (book and presentation) and video (DVD and VHS) resources to support your efforts in faith formation and personal spiritual growth.

Leader's Guide written by:
Joan McKamey

Copyright ©2004, St. Anthony Messenger Press
All rights reserved.

For more information: (800) 488-0488

A **FRANCISCAN COMMUNICATIONS** RESOURCE FROM

ST. ANTHONY MESSENGER PRESS
28 W. Liberty Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202-6498

Visit our web site: www.AmericanCatholic.org