

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
First Commandment: Believing in God

## Catechist Preparation

### Clarifying the Essentials

The fundamental stance of the religious person is adoration: acknowledging God as Creator, Savior, and Lord.

- The First Commandment promotes religion and forbids idolatry. Idolatry is the worship of false gods, whether they are creatures, status, power, pleasure, ancestors, the state, money, or anything else (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2113).
- It forbids superstition, the occult, and magical practices (see CCC 2111).

Atheism and agnosticism offend against the First Commandment.

- Atheism denies the existence of God, seeing in persons their total end, thus exaggerating human autonomy (see CCC 2126).
- Agnosticism claims that God is unknowable or not provable (see CCC 2127).

### Why Is This Important?

Without centering our life in God, we lose our way. God alone is Creator, Savior, and Redeemer—capable of providing us with a trustworthy center and a direction for our lives.

When we surrender to God and God's grace, we cultivate a partnership that guides us. Reaching for God in adoration and worship, we find our true selves and our way to one another. Out of our partnership with God, we pursue the moral life and offer ourselves in service and self-sacrifice to our brothers and sisters, emulating Christ the Lord. We are thus propelled into the eternal kingdom that awaits us.

*Every action done so as to cling to God  
in communion of holiness, and thus  
achieve blessedness, is a true sacrifice.*

SAINT AUGUSTINE

## Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Prepare the space with chairs in a circle. Arrange a focal point with a candle and an open Bible. Supply name tags and refreshments.

### Welcome

Greet people as they arrive. Take time for introductions and conversation.

### Engage

1. Distribute copies of these Bible passages: Exodus 6:7; Jeremiah 32:38; and Ezekiel 36:28. Have volunteers read them aloud. Then ask:

*What do these passages have in common?*

*What do they tell us about God's desire for a relationship with us?*

*How does a believer respond to God's desire?*

*What prevents God's desire from being realized?*

2. Discuss the **Insight** section of the participant handout.

### Teach

Invite the group to read **Church Teaching**. Then discuss the following:

- The First Commandment calls us to believe in One God.
- Our response to God in faith is adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.
- God's love is unlimited. God loves us unconditionally and calls us to worship him alone. Anything or anyone who leads us away from God is false and will lead to nothingness.

### Apply

Invite the participants to answer these questions:

*In what way am I affirmed in my understanding?  
What insight did I gain? How am I challenged by  
what I've learned?*

After some quiet, ask them to share their responses in small groups.

### Pray

Pray the Glory Be.