



STAY—St. Thomas Aquinas Youth

I AM WHO AM

Outline of Events:

- 6:45pm—Dinner (team 3)
- 7:15pm—Head to Large Group in Youth Room.
- 7:20pm—Welcome and Praise & Worship by Matt
- 7:30pm—Large Group— #4 game (pg 12) by Sean; #7 (pg 13) talk by Matt.
- 7:50pm—head to Small Groups
- 8:30pm—Te Deum Prayer in groups.

The Apostles Creed begins with...

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.” This statement is the most important because it is the source of all truth.

“The Holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Church believes and professes that there is one living and true God, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, omnipotent, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intellect and will and in all perfection Who, being One, singular, absolutely simple and unchangeable spiritual substance, is to be regarded as distinct really and in essence from the world most blessed in and from Himself, and unspeakably elevated above all things that exist, or can be conceived, except Himself.”

- First Vatican Council -

Lesson Content

CCC	2
Baltimore Catechism	4
Attributes of God	7
Attributes of God	8
Large / Small Group	11

In Session Three, Chapter 1 of the council the Church defined the attributes of God. Vatican I was called in 1869 and ended in 1870. At this time two ideas were rapid and challenged the existence of God. Rationalism (the belief that reason was the ultimate source of knowledge and justification) and materialism (the belief that the only thing that can be proven or truly known to exist is matter). It is not surprising that with rationalism, materialism and liberalism (individual liberty over hierarchy) atheism began to spread and developed in the early 1900’s into Communism and Socialism, a state without a God. God was in the realm of Faith which was not needed because Reason prevails. God was not matter, therefore we cannot know whether He exists and it doesn’t matter if He exists because liberalism put the focus on the individual and his liberty over any higher power whether that be a government, a church or a supreme being. There was a need for the Church to defend, clarify and even define God and in the Council this is exactly what the Church did. Rationalism, Materialism and Liberalism in our time have developed future into secular humanism and moral relativism so it is important for us to KNOW GOD and defend GOD.

Excerpts from *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

God is one (200-202)

[205](#) - God calls Moses from the midst of a bush that burns without being consumed: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."⁹ God is the God of the fathers, the One who had called and guided the patriarchs in their wanderings. He is the faithful and compassionate God who remembers them and his promises; he comes to free their descendants from slavery. He is the God who, from beyond space and time, can do this and wills to do it, the God who will put his almighty power to work for this plan.

"I Am who I Am"

Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you', and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I Am has sent me to you' . . . this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."¹⁰

[206](#) - In revealing his mysterious name, YHWH ("I AM HE WHO IS," "I AM WHO AM" or "I AM WHO I AM"), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called. This divine name is mysterious just as God is mystery. It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is—infinitely above everything that we can understand or say: he is the "hidden God," his name is ineffable, and he is the God who makes himself close to men.¹¹

207 - By revealing his name God at the same time reveals his faithfulness which is from everlasting to everlasting, valid for the past ("I am the God of your fathers"), as for the future ("I will be with you").¹² God, who reveals his name as "I AM," reveals himself as the God who is always there, present to his people in order to save them.

God is holy (208-209)

"A God merciful and gracious"

[210](#) - After Israel's sin, when the people had turned away from God to worship the golden calf, God hears Moses' prayer of intercession and agrees to walk in the midst of an unfaithful people, thus demonstrating his love.¹⁸ When Moses asks to see his glory, God responds "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'the LORD' [YHWH]."¹⁹ Then the Lord passes before Moses and proclaims, "YHWH, YHWH, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness"; Moses then confesses that the LORD is a forgiving God.²⁰

[211](#) - The divine name, "I Am" or "He Is," expresses God's faithfulness: despite the faithlessness of men's sin and the punishment it deserves, he keeps "steadfast love for thousands."²¹ By going so far as to give up his own Son for us, God reveals that he is "rich in mercy."²² By giving his life to free us from sin, Jesus reveals that he himself bears the divine name: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will realize that 'I Am.'"²³

God alone IS

[212](#) - Over the centuries, Israel's faith was able to manifest and deepen realization of the riches contained in the revelation of the divine name. God is unique; there are no other gods besides him.²⁴ He transcends the world and history. He made heaven and earth: "They will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out like a garment . . . but you are the same, and your years have no end."²⁵ In God "there is no variation or shadow due to change."²⁶ God is "He who Is," from everlasting to everlasting, and as such remains ever faithful to himself and to his promises.

Excerpt from *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

[213](#) - The revelation of the ineffable name "I Am who Am" contains then the truth that God alone IS. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and following it the Church's Tradition, understood the divine name in this sense: God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from him; but he alone is his very being, and he is of himself everything that he is.

III. God, "He Who Is," Is Truth and Love

[214](#) - God, "He who is," revealed himself to Israel as the one "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."²⁷ These two terms express summarily the riches of the divine name. In all his works God displays not only his kindness, goodness, grace, and steadfast love, but also his trustworthiness, constancy, faithfulness, and truth. "I give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness."²⁸ He is the Truth, for "God is light and in him there is no darkness"; "God is love," as the apostle John teaches.²⁹

God is truth

[215](#) - "The sum of your word is truth; and every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever."³⁰ "And now, O LORD God, you are God, and your words are true;"³¹ this is why God's promises always come true.³² God is Truth itself, whose words cannot deceive. This is why one can abandon oneself in full trust to the truth and faithfulness of his word in all things. The beginning of sin and of man's fall was due to a lie of the tempter who induced doubt of God's word, kindness, and faithfulness.

[216](#) - God's truth is his wisdom, which commands the whole created order and governs the world.³³ God, who alone made heaven and earth, can alone impart true knowledge of every created thing in relation to himself.³⁴

[217](#) - God is also truthful when he reveals himself—the teaching that comes from God is "true instruction."³⁵ When he sends his Son into the world it will be "to bear witness to the truth":³⁶ "We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true."³⁷

God is love

[218](#) - In the course of its history, Israel was able to discover that God had only one reason to reveal himself to them, a single motive for choosing them from among all peoples as his special possession: his sheer gratuitous love.³⁸ And thanks to the prophets Israel understood that it was again out of love that God never stopped saving them and pardoning their unfaithfulness and sins.³⁹

[219](#) - God's love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother's for her children. God loves his people more than a bridegroom his beloved; his love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities and will extend to his most precious gift: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."⁴⁰

[220](#) - God's love is "everlasting":⁴¹ "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you."⁴² Through Jeremiah, God declares to his people, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."⁴³

[221](#) - But St. John goes even further when he affirms that "God is love":⁴⁴ God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret:⁴⁵ God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.

Q&A from the *Baltimore Catechism*

Who is God?

God is the Supreme Being, infinitely perfect, who made all things and keeps them in existence.

What do we mean when we say that God is the Supreme Being?

When we say that God is the Supreme Being we mean that He is above all creatures, the self-existing and infinitely perfect Spirit.

- (a) God is above all created things--the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, men, and angels. Some likeness of God is in every creature, from the highest to the lowest. The highest angel, however, is but a weak reflection of the infinite perfection of God, who is the infinite Creator and Governor of the universe.

What do we mean when we say that God is self-existing?

When we say that God is self-existing we mean that He does not owe His existence to any other being.

- (a) God is the first and completely independent source of all being, Every other being is *given* existence, God *is* His own existence; God *is* His own life, or He who is.
- (b) It is a manifest contradiction to hold that God, who is self-existent, could have been brought into being by anyone else.

What do we mean when we say that God is infinitely perfect?

When we say that God is infinitely perfect we mean that He has all perfections without limit.

- (a) God has in Himself, in an eminent degree, the perfections of all things that ever existed or will or can exist. He is the cause of all perfection in creatures. The perfections of created things are in God in an infinitely superior manner.
- (b) Every creature, even the highest angel, is finite for it has the limitation of dependence on the Creator for its existence.

What are some of the perfections of God?

Some of the perfections of God are: God is eternal, all-good, all-knowing, all-present, and almighty.

What do we mean when we say that God is eternal?

When we say that God is eternal we mean that He always was and always will be, and that He always remains the same.

- (a) If God had a beginning or if He could cease to be, He would be limited and would not be infinitely perfect or self-existing. If God changed the change would be either for the better or for the worse. In either case God would not be infinitely perfect.
- (b) Spirits such as angels and the souls of men are eternal in the sense that they will live forever, but both angels and the souls of men, unlike God, had a beginning and are subject to change.

What do we mean when we say that God is all-good?

When we say that God is all-good we mean that He is infinitely lovable in Himself, and that from His fatherly love every good comes to us.

- (a) Things are good and lovable in the degree that they are perfect. Since God is infinitely perfect, He is all-good and infinitely lovable in Himself, and all goodness of creatures must come from Him.

What do we mean when we say that God is all-knowing?

When we say that God is all-knowing we mean that He knows all things, past, present, and future, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions.

(a) God's knowledge is not gained like ours, by proceeding step by step from things known to those unknown. By knowing Himself perfectly, God knows from eternity all things past, present, and future, and even all things possible. Every creature, in its actions, depends entirely on God, and any goodness in creatures is but an imperfect reflection of God's perfection. Through His infinitely perfect knowledge God knows the extent to which creatures share His perfections.

(b) God's knowledge of the future does not take away our freedom, but leaves our wills free to act or not to act.

(c) We are responsible for our free actions, which will be rewarded by God if they are good and punished by Him if they are evil.

What do we mean when we say that God is all-present?

When we say that God is all-present we mean that He is everywhere.

(a) God is everywhere:

first, by His power, inasmuch as all things are under His dominion;
second, by His Presence, inasmuch as nothing is hidden from Him;
third, by His essence, inasmuch as He is in all things as the cause of their being.

If God is everywhere, why do we not see Him?

Although God is everywhere, we do not see Him because He is a spirit and cannot be seen with our eyes.

- (a) Although we cannot see God, the splendid order and beauty of creation should constantly remind us of His wisdom, His power, His goodness, and His nearness to us.

What do we mean when we say that God is almighty?

When we say that God is almighty we mean that He can do all things.

(a) God can do anything that is not opposed to His perfection, or that is not self-contradictory. The impossibility of God's doing anything wrong or acting falsely does not limit His divine power, since wrongdoing and falsity in themselves are evil and are manifest defects: they cannot be associated with an infinitely perfect Being.

b) Although God, the first cause of all things, actually does all things, He does not thereby deprive the creature of its power of causality nor of its freedom of action. A creature is never more than a secondary cause, that is, always dependent on God, always a finite being. When this secondary cause is intellectual, it is constituted by Almighty God as a free agent.

Is God all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just?

Yes, God is all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just.

(a) God, the first cause of all things, in His wisdom knows these things perfectly and disposes them to their ends according to appropriate means.

(b) If we do not understand why or how God does certain things or permits them to happen, it is because our limited minds cannot understand His secrets nor see the universal plan of creation.

(c) Because God is all-holy, He is entirely free from all sin and imperfection and is infinitely good and lovable.

(d) Because God is all-merciful, He gives to each creature even more than is its due. He rewards the good more fully and punishes the wicked less severely than they deserve. He is always ready to help His creatures and to forgive repentant sinners.

(e) Because God is all-just, He gives to each creature what is due to it. God rewards the good and punishes the wicked partially in this life and more fully in eternity.

Can we know by our natural reason that there is a God?

We can know by our natural reason that there is a God, for natural reason tells us that the world we see about us could have been made only by a self-existing Being, all-wise and almighty.

Can we know God in any other way than by our natural reason?

Besides knowing God by our natural reason, we can also know Him from supernatural revelation, that is, from the truths found in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, which God Himself has revealed to us.

Attributes of God

From *The Pocket Catholic Catechism* by John A. Hardon, S. J., pg 19-22:

“When we speak of God’s perfections, we call them ‘attributes’ because we attribute to Him such qualities as belong to the divine nature. Yet all the while we realize that these perfections in God only dimly correspond, in human language, to various properties in creatures.

In reality, the divine attributes are identical among themselves and with the divine nature. But in our human way of thinking there are different attributes because they are like the differences we see in creation, which itself is a manifestation of the indescribable greatness of God.

The Apostles’ Creed gives only one attribute of God: that He is almighty. Since apostolic times, however, the Church has identified no less than fifteen divine attributes and, by now, a library of literature has been written to explain what they mean.

God is absolutely *one* because He is the only Being who must exist, and because there are not many gods (polytheism). He is not just one chief god (henotheism), nor merely the good god along with an evil god (Manichaeism).

He is the *true* God because He really exists and is not a figment of the imagination projecting our own fears or desires.

He is the *living* God whose life is His very essence. He is the being whose inward activity is identical with His nature.

He is *eternal* because in God there is nothing past, as if it were no longer; nothing future, as if it were not yet. In Him there only ‘is,’ namely, the present. That is why when Yahweh first appeared to Moses in the burning bush and Moses asked Him for His name, God told him, ‘I Am Who Am’ (Exodus 3:14).

God is *immense* because He is beyond all measurement. He encompasses everything, while He alone cannot be encompassed by anything.

He is *incomprehensible* because He is not limited in any way. God is not confined either in the manner of a body or of a created spirit.

God is *infinite* not only because He has no limitations, but because He has within Himself the plenitude of all perfection. He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and has absolute fullness of being.

God is *unique* because there is neither nor can be another God. He must have no equal.

God is pure *spirit*. He has no body or spatial dimension. In our own language, He is a spiritual being who thinks and who wills. He knows and loves. He is in the deepest sense a personal God, and not some impersonal force or cosmic energy.

God is totally *simple* because there are no component or parts in Him, like body and soul or substance and accidental properties. Thus Christ said of Himself, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ (John 14:6).

God is *unchangeable* because He eternally possesses fullness of being. There is nothing He can acquire that He does not already have, nor lose what He already has.

God is *transcendent* not only because He surpasses all other beings, but because He is completely distinct from the world. He is the Totally Other.

He is *perfectly happy* in and of Himself, without dependence on any other being for beatitude.

Attributes of God & Definition of God

God is finally the most *sublime* because He is beautiful in the highest degree. Beauty is that which pleases when seen. That is why the Scriptures condemn those who are seduced by creatures: ‘They have taken things for gods. Let them know how much the Lord of these excels them, since the Author of beauty has created them’ (Wisdom 13:3).

The Catholic Church speaks of the foregoing attributes of God as internal, because they pertain to God as He is in Himself. In today’s world, in which atheism is so prevalent, we must be clear in our understanding of who the one true God is.

However, we must also recognize what are called the relative attributes of God. These are the divine perfections in relation to the world he has made. Among these, the Apostles’ Creed mentions only His omnipotence or almightiness. By this we mean that He cannot do anything that would deny His nature like tell a lie; nor can He act in a contradictory manner, like change His mind.

We know, of course, that God is also omniscient because he knows all things past, present, and future. He is all-good because He wants only to benefit the creatures that He makes. And He is even all-merciful in forgiving human beings, provided they repent for the offenses they have committed against their loving Lord.”
know how much the Lord of these excels them, since the Author of beauty has created them’ (Wisdom 13:3).

The Catholic Church speaks of the foregoing attributes of God as internal, because they pertain to God as He is in Himself. In today’s world, in which atheism is so prevalent, we must be clear in our understanding of who the one true God is.

However, we must also recognize what are called the relative attributes of God. These are the divine perfections in relation to the world he has made. Among these, the Apostles’ Creed mentions only His omnipotence or almightiness. By this we mean that He cannot do anything that would deny His nature like tell a lie; nor can He act in a contradictory manner, like change His mind.

We know, of course, that God is also omniscient because he knows all things past, present, and future. He is all-good because He wants only to benefit the creatures that He makes. And He is even all-merciful in forgiving human beings, provided they repent for the offenses they have committed against their loving Lord.”

Definition of God from Fr. John Hardon's *Modern Catholic Dictionary*

The one absolutely and infinitely perfect spirit who is the Creator of all. In the definition of the First Vatican Council, fifteen internal attributes of God are affirmed, besides his role as Creator of the universe: "The holy, Catholic, apostolic Roman Church believes and professes that there is one true, living God, the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth. He is almighty, eternal, beyond measure, incomprehensible, and infinite in intellect, will and in every perfection. Since He is one unique spiritual substance, entirely simple and unchangeable, He must be declared really and essentially distinct from the world, perfectly happy in Himself and by his very nature, and inexpressibly exalted over all things that exist or can be conceived other than Himself" (Denzinger 3001).

Reflecting on the nature of God, theology has variously identified what may be called his metaphysical essence, i.e., what is God. It is commonly said to be his self-subsistence. God is Being Itself. In God essence and existence coincide. He is the Being who cannot not exist. God alone must be. All other beings exist only because of the will of God.

Divinity and Humanity

Characteristics of Divinity	Characteristics of Humanity
ONE & UUNIQUE —There is only ONE divinity, God has no rival, there is no one like Him. God is three persons	Those who have human nature are many, each person is unique as a person but we are not unique in that we all have the same nature.
TRUE—God is not made up. Karl Marx said that God is just opium for the people, in other words he was made up by humans who needed something or someone to believe in. God is not a fairy tale, HE IS TRUE. God was never an idea or even a thought he always WAS.	It is possible that at one time each human could have been just a thought, just an idea. For example a husband and wife before conceiving a child can think of that child and what it will look like at that moment the child is there in thought or idea only.
LIVING—Fredrick Nietzsche was a philosopher that said, “God is dead” Nietzsche was wrong God was never born and never died. Jesus was both divine and human and it was his humanity not his divinity that was put to death on the cross. Divinity has never and will never die.	There is a famous saying that says that there are two things that are certain in life, death and taxes. We were not always living because we came into existence and we will die, with the hope of resurrection.
ETERNAL—For God the past and future are NOW the present there is not past or future there just IS.	As humans we remember the past and sometimes live in the past or hang on to the past, we all have a past, a story, secrets etc. We also are constantly thinking of the future wondering what will become of us. It is very hard for us to live in the present which is a mere blink of an eye.
BEYOND MESSURE—Measurements deal with space and time. God is outside of both time and space and so cannot be measured by science or anything.	We are measured our measure ourselves each day. We get grades to measure our mind. Scales to measure our weight. Judgments to measure our character.
IMCOMPREHENSIBLE—God cannot be contained by the human mind. Divinity cannot be understand with just our human nature. We must have faith which is a supernatural gift. Even with faith God only reveals to us what we need to know, He doesn't not reveal everything.	We can somewhat be comprehended but we are also a mystery. Since we are made in the image of God we find it sometimes hard to comprehend ourselves and we get frustrated when others don't comprehend or understand us.
INFINITE—There are no limitations to the intellect, will or perfections of God.	We are limited every day, we see the limits of our mind in school, the limits of our will in the choices we make or don't make. The limits of our perfections in those that have greater gifts than us in certain areas.
PURE SPIRIT—This is why God is not male or female, he has no body. As pure spirit He thinks and He wills and his thoughts and will is perfect.	Made in God's image we have a soul, which allows us to Think and Will (act). Our soul (thoughts and actions) animates our body but also our body can put limits on our ability to think and act.
SIMPLE—God has no parts, no components, He is complete.	We have many parts, stages of developments, parts of our body, etc.
UNCHANGING—God just IS, He cannot gain anything or else there would have been a point when he did not have. He cannot loose anything or else there would be a point when he doesn't have. God has everything, He is the fullness of being.	We loose and gain everything day, in fact probably every minute. We loose weight , we gain weight. We loose memory but then gain experience. We are in constant change.

Divinity and Humanity

Characteristics of Divinity	Characteristics of Humanity
TRANSCENDENT—God who is the creator transcends creation. He is outside His creation. He is completely other.	We are part of creation, we came into existence and all our chemical makeup ties us to creation. Our spiritual make up, our soul ties us to God, the divine.
PERFECTLY HAPPY—God does not depend on others. He does not need His creation for happiness. He is complete. St. Thomas Aquinas says that the contemplation of God is the greatest way toward happiness, because God is happiness.	We depend on others every day. We are not happy and seek it daily. “Don’t worry, be happy” would have never been written if we were perfectly happy.
SUBLIME—God is beauty to the highest degree. God is completely perfect and lacks in nothing.	We strive for perfection and love things that get close to perfection. We say that the meal is perfect but yet in reality it still lacks perfection. We say that a football team is perfect but yet there will one day be or already has been a team more perfect. There is nothing in creation that is perfect, there are only levels of perfection either more like

Once we compare Divinity to Humanity we see that we are not God.

In a small group setting, you could read the Characteristic of divinity and then ask the small group how as humans we differ. How has God made us similar to Him? How has God made us different than Him? Is it ok to want to be like God to want the same attributes as He has? St. Thomas Aquinas said, “God became man so that man can become God.” What is the only way we can become God? (We become God by connecting ourselves completely to Christ, the God—Man). How does our connection to Christ give us more fully the attributes of God found in the chart?

Why do we call God He? Being male is not one of God’s attributes, so why do we refer to God as male. God is pure spirit so He is neither male or female. We refer to God as male because Jesus referred to God as male when He called God, “Father”. When the Word became Flesh the Word became Flesh in a male body (Jesus) and so this is another reason why we call God He. Why Father and Why a Male body? Traditionally the father is the provider and the source and the mother is the nurturer and receiver. God is therefore the Source of all and the provider or creator of all and his creation is to receive what he provides and nurture or take care of what he provides.

Large and Small Group

1. Say the word ball. Have the group write down or draw that they are thinking when you said ball. Give the definition of “ball”. Ball—a round or roundish body, of various sizes and materials, either hollow or solid, for use in games, as baseball, football, tennis, or golf. After giving the definition see if what they drew or wrote matches up with the definition. Say the word “is” and have the group write down or draw what they are thinking when you said is. Give the definition of “is”. IS—The third person, singular of being. To be. IS is a verb. Things are defined by attributes. The attributes of a ball are round, roundish, hollow, solid, used for games. If something has these attributes then that thing is most likely a ball. God defines Himself as “I AM” or you could say “I IS”. But what does this mean. What are the attributes of “IS” the only thing we know is that IS is BEING or to be. When God says, I just AM, people respond, “You are WHAT?” God responds I just AM. The danger is that humans can then fill in the blank. I AM _____ or God is _____. Why is it dangerous for humans to fill in the blank? How have humans filled in the blank, think of pagan cultures such as the Egyptians or Aztecs. How does God fill in the blanks for us through natural reason? How does God fill in the blanks for us through Divine Revelation (Prophets, Christ, Scripture, Tradition, Church).
2. “The shadow proves the sunlight” Ask the group what they think this means. In Plato’s “Republic” the cave analogy is given in which there are people who live in a cave. The light from the sun comes in through the opening of the cave and casts a shadows on the wall of the cave. For example the light casts a shadow of a tree on the wall of the cave. The people in the cave do not see the sun and do not see the tree, in fact they have never seen either, all they see or experience is the shadow of the tree. One lesson that can be drawn from the story is that if we only see “shadows” but not the real object from which the shadow comes we might think that the shadow is reality. Creation is in a sense the shadow or image of God but if we only see God’s image or shadow we can begin to think that the image or shadow is God itself. God is seen in creation but is NOT creation. St. Paul speaks about this in Romans 1:20-23 “Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image or mortal man or of birds or of four-legged animals or of snakes.” Mankind began to worship the image of God / creation rather than the reality of God / the creator. To give an example of this create 8-10 shadows or maybe show a paper with silhouettes / images on the paper. Have the group guess what the image is. Some can be obvious like a cat, dog, cross, etc. Some images should be difficult, maybe something from another country, which the group would not have seen. The natural flow of reason is that we know the reality and then understand it’s image. We see this in nature. For example if I were to never have seen a human including my self and then I saw first a bathroom sign with the stick figure of a man, I would probably not know what the drawing was. I first know man and then I know the drawing or image of man. With God it works in reverse. God gives us His image first and it is that image in creation, in His Word and then in the Word made Flesh that He moves us to the reality of His divinity. “He (Jesus Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” 1 Colossians 1:15. So God gives us his IMAGE and FAITH which then moves us to reality. So it is the image (shadow) and faith (His revelation) that proves the sunlight (GOD). Saint Philip and Jesus’s conversation sums up the role of Christ the Word made Flesh. “Philip said to him, “Mater, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How then can you say, ‘Show us the Father.’” John 14:8-9. (this segment goes well with #6)
3. “Gone” This is another song by Switchfoot that talks about how all things pass away. In an every changing world God is unchanging. One attribute of God is that he is UNCHANGEABLE. Something can only change in two ways, it either gets better or worse, it either gains or loses. If God changes for the better then it means He was not perfect. If God changes for the worse then it means He is no longer perfect. If He gains it means He didn’t have it before, if he loses it means He no longer has it. God is GOOD. Evil by definition is the deprivation of Good or in other words were some GOOD is lacking. God cannot be evil. If God was evil it means that He would be lacking complete goodness and therefore would have changed. A fun game to show how quick things in the world change is to have a slide show or sheet of paper showing things that the youth may never have seen. For example a pager, a typewriter, ice box, big super computer, record player, old celebrities like Michael Jackson, or even things that were popular by no completely out of style. If a slide show is put together the song “Gone” by Switchfoot would be good to put in the background.

Large and Small Group

4. God gives us his WORD. In John's Gospel, chapter one it says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The WORD is God's promise to reveal Himself and unite Himself to humanity, whom He created and loves. When we say someone gave his WORD, we hope that person keeps his word. Usually when someone gives their word they will shake hands as a sign of their word, or sign a contract making a physically document of their word. God seals his Word by allowing His Word to become flesh in the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. John 1:14 says, "The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us". What does this tell us about the first person of the Trinity, God. It tells us that God gives us his WORD, which is his promise, that He is KIND and that He is FAITHFUL. His promise or word is given out of love and kindness and can be trusted because He is faithful to His word. We will only TRUST God if: 1. We believe his Word, his promise. 2. We believe that he has our best interest, that He is kind 3. We believe that he his faithful, that He will stay constant. Satan want's to make us believe that 1. God's word is a lie. 2. That He is not kind but instead angry and mean and 3. That he cannot be trusted and will abandon us. The very first words out of satan's mouth were, "Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden." Genesis 3:1. Satan is saying, God you really trust God, can you really trust his word, his promise, his kindness and his faithfulness. Satan sows the seed of doubt, which destroys trust. Satan's next words are, "You certainly won't die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened an you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad." Satan is telling Eve that God is lying to her, that he cannot be trusted, that he is holding back goodness from her, in short that God cannot be trusted. Trust yourself, not God. Satan's plan is simple. 1. attack the attributes of God (Kindness and Faithfulness). 2. If God is not kind or faithful he cannot be trusted. 3. We do not want to be in a relationship with someone we cannot trust. 4. If we do not have a relationship it is as if that person doesn't even exist. In our modern world the attributes of God have been attacked and people don't feel like they can trust God, they therefore don't have a relationship with God. How many times have we been hurt in a relationship and broken off a relationship and said to other, "that person doesn't exist anymore in my life" or "I don't even want that persons name mentioned around me" or "I never want to see or talk to that person again." We have to remember that God is a person, the first person of the Trinity. We live in a world that has become more and more atheistic saying, "God doesn't exist", "I never want to see or hear him", "I don't want his name to even be mentioned". Since this is the case we must look again at the attributes of God, TRUST HIM, build a relationship with Him and keep that relationship firm and secure. (this segments goes well with #7)

GAME - TRUST God or (others, self, satan) - this game can be explained using the topic found in #4.

There will be three chairs, which three people in the chair, the people will be blindfolded. Behind the chairs will be a person who will represent GOD. This person will offer the three people something. Before the offerings take place, the people in the chair will be told that they can decide on there own and can have the crowd assist them. The person offering (GOD) will not say much at all, basically suggesting what would be best for the person but then letting free will work. The person in the chair can TRUST, self, crowd or God. In some cases maybe all three will be the same.

To person ONE, God offers a candy bar by holding it up for the crowd to see. He says, "Your gonna want this! But I will leave it up to you to decide." If the person says no then he takes of the blind fold and then show person one what they missed out on. If the person says yes then he puts the candy bar on his head and lets the person take it and take off his blind fold.

To person TWO, God offers a bag of flower by holding it up for the crowd to see. He says, "Your not gonna want this! But I will leave it up to you to decide." If the person says no then he takes of the blind fold and then show person one what they missed out on. If the person says yes then he dumps the flower on the persons head.

To person THREE, God offers an egg by holding it up for the crowd to see. He says, "Your gonna want this! But I will leave it up to you to decide." The egg is a hollowed out real egg that has a \$20 bill in it. If the person says yes then the egg is broken on his head but finds out that the \$20 is his to keep. If he says NO then he is shown the egg once his blind fold is taken off, but he is also shown (as the egg is cracked) that he missed out on \$20.00.

Large and Small Group

CCC 206 says, “He is the “hidden God...and he is the God who makes Himself close to men.”

Why does God remain hidden?

God only reveals what we need to know, why doesn't he reveal everything?”

How does God reveal Himself in the Trinity and share Himself in the Trinity?

5. God keeps us in existence. If God were to stop thinking of us, we would cease to exist. God made all things and keeps them in existence. He makes something from nothing and that something is us. He made us out of love and keeps us in existence out of love, we are the apple of His eye. Image how powerful and loving He is. How hard would it be for a husband who loves his wife to continually think of her. Imagine a mother who loves her baby to constantly think of that baby. What if you had to continually think of the person(s) you love to keep them in existence? Could you do it? To prove this point have two friends in the group volunteer. Friend A (Bob) will need to constantly think of his friend B (Theresa) Bob will be given 2 minutes to think ONLY of Theresa. Bob will be given a piece of paper and every 10 to 12 seconds will ask Bob what he is thinking about and Bob will have to write it down. After the 2 minutes is up, Bob will be asked what is on his list, is Theresa on the list every time. If Theresa's existence was based on Bob continually thinking of her then Theresa would be GONE. Bob's list could look like this: Theresa...Ice Cream...School Work...Theresa...This is a dumb game...I'm Hungry...What's the Point...etc.

6. This is a continuation of #2. “Some likeness of God is in every creature from highest to lowest” This is a phase from the Baltimore Catechism. Creation can teach us about God. God reveals Himself through natural reason and divine revelation. Split your group up into two groups. One group will name a created object, even a man made object and then the other group will have to say what the created object teaches us about God. It might be easier to come up with a few examples first like the ones below to give the groups a chance to explain.

Water—H₂O are the elements but they can be in ICE form (God), LIQUID form (Jesus) or GAS form (Holy Spirit)

Dog—sign of loyalty and faithfulness

Sunflowers—They follow the Sun, and actually change the direction they face during the day, this shows that creation longs for its source.

There are some objects that are so evil (deprived of Good) that they do not point us to God, who is all Good. What are some objects so void of goodness that they actually distort the image of God and the reality of Goodness?

7. This is a continuation of #4. God is All-Merciful—He rewards the good more fully than they deserve. He punishes the wicked less severely than they deserve. The great devotion of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is summed up in the words, “Jesus I Trust in You” We can trust in God's Mercy. One of His attributes is that he is Merciful, this means that he rewards and punishes us and that since we are in relationship with Him we can ask for His mercy to reward us more fully and punish us less severely. Two things are certain we will be rewarded and we will be punished, we cannot escape either but can ask for God to give us His mercy. I know a Irish Franciscan who always says, “MERCY” this can be applied to everything. Jesus talks about Mercy all the time. In Luke chapter 18 we see two examples of people pleading for Mercy, “God, have mercy on me a sinner” and “Jesus, Son of David have mercy on me.” The Jesus prayer prayed in the Easter Church echoes these phrases from scripture, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” Also in the beatitudes Jesus tells us, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” How can we reward others more than they deserve? How can we punish others less severely than they deserve? When have you been rewarded more than you deserved or expected to be rewarded? When have you been punished less severely than you deserved or expected?

Large and Small Group

8. God is DISTANT but CLOSE. The first part of the creed says, “God, the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Let’s break this down. God as Father show His relation to us, God as Almighty shows His relation to all and God as creator shows his uniqueness. If something exists it either 1. made itself. 2. was made by something else or 3. was always there. God is the only thing in existence that was always there. He did not make Himself and was made but nothing else. God is Distant and at the same time Close to His creation. Here is how:

DISTANT

He is God, Divine, he is other than us and His attributes are not our attributes.

He is Creator, we are the creation

He is Almighty, above all, all powerful with no equal.

He revels Himself to Moses at I AM

CLOSE

He is Father, which is the way Jesus revels Him, he loves and cares for us and is our source.

The creator becomes part of creation in the person of Jesus Christ the Word made Flesh

God says you will receive my power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses.

Since the time of Moses (1500AD), God has continued to revel himself. God’s attributes have become more clear over the past 3500 years. The Church has identified 15 attributes of God and presented them to the world at the Vatican I Council.

Why is it OK for God to be both distant and close at the same time?

(God remains God, but shows His love for us, His desire to unite with us and give himself to us)

Why is it OK for us to not know everything about God but enough to know, love and serve Him?

(God only reveals to us what we need to know, He does this to increase our trust in Him.)

Is it important that God stays distant and mysterious?

(Yes, because we can worship and be in awe of a creator that loves and has mercy on his creation, we can enter into the mysteries of our faith through worship, education and prayer)

What would happen if he only stayed distant and mysterious?

(We would probably have to make things up, we would have to guess what He is like and we would be mistaken as the pagan were, our hearts would long for a God that we could never know.)

What would happen if there was no mystery at all and we KNEW absolutely everything about God?

(There would be no need for FAITH, no need for HOPE, no need for TRUST. If we knew now everything we would be face to face with God in heaven the beatific vision, so life on earth would not be necessary.)

Large and Small Group

9. Give each group member a note card containing either verses from Sacred Scripture or events from Salvation history (listed below). Bibles and Catechisms will be available for use. Also the verses given can be photo copied if there are not enough bibles. Each person or pair must reflect on the verse or event and then share with the whole group one or more Divine attributes that God reveals to us about Himself through the verse or event. Assign one youth to write down all the attributes on the board.

From Scripture:

1. Deuteronomy 6:4 – God is one
2. Leviticus 11:44 – God is holy
3. 1 John 4:8 – God is love
4. Matthew 10:30 – God is all-knowing / all-wise
5. Matthew 19:26 – God is all-powerful

From Salvation History:

6. Creation- God creates out of love something from nothing; He is unselfish, He is giving
7. Incarnation- God is love, He is willing to share in our life, He cares, He wants us to know Him
8. Crucifixion- God is both just, our sins had to be paid by Jesus, and merciful he gave us life through His Son's death
9. Resurrection- God is all powerful, He conquers death and has power over nature
10. Decent of the Holy Spirit- God wants to live within us, He wants to share his divinity with us

Discussion:

Why do you think God cares whether we know Him or not?

Why does He try so hard to reveal Himself to us?

If God is all these things, what does that mean to me?

Who has God revealed Himself to be in my life?

How can we get to know God in a personal, real way? (sample answer: daily prayer, SS reading, Adoration, daily Mass, meditation on nature, the sacraments—anything that is a conduit of grace)

Prayers (Te Deum)

O God, we praise Thee, and acknowledge Thee to be the supreme Lord.
 Everlasting Father, all the earth worships Thee.
 All the Angels, the heavens and all angelic powers,
 All the Cherubim and Seraphim, continuously cry to Thee:
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts!
 Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy glory.
 The glorious choir of the Apostles,
 The wonderful company of Prophets,
 The white-robed army of Martyrs, praise Thee.
 Holy Church throughout the world acknowledges Thee:
 The Father of infinite Majesty;
 Thy adorable, true and only Son;
 Also the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.
 O Christ, Thou art the King of glory!
 Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
 When Thou tookest it upon Thyself to deliver man,
 Thou didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.
 Having overcome the sting of death,
 Thou opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
 Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.
 We believe that Thou wilt come to be our Judge.
 We, therefore, beg Thee to help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy
 Precious Blood.
 Let them be numbered with Thy Saints in everlasting glory.

V. Save Thy people, O Lord, and bless Thy inheritance!
 R. Govern them, and raise them up forever.

V. Every day we thank Thee.
 R. And we praise Thy Name forever, yes, forever and ever.

V. O Lord, deign to keep us from sin this day.
 R. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

V. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in Thee.
 R. O Lord, in Thee I have put my trust; let me never be put to shame.

This prayer is a part of the Divine Office, prayed at the end of Matins, and is also sung in thanksgiving to God for some special blessing (e.g. the election of a pope, the consecration of a bishop, the canonization of a saint, the profession of a religious, the publication of a treaty of peace, a royal coronation, etc.) -- usually after Mass or Divine Office, or as a separate religious ceremony.

The Te Deum is also called the "Ambrosian Hymn" and its authorship has been attributed by various writers to St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Hilarius, St. Abundius, St. Sisebutus, and St. Nicetus. An 8th century legend attributes it to both St. Ambrose and St. Augustine: they, according to the story, both sang it spontaneously on the night the latter was baptized (A.D. 387).