



Facilitator Guide



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The stories are based on actual events but details have been modified in order to protect anonymity of those involved.

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Written and Presented by
Michael Dopp, STL

Filmed and Edited by
Eric Groth
Outside da Box Studios

Produced by
ministry23, LLC

Director of Development
Douglas J. Venne Jr

Production Development
Juliana Michelotti

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Linda Dopp and Thérèse Dopp

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You are about to embark on an incredible journey! There is nothing more exciting, lifegiving, and joyfilled than coming evermore into communion with Christ. He is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. John 14:6) and communion with Him alone fills the deepest desires of the human heart and leads the soul to heaven.

relit has one purpose: to help you deepen your friendship with Christ by living out more fully your baptismal vocation to evangelize. For almost a decade I have had the immense privilege and joy of helping fellow Catholics learn how to effectively share their faith with other people. Thus *relit* is drawn from not only the Scriptures, Catholic history, and Church teaching, but also from working with thousands of Catholics who also wanted to be God's instruments in leading other people into friendship with Christ.

Perhaps some of you are afraid to evangelize. Others may be uncertain of your call to do it. Some of you may wonder what it is and how to do it. Over the 18 sessions, all of these issues and questions will be addressed. *relit* is designed to specifically give you all that you need to begin to live out your evangelical vocation. A lot of learning will happen afterward as you continue your own formation and learn from experience. But for right now, *relit* will give you the foundations that you need in order to respond to the great commission of Christ to take the Gospel to all nations (cf. Matthew 28:19).

Come Holy Spirit. Send us out to bring the Gospel into the world. May many people come to know and love You and one day reach the promise of eternal life. Fill us, we pray, with ever more of your Divine Fire and Love.

St. Francis Xavier, pray for us.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, pray for us.

Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.

God be with you,

Michael

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SESSION 1: THE GREAT STORY

SUMMARY

God created us out of love and for love. Although our communion with Him has been broken, by His cross and resurrection we are invited once more to live in communion with God forever.

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”

JOHN 3:16 (RSV)

THE BEGINNING

- › God existed as a Trinity of love for all eternity.
- › Love, by its very nature, wants to be given away.
- › God pours out His love within Himself and in creation.
- › Love wants to be received and returned, but nothing in creation could receive and return the love of God.
 - So, God makes us so that we can be loved by Him and love Him in return.

*LOVE, BY ITS VERY
NATURE, WANTS TO
BE GIVEN AWAY.*

❖ If desired, print the documents for Further Reading, listed at the end of this session in the participant guide, for your participants before the session begins.

❖ Have the attending priest or program coordinator begin the session with prayer.

❖ Session Transition

Before viewing the first video session, briefly describe the structure of *relit: The Heart of Evangelization*, found on p.ii of this facilitator guide.

THE CHOICE

- › God allows us to choose whether we will say “Yes” to His invitation to communion.
 - When Adam and Eve said “No” by disobeying God, they committed the first sin.
 - We have echoed that sin with our own. In doing so, like Adam and Eve, we have said “No” to the offer of God.
- › The “No” of Adam and Eve led them out of Eden.
 - It led to the rupturing of friendship with God.
- › In our life, sin does not bring the happiness it promises and separates us even further from God.
- › Since we are made for God, there is an ache within us when communion with Him is absent.

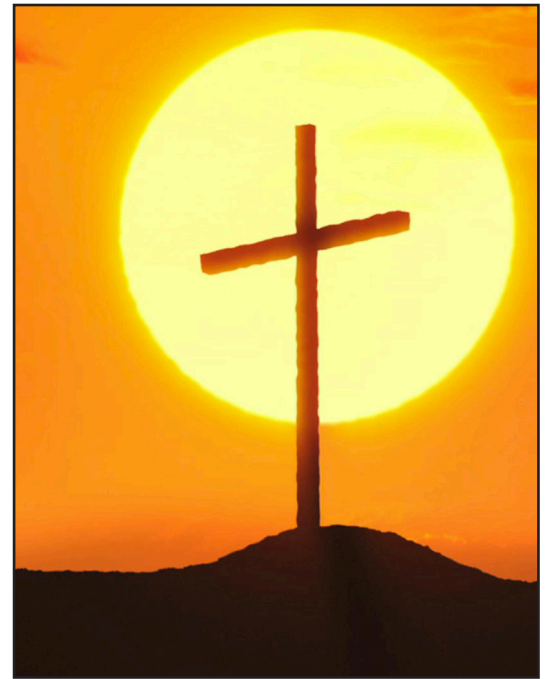
RESTORATION

- › We try to “build a tower” back up to God in an attempt to fix the problem.
 - It is impossible for us to restore our broken relationship with God.
 - The problem is that any offense against God (sin) is an infinite offense.

- As finite beings, we cannot “make up” for an infinite offense.
- Doing a lifetime of “good things” cannot make up for even the smallest venial sin.
- Restoring relationship with God
 - The heart of God the Father longs for communion with us even more than we long for it with Him.
 - This is the story of Israel – God always sought after Israel, even after they had rejected Him.
- God the Father sends His Son to reunite God and man.
 - Thus, in the Incarnation, redemption begins – God and man are reunited
 - In His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ conquers sin and death and once more makes communion between God and us possible.
- We must say “Yes” to what Christ did on Calvary, for He will not force His salvation upon us.

THE RESPONSE

- Even though God offers us everything we need for this life and eternity, we pause and wonder, “Is God good? Is His invitation worth saying ‘Yes’ to?”
- How we can say “Yes” to God
 - Primarily through the sacraments, especially Baptism.
 - Since many of us are baptized as infants, we are called to echo throughout our life the “Yes” that was said on our behalf.
 - For those that have been away from the Church, the “Yes” can be given by returning to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Often the “Yes” seems to be muted, even if we have done all the “Catholic things.” In other words, there often has not been a deep and willful engagement of the heart.
 - We can ask ourselves: Do I love God?
- Each of us is called to give this “Yes” of love to God both once and forever, initially and continually.
 - It could begin anywhere: at a retreat, during a parish mission, or in the silence of our room.
 - It can then echo through our regular, willed response to grace, saying “Yes.”
- Every Easter Vigil, we renew our baptismal promises.
 - This can be our definitive “Yes” or a renewal of the “Yes” that we have already made.
- Our “Yes” should be clear and specific.
 - It is like the vow at a wedding. It doesn’t just happen by accident.
- We are in deep communion with God because we live a holy and sacramental life and because we choose, with our will and heart, to say our “Yes.”
 - This “Yes” of love is called to be renewed daily.



❖ Takeaway

Out of sheer love, God created us for a relationship with Himself. Sin has broken this. However, through the sacrifice of Christ, it is possible once more to be united to God eternally. We are called to give our “Yes” to this, primarily through the reception of the sacraments, but also in the sanctuary of our own heart.

- ❖ Starting with the Knowledge Questions, small group facilitators should guide the discussion, providing time for each question to be touched upon. To encourage full group participation, be sure to:
 - Allow each group member the chance to make their thoughts heard.
 - Let your group linger on topics that produce more fruitful conversations, rather than cutting the discussion short.
 - Keep individuals from dominating the conversation to ensure that everyone is able to share their thoughts.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings visible.

Application Questions

If a co-worker said that “Catholics think they can earn their salvation,” what would you say?

What parts of the Great Story do you think the people in your life need to hear the most?

How could the Great Story better inform how you choose to live your life?

❖ Common Questions:

Why do we need to give a “Yes” if we are living a sacramental life?

The sacraments offer us the grace necessary for our sanctification and salvation. However, we must be open to receiving all of this grace. A closed heart says “No” to the grace offered. An open heart is a “Yes” that welcomes all of God’s treasures.

What happens after we give our “Yes”?

This is the beginning of the Christian life. Just as marriage begins with a single “Yes” when the couple exchanges their vows, we allow our initial “Yes” to God to be repeated throughout our life so that our friendship with Him may ever grow.

- ❖ After participants have read through the Activity, encourage them to implement it in their daily life. Ask a few people to share their plan.
- ❖ Have the attending priest or program coordinator close with the prayer found below.
- ❖ Provide a 10-15 minute break before beginning the next video session.

Session 1 Activity

For 5 minutes each day for 4 days, prayerfully reflect on the 4 main parts of the Great Story: The Beginning, The Choice, Restoration, and Response.

Ask God the Father to reveal ever more deeply the truth of it in your heart. Pray earnestly that He may help you to fully believe any parts of it with which you struggle (e.g. God’s love, your goodness, Christ’s offering, our capacity to respond).

Further Reading

Decree *Ad gentes* (on the mission activity of the Church)

Paragraphs 10-18
(Chapter II – Mission Work Itself)

Available at: www.vatican.va

PRAYER

HEAVENLY FATHER,

YOU HAVE MADE US OUT OF YOUR HOLY AND DIVINE LOVE.

OPEN OUR HEARTS THIS DAY SO THAT WE MAY KNOW YOUR LOVE EVER MORE.

FILL OUR MINDS WITH YOUR TRUTH AND OUR SOULS WITH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT.

MAY OUR “YES” TO YOU ECHO IN OUR HEARTS EVERY DAY, AND MAY WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO SHARE THE GREAT STORY WITH OTHERS.

AMEN.