



USER GUIDE

TO LEAD REFLECTION ON THE
Pastoral Letter to Young People



Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops



PASTORAL LETTER TO YOUNG PEOPLE: USER GUIDE

Introduction and Purpose

On 12 October 2022, in honour of the anniversary of the death of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the first beatified millennial, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter to Young People.

This Pastoral Letter responds to the CCCB's virtual conversations with over 200 young people across Canada between the ages of 12 to 25, held in the fall of 2020. The Pastoral Letter was drafted by the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis and the Office for Family and Life, at the request of the Executive Committee. It received input from youth ministry specialists, the Episcopal Commission for Evangelization and Catechesis, the Episcopal Commission for Doctrine, and the Standing Committee for Family and Life. The Permanent Council approved the Pastoral Letter at its June 2022 meeting, following some revisions, and agreed that it be issued in the name of the CCCB.

The full resource page can be found here: <https://www.cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/family-and-life/documents-activities-proposed-ccb/pastoral-letter-to-young-people/>

In order to assist clergy, youth ministers, chaplaincy leaders, university chaplains, and others, this User Guide suggests ways to reflect on the message of the Pastoral Letter to Young People.

1. For whom is the User Guide designed?

- Priests and Women/Men in Consecrated Life
- Diocesan and Parish Youth Ministers
- Those who work in the evangelization and catechesis of Young People
- High School Chaplaincy Leaders
- University and College Chaplains
- Religious Educators
- Families
- Catholic Movements and Associations as well as other groups

2. To whom is the Pastoral Letter to Young People Addressed?

a. The Pastoral Letter is addressed to young people ages 12 through 25. We suggest that the letter be studied in groups organized according to age, for example:

- i. Youth Ages – 12-16
- ii. Youth Ages – 16-19
- iii. Young Adults Ages – 20-25



3. What are the components of the Pastoral Letter to Young People?

- a. Pastoral Letter (PDF file to print or use digitally)
- b. Questions for Reflection and Discussion
- c. Video (featuring a Bishop and young people)
- d. Social Media Graphics
- e. User Guide

4. What can I do as a facilitator to prepare for sessions?

- Familiarize yourself with the Pastoral Letter by reading and reflecting on the text
- Consider how you might answer the reflection questions
- View the video and identify the appropriate time stamps for viewing

5. What preparation is required immediately before the session?

- a. Create a hospitable place for facilitated conversation
- b. Ensure that technical requirements for viewing the video are set up and cued before the session begins
- c. Videos can be accessed in the following ways:
 - i. Via the [CCCB YouTube Channel](#) or
 - ii. [Download the video file](#) from the CCCB website and save it to your computer. This option is suitable for unstable internet connections.
- d. Have print copies of the pastoral letter available as required.
- e. Be prepared to display the PDF Pastoral Letter on a large screen.



6. What materials will be helpful?

Depending on the group and the availability of resources, the following items may be of assistance.



A digital or print copy of the Pastoral Letter



An opening and or closing prayer (PDF, digital slides or print copies)



The video reflection of the Pastoral Letter to Young People (include link)



Pencils or pens



Tablet to access the video or laptop, speakers, projector and screen



Paper for taking notes



A Catholic Bible



Flip chart/whiteboard /chalkboard and markers/chalk

7. Why are guidelines for conversation helpful?

It is always helpful to identify, with the participants, some guidelines for conversation at the beginning of each session.

These may include:

- All participants will be given an opportunity to speak in the group; some may choose not to; the group will respect the person's decision.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Participants, if they choose, may respond to the speaker in a helpful but non-judgmental/non-confrontational way.
- Respect each other and commit to confidentiality to promote trust.
- Sometimes a person may require more time to speak than is allotted in the discussion. The facilitator will gently redirect the person so that he or she may speak one-on-one with another person during a break or after the session.

8. How should I organize the sessions?

It is possible to study the entire pastoral letter in one session. This is dependent on time and age of the participants. Below you will find a basic step-by-step outline for a typical session.

Step One

- Introduce yourself
- Welcome participants and allow them to introduce themselves briefly
- Opening prayer
- Introduce the purpose of the session and provide context for the Letter:
- The Bishops of Canada hosted conversations with over 200 young people from across Canada.
- The Letter is the Bishops' response to affirm that they are listening to youth, they understand their concerns and they wish to journey with them.

Step Two

- Watch the selected section of the video
- Stop the video at the correct time
- Invite participants to reflect quietly on the questions provided for the section
- Review Norms for Conversation
- Small group discussion or large group, depending on the number of participants
- *Repeat Step Two if you are discussing multiple sections in a single session*

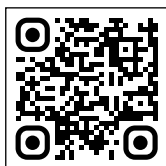
Step Three

- Close the discussion by summarizing the main themes discussed
- End with prayer (e.g. Our Father, Hail Mary or Glory Be)
- Thank attendees for participating and remind them of the date and time of the next session



9. How to use the Video

The video can be viewed in short segments to pause and facilitate questions for discussion. Simply click on the timestamp in the chart below for the section you wish to view to begin playback, and then pause playback before the next section.



If viewing the downloaded video, use this chart for timestamps on when to manually start and stop the video.

OR

Simply click on the time stamps in the YouTube video description to navigate to the desired section.

Below is a suggested approach to study the document over a series of three sessions.

SESSION ONE

0:00 [Introduction: God Loves you!](#) (pp. 2–3)

0:56 [Walking and Talking Together](#) (p. 4)

- *Who were the people in your life who have helped you grow in faith?*
- *Where do you feel most comfortable talking about and sharing your faith with others?*

4:15 [Technology and Faith](#) (p. 4)

- *How do you balance time spent online with time spent in-person with family and friends?*
- *How might the Church make better use of technology to connect with young people?*
- *What does “becoming what/who you are” mean to you?*

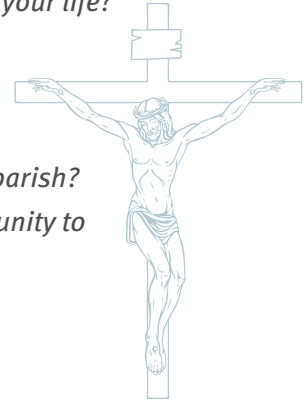
SESSION TWO

5:53 [The Presence of Jesus in your Life](#) (p. 5)

- *Who is a caring and compassionate person in your life that you can ask to guide and help you in times when you are anxious?*
- *How does prayer help you during times of sadness and stress?*
- *In what ways or moments have you noticed Jesus' presence in your life?*

8:00 [Growing in Faith: A Life-Long Learning Experience](#) (p. 6)

- *How can your parish community help you deepen your faith?*
- *Who is the best person to share your suggestions with at the parish?*
- *What gifts can you offer young people within your faith community to help them develop their relationship with Jesus?*



SESSION THREE

9:24 [The Blessed Virgin Mary](#) (p. 7)

- *How does Mary's "yes" help you better understand God's plan for your life?*

10:00 [St. Kateri Tekawitha](#) (p. 8)

- *Following in the footsteps of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, how do you find the strength to overcome the difficulties and challenges of life?*

11:33 [Blessed Carlo Acutis](#) (p. 8)

- *How does Blessed Carlo Acutis' legacy inspire you to be an extraordinary, ordinary young person of faith?*

12:43 [Conclusion: Be an Original!](#) (p. 9)



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PRAYERS FOR USE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Prayer of the Pope

Lord Jesus
in journeying towards the Synod,
your Church turns her attention to all
the young people of the world. We pray
that they might boldly take charge of
their lives, aim for the most beautiful
and profound things of life and always
keep their hearts unencumbered.

Accompanied by wise and generous
guides, help them respond to the call
you make to each of them, to real-
ize a proper plan of life and achieve
happiness. Keep their hearts open to
dreaming great dreams and make them
concerned for the good of others.

Like the Beloved Disciple, may they
stand at the foot of the Cross, to receive
your Mother as a gift from you. May
they be witnesses to your Resurrection
and be aware that you are at their side
as they joyously proclaim you as Lord.
Amen.

Franciscus

Prayer for the Canonisation of Blessed Carlo Acutis

Oh God, Our Father,
thank you for giving us Carlo,
a life example for the young
and a message of love for everyone.

You made him become enamoured with
Your Son Jesus, Making of the Eucharist
his “Highway to Heaven”.

You gave him Mary, as a most loving
Mother, and, with the Rosary, you made
him a poet of her tenderness. Receive
his prayer for us.

Above all, gaze upon the poor,
whom he loved and helped.
Grant for me too, by his intercession,
the grace that I need ...

And make our joy fulfilled,
placing Carlo among the Saints of your
Church, so that his smile may shine
again for us in the glory of your name.
Amen.

Pater, Ave, Gloria
 (“Our Father”, “Hail Mary”,
 “Glory be to God”)

Imprimatur + Domenico Sorrentino
Bishop of Assisi
Nocera Umbra
Gualdo Tadino
Foligno