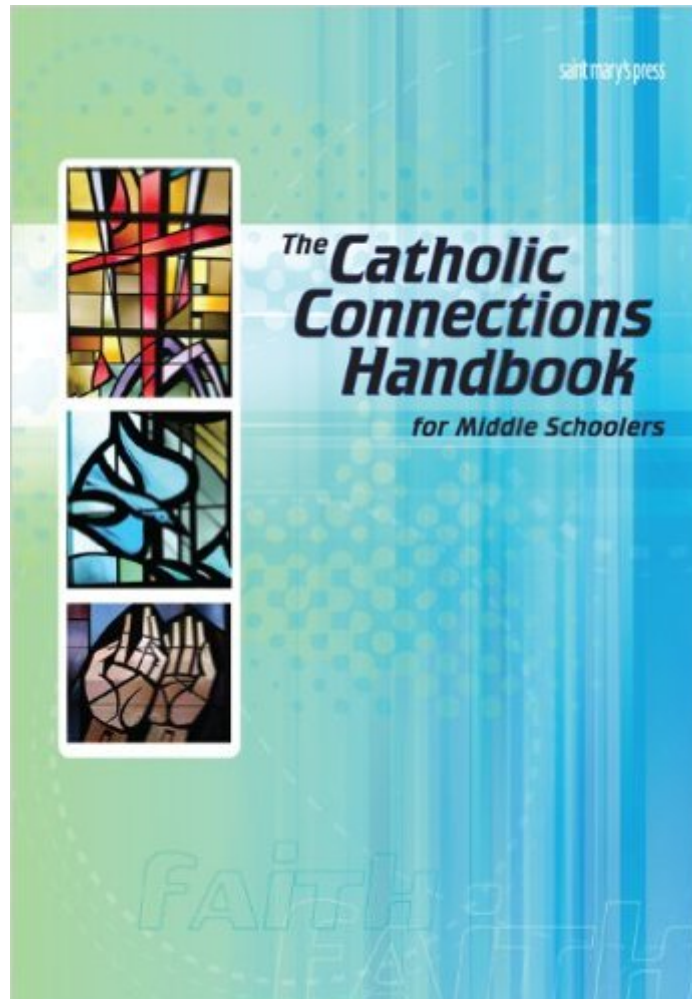


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The Catholic Connections Handbook For Middle Schoolers-paper



Synopsis

Whether middle schoolers encounter this book as part of the Catholic Connections program in faith formation or pick it up out of curiosity, *The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers* offers great guidance and aims to help young teens learn about all the central aspects of the Catholic faith, including God, revelation, faith, Jesus the Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, liturgy and sacraments, Christian morality and justice, and prayer. The book contains many special features and sidebars, including

- Live It!:** suggestions for putting faith into action
- Pray It!:** short, inspiring prayers
- Did You Know?:** additional information about selected topics
- Fun Facts:** brief notes designed to inform and amuse
- Illustrations:** 22 4-color illustrations of people of faith
- People of Faith:** profiles of inspiring, faith-filled people
- Think About It!:** questions to ponder or discuss with friends and family
- Liturgy Connections:** articles that show the relationship between Catholic beliefs and worship
- Looking Back:** insights from history
- PLUSA** collection of prayers
- A glossary of key words
- A handy, brief summary of Catholic beliefs and practices

The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers is a great tool for study, but it is more than that. It offers excellent guidance for praying and living the Catholic faith. The Subcommittee on the Catechism (formerly the Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text, copyright 2009, to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While there are some features to admire in these pages, including an attractive design, fairly solid doctrinal content, and accessible but non-condescending language, the chapters on the liturgy are problematic. Much like the authors' *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth*, this book presents a discontinuous view of the liturgy and a false, externally oriented sense of participation. Pope Benedict reminds us that participation in the liturgy is primarily an internal event: "It should be made clear that the word 'participation' does not refer to mere external activity during the celebration. In fact, the active participation called for by the Council must be understood in more substantial terms, on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life" [*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 52.] Yet in this book's pages, middle schoolers are told that "Getting involved in liturgical ministries, like being a lector, can help you appreciate the richness of the Mass." Likewise, they are asked, "Have you ever been asked to bring up the gifts at Mass? It is an honor to represent the faith community in this way." No, it is an honor -- a privilege -- to receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of the Lord at Mass. Children should not be told that bringing up the gifts adds to that experience. Moreover, priests are frequently shown celebrating Mass with sacred vessels made of clay, an abuse of the liturgy specifically proscribed by the Holy See (see *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 117), and wearing vestments that appear to have been borrowed from the set of a production of *Godspell* or *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

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