

Rediscover *the* Saints

Study Guide



Dynamic Catholic

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Introduction

We are practically shaking in our socks with excitement! Why are we so excited? Because the saints are about to enter into your life and the lives of your small group like never before. Wow! It's incredible when you think about it. Thousands of men and women with insider knowledge on how to unlock the-best-version-of-yourself and get to heaven itching to help you do the same. The next ten weeks might be the turning point for you or someone in your group. Hot dog! If that doesn't rev your engine, I don't know what will! But, since we've already exhausted our exclamation mark supplies with this little intro, we'll go ahead and dive into the study guide.

Thank you for inviting the saints into your lives. Thank you for journeying with them (and with us) for the next 10 weeks. This is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Best Practices

Keep your meeting time and place consistent.

Once a week, at a time convenient for all participants, in a location that has accessible parking is great. If you're meeting at someone's house, let people know beforehand where they can park (e.g. in the driveway, at the curb, down the street).

Get to know each other.

Even if you have already been meeting for some time, it can be beneficial to begin your time together as a group with a fun, lighthearted question. Here are some fun suggestions:

- Which fictional character would you want to be your best friend?
- What is your dream vacation?
- If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life what would it be?
- What is one of your favorite, funniest, or most awkward childhood memories?

Starting sessions this way helps individuals get to know each other a little and feel more comfortable together.

Pray.

Start every session with the opening prayer, and close each session with the closing prayer. You can also give people the opportunity to offer personal prayer intentions.

Read.

In this guide, we recommend that you only read the first two sections of the book together during your first session. You can take turns, each person reading one paragraph before switching. Or, if it suits your group better, one person can read it all. This is the only session we specifically call out reading together, but feel free to ask people to read their favorite quotes or even chapters before diving into questions every week.

Discuss.

Each week, you'll go through and ask the questions for each chapter, discussing them as a group. If you don't get through all of the questions, that is okay! Some questions might resonate more with your group than others. Feel free to ask which ones work best for your group and allow discussion to flow naturally—these are often some of the best conversations!

Allow room for silence.

It's okay if there are moments of quiet in the group. It may feel uncomfortable or awkward, but people need time to process or to summon the courage to speak up.

We are very grateful for you and your decision to meet people where they are and lead them to where God is calling them to be. The Catholic Church needs people like you doing things like this.

Be Bold. Be Catholic.

**God Bless,
The Dynamic Catholic Team**

SESSION 1:

Amazing Possibilities

Opening Prayer

LOVING FATHER, help us to know deep in our hearts that you are ready to remove today whatever obstacles we have placed between ourselves and you in the past. Open our hearts, minds, and souls to see the future you have imagined for us, and give us the courage to embrace your plans even when we feel inadequate and insecure. Amen.

Read the “Prologue: The First Saint” together as a group. Take turns reading each paragraph. When it is your turn to listen, close your eyes and place yourself in the story. What do you see? What does it smell like? What do you hear? How do you feel?

- What makes it hard to believe that “every Saint has a past and every sinner has a future”?

Read “Getting Started: Amazing Possibilities” together as a group.

- What is stopping you from being completely available to God?
- Do you believe that God wants you to be a Saint?
- Do you think it’s possible for you to be a saint?
- How can you incorporate more Holy Moments into your everyday life?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 1, 2 and 3 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

FATHER OF ALL CREATION, show us the power of your love in new and special ways. Open our hearts and minds to receive your love in all the ways you want to share it with us. And allow your love to flow through us to others, so that by knowing us they might come to know you and your love a little more.

SESSION 2:

God Loves You

Opening Prayer

FATHER OF ALL LIFE, Teach us how to live life to the fullest. Give us the courage to choose the-best-version-of-ourselves in each and every moment of our days. And allow our friendship and example to lead others to experience what it means to be fully alive. Amen.

1. Augustine: You Have a Future

- What do you believe about your past that is keeping you from your future?
- In what areas of your life have you abandoned God and why?
- Did you have a turning point in your life like St. Augustine? Do you still need one now?

2. Walter: An Overwhelming Love

- Have you ever allowed yourself to rest in God's love?
- In what ways does God show you the power of his love?
- When were you first drawn into a relationship with God? Are you being called into a deeper relationship with him now?

3. Irenaeus: Fully Alive

- When was the last time you felt fully alive? And why?
- What obstacles are preventing you from being fully alive?
- How do you think living life to its fullest glorifies God?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 4, 5 and 6 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

LOVING FATHER, the tides come in and go out to a rhythm, our hearts pump blood through our bodies to a rhythm, and the sun rises and sets to a rhythm. Help me to recognize the genius of rhythm in all you created and to establish that rhythm in the days of my life by celebrating strong daily routines and rituals. Amen.

SESSION 3:

Life-Giving Routines

Opening Prayer

FATHER, thank you for all the ways you bless me, those I am aware of and all those I am still oblivious to. The Scriptures show me that from the beginning you have desired friendship with humanity. Help me to know and believe that just as you yearned for friendship with Adam and Eve; Abraham, Moses, and Noah; Ruth, Esther, Rachel, and Mary; you desire a powerful friendship with me. Give me the wisdom to make prayer a priority in my life so together we can foster a beautiful friendship. Amen.

4. Benedict: Life-Giving Daily Routines

- Do your daily routines reinvigorate you?
- Have you ever experienced the effects of a good daily routine? What was that like?
- How can you incorporate the motto “*Ora et Labora*” (“Pray and Work”) into your everyday life?

5. Teresa of Avila: The First Routine

- Have you ever been taught how to pray?
- How does thinking about prayer as a conversation with God change the way you approach prayer?
- When you pray, do you do all the talking or do you spend time listening?

6. Ignatius: Emotional Intelligence

- Are you an emotionally intelligent person?
- What piece of the “Spiritual Exercises” resonate with you the most?
- Have you ever experienced contagious holiness?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 7, 8 and 9 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

FATHER, teach me to listen deeply to what is happening within me and to discern what you are saying to me through my hopes and dreams, fears and failures, joy and sadness. Give me a piercing awareness of what is happening within me and around me, so that I can love you more, love others to the best of my ability, and love myself as you love me. Amen.

SESSION 4:

Making Great Decisions

Opening Prayer

LORD, thank you for the vast array of feelings and emotions that you allow me to experience. Teach me to listen to the dissatisfaction in my life and discover what you are saying to me through it. Then give me the courage and boldness to do something about it. Amen.

7. Francis of Assisi: Dissatisfied

- What are you dissatisfied with at this time in your life?
- How can you respond, instead of react to, what you are dissatisfied with?
- How is God inviting you to a better life?

8. Thomas More: The Gentle Voice Within

- When was the last time you paused to listen to your conscience before making a decision?
- When have you made a courageous choice and felt the effects of grace from it?
- Have you ever turned to the example of a saint in a time of adversity? If so, which saint?

9. St. John: Friendship

- Do you allow people to really get to know you?
- How would you describe Jesus to someone who has never heard of him?
- How do you want to be known? How do you want to be remembered?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 10, 11 and 12 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

LORD, inspire me to care more about my friendship with you than about my accomplishments in this world. Help me to make our time together each day a sacred and nonnegotiable touchstone of daily life. Teach me how to be a good friend to others. Amen.

SESSION 5:

The World Needs The-Best-Version-of-You

Opening Prayer

LOVING FATHER, open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change so that I can carry out the mission you have imagined for my life. Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are dynamic and engaging. Show me how best to get involved in the life of my parish. Make our community hungry for best practices and continuous learning, and help us to realize that we each have a role to play in making our parish a perfect place for imperfect people trying to walk with you. Amen.

10. Martha: Our Longing for Belonging

- Are you part of a vibrant community? How do you contribute to its vibrancy?
- Is Jesus asking you to sit at his feet (like Mary), or grow in hospitality (like Martha)?
- If every person in your parish were as engaged or disengaged as you, how dynamic would your parish be?

11. Vincent De Paul: God Feeds Us to Feed Others

- Are your friends helping you become the-best-version-of-yourself?
- How good are you at recognizing and serving the poor around you?
- Have you ever experienced the domino effect of a Holy Moment?

12. Harry: With Your Whole Heart

- When was the last time you did something with your whole heart?
- Are you helping your siblings become the-best-version-of-themselves? How can you start?
- Do you collaborate with God wholeheartedly? Why or why not?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 13, 14 and 15 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

FATHER, empty my heart of all the useless attachments, superficial desires, and selfish inclinations so that I can give my whole heart to loving you and the people who cross my path. Amen.

SESSION 6:

Trusting God's Plan for You

Opening Prayer

LORD, I am open to your possibilities. Please fill me with the wisdom, grace, and courage I need to step out of my self-imposed limitations and live in your possibilities. Amen.

13. John Vianney: Disoriented

- Are you open to the possibilities that only God can see for you?
- Have you ever seen God work in a moment of rejection?
- What do you think God is calling you to do in both your primary and secondary vocations?

14. Thomas: We All Have Doubts

- Do your doubts unsettle you, or do you see them as an invitation to grow?
- What doubt are you wrestling with right now?
- What can you take from the story of St. Thomas and put into practice today?

15. Bernard: In Search of Excellence

- Are you committed to the pursuit of excellence?
- Who is your hero, and why?
- What needs to be renewed, refreshed and improved in your life?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 16, 17 and 18 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

FATHER OF ALL CREATION, fill me with a love of excellence, fill me with a hunger for excellence, and make me excellent in all the ways you envisioned while I was still in my mother's womb. Amen.

SESSION 7:

Love Is Sacrifice

Opening Prayer

LOVING FATHER, teach us to do the little things of each day with great love by opening our hearts, minds, and souls to the reality that each moment is an opportunity to love. Amen.

16. Therese of Lisieux: It's the Little Things

- What list of attributes describes your best self?
- Describe a time you experienced the joy that came from doing a small act with love.
- How can you practice the “Little Way” in your life?

17. Maximillian Kolbe: I Will Take Your Place

- For whom are you willing to lay down your life?
- Have you ever dreamed of becoming a saint?
- What small sacrifice are you willing to make today for somebody else?

18. Mother Teresa: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness

- How do you celebrate truth, beauty, and goodness?
- Do you believe that Christians can still captivate the world? Why or why not?
- What are the “poisons” in your life right now?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 19, 20 and 21 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

JESUS, you came into the world to remind us of truth, beauty, and goodness. Awaken us to the truth, beauty, and goodness that you have placed within us, so we can share them with the people we meet each day. Amen.

SESSION 8:

Be Bold

Opening Prayer

FATHER, your saints teach us how to live when life gets difficult. They teach us how to endure all types of hardships. We all have to grapple with troubled times in our lives. During those moments of darkness and difficulty, remind us to draw strength from the examples of your saints. Amen.

19. Mary McKillop: Australia's First Saint

- How coachable are you?
- Do you think it is possible to be both critical of the Church and also faithful to God?
- When was a time you allowed yourself to be coached by God? How about anyone else?

20. Anthony of the Desert: Be a Rebel

- Is the culture helping you or hurting you?
- Would you describe yourself as a slave to the culture or a child of God? Why?
- When was a time you were a rebel for goodness and truth?

21. Nicholas: Holding Christmas in Your Heart

- What can you learn from the real Santa?
- In what ways do you intercede for God's people?
- How do you celebrate? What do you celebrate?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapters 22, 23 and 24 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

LORD, help us to realize that the saints were ordinary people who made themselves available to you. Give us the courage to make ourselves completely available to you, so that together we can collaborate in whatever ways you envision. Amen.

SESSION 9:

Letting Go

Opening Prayer

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, QUEEN OF ANGELS, hold me in your arms and comfort me in times of disappointment and disillusionment.

Watch over my children, hold them close to you, and protect them from all harm. Share your wisdom with us as you did with the early Church, so we can become phenomenal decision makers. Amen.

22. Mary: Beautiful Surrender

- What prevents you from surrendering yourself completely to God?
- Have you ever surrendered to God? What was that like?
- What can Mary and the saints teach you about making good decisions?

23. Ralph: Love of Learning

- What stimulates your curiosity and desire to learn?
- What is your learning style?
- How would reading five pages of a spiritual book each day impact your life?

24. James: Do Not Be Afraid

- How often do you forget that we are just passing through this place?
- Where would you like to take a pilgrimage—pick places both locally and abroad?
- What are your fears, and how can you let God transform those fears?

For Next Time

Remind folks to read chapter 25 before your next gathering, which will be on... [insert date, time, and place here].

Closing Prayer

FATHER, give me the heart of a pilgrim. Help me to be mindful of the fact that I am just passing through this place we call earth. And fill me with the courage to live the life you created me to live. Amen.

SESSION 10:

Now Is Your Time

Opening Prayer

FATHER, fill me with a love of learning. Make me hungry to learn and grow in every aspect of life, especially spiritually. Help me to keep in mind that when I am growing spiritually, everyone in my life benefits from it. Amen.

25. All Saints: Now Is Your Time

- How can you recapture the wonder of childhood?
- Life is filled with moments that call us to go deeper. What will your moment be?
- How can you be more present in the moments of your life?
- Are you ready to start collaborating with God?
- How is God calling you to move forward?
God's dream is for all of us to be saints.
What would you be the patron saint of?

Closing Prayer

LORD, draw me nearer than ever before in my life, so that I can hear your voice and respond to your call. Amen.

Conclusion

Your small group is changing the world. Think about it... if every Catholic in America was part of a small group as awesome and dynamic as yours, your parish and your community and the Church and the world would all look completely different. So thank you and keep it up!

To learn about how you can get everyone in your parish a great, Catholic book, please go to DynamicCatholic.com/Book-Program. It's incredibly affordable, wonderfully effective at bringing people back to church, and a great first step in establishing more small groups at your parish. We hope you check it out.

Remember: The saints cheering are for you. And so is Dynamic Catholic. Good luck and God bless!



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