

Catholic Central

*An orientation guide to themes and episodes,
for faith formation ministries and viewers
seeking the Big Picture.*

Family Theater Productions

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Family Theater
Productions



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Catholic Basics

What does it mean to think, live and be Catholic?

What's Catholic?

Is being Catholic about following a set of rules? Practicing cultural traditions? Or something more? Kai and Libby serve up an overview of some of the things that Catholicism entails, both in church and in daily life. (8:49)

The Liturgical Year

Beginnings, endings, and the in-between: we experience them in everyday life, but Catholics also have a calendar that serves as a guide to navigating them while getting closer to Christ. What are the Catholic seasons? How can they help us throughout life? (7:16)

Being Human

What does it mean to be human? Kai and Libby explore what being a human person means, both in terms of science and as Christians. This includes the idea of being made in the image and likeness of God, our capacity for love, our need for community, the ways in which we create and communicate, and our eternal destiny. (7:00)

Life After Life

To think, live and be Catholic means to be part of a journey that begins the moment we are born and lasts forever. What happens after our earthly life comes to an end? Where do we go? More importantly, why? Kai and Libby explain the Great Beyond: Heaven, Purgatory and ... uh, the other place. (7:12)

Living Catholicism

What does it mean to live as a Catholic in the world? What shapes our attitudes towards human interactions and decisions about work and life?

Church at Home

People often think of Church as a physical building or place of worship. While that may be true, did you know Church can also take place at home? Join Nick and Gabby go uncover a new way to serve God in your very own home. (8:05)

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments ... not just a list of things we can and cannot do to get into Heaven. Rather, they are the loving words given to us by a Father who wants what is best for us. Join Gabby and Nick in this episode of Catholic Central to learn more. (7:12)

Truth, Beauty, Goodness: The Transcendentals

What is truth? Why are we drawn to beauty and goodness? These three things are something all humans gravitate towards. Wanna know why? Check out our episode on the Transcendentals to learn more. (6:08)

Corporal Works of Mercy

Serving other faulty, smelly human beings can be many things, but one thing Catholics believe it's not? Optional. Kai and Libby give you several ways to break out of selfishness and put love into action today. (5:20)

Spiritual Works of Mercy

How can we help others spiritually? Kai and Libby break down some of the ways the Catholic Church has laid out throughout the centuries to serve others on a spiritual level, and what exactly it means to carry them out. (5:45)

Virtues

We all have bad habits, from putting things off to getting sucked into Netflix for hours at a time. But how can we combat them? Kai and Libby take you through the cardinal and theological virtues that can help you combat bad habits and live a happier, more fulfilled life. (5:56)

What Is Love?

Ah, love. The most highly-addictive, many-splendored battlefield there is, and also the rule by which Catholics live in the imitation of Christ. So, what does love mean? Kai and Libby explain the different kinds of love and how we can all keep ourselves from being selfish when it comes to love. (6:13)

Everyday Discernment

Is making decisions a straightforward process, or does life seem like a constant crossroads of infinite possibilities and saying yes to anything excludes everything else? Kai and Libby share some techniques, including the much-talked-about Discernment of Spirits, that will hopefully make the process easier for making choices, big or small. (7:07)

Formation of Conscience

The conscience goes beyond your gut, instinct, or little voice inside you. But how should we use it? How do we go about forming it? Kai and Libby fill you in on how to form the conscience and eventually make better decisions because of it. (6:54)

Faith and Science

Many people mistakenly believe that faith is in contradiction to science or reason. These episodes address that misconception.

Faith and Reason

The Catholic Church requires you to check your brain and abandon all logic at the door, right? Actually, no. In this episode, Kai and Libby break down the different tools that the Church uses for finding different kinds of truth, and where faith comes in. (6:18)

Creation and Evolution

How did we get here as humans? In this episode Kai and Libby refute the notion that science and faith are at war, but instead demonstrate the ways they complement each other. They discuss the Catholic Church's acceptance of the theory of evolution, Catholic contributions to scientific research and discovery, and exploration of not just how the universe works, but why it exists at all. (6:51)

Proofs of God

Belief in God is more than just blindly believing in an old man in the sky. Kai and Libby take you through a few of the rational arguments for the existence of God that Catholics have proposed throughout the centuries, and how faith and logic can work together. (7:28)

Healing

The hope for healing of body, mind and spirit is part of our tradition. These episodes describe the sacraments of healing and talk about mental health issues in our world today.

Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick might be one of the least visible and most misunderstood sacraments. Who is it for? What is it supposed to accomplish? Should we assume that if a priest comes to anoint us it means our time's almost up? Kai and Libby walk us through what it means and why Catholics have it. (4:46)

Reconciliation

What's so important about the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Why do Catholics believe that you have to confess to a priest? What's happening in that confessional? Kai and Libby explain the powerful but often misunderstood sacrament that enables us to mend our relationship with God and heal. (6:52)

Spirituality and Mental Health

Can you "pray away" mental illness? Is there hope for people who commit suicide? Kai and Libby discuss the Catholic Church's teaching on mental illness, and what you can do if you find that you and others are struggling with it. (6:23)

Prayer

What is prayer? How should we pray? Why? Kai and Libby fill us in on the graces and benefits of a prayer life that goes beyond just asking for stuff. (4:32)

Sacraments of Initiation

How does a person join the Catholic Church, become Catholic? These episodes describe the sacraments of initiation in the Church.

Baptism

What does it mean to be "born again in the spirit"? Kai and Libby look at the first sacrament, which is common to all Christians (Jesus was also baptized). Even outside of Christianity — and often in movies and TV — entering into, and emerging from, water is a universal symbol of renewed life, a way of being born again "of water and the spirit." (7:27)

Confirmation

What exactly is happening at confirmation? Kai and Libby explain just what is being confirmed, who is doing the confirming, and, most importantly ... why? (6:21)

Eucharist 101

Catholics call the Eucharist "the source and summit of the Christian life." But what does that mean? What do Catholics REALLY believe about the Eucharist? Why is it important? (7:23)

Real Presence

What does it mean when Catholics talk about the Real Presence in the Eucharist? Where does this belief come from? How does it affect us today? (6:56)

Vocations

Each person is called by God for a purpose. These episodes describe the sacraments of commitment and look at the ways vocation is part of everybody's life.

The Purpose and Meaning of Life

Is there a secret to life's meaning and purpose? What are we called to? Do you ever feel paralyzed when you look at all your options? How can we avoid messing everything up? Kai and Libby attempt to answer these questions and more. Find out the five steps Catholic thinkers recommend for a life of meaning, joy, and love. (6:37)

Catholic Dating

Dating in the Catholic world can be awkward, confusing and depressing. But it doesn't have to be! Kai and Libby give us some tips on how to make the dating experience better, both for you and everyone you date. (7:45)

Sexuality

What's the deal with all of the Catholic rules on sexuality? Is the Church trying to repress Catholics, or are there other reasons behind what Catholics believe? In this episode, Kai and Libby explore the whys behind the Catholic Church's seemingly unnatural and outdated teachings on sex, whys about our purpose and our commitment to each other. (7:28)

Marriage

Marriage: one of the most common institutions across every time and culture. But what do Catholics mean when they talk about marriage? (5:56)

Holy Orders

What is the sacrament of Holy Orders, and what does it do? What does it mean to be a priest, deacon, or bishop? Kai and Libby go through the history of the priesthood and what it looks like today. (7:03)

God Talk

Who is God and how do we talk about God? These episodes address the Catholic perspective on God-talk.

Who Is God?

God is a term that's thrown around a lot, but what do Catholics really mean when they say God? How can we know who God is? Why does God seem to have changed throughout time? (7:34)

The Holy Spirit

What — or who — is the Holy Spirit? Where does he show up in Scripture, and in our lives? Kai and Libby fill you in on the most mysterious person of the Trinity. (4:31)

Who Is Jesus?

There are so many different images of Jesus, but what was he really like? What can we know about him? And how can Catholics say they have a relationship with someone who lived 2,000 years ago? (6:56)

The Trinity

The Trinity: three persons, one deceptively simple concept that has spawned dozens of theological headaches over the centuries! Kai and Libby try to explain what the Trinity means and what the implications of it are for Catholics today, without falling into any major heresies. (5:44)

Catholic Prayer

Catholic spirituality offers a range of ways to connect with God. These episodes present some of the most widely practiced and treasured prayer traditions.

Prayer

What is prayer? How should we pray? Why? Kai and Libby fill us in on the graces and benefits of a prayer life that goes beyond just asking for stuff. (4:32)

Lectio Divina

Can you have a personal experience with God through the Bible? Is reading the Bible all about memorizing dates and facts, or is there another way to go about it? In this episode, Kai and Libby show how to use the Bible to deepen your prayer experience and relationship with God. (6:00)

Ignatian Meditation

Kai and Libby demonstrate how the technique called Ignatian Meditation — developed by St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits — can help readers go deeper into the Bible by using their imaginations to flesh out passages, especially stories in the Gospels. Just don't get carried away! (5:59)

The Rosary

The Rosary might seem boring and irrelevant at first, but there's more to it than meets the eye, er ... ear ... Kai and Libby guide you through the history, meaning, and how it can benefit your spiritual life. (6:02)

The Rosary: The Four Mysteries

Not sure how to pray the Rosary? Kai and Libby guide you through the complete prayer in four episodes covering the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries. (Audio)

Psalms

The Psalms are more than the part of Mass when the cantor looks like she's landing a fighter jet! Kai and Libby take you through the different kinds of Psalms and how they can help YOUR prayer life. (5:02)

Catholic Social Teaching

Jesus' teaching and Biblical prophecy contain a vision of how human beings should treat one another in society. This vision has been identified as Catholic Social Teaching. While Jesus may not have spoken on some of the specific issues we face today, his view of life and humanity can be a guide for Catholics in shaping their hearts and activity.

Catholic Social Teaching

What do hymns, holy water, and incense have to do with defending human rights around the world? (6:58)

Pro-Life Issues

What does it mean to be pro-life? What are the issues that matter, and why? Join Kai and Libby as they explain why Catholics care about the beginning, the end, and everything in between. (7:20)

Feminism

Is Feminism an evil movement with aims to destroy society as we know it? Or something positive that even popes have endorsed? Can Catholics be feminists? Kai and Libby break down some of the different movements within Feminism and what role it has in the Church and the world. (7:10)

Just War

Is war ever the answer? What's the Catholic approach to thinking about it? When is it justified? Kai and Libby break down the things a conflict needs in order to be considered just, and some of the things that all of us need to take into account when thinking about conflict on a both global and local scale (looking at you, roommates!). (7:50)

Care For the Environment

The Environment ... beloved of tree-huggers, hippies, and ... popes? Kai and Libby explore the rich teachings and tradition of the Catholic Church when it comes to the stewardship and conservation of the environment, and why it matters to Catholics. (6:30)

Evil in the World

These episodes talk about the various ways evil manifests itself and address the problem of evil itself.

Forces of Evil

What does it mean when Catholics talk about evil? Is the Devil real? Should we be scared that we might be possessed? In "Catholic Central: Forces of Evil" Libby and Kai explain what Catholics think about evil, and how to fight against it. (7:42)

Seven Deadly Sins

Do you ever feel like you lose control? Kai and Libby look at common troublesome issues that have plagued humanity since the beginning: avarice, envy, pride, sloth, gluttony and lust. Luckily, each of these sins has an antidote, a virtue that, cultivated and nurtured, can offer freedom. What are they? Well, you'll just have to watch. (8:19)

Problem of Evil

Kai and Libby ask the big question: Why do bad things, like floods, fires, illness and falling anvils, happen to good people? They tackle the role of free will in the things that go wrong for us, along with the larger meaning of suffering, and how suffering affects, and can strengthen, our bonds with each other and God. (7:51)

Bible Basics

Welcome to the Bible. These episodes include a general introduction to the sacred texts as well as focusing on key books of the Old and New Testaments.

The Bible

What do Catholics actually believe about the Bible? Kai and Libby explore the origin of the most important collection of literature in Christianity. We explain how the books of the Bible came to be, who decided which writings should be included (such as those six “extra” books in Catholic Bibles), and how we should interpret what we read there. (8:06)

The Pentateuch

Paradise, plagues, and floods, oh my! The first five books of the Bible, aka the Pentateuch, aka the Torah, contain some pretty epic stories, but how should we read them? How can we find in them things that are relevant for our lives? Kai and Libby break down some of the themes in the stories in the Pentateuch while wearing some awesome wigs. (5:36)

Prophets

We hear a lot about prophets, but who are they, and what is their function? Kai and Libby examine some of the prophets in the Old Testament, and explain why we should be skeptical when it comes to modern-day self-proclaimed prophets. (5:41)

Women of the Old Testament

We often hear the stories of strength and perseverance from fairytales and fables — but did you know that the Old Testament has some of the greatest stories of valor and triumph? These stories are specifically of the women who held firm in their trust in God and in grace during a time when a “woman’s place” often meant being timid and obedient. Join Gabby and Nick to learn more about these incredible women and the lessons we can learn from their stories. (8:07)

Gospels

What’s the big deal about four books in the Bible? In “Catholic Central: The Gospels,” Kai and Libby survey the four Biblical books that are central to Christianity: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They are eyewitness accounts (or, in the case of Luke, based on eyewitness accounts) of the life and ministry of Christ. We explore these four distinct lenses through which Jesus comes fully into focus. (7:27)

Pauline Letters

St. Paul is responsible for a lot of the books in the New Testament, including some stuff that is, well, pretty weird (by today’s standards). What is the context behind Paul’s letters, and what can we take from them in our own times? (6:39)

Revelation

Plagues, destruction, locusts with human heads that torture people ... the book of Revelation is, to put it mildly, a little weird. In this episode, Kai and Libby show us how to read the book of Revelation and how all those cryptic visions can mean something for us today. (7:08)

The Church and Her People

These episodes take a big-picture look at the Church and how it developed. Historically the papacy has been a source of inspiration and, at times, scandal. Even in the times when some people in the Church sinned, saints and reformers have emerged.

History of the Church in 5 Moments

The Catholic Church has seen a lot in its 2,000+ year history. In this episode, Kai and Libby look at five key moments in history that helped shape the Church into what it is today. (7:55)

Popes 101

What can and can't the pope do? Habemus Papam! Kai and Libby look at the history of the Catholic pontificate, from its beginning with Christ declaring Saint Peter the Rock (and thereby the first pope) down to the present day. The episode also deals with how popes are chosen, and what they can, and can't, declare to be infallible. (8:01)

Saints

They are "our great cloud of witnesses": the saints in Heaven, friends of God and friends of us left here on earth. Kai and Libby introduce some of the very human people the Church has acknowledged as saintly, because of how they lived their lives, and because of the miracles God does when people pray for their intercession. Everybody needs a friend! (8:16)

Mary

Kai and Libby look at the Jewish girl who said "Fiat!" (Latin for "Let It be done"), became Jesus' mother and His first disciple, and, per Christ's edict from the Cross, mother to us all. We learn that she's venerated, not worshiped; asked to pray for us; and makes occasional appearances to the faithful to achieve her one mission: bringing people closer to her Son. (6:58)

Immaculate Conception

This short episode delves further into what are Catholics talking about when they reference the Immaculate Conception. Libby breaks down what it is, why Catholics believe it, and what it could mean for us today. (2:35)

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe is undoubtedly the best-known Marian apparition in the world. But what is the story behind her appearance? Who was the humble Indigenous man who said "yes" to her request? And what impact did Our Lady of Guadalupe have on the people of the Americas? Join Nick and Gabby to find out! (5:27)

St. Joseph

St. Joseph doesn't say a word in Scripture, but that doesn't mean he wasn't important. Libby fills us in on exactly why Scripture describes St. Joseph as a righteous man, and how he can help us out today. (2:40)

St. Patrick

Who are we really celebrating on St. Patrick's Day? What is St. Patrick's story? Join Kai as he separates the myths from the true story. (3:17)

Liturgy and Liturgical Seasons

These episodes present a play-by-play account of the Mass, an overview of the Church's yearly calendar, and a look at the key celebrations of the liturgical year.

Sunday Morning Liturgy (The Mass)

It's the Sunday morning liturgical event you've all been waiting for! Kai and Libby come to you live from this week's Mass to make sure you don't miss a beat of this historical, mystical, and communal celebration. (7:16)

The Liturgical Year

Beginnings, ends, and the in-between: we experience them in everyday life, but Catholics also have a calendar that serves as a guide to navigating them while getting closer to Christ. What are the Catholic seasons? How can they help us throughout life? (7:16)

Lent

What is Lent all about? Do you have to give up everything good and/or fun? Why do Catholics do Lent? Kai and Libby take you through the history of Lent and how to get the most out of it this year. (7:32)

Kai's Lenten Meltdown

Our co-host Kai had a bit of a rough start to Lent. How's your Lent going? (1:55)

What's Up With Catholics? (Ash Wednesday edition)

How are Catholics around the country preparing for Ash Wednesday? Kai answers that question in this short video. (1:01)

Ash Wednesday Quiz

Why do we use ashes on Ash Wednesday? Libby answers that question with the help of this short Ash Wednesday quiz. (0:34)

Good Friday

Good Friday: the day we commemorate the death of Jesus. So why do we call it GOOD Friday? How can we come to a deeper appreciation of this day? (2:56)

Easter Traditions

What do Easter eggs and bunnies have to do with the resurrection of Jesus? Kai and Libby explain some of the Easter traditions we celebrate and the connection to Catholic beliefs. (2:20)

Pentecost

What happened at Pentecost? Why is it called the Church's birthday? How does the Holy Spirit help us today? (1:46)

Symbols of Christmas

From Santa (spoiler alert!) to Christmas trees, lots of Christmas stuff has Catholic roots. Kai and Libby break down the real stories behind the things that bring us joy, mirth, and an unbelievable amount of stress each December. (3:09)

The Nativity

The Birth of Christ is the reason for the season, but what does the Incarnation really mean, and why is Christmas on December 25? Our Nick and Gabby take a break from holiday preparations to give you the facts. (3:38)

Crisis and Reform

Throughout history, the Holy Spirit works to heal the wounds of the Church and renew her mission of continuing God's service on earth.

Sexual Abuse Crisis

Recent news about sexual abuse in the Catholic Church has shaken the faith of many Catholics. Kai and Libby offer some perspective on the crisis and where to go from here. (6:43)

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