

THE
SEARCH
COORDINATOR MANUAL



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE®

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	—————	EPISODE SUMMARY
7	—————	SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE
9	—————	LARGE GROUP EXPERIENCE
11	—————	THE SEARCH CONTINUES
12	—————	RETREAT OPTION
19	—————	FAQ
22	—————	TESTIMONIALS



EPISODES



THE SEARCH leads people to the deepest questions of the human heart, exploring the meaning and purpose of life with a visually stunning and intellectually stimulating approach. As an evangelization series hosted by Chris Stefanick, THE SEARCH guides viewers through a crescendo of seven episodes examining life and death, sorrow and happiness, and science and faith. Astrophysicists, psychologists, astronauts, neuroscientists, professors, athletes, artists, and the beauty of the cosmos all point to one big conclusion: Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Each episode averages 30 minutes in length. THE SEARCH is available in English and Spanish.

Don't go through THE SEARCH alone!

Whether in a large group, a small group or one-on-one discussion, THE SEARCH is best experienced with others. The combination of beautiful music, cinematography, and compelling testimony inspires thought-provoking and lively discussion. *THE SEARCH Guide* will help a group grow, discuss, and internalize the main points.

EP 1: WHAT DO YOU SEEK?



In our very first episode, we open hearts with a look at the question “what do you seek?” What is that deep longing in our hearts all about? We’re all living for something, and we all strive for that something out there that is ultimately going to make us happy. But what is it? For some, this question is on their minds every day. For others, life goes by in a flash without even asking the question.

EPIISODES

EP 2: WHO ARE YOU?



To find clues as to the meaning of life, we first look at ourselves. Who am I? Is there more to me than matter? Is there more to us than meets the eye? We talk with neuroscientists, psychologists, composers, and artists to examine the mystery of you. If you're just a body, then satisfaction in life should come from tending to simple bodily needs. Fill your stomach, be comfortable. But there's more to you than that. You are material and immaterial. And that unseen part of you craves for so much more. As C. S. Lewis once said, "If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

EP 3: WHY A GOD?



Today we seem to think we've moved beyond the idea of God, but this secular view of life is a relatively new and unusual idea to humanity. All through human history man has looked to something outside himself for the answers to life. Why have we given up on God? Do we think science has disproven him? Do we think society is better off without him? We talk with astrophysicists, chemists, Harvard professors, and more to make the case that it's not only reasonable to believe in God—it's *essential* if you want to have a truly amazing life. Our souls seek their creator, and we'll never be truly happy unless we seek him out. As St. Augustine famously said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

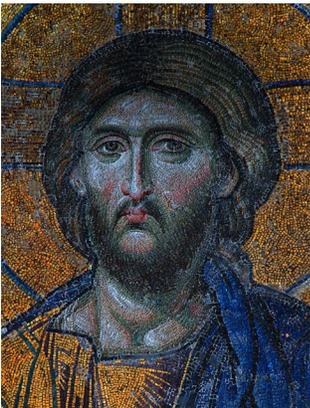
EPIISODES

EP 4: WHAT'S OUR STORY?



Your life is a story, and it's caught up in the great story of humanity. This great story, as we see in the Scriptures, shows us the amazing love story that is God's pursuit of man. The God that is love created us so we can ultimately be with his love. We were made to be with God. Union with God is so central to the purpose of life that we even see the afterlife in these terms. Our definition of Heaven is union with God, and Hell is the absence of him. Your life has a plot. Your life has purpose. Your life has value. We need to see how we fit into this big love story to begin to know why we exist. And that love of God isn't abstract—it has a face and name: Jesus.

EP 5: WHO IS JESUS?



The most beautiful part of this story is that we can personally know God's love. This is the person of Jesus. But how did this seemingly insignificant carpenter born into poverty in a dusty corner of the Roman Empire become the most pivotal figure in all of history? Christianity isn't simply a philosophy for life—the center of Christianity is a person. We look at the life of Jesus and what he came to do. Ultimately, we need to decide if Jesus really was who he said he was. We can't sit on the fence. Because if Jesus really was who he said he was, we need to make him the Lord of our lives, and when we do, everything changes.

EPISODES

EP 6: AM I SAVED?



What Jesus did for us through his life, death, and resurrection was the greatest act of love in history. He saved us. He did this for each one of us. Personally. But some might feel unworthy of this gift of love. We may feel we have too much baggage. We may feel unlovable. But God didn't come to reveal himself to us on a pedestal—he came to enter into our messy human condition. To fix us from within. To transform us from the inside out. Some might be surprised by how generous the love of God really is. We don't deserve God's love, but that's the amazing reality of God's mercy. This relationship with God isn't all about our love for him. It's about his love for us that changes our lives forever.

EP 7: WHY A CHURCH?



How do I access this man who lived 2,000 years ago? How do I live this call of love? We uniquely encounter the love of God in his Church. But really? The Church? There are so many negative views of the Church. It's out of touch. It's full of bad people. It's just too boring. Maybe when we say "the Church" we mean a little more. The Church is the family of God that's been lovingly gathered through our entire story. It's the place where we were meant to encounter his grace that prepares us for every step of life. The God that is love knows how we're made—material and spiritual—and we need tangible ways to live our faith. We can't be spiritual but not religious. This is where we'll find ultimate happiness in life. This is where the God that has been seeking humanity, who wrote the deepest desires onto our human hearts, encounters us. Jesus' first words to humanity in the Gospel of John are "what do you seek?" The one that asked the question not only knows the answer—he *is* the answer. The answers to everything. And you find him most profoundly here in his Church.

SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

THE SEARCH SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

THE SEARCH small group can gather at the parish or in a home. The facilitator invites up to eight people to participate, and the groups may be either co-ed or the same gender. The same gender groups may use either *THE SEARCH Guide* or gender specific guides (*THE SEARCH Men's Participant Guide* or *THE SEARCH Women's Participant Guide*). The gender specific guides are designed for groups that have some familiarity with faith formation as they contain prayer, scripture, catechism quotations, and application questions.



REACHING THE WORLD WITH THE SEARCH

Imagine if a small group of five went through THE SEARCH, and at its conclusion each participant led a group of five new people through THE SEARCH. If that multiplication continued unbroken, it would reach eight billion people in approximately fourteen generations.

SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR TIPS

- Encourage everyone to share, but let them know that they don't have to if they are not comfortable
- Encourage everyone to be respectful in what they say and in listening to what others have to say
- Let the group know that differences in opinion are welcome
- Ask follow-up questions like "Can you explain a little more?" or "Has anyone else felt the same way?"
- Give affirming responses to what is shared
- Gently draw others into the conversation if someone is dominating the time
- Refrain from teaching—simply facilitate discussion on key points from the video

Here is a sample schedule for the small group gathering:

7:00 pm Snacks / Drinks

7:15 pm Introduction (*Getting to Know You* or *Connect* questions from the Guide)

7:35 pm Play THE SEARCH video

8:05 pm Group discussion

8:40 pm Closing announcements

8:45 pm Finish



LARGE GROUP EXPERIENCE

THE SEARCH LARGE GROUP EXPERIENCE

The large group is a gathering hosted at the parish over the course of seven weeks. The team consists of a host, table facilitators, and a hospitality coordinator. The video is presented, and then the large group breaks into round tables for small group discussion. The small groups remain the same week to week. THE SEARCH guide is available for each member of the group. The facilitator uses the guide to help participants get to know one another and to discuss the key points in the video. The participant uses the guide to take notes and to use in the future, should they feel called to facilitate a small group of their own.



There are a few key roles in building your SEARCH team—the host, the table facilitators, and the hospitality coordinator.

The host should be comfortable speaking in front of a group. They are charged with creating a welcoming and fun environment. They will move the group through transitions and make announcements.

The table facilitators will use the guide to help their table get to know one another on a deeper level and to discuss the points that were made in the video presentation. The table facilitators will make sure everyone has an opportunity to share their thoughts, and that members are respectful of one another. They will not teach any content—only facilitate discussion. They will encourage members to share their honest reactions to the video and listen attentively to one another.

The hospitality coordinator recruits the help that is needed to set up the environment, provide snacks and drinks, and clean up after the session.

LARGE GROUP EXPERIENCE

HELPFUL TIPS

- Assemble a team to host THE SEARCH
- Reserve space at the parish
- If you wish to offer a retreat after the seven weeks (*learn more in the retreat section below*), reserve the retreat center and priests to hear confessions
- Advertise THE SEARCH and order guides at least three weeks in advance
- Invite those in marriage preparation, RCIA, and parents of children in sacramental preparation/religious education
- Arrange for snacks and drinks
- Set up a room with a large screen, sound projection, and round tables for discussion
- Have the team arrive an hour early for setup and prayer
- Have the host prepare a crowd interaction icebreaker and/or a joke for each session

Here is a sample schedule for the large group gathering:

7:00 pm Snacks / Drinks

7:15 pm Host welcomes and leads introductions / Icebreaker

7:25 pm Play THE SEARCH video

7:55 pm Small group discussion

8:40 pm Closing announcements

8:45 pm Finish

AFTER THE SEARCH EXPERIENCE

Here are some ways to build on the momentum of your small group or large group SEARCH experience:

- THE SEARCH retreat (see below)
- *THE SEARCH Continues*: Forty short videos addressing the most searched questions online regarding Catholicism
- *Forgiven*: Four powerful episodes of a similar production quality as THE SEARCH that inspire people to return to a frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- *Symbolon*: Once reconciled with God, the heart desires to know Him intimately. *Symbolon* consists of twenty beautiful episodes that cover the truths God has revealed about Himself and His Church



RETREAT OPTION

THE SEARCH RETREAT OPTION

A retreat can be a powerful way to cap THE SEARCH experience. Participants will have journeyed together for seven weeks, sharing meaningfully about their lives and their thoughts about the presentations, and will likely welcome an opportunity to get away for a retreat with their small group. Their hearts will have been prepared for a transforming encounter with the Holy Spirit! The retreat can also provide an opportunity to make a public commitment to Jesus Christ and his Church.



OVERNIGHT SCHEDULE

Friday

- 6:30 pm Check in / Move into rooms
- 7:00 pm Welcome / Orientation / Icebreaker
- 7:30 pm Talk #1: The Spirit-Filled Life
- 8:00 pm Testimony: My experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit
- 8:20 pm Break / Snacks / Drinks
- 8:45 pm Small groups
- 9:30 pm Praise and worship / Closing prayer

RETREAT OPTION

OVERNIGHT SCHEDULE

10:00 pm Fireside social / Board games / Cards

11:00 pm Lights out

Saturday

8:00 am Morning prayer / Praise and worship

8:30 am Breakfast

9:30 am Icebreaker

9:45 am Talk #2: The Power of Personal Prayer (Introduction to *Lectio Divina*)

10:15 am Testimony: My daily quiet time in God's Word

10:45 am Break / Coffee

11:15 am Small groups

12:00 pm Personal solitude (take a walk, sit beneath a tree, read Matthew 6:25–34)

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Icebreaker

2:15 pm Talk #3: The Sacraments —The Source of the Spirit-Filled Life

2:45 pm Testimony: How frequent Reconciliation and the Eucharist have changed me

3:15 pm Break

3:30 pm Prayer of commitment to Jesus / Adoration and Reconciliation

4:30 pm Talk #4: Habits of the Spirit-Filled Life (Community / Formation / Mission)

5:00 pm Closing prayer ceremony

5:30 pm Finish

RETREAT OPTION

SAMPLE TALK OUTLINES

Talk #1: The Spirit-Filled Life

- The Holy Spirit is the Third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, the bond of love between the Father and the Son (CCC 684–685).
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to build, animate, and sanctify the Church and bring souls into communion with God so that they bear fruit and give witness to Christ (CCC 737ff).
- The Holy Spirit does this through the Church’s proclamation of the Gospel, through the Sacraments, and through working in the moral and spiritual life of the Christian (CCC 738).
- God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; CCC 735). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are permanent dispositions in the soul, making it more docile to God’s promptings.
- Through the power of the Spirit, Christians can bear much fruit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control (CCC 736).
- These fruits are seen when we live less for self and walk more in the Spirit (CCC 736).
- The Holy Spirit sanctifies us, makes us holy, through grace, which is a participation in the life of God. God’s divine life is infused into the soul by the Spirit to heal it of sin and to sanctify it (CCC 1996–2000).
- Faith and works are interrelated in God’s plan of salvation. Being liberated from sin and becoming a son or a daughter of God is a free gift given to us through faith, but we remain in God’s family and mature as his spiritual children through love and good works. Thus faith and love together lead us on toward eternal life (CCC 1987–1995).

RETREAT OPTION

SAMPLE TALK OUTLINES

Talk #2: The Power of Personal Prayer (Introduction to *Lectio Divina*)

- Read John 4:1–26 (the woman at the well).
- “If you knew the gift of God!” (John 4:7). The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: There, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him. (CCC 2560)
- “You would have asked him, and he would have given you living water” (John 4:9). Paradoxically, our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God: “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water!” (John 4:10). Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God. (CCC 2561)
- Sacred reading of the Scriptures (*Lectio*): The reading and rereading of the Scripture passage, paying close attention to words, details, themes, and patterns that speak to you.
- Meditation (*Meditatio*): Meditating or reflecting on what you’ve read to gain understanding. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you spend time pondering what you have read and striving to understand it in meditation.
- Prayer (*Oratio*): A time to bring your meditative thoughts to God in prayer. Speak with God about how the connections and implications of your meditation on the Scripture affect your life and the lives of those around you.
- Contemplation (*Contemplatio*): A time of quiet and rest. We listen and await God’s voice. Contemplation allows one to enter decisively and more deeply into the Mystery of God—this is no small endeavor, so be patient as you engage this step and strive to be receptive to God’s voice speaking into your life.
- Resolution (*Resolutio*): A call for resolution and action, inviting you to respond to God and the things you have read in Scripture and prayed about.
- Read John 4:1–26 practicing *Lectio Divina*.

RETREAT OPTION

SAMPLE TALK OUTLINES

Talk #3: The Sacraments — The Source of the Spirit-Filled Life

- “Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131).
- “The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions” (CCC 1131).
- The Catholic Church recognizes seven sacraments as having been established by Christ (CCC 1210–1211).
- Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the Sacraments of Initiation, which lay the foundations of the Christian life (CCC 1212).
- Reconciliation (or Penance) and Anointing of the Sick are the two Sacraments of Healing, which heal and strengthen the soul weakened by illness and sin (CCC 1420–1421).
- Matrimony and Holy Orders are the two Sacraments of Service, directed toward the salvation of others (CCC 1534).
- Baptism in particular is the gateway of the Christian life. Through this sacrament, the soul passes through Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection and experiences death of the old self and rebirth as a child of God (CCC 1213).
- The Eucharist is the “the source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC 1324).
- The Real Presence: At Mass, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is not a chemical or physical change because the outward, sensible appearances of bread and wine remain, but under those appearances of bread and wine, Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist (CCC 1374).
- The Eucharist as sacrifice: The Mass is a sacrifice because it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the Cross, because it is its memorial (CCC 1366). At every Mass, we are called to join our lives in union with Christ’s gift of himself to the Father (CCC 1368).
- The spiritual effects of the Sacrament of Penance include: reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace; reconciliation with the Church; peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation; and increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle (CCC 1496).

RETREAT OPTION

SAMPLE TALK OUTLINES

Talk #4: Habits of the Spirit-Filled Life (Community / Formation / Mission)

- Read John 15:1–11 (the vine and the branches).
- A disciple of Jesus Christ is both faithful and fruitful (John 15:8).
- They are faithful—dedicated to prayer, study, service, and frequent reception of the Sacraments.
- They are fruitful—dedicated to helping others become faithful and fruitful.
- The H.A.B.I.T.S. of a disciple:
 - Holy Hour: Commitment to daily mental prayer
 - Accountability: Commitment to honest sharing, mutual encouragement, and accountable to growth
 - Bible: Commitment to reading and praying with the bible
 - Invest: Commitment to investing your time, talents, and treasure
 - Tell: Commitment to telling others about the difference Jesus has made in your life
 - Sacraments: Commitment to frequent reception of Eucharist and Penance
- Vision for small group discipleship—a small group committed to growing in spiritual H.A.B.I.T.S. and eventually leading a small group of their own.
- Christian discipleship was never meant to be lived in isolation. We are made for community and are destined for community within the eternal exchange of life and love in the Holy Trinity.
- God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).
- A strategic plan for one small group to reach the world: If five members of a small group each commit to leading their own small group of five, who in turn commit to leading their own small group of five, and so on, that will reach the population of the world in about fifteen cycles.
- Content for small groups: *THE SEARCH* and *Symbolon*.
- Why *Symbolon*? Jesus commissioned his disciples to “teach them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 20:20). *Symbolon* is a systematic presentation of the deposit of faith that Jesus entrusted to the Church.

RETREAT OPTION



SAMPLE PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO JESUS

Lord Jesus, please forgive me for all the sins I have committed and for the good I have failed to do. I repent of my sin and turn to you for mercy and grace. I surrender my will to you.

Come into my life and be my Savior and my Lord.

FAQ



Who should be invited?

THE SEARCH is for everyone! Invite those who have been long term parishioners as well as those who are not currently part of your parish. We highly recommend inviting those who are coming to the parish for Sacraments—couples to be married, parents bringing a child to be baptized, those who might not yet be ready for RCIA but have inquired, and parents of children in Religious Education or the parish school. Also consider inviting those who are grieving. In times of suffering, people are searching for answers and accompaniment.

How do you invite those who are disconnected from the Church?

No amount of slick marketing will ever impact the disconnected like intercessory prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind five people within your sphere of influence who need to attend THE SEARCH. Write these names down and start to pray for them daily. Ask the Holy Spirit to prepare their hearts for a personal invitation from you. Finally, ask the Holy Spirit to provide the right time, as well as the courage, for this invitation to take place. You might call this practice the Friendship Evangelization Challenge. Invite all the leaders in the parish to do the Friendship Evangelization Challenge keeping in mind that the end goal of the Friendship Evangelization Challenge is not only to invite someone to THE SEARCH, but have the courage to ask: “Can I share with you the difference Jesus Christ has made in my life?”

FAQ

Is THE SEARCH available in Spanish?

Yes. THE SEARCH is available in both English and Spanish.

Where do we purchase THE SEARCH?

THE SEARCH is available through a subscription to FORMED. Videos are also available on DVD or Blu-ray.

THE SEARCH Guide, *THE SEARCH Men's Participant Guide*, *THE SEARCH Women's Participant Guide*, and *THE SEARCH Journal* can be found at [CatholicMarket](#). There is a discount for bulk orders.

Why are there different guides?

THE SEARCH GUIDE is designed to help a small group get to know one another on a deeper level, recall key points from the videos, jot down thoughts, and discuss within the group. Its aim is evangelization. The Men's Guide and Woman's Guide assume some familiarity with faith formation. They contain prayers, scripture references, catechism references, and challenging questions.

Should we do the large group experience or the small group experience?

If the goal is to get as many people as possible to go through THE SEARCH experience, you might consider implementing both strategies. For example, you might launch one SEARCH large group and one SEARCH small group. The goal for both would be to multiply. For the large group, the goal would be to invite and coach participants to become small group facilitators for the next large group. For the small groups, the goal would be to invite and coach the participants to facilitate their own SEARCH small group, whether using *THE SEARCH Guide* or the *Men's* or *Women's Participant Guides*.

FAQ

How often should we run a large group SEARCH experience?

We recommend you run a SEARCH course in the fall, winter, and spring. Your leadership for future courses is often found from participants in previous courses, many of whom are thrilled for the opportunity to give back. When you consider that THE SEARCH is a gateway for active participation in the life of the parish, you will want to run courses with some frequency.

Can we do the retreat at the parish or should we go to a retreat facility?

You can certainly host the full day retreat at the parish. The overnight retreat will require a facility with lodging. The ideal is to remove participants from their normal environment so they can disengage with the preoccupations of their daily life and be more disposed for an encounter with the Holy Spirit.

What is a good follow-up for THE SEARCH?

THE SEARCH Continues is a series of short videos that address the most commonly asked questions about Catholicism. They can be found on FORMED. In addition, participants will likely have a desire for community and formation coming off THE SEARCH. We recommend a discipleship group. A discipleship group is generally 5–8 men or women who are transparent, confidential, accountable, and go deeper in their study of the faith. *Symbolon* is an excellent resource coming off THE SEARCH, as it comprises twenty sessions which deliver a systematic presentation of the Catholic faith. *Symbolon* is accessible through FORMED.org or can be purchased at catholic.market/programs/symbolon

Testimonials



In my 74 years of life in this world, I can vouch that THE SEARCH episodes are the most lucid and most simple presentation of the Catholic faith. This has come at a time when the Catholic Church is being buffeted and destroyed by the enemy within. Truly the episodes are amazing and marvelous in superlative terms.

ROBIN



THE SEARCH is absolutely beautiful and amazing! How wonderful it would be if everyone could watch this! Catholics, non-Catholics, alienated Catholics . . . Everyone!

SUZANNE



It hit me in my heart! THE SEARCH really needs to be shared with everyone. Thank you!

DAVID



We are both cradle Catholics, but there is always so much more to know. I thought THE SEARCH would be like a bible study, but the cinematography is just amazing—it brings God's beauty. The stories are so heartfelt and the education behind it puts them together and makes sense and gives outstanding clarity.

MARIE AND MICHAEL



I have led many small groups, but this one takes the cake. While THE SEARCH was foundational "stuff," I discovered that I keep forgetting the foundation, like a golfer or a baseball player who forgets to practice the fundamentals of the game.

TOM