

BASIC CHRISTIANITY

Preface

This 22 week course of instruction in basic Christianity is intended for those adults who are preparing for baptism and/or confirmation, for those who wish to refresh or deepen their own understanding of the basics of Christian faith and practice and for those who are curious about Christianity. No commitment is involved in attending the class.

It is based on the series of 31 classes developed by the Rev. Homer F. Rogers during a ministry of over 35 years, first at St. Barnabas, Denton, and then at St. Francis, Dallas. What I have done, primarily, is to condense them. Although I have made some changes and additions, to a great extent these are Father Rogers' ("Padre's") instructions.

The class begins with the lecture, which some have compared to a *cursillo rollo*. But, unlike a rollo, the lecture is seldom dull, in good part because of the marvelous stories and examples Father Rogers uses to illustrate and clarify the theology.

The lecture is recorded on a cassette, usually a C-90 but sometimes a C-120. Copies of the tapes are made available to those who miss the class as well as to those who want to be able to re-hear the lectures. Also it is common for people who come to the classes to lend tapes to their friends. I have a high speed duplicator and I buy blank cassettes in lots of a hundred so the price is very cheap. I either lend the tapes or sell them for \$1.00 each.

When the first side of the C-90 cassette is done and the recorder stops, there is about a fifteen minute intermission.

Following the intermission, the lecture resumes and usually takes fifteen to thirty minutes to finish. At the conclusion, xerox copies of the text of the evening's lecture are handed out. The tape recorder continues running. There may be some in the class who are "visual learners" and prefer to have the text in front of them. They can receive their copies at the beginning.

The lecturer then asks each person, in turn, to mention at least one point in the lecture to which he had any kind of reaction—positive or negative. The points are listed on a dry erase white board. Then the group is asked to say anything they wish about any of the points. The most desirable form of the discussion has the people speaking to each other about the points, etc., rather than to the lecturer.

The result of the discussion is that the members of the class internalize the material *and* they develop a sense of trust with the other members of the class. By the end of the 22 weeks, a strong sense of community emerges. They usually hate to see the series of classes come to an end.

Those who are already members of the parish find that they are closer to each other. Those who decide to join the Church come into her already having a close relationship with some of her members whom they met in the class. Members even who attend different series of the classes

feel closer to each other. The result is that the Body of Christ is built up.

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