

Church Seminar Proposal

Holy Ground: Walking with Jesus as a Former Catholic

Pastor and Author Chris Castaldo

Outline of a Typical Church Venue

These gatherings are often held in a church auditorium or classroom. If Chris is delivering a single talk, it is the first of these that he presents, titled *Understanding and Relating to Catholics*.

I. Understanding and Relating to Catholics

This is Chris's standard talk designed to provide perspective in three major areas: the teachings of the Catholic Church, the profiles of Catholics in America, and practical suggestions for approaching Catholic friends and loved ones with the gospel. The last half of the session is reserved for Q&A. Our experience has seen enormous enthusiasm among those asking questions. For many participants, this is the moment they have been awaiting for many years, a time to get advice from a pastor who specializes in Catholicism and gospel outreach.

1.) Fundamental Similarities & Differences of Belief

2.) Three Types of Catholics in America

3.) Approaching Conversations with Catholics

4.) Questions & Answers

II. How Catholics and Protestants Think

This talk describes the outworking of Catholic and Protestant thought by examining how assumptions on issues such as identity, worship, and salvation give rise to different expressions of faith and practice.

1.) How Catholics and Protestants view the Church (identity)

Catholic: A unified institution, historical roots, full of traditions

Protestant: A collection of individuals who believe a common message, critical of "traditions"

2.) How we view Spiritual life (worship)

Catholic: Centered on the sacraments

Protestant: Centered on a personal response to Scripture

3.) How we view Assurance of salvation (our hope)

Catholic: Assurance is generally viewed as "presumption"

Protestant: Assurance is central

4.) Areas of Similarity

- a. Prayer
- b. Truth
- c. Cultural engagement
- d. Jesus, Lord and Savior

5.) Questions and Answers

III. Sharing Christ among Catholic Friends and Family

This session, based on the second half of *Holy Ground*, offers principles of outreach that are contextualized to a variety of Catholic people and situations.

1.) Misconceptions about Evangelism

2.) How Catholics View Evangelicals

3.) How to Maximize Gospel Opportunities among Catholics

4.) Questions and Answers

IV. Q&A

The sorts of questions that often arise in these discussions include: What is the so called New Evangelization of the Catholic Church? How can we respond to Catholic arguments about Church authority? How did Vatican II change the beliefs and practice of the Catholic Church? How do you counsel an evangelical child of the church who is considering marriage to a Catholic? To what extent should evangelical Protestant Churches cooperate with Catholic parishes in local forms of ministry?

V. Sermon: “Whitewater on the Tiber” 1 Peter 3:15-16

Drawing from the broader context of 1 Peter, this 30 minute exposition explores the Church’s calling to uphold biblical conviction and a warm-hearted, Spirit empowered love for others.