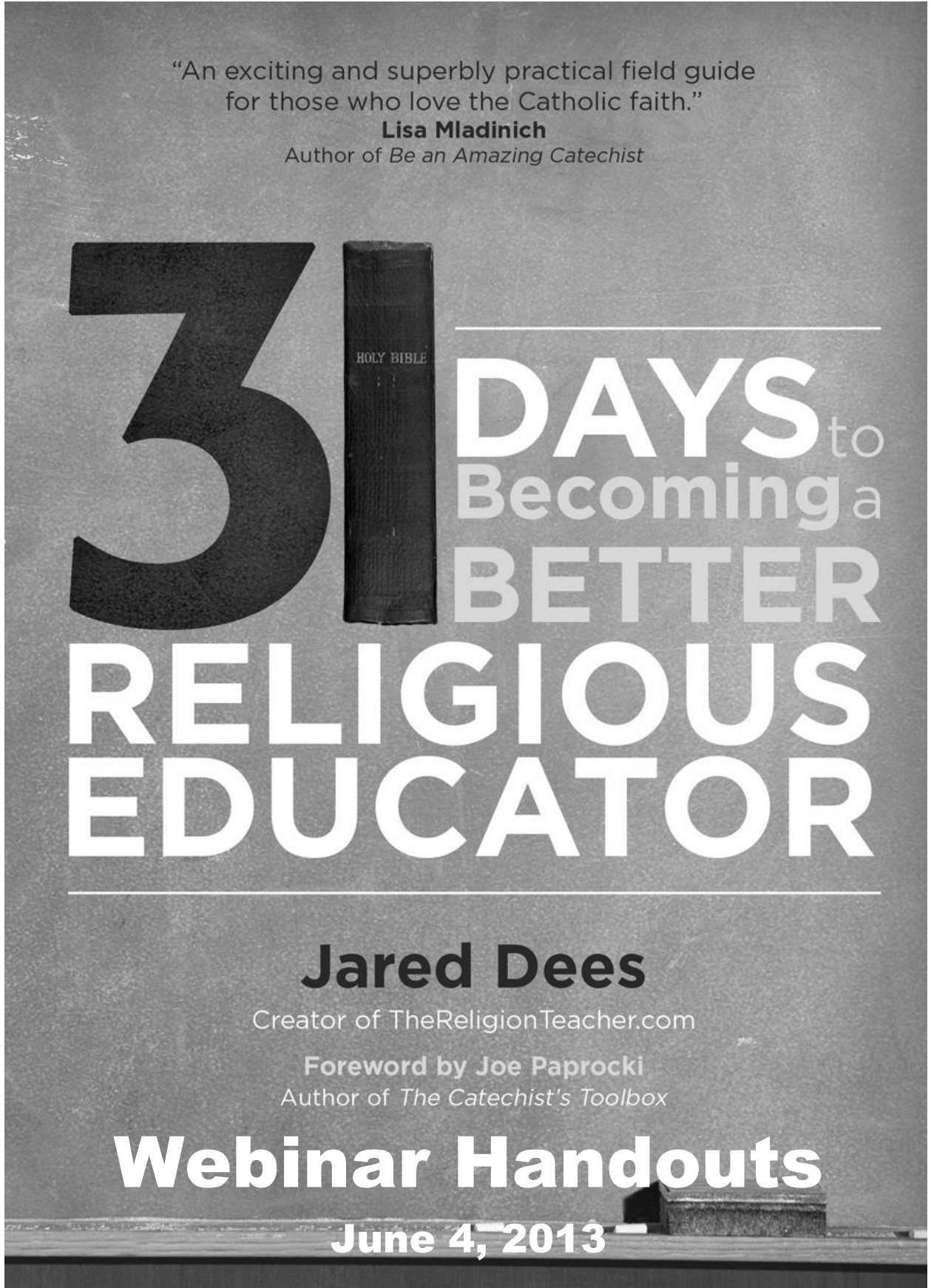


“An exciting and superbly practical field guide  
for those who love the Catholic faith.”

**Lisa Mladinich**

Author of *Be an Amazing Catechist*



**31** DAYS to  
Becoming a  
BETTER  
RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATOR

**Jared Dees**

Creator of [TheReligionTeacher.com](http://TheReligionTeacher.com)

Foreword by Joe Paprocki

Author of *The Catechist's Toolbox*

**Webinar Handouts**

**June 4, 2013**

**Exercise 1: The Big Why List (Day 1)**

“Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world’s greatest need.”

— Frederick Buechner

1. List all of the needs of the Church or of the students you teach below.
2. If I had to choose just one lesson about God that my students needed to hear the most, what would it be?
3. What is one belief my students struggle with the most?
4. What is one spiritual practice my students could benefit from the most?
5. If I could help my students make one change in their life, what would it be?
6. What aspect of the faith are kids missing the most in their lives?
7. What are the biggest problems adult Catholics experience in the Church?

Star or circle the answers that either get you excited or make you angry. If there is only one answer that gets you really excited, then consider this the focal point of your call to teach.

**Exercise 2: Recognize Your Relationship with Christ (Day 2)**

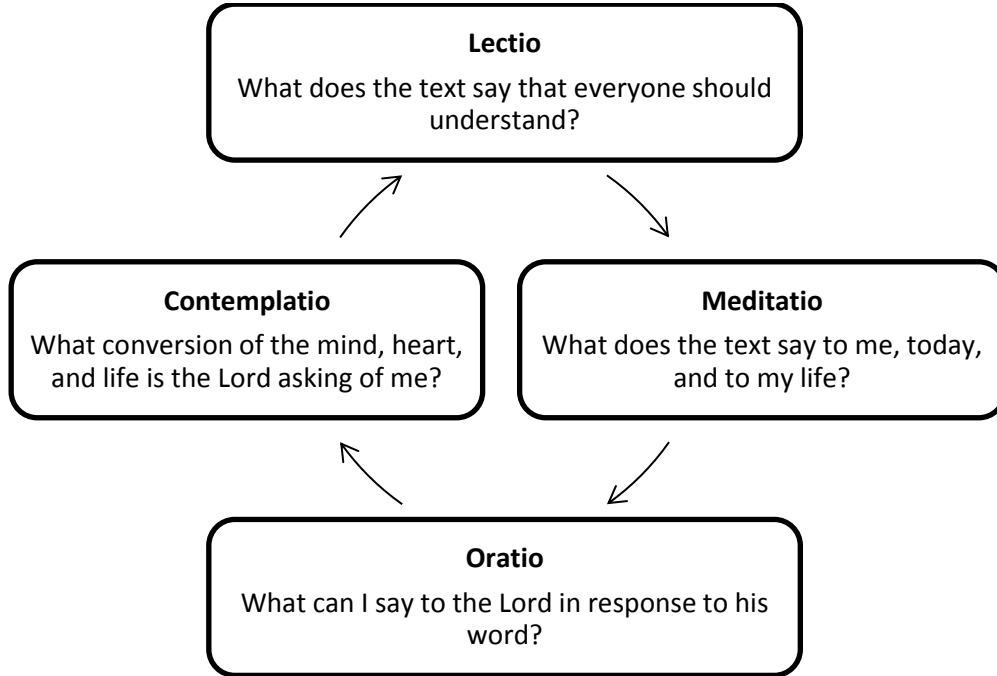
1. How did you meet Jesus Christ? (Who introduced you to him? What are your earliest memories of him?)
2. How has your relationship grown over the years? (How did you come to know him more deeply?)
3. What is your relationship with Christ like today? (How often do you spend time with him in prayer? When and how do you pray? When do you think about Christ the most?)

**A Timeline of Your Relationship with Christ**  
(Turn the paper sideways)



**Exercise 3: Lectio Divina (Day 4)**

**Directions:** Select a passage from the Bible and read it a few times. Answer the questions in each box below. Write the responses on this handout or in a journal.



**Lectio:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Meditatio:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Oratio:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Contemplatio:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 4: Read the Writings of a Saint (Day 5)**

Saint: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of the Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Passages I Liked:

Top Takeaways:

**Exercise 5: Make Prayer a Habit (Day 7)**

The prayer experience I want to add:

My current routine:	My new routine with the prayer habit:

The obstacles I will face in making this prayer a habit:

I will remind myself to pray by:

**Exercise 6: Compliment a Parent about a Child** (Day 12)

Use the following template to write a note or make a phone call to a student's parents.

*Hi [parent's name], this is [student's name]'s [religion teacher/catechist].*

*I'm calling with some good news about your [son/daughter]. I want to share with you how impressed I have been with [his/her] actions. [He/she]. . . [explain the positive actions or efforts you would like to share with the parent]. These kinds of actions have made [him/her] an important asset to our classroom and [school/parish] community. Thanks for everything you do for [him/her].*

*I am always available if you have any questions about your child's progress or if you want to hear more about what we are doing in class. Just reach out to me via [state how you would like parents to contact you: e-mail, phone, written note, etc.].*

*Thanks for your time! Have a wonderful night.*

**Exercise 7: Pray for Your Students (Day 13)**

Write the name of a student and a short prayer tailored specifically to their needs. Do this for as many students as possible.

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### **Exercise 8: Update Your Classroom Procedures (Day 15)**

List the most common questions you get in class, as well as the instructions you find yourself repeating over and over again.

#### **Design New Procedures**

What procedures can you create, introduce, and practice with your students so that you don't have to answer those common questions or repeat instructions? Describe the step-by-step procedures in detail below.

Reference pages 77–79 of *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator* for advice on implementing new procedures.

**Exercise 9: Update Your Classroom Rules (Day 16)**

In the space below, write or rewrite some rules for your classroom. Use the tips about creating classroom rules on pages 83–84 of *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator* for guidance.

Set standard consequences for breaking one of the rules above. What consequence will students experience if they break a rule?

**Exercise 10: Articulate Your Classroom Vision** (Day 17)

What is the name of the school or parish where you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a vision or mission statement already associated with this institution or the person or persons from which its name is taken? If so, describe it in the space below:

What virtues or goals are you most passionate about for your students? (Refer to your notes from Day 1 of *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator* to refresh your memory)

Finally, state a simple summary of the vision you would like to present to your class. It can be a short phrase or a longer mission statement, but be sure it is something you and your students will be passionate about pursuing!

**Exercise 11: Simplify Your Lesson (Day 23)**

Examine your next lesson plan or use this exercise to evaluate your most recent lesson plan. Complete the following statements.

**If my students learn nothing else during this lesson, they must learn . . .**

**Or, the single most important thing for students to learn in the lesson is . . .**

**I will teach about this core concept in the following ways . . .**

**Exercise 12: Lesson Review Template** (Day 29)

Using the graphic organizer below, evaluate a recent lesson.

<b>The Bright Spots</b> (What went well?)	<b>The Room for Improvement</b> (What didn't go well?)
<b>Changes</b> (What would I change if I had to do it again?)	

**Exercise 31: Become a Witness (Day 31)**

Think of a religious experience in your life that changed you in some way. Read and answer the questions on pages 162–63 of *31 Days to Becoming a Better Religious Educator* below.

**Conversion Experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**P: Prior Experience**

**R: Receive Grace**

**O: Openness to Grace**

**C: Conversion**

**ESS: Witness**