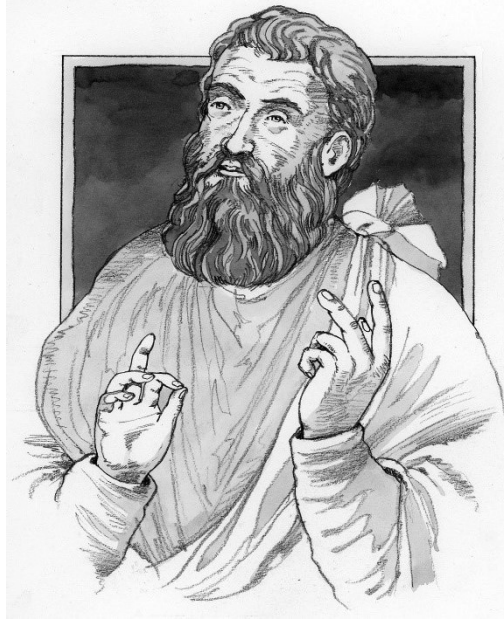


Achievement Course: Apologetics
Recommended Ages: 10-18 years of age
Approximate Completion Time Frame: 3-6 months



Saint Justin Martyr, pray for us!

Saint Justin Martyr is the patron saint of Catholic apologists. He was born at the beginning of the second century and studied pagan philosophy. He turned to Christianity after finding the source of Truth, which the pagans weren't able to explain. He was astounded by the zeal and love shown by the Christian martyrs and converted to Christianity. He opened a school in Rome to teach Greek philosophy through the lens of Christianity. As an apologist, he wrote on defending the Christian faith. He was martyred for the faith around 165 by Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

Objective: To demonstrate how to defend your Catholic faith in charity and love while drawing others closer to Christ.

1. Requirements

- a. Define the term “apologetics”.
 - i. Apologetics comes from the Greek work “apologia” meaning “a defense”. Apologetics is the task of defending the Catholic faith against objections to our faith and morals as revealed in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
- b. Where do we get the word apologetics?
 - i. The word apologetics comes from our first Pope Saint Peter in 1 Peter 3:15: “Always be prepared to make a defense (apologia) to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”
- c. Saint Peter asks us to do apologetics with two attitudes. What are those two attitudes?
 - i. See 1 Peter 3:15: “gentleness and compassion”. We should be gentle and kind to those who disagree with us. We should have compassion because they do not yet know the joy of being a Catholic.
- d. Write a one page report on three of the following great defenders of the Catholic faith and explain which heresies each refuted. If they wrote monumental books, be sure to include them in your essay.
 - i. Saint Justin Martyr
 - ii. Saint Augustine of Hippo
 - iii. Saint Leo the Great
 - iv. Saint Cyril of Alexandria
 - v. Saint John of Damascus
 - vi. Saint Thomas Aquinas
 - vii. G.K. Chesterton
- e. Defending many misunderstood Catholic doctrines of our time.
 - i. In sitting with a TSG Officer, be able to refute without notes or a script the following objections that people make against Catholicism. While we have included notes to help you refute these errors, please feel free to use other resources.
 1. Refute “Catholics worship Mary.”
 - a. Catholics do not worship Mary, as we honor her. “Honor your father and mother” is a commandment that Christ follows. We imitate Him in honoring His mother. CCC 460, 722, and 726; Luke 1: 26.
 2. Refute “Praying to Saints is wrong. You should only pray to God.”
 - a. Saints are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They pray for us to God as we on earth pray for each other. All their prayers go to God the Father through Jesus Christ – just like our human prayers.
 3. Refute “The Eucharist is just a symbol. It is not really the Body and Blood of Jesus.”
 - a. Jesus says “this is My body” not “this symbolizes My body.” Also John 6 says, “My flesh is food indeed and My blood is drink indeed.” John 6: 35 – 42; 1 Corinthians 11; CCC 1326.
 - b. Read and familiarize yourself with John 6.
 4. Refute “Mary is not the Mother of God.”

- a. Mary is not the Mother of the Trinity or the Mother of the Divine Essence of God. She is the Mother of Jesus Christ who is God the Son. Since God the Son is a person, she is His mother. Mothers are not mothers of natures, they are mothers of persons. Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God the Son. Luke 1:43 also calls Mary “the Mother of my Lord.” CCC 460, 722, and 726; Luke 1: 26.
- 5. Refute “Why do you worship the Pope? The Pope is not infallible.”
 - a. We do not worship the Pope. We honor him as the successor of Saint Peter. Christ changed Simon’s name to “Peter” in Matthew 16:18 and gave to him the “keys of the kingdom” so that he could bind and loose in Christ’s name. The power of these keys is passed down over time to the Popes. He is man like us, but the power of the keys prevents him from dogmatically declaring ex cathedra error in the Catholic Church regarding doctrine and morals.
 - b. Popes go to confession because they ARE fallible, however they are not fallible with Church Doctrine. Peter was given the keys to heaven from Jesus Christ, but even Peter denied Christ, showing his fallibility.
- 6. Refute “Purgatory does not exist.”
 - a. Saint Paul in 1 Cor 3:15 says that some people are “saved through fire.” This refers to people who are saved (going to heaven) but first must pass through a cleansing fire, which we call “purgatory.”
- 7. Refute “You should not baptize babies because they don’t know what is going on. You should only baptize adults.”
 - a. Saint Peter taught that Christian baptism was also for the children of believers, when he said, “Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...this promise is for you and your children.” This follows the Old Testament practice of placing the sign of circumcision on adult believers and the children of believers (see Col 2: 11-12).
- 8. Refute “Abortion is not wrong.”
 - a. Human life with unique DNA begins when a human sperm and egg meet and form a new human life. We do not have the right to invade a woman’s body to destroy that new life. Each life has a soul and is special to God.
- 9. Refute “You don’t need to confess your mortal sins to a priest. Just confess them straight to Jesus.”
 - a. It’s true that only God can forgive sins, but Jesus Christ shares his power with Catholic priests as we read in the Gospel. Jesus Christ, on the night of the day He rose again (the first Easter) gave to the Apostles the power to forgive sins or not to forgive sins: “if you forgive the sins of any, their sins are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any, their sins

are retained.” (John 20: 23) Christ gave this power to the human Apostles and it is passed down over time through the bishops to the Catholic priests of the world.

- f. Make sure that you or your family own the tools that you need for Apologetics. If your family does not own these resources, ask your parents to acquire them or save money to purchase them.
 - i. A Catholic Bible – TSG recommends the Douay Rheims Challoner Bible, the Revised Standard Version – Catholic Edition, or NAB Catholic Edition.
 - ii. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition
 - iii. The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Reference

Explanations and definitions above are from the Troops of Saint George founder, Dr. Taylor Marshall