



# Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion

## GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

*Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion*, written by Jeffry Odell Korgen and illustrated by Christopher Cardinale, is a graphic biography that introduces readers to the amazing life of Dorothy Day, reviews her impact on the Church and peace and justice movements, and provides an informative understanding of the process of canonization.

Spanning a variety of themes, *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* can be integrated into high school classroom instruction in multiple subjects. This guide identifies opportunities for integration in courses in theology, history, government, and art.



### Theology/Religion

Assign *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* as a reading in high school theology/religion courses. The table below identifies specific catechetical concepts illustrated by the life and witness of Dorothy Day. The right-hand column in the table suggests questions for discussion or reflection connected with *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* and particular catechetical concepts. The content included in the table is not exhaustive.

#### Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion and Catechetical Concepts

Core Curriculum Course	Catechetical Concepts	Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion
I. The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture	I. How Do We Know About God? A. The thirst and desire for God ( <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> [CCC], nos. 27-30, 44-45, 1718).	How was a thirst and desire for God experienced by Dorothy at various times in her life? Reflect on Dorothy and Gene O'Neil's conversation on pages 19-22.  You may wish to read the full text of Francis Thompson's 1890 poem, <i>The Hound of Heaven</i> . Reflect also on events depicted at the end of chapter 1 and in chapter 2.  To what religious practices was Dorothy drawn during her life?
II. Who Is Jesus Christ?	I. God and Revelation. B. Faith: the response to God's self-Revelation. 2. Faith in Jesus Christ leads to discipleship (CCC, nos. 520, 546, 562, 654, 1533). b. Willingness to believe and trust in what Jesus has taught us about the Triune God, about ourselves, and about how to live (CCC, nos. 915, 1693, 1816, 1823, 1986, 2262, 2347, 2427, 2466, 2612). c. This faith has practical implications for daily life and one's relationship with Christ (CCC, no. 908).  IV. Jesus Christ Teaches Us About Ourselves. B. Jesus Christ redeems us and gives us his grace so that we can choose the good according to God's will and resist sin and its effects (CCC, nos. 1705, 1708-1709).	Dorothy's faith and commitment to discipleship required difficult decisions. Describe a time when Dorothy exhibited faith and trust, choosing the good even when it was difficult.
III. The Mission of Jesus Christ (The Paschal Mystery)	V. Moral Implications for the Life of a Believer. B. Universal call to holiness of life (CCC, nos. 826, 2012-2014, 2028, 2045, 2813). C. Living as a disciple of Jesus. 1. Adherence to Jesus and acceptance of his teaching (CCC, nos. 520, 618, 767, 1693). 2. Conversion of heart and life, and the formation of conscience (CCC, no. 1248).	Describe Dorothy's "conversion of heart and life." How did the formation of her conscience and the ability to act on it help lead to a life of holiness?
IV. Jesus Christ's Mission Continues in the Church	IV. The Church in the World. D. Visible structure of the Church: a hierarchical communion (CCC, nos. 880-896). 2. The various vocations of life. d. Laity: baptized members of Christ (CCC, nos. 897-913).	Reflect on the vocation of the laity in light of Dorothy Day's work and witness.  How did Dorothy live the call to be "salt and light for the world"?  What was the relationship between Dorothy's efforts and a life of prayer?

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V. Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Jesus Christ	II. The Sacraments of Initiation (CCC, no. 1212). A. Baptism: the sacrament which is the birth of the baptized into new life in Christ. In Baptism, Original Sin is forgiven along with all personal sins. By it we become adoptive children of the Father, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit; it also incorporates us into the Church and makes us sharers in the priesthood of Christ (CCC, nos. 1279-1280).	Why was Dorothy's decision to baptize Tamara—and to receive the sacrament herself—significant? Reflect on Dorothy's journey in light of what you have learned about the sacraments and their effects.
VI. Life in Jesus Christ	<p>I. What Is Life in Christ? A. God's plan for us (CCC, nos. 302-314, 1692). 2. God created us in his image and likeness (CCC, nos. 1700-1706). a. The dignity of the human person (CCC, no. 1700).</p> <p>II. God Has Taught Us How to Live a New Life in Christ. B. Revelation. 1. Teachings revealed by God under the Old Covenant. 5) Fifth Commandment: You shall not kill. a) Respect human life in all its stages and situations (CCC, nos. 2258-2262). d) Sins against the Fifth Commandment: murder; suicide; abortion; euthanasia; embryonic stem cell research; abuse of alcohol, drugs, food, or tobacco; abuse of the body (CCC, nos. 364, 2268-2283, 2290-2291). 2. Teaching revealed by God in the New Covenant. a. Two Great Commandments of Jesus (CCC, no. 2083). 1) First Great Commandment relates to the first three Commandments of the Decalogue. 2) Second Great Commandment relates to the rest of the Decalogue. b. The grace of the Holy Spirit (CCC, nos. 1966, 2003). c. The Sermon on the Mount (CCC, nos. 1966-1970). 1) Beatitudes: Christ's answer to the question about happiness (CCC, nos. 1716-1723). 2) Other teaching. a) Love your enemies (CCC, no. 2844). c) Non-violence (defense of innocent) (CCC, nos. 2306, 2263-2265).</p> <p>III. Living New Life in Christ Jesus and the Gospel Message Are the Basis for Catholic Moral Teaching. F. Conscience. 1. Definition of conscience (CCC, nos. 1777-1782). 2. Types of conscience (CCC, nos. 1785, 1790-1794). 3. Proper formation of conscience (CCC, nos. 1783-1785). 4. Moral responsibility of following an informed conscience (CCC, nos. 1783-1785). 5. Freedom of conscience (CCC, no. 1782).</p>	<p>Discuss one or more perspectives held by Dorothy Day that were rooted in her belief in the dignity of the human person.</p> <p>Reflect on Dorothy's experience of unexpected pregnancy, abortion, and depression. How did Dorothy eventually come to experience God's mercy and forgiveness?</p> <p>How did Dorothy live out the Two Great Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and/or the Beatitudes?</p> <p>How is Dorothy's approach to war similar or different from the just war tradition?</p> <p>Reflect on Dorothy's embrace of pacifism and nonviolent resistance in light of the Church's teaching on conscience.</p>
Electives Option A: Sacred Scripture	<p>VI. The Prophets</p> <p>VIII. The Gospels</p> <p><i>Various connection-points, especially related to God's desire to share his merciful love with us, and the call to discipleship.</i></p>	<p>How might Scripture, especially one of the passages below, have inspired Dorothy Day in her work and ministry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isa. 58</li> <li>• Matt. 5:1-13 (Beatitudes)</li> <li>• Matt. 25:31-46 (The Judgment of the Nations)</li> </ul>

Core Curriculum Course	Catechetical Concepts	Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion
<b>Electives Option B: History of the Catholic Church</b>	<p>II. History of Church in Post-Apostolic Times. 11. Industrial Revolution—Need for Social Justice for Workers (1878-1903). A. Industrial Revolution. B. Social injustices. 1. No living wage, no pensions or sick leave; child labor, sweat shops. 2. Denial of right to form labor unions or mount strikes. 3. Management's ignoring human dignity of workers, etc. C. Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903)—<i>Rerum Novarum</i>. 1. Universal destination of goods of earth for all people. 2. Subsidiarity, justice for workers, reform of capitalism (CCC, nos. 1883, 1885, 1894, 2209). 3. Common good, private property, living wage, unions (CCC, nos. 1807, 2401, 2403, 2246, 2435). 12. The Church and Social Justice Teaching. A. Pope Leo XIII, <i>Rerum Novarum</i>. B. Pope Pius XI, <i>Quadragesimus Anno</i>. C. Pope John XXIII, <i>Mater et Magistra</i>, <i>Pacem in Terris</i>. 18. The Church in the United States. C. Church's role in development of social justice in the United States. F. Late twentieth to start of twenty-first century. 2. Reasons for hope. g. this one is abbreviated from the original which is American Saints: Elizabeth Seton, Frances Cabrini, John Neumann, Katharine Drexel, Rose Philippine Duchesne, Theodora Guerin; Blessed Junipero Serra, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha.</p>	<p>What Scripture and magisterial teaching inspired Peter Maurin, who introduced Dorothy to the social teaching of the Church?</p> <p>Where do you see the principles of the Church's social teaching expressed in the reforms for which Peter Maurin called, and later, in the Catholic Worker movement?</p> <p>Reflect on one of the following in light of Catholic Social Teaching: houses of hospitality, clarification of thought sessions, Catholic Worker farms.</p> <p>Do you think that Dorothy Day should become a saint? Why or why not? Did you gain any insights about the process of canonization from <i>Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion</i>?</p>
<b>Electives Option C: Living as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in Society</b>	<p>II. Social Teaching of the Church. A. Church always has stood for charity and justice (CCC, no. 953). 1. Social teachings in Scripture. a. Amos and Isaiah. b. The Sermon on the Mount; Last Judgment (CCC, nos. 2153, 2262, 2336, 2605, 2830). c. Communal sharing, deacons, collections for churches. 2. Church's history of social concern. 3. Corporal and spiritual works of mercy (CCC, no. 2447). II. Social Teaching of the Church. C. Social teaching in the modern era. 1. Pope Leo XIII: encyclical <i>Rerum Novarum</i> in 1891. 2. Social doctrine encyclicals of Popes Pius XI, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. II. Social Teaching of the Church. D. Principles of Catholic social teaching from the Universal Magisterium. 3. The perfection of the person by the common good: man is perfected not only by private goods such as food and shelter but by "common goods" such as peace and truth that come about through his life with others in community (CCC, nos. 1905-1912, 1925-1927). a. Respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the person. b. Prosperity, or the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of society. c. The peace and security of the group and its members.</p> <p>III. Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching (CCC, nos. 1877-1948, 2196-2257).</p> <p>IV. Sin and Its Social Dimensions. A. Concept of social sin. 1. Difference between "social sin" and personal sin (CCC, nos. 1868-1869). C. Social dimensions of the Beatitudes (CCC, nos. 1720-1729).</p>	<p>What are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy? How does Dorothy Day live them out at various points in her life and ministry?</p> <p>Reflect on the parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) in light of the witness of Dorothy Day.</p> <p>How did Peter Maurin help Dorothy discover Catholic Social Teaching? What aspects of CST inspired Dorothy? How did she respond?</p> <p>In what way(s) did the Beatitudes help inspire the vision for houses of hospitality and Catholic Worker farms?</p> <p>What "structures of sin" did Dorothy Day call attention to during her life?</p>



## Social Studies/Social Science (U.S. History, U.S. Government)

The following discussion or reflection questions make connections between *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* and areas of study in social studies, history, and/or government.

### U.S. History I and II

- What conditions and/or realities impacted workers in the early years of Dorothy Day's career? How did her reporting call attention to those realities?
- At different times in her life, Dorothy was involved in supporting workers and unions, women's suffrage, the civil rights movement, war resistance, and farmworkers. Applying what you have learned about these movements through your studies, re-read sections of *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* that relate to a particular movement and discuss what historical realities are being illustrated in word or image in *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion*.
- How did the role of women in society change during Dorothy Day's life? What do you think she thought about these changes?
- Select one of the global events happening in the world during the life of Dorothy Day. What was her perspective and what factors or influences helped form that perspective? Was her perspective reflective of public opinion at the time? Why or why not?
- On p. 10, several "big ideas in radical New York" are represented by Dorothy's colleagues and friends. Do additional research and then comment on the following. What were key aspects of the viewpoints of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), International Workers of the World (IWW), Marxist Socialists, and Anarchists? What U.S. or global events may have influenced those who held those viewpoints? How were their views similar or different from American capitalism? How were their views similar or different to Dorothy's own?
- The illustration on p. 32 depicts the Hunger March of 1932. What realities of the time did this March draw attention to? How did those themes appear in Dorothy's later work?
- Research Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker's stance on one of the following wars that occurred during her life: the Spanish Civil War, World War II, the Cold War, or the Vietnam War. What was Dorothy/the movement's perspective? Why? How was this perspective reflected (or not reflected) in public opinion at the time?
- What were the reasons for U.S. military involvement in World War II or in Vietnam? What perspective did Dorothy and the Catholic Worker have about this military involvement? Do you agree or disagree with her thinking?

### U.S. Government

- How did Dorothy Day participate in government and engage civically?
- Draw from what you have learned about the legislative process to reflect on Dorothy's testimony to a senate committee on selective compulsory military service (the draft) (pp. 53-54).
- Apply what you know about the civil rights movement and nonviolent resistance to Dorothy Day's involvement in this and other movements during her life.
- Reflect on Dorothy Day's involvement in protest movements in connection with what you have learned about civil rights and liberties guaranteed to U.S. citizens.
- What do you think about the FBI files on pp. 64-65? Note: The illustration includes actual quotes from the files the FBI created about Dorothy Day.



## Art

The following discussion or reflection questions can help engage art students with *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion*.

- How did supporters of the Catholic Worker use art to depict the movement's values?
- How does the chosen genre of *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* (graphic biography) help tell Dorothy Day's story in ways that other artforms would not? What are the strengths and limitations of the graphic biography artform?
- Where do you observe "art within art" in the graphic biography? That is, do you notice other art forms used within the graphic biography to help communicate the story in a different way? How do all of these elements work together?

- Analyze the use of various artistic properties (e.g., sensory, formal, technical, expressive, etc.) in *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion*.
- How does the artist use picture storytelling to share Dorothy Day's life?
- What was your favorite panel in the story? Why was the artwork powerful?
- Explore the art of *Catholic Worker* artists Ade Bethune and Fritz Eichenberg online. Which images are most powerful to you? Why?
- Contemporary artists continue to use art to help tell Dorothy Day's story. The *Illuminator* is a newsletter about the arts and artists of the Catholic Worker movement. Read an [issue](#) and comment on the characteristics of the art you see there.
- Using whatever medium you choose, further break open an aspect of Dorothy's story that you feel compelled to reflect on through your own art.



## Service

*Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* can aid theological reflection around service projects and/or service learning. [View the Guide for Service Projects and Service Learning here.](#)