



# APOLOGETICS 101

SURPRISED BY TRUTH

Prepared by Fr. John Bartunek, LC, S.Th.D.  
[RCSpirituality.org](http://RCSpirituality.org)

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# OVERVIEW

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## APOLOGETICS 101

### SUMMARY

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The word “apologetics” has a technical meaning. It refers to *explaining the Catholic faith to those who disagree with it or don’t understand it*. The term comes from the Greek word “apologia”, which means explanation. In this use of the term, we are not talking about making an apology for some kind of offense or mistake, but rather explaining why the Catholic faith is true, reasonable, and redemptive. All mature Catholics need to be able to do this in order to fulfill their mission as witnesses of Christ and missionaries in the world.

This Study Circle Guide simply enables you to utilize for small group study a series of books containing testimonies of a wide variety of people who converted to the Catholic faith. These people come from different backgrounds: Protestant, Jewish, Orthodox, Mormon, fallen-away Catholic, etc. Each chapter of these books contains a personal narration of how the person made his or her way into (or back into) the Catholic Church. The series of books is called *Surprised by Truth* and is edited by one of our generation’s great apologists, Patrick Madrid.

There are two ways to study apologetics, either argument by argument or through real-life case studies. The *Surprised by Truth* series offers a powerful opportunity for the second way, which we highly recommend because of its existential weight. Understanding the path taken by real converts to Catholicism equips you to help others take that path much more effectively than simply understanding abstract arguments divorced from real personal journeys.

### CATEGORIES OF INTEREST

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Catholic Doctrine; Apologetics; Apostolate

### RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF SESSIONS

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There are three volumes in the *Surprised by Truth* series. The first volume contains 11 chapters/testimonies, the second volume contains 15, and the

third volume contains 10. Each of those chapters could easily serve as the raw material for one session (which would make a total of 36 sessions). You could work through one volume at a time or also intersperse one of these sessions among other group studies you are doing (e.g. having an Apologetics 101 session every month). You could also preview the chapters and decide which of them would be most useful for your group, and limit your study to that number of sessions.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

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- The study questions provided by this Study Circle Guide.
- Copies of the relevant volumes or the relevant chapters for each participant. These can be found on Amazon.com or on Patrick Madrid’s [website](#).

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

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Anyone interested in the topics or in need of more knowledge to be able to defend the Catholic faith against critics.

### HOW MUCH HOMEWORK?

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This depends on how you decide to arrange your study. We recommend either of two basic approaches.

- I. Have every participant read each chapter and answer the study questions before your meeting. Then use the meeting time to share and discuss your answers, one by one. If this method is chosen, here are the recommended study questions that each participant should answer while reading and studying each chapter:
  - What prejudices against Catholicism did the author of this chapter have before converting? Where did those prejudices come from? Do you know or have you known anyone who has similar prejudices?









