

7 Step Guide in the Journey to Salvation

by Steve Wood

One of the familiar images of Christmas is the journey of the wise men on their quest to find the Messiah. They had a desire to know the messiah and had a general idea of how to find him, but they needed a little assistance in Jerusalem to get them on their way to Bethlehem.

What if a family member, or friend, asked you this Christmas season, “How can I know Jesus and be saved?” What would you say? Would you be prepared to answer them?

What if a friend or family member was seriously injured or dying and asked you, “How can I have eternal life?” What if your child or teenager asked this question? You would certainly want to be ready with an answer.

*Always be prepared to make a **defense** [a reasoned statement, answer] to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.*
1 Peter 3:15

The purpose of this 7 Step Guide is twofold. First, it is designed to help Christians prepare to answer and to explain how a friend or family member can come to know and to believe in Jesus as their savior. Second, it is designed for any wise man or woman who is on the journey to know Jesus Christ. Wise men and women continue to seek Him.

The two navigational aids for your journey are: the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. These are your GPS and Chart (map) that will faithfully guide you.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), Section 1229: “From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. The journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion.”

7 Steps: (1) Proclamation, (2) Profession of Faith, (3) Repentance & conversion, and (4) Baptism, (5) Confirmation, and (6) Eucharist (7) How to return to the Church

Step 1: Proclamation

Listen attentively. Pray before Mass and listen attentively to the readings.
Pray before your personal reading of the Bible. Where should you start? I personally recommend the Gospel of John.

John 20:31 These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Some key elements in the Word of God:

Jesus was a man (he was born as a baby, ate, slept, was hungry, went fishing, suffered bodily torments, and died)

Jesus is fully God

Matthew 1:23 “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us).

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

Jesus is the way to the Father and the one in whom salvation is found

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.”

Jesus was crucified, died (for our sins), and was buried, but he rose from the dead.

Every other founder of a world religion is still in their grave. Jesus’ resurrection is proof of his claim to divinity.

Read the final chapters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, 2 by which you are saved, if you hold it fast - unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Step 2: Profession of Faith. Who do *you* say that I am?

You must make a public profession of faith.

Romans 10:8 The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); 9 because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord [i.e. God] and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. 11 The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” ...13 For, every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

Mat 10:32 So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

(Even to the point of martyrdom – She Said Yes)

Step 3: Conversion/Repentance – turning from sin and turning to Jesus (2 sides of a coin)

I to Thy – new center of your life

180°degree u-turn

Necessity of true repentance:

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit that befits repentance.”

Quit sinning and start a willingness to obey:

- The 10 Commandments
- Christ’s commands
- Christ’s leaders in the Church

Necessity of faith that God loves and accepts his prodigal children.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Step 4: Baptism

CCC **1213** Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

CCC **1215** This sacrament is also called "*the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit,*" for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."

Mark 16:16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

1 Peter 3:19 ... in the days of Noah ... eight persons, were saved through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

Family Conversions and baptism:

Acts 16:30 “Men, what must I do to be saved?” 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family.

Step 5: Confirmation – outpouring of the Holy Spirit – Acts

CCC **1285** Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”

Step 6: Eucharist

Bread of Life – John 6

“we are what we eat” we become what we eat – spiritual transformation

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

John 6:52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; 54 he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Prayer and Scripture

Step 7: How to return to the Church

What if I’m a Catholic, but I’ve been away from the Faith ... how do I get going again?

CCC **1423** It [Penance] is called the *sacrament of conversion* because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.

It is called the *sacrament of Penance*, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

For a CD presentation of this Guide in the Journey of Salvation call 1-800-705-6131.

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