Welcome to Queen of Heaven

Last year, Saint Benedict Press released Doors of Mercy, a parish and home study program that offered participants a whirlwind tour of salvation history and highlighted the depths of God’s mercy. It also introduced you to a humble Polish nun named Maria Faustina Kowalska and the Divine Mercy message and devotion.

But Doors of Mercy was only the beginning.

The next journey we are embarking on is a deeper encounter with our mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. While all Catholics know and honor her, Queen of Heaven will introduce you to her in a fuller, more intimate way.

The central goal of this program is to draw you closer to your heavenly mother. We will do this not only by teaching you about common devotional practices that Catholics have incorporated into their daily lives for centuries but also by telling you her story, the complete story.

Queen of Heaven will take you back into the distant reaches of time, before creation itself, and explore the Church’s teaching of Mary as “the predestined mother,” before embarking on a trip through Sacred Scripture and the often-sorrowful path she traveled with her Son. After reviewing her assumption into heaven, we will examine her role in the early Church and the development of the great Marian dogmas before leaping into some of her best-known apparitions—when she left her throne and returned to call us back to God.

Amidst all this, we will explore the battle she has waged against the Devil, showing you the fulfillment of the prophecy from the Garden that enmity would be placed between the woman and the serpent. It is a battle she has fought for the world, for humanity, and for you.

It is our hope and prayer that this program, whether you enjoy it at home or in your parish, will give you a deeper understanding of the Blessed Virgin Mary and enkindle in your heart a deeper love for your heavenly mother.

Conor Gallagher, Publisher
CONTENTS

Understanding Your Guide ........................................................................................................ 8
Group Study Session Plan ........................................................................................................ 11
My Personal Checklist: Before the Study .............................................................................. 13
An Introduction to Queen of Heaven ..................................................................................... 15
Lesson 1 ................................................................................................................................... 19
The Battle Begins: The Woman & the Serpent
Lesson 2 ................................................................................................................................... 33
The Annunciation: The Day Creation Held Its Breath
Lesson 3 ................................................................................................................................... 47
The Sorrowful Mother: A Sword Shall Pierce Your Soul
Lesson 4 ................................................................................................................................... 61
Mother of the Church: All Generations Will Call Me Blessed
Lesson 5 ................................................................................................................................... 75
Guadalupe: Mother of the Americas
Lesson 6 ................................................................................................................................... 89
Lourdes: I Am the Immaculate Conception
Lesson 7 ................................................................................................................................... 103
Fatima: The Lady of the Rosary
Lesson 8 ................................................................................................................................... 117
The Consecration: My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph
My Personal Checklist: After the Study .............................................................................. 131
Video Notes .............................................................................................................................. 133
Lesson Readings ....................................................................................................................... 149
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ 161
What’s inside your Queen of Heaven Study Guide? Here’s an overview.

The Study Guide is divided into eight lessons. The following elements appear in each of them.

LESSON INTRODUCTION
It will be helpful to read this short passage before embarking on each lesson.

LESSON READINGS
Each lesson is drawn from various sources, from Scripture passages and teachings found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church to the many books and articles that have been written about Mary’s role in the Church and the amazing accounts of her apparitions. Suggested readings from these sources are to be read before embarking on each lesson. These readings are optional but will better prepare you for the material. The scriptural texts quoted in the Study Guide and Leader Guide come from the Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition (RSVCE) translation of the Bible. Be aware that the wording of the biblical text will vary in other translations.

OPENING & CLOSING PRAYER
Prayer should be an integral part of every aspect of our lives, especially when we embark on a study of our mother, Mary. We ask God for the knowledge, wisdom, diligence, and humility necessary to understand His Word and for the grace to change our lives by responding in faith and obedience to what He says.

The Opening Prayer is for the group to pray together. We begin each session with a special prayer to Our Lady, invoking her intercession in our study and our lives. We’ve selected special prayers from the rich treasury the Church offers us. These are prayers gathered from sources originating throughout various centuries as ways to help us speak with our Blessed Mother.

When completing the session, close with the Memorare, one of the most famous Marian prayers used by the Church. It is an ancient prayer asking for Mary’s intercession and reminds us that she can never turn down one of her children when they approach her with a sincere heart. Ending with this prayer will send you back out into the world with your spiritual mother watching over you.

VIDEO LESSON: QUEEN OF HEAVEN
Embark on the first video, Queen of Heaven, hosted and narrated by Leonardo Defilippis, with expert commentary from over a dozen Catholic scholars, authors, and speakers. This part of the study takes you on a journey through history alongside Mary, beginning before time itself and extending into today. Key highlights are provided with room to take notes, which will help you with the group discussion that follows.

KEY WORDS & PEOPLE TO KNOW
Each lesson contains several terms and people that are helpful to know and review.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
If your study has ten or more participants, you may hold discussions in smaller groups of five to seven. Each small group will have its own discussion leader prepared to guide the group. The small group discussion for each lesson will respond to two sets of questions: “Lesson Review” and “Life Application.”

PART I: LESSON REVIEW
These questions prompt you in two ways: First, the questions help you recall some of the insights you have learned in reading the scriptural passage and the study notes. Second, the questions help you reflect more deeply by considering some wider issues raised by what you have learned.

PART II: LIFE APPLICATION
These questions are posed to help you consider how you might nurture your relationship with Mary and allow her to draw you closer to her Son. They will prompt you to discuss Mary’s role in your salvation and the many ways you might show your love for her in your everyday life. After this discussion, you will be able to consider your answers in light of the insights provided by the Spiritual Life Video.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE VIDEO
After returning from your break, you’ll watch this second video hosted by Fr. Patrick Winslow, who gives a short pastoral talk on Mary and the role she plays in your salvation, as well as the many ways you can show your love for her through common forms of devotion and veneration. Additionally, our expert commentators will speak on their own relationship with Mary and share personal testimonies on these devotional practices, including the Rosary, pilgrimages, sacred images, Marian consecration, and more.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
This passage should be read after watching the Spiritual Life Video. It helps reaffirm the lesson and leads you to the “Living It Out” portion of the session.
LIVING IT OUT
This section provides a brief period to pray, discern, and write down the specific ways you can nurture your relationship with Mary and discover how she can draw you closer to her Son.

BRINGING IT HOME
Each lesson contains a short summary looking back at the part of the story you have just covered and looking ahead to what awaits you in the next session.

WORDS OF WISDOM
Spread throughout each lesson are various quotations and excerpts to help you understand Mary’s role in the Church and our lives. These include:

† God’s Word: Scripture passages from the key moments of each session.
† From the Catechism: Supporting passages from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
† Saints on Mary: Quotes from these holy men and women of the Church.
† The Popes Teach: Helpful insights and inspirational messages from encyclicals, homilies, and books written by the popes throughout the ages.

FURTHER READING
Each lesson contains a list of other titles that you can read to further your knowledge of Mary’s life and come to know her better.

GROUP STUDY SESSION PLAN

What does a typical study session look like? Here’s an overview.

BEFORE THE SESSION
- Review your Living It Out section from the prior lesson to consider the ways you deepened your relationship with Mary (will not apply for Lesson 1).
- Review the optional Lesson Readings section.
- Read the Lesson Introduction.

SESSION
- Opening Prayer
- Queen of Heaven Video—hosted and narrated by Leonardo Defilippis
- Small Group Discussion
  Part I: Lesson Review
  Part II: Life Application
- Break
  - Spiritual Life Video—hosted by Fr. Patrick Winslow with personal testimonies from Catholic scholars and experts
  - The Spiritual Life
  - Living It Out
  - Bringing It Home
  - Closing Prayer

AFTER THE SESSION
- Review the self-study material, including Key Words & People to Know, Words of Wisdom, and Further Reading.

MY PERSONAL CHECKLIST
At the beginning of the first group session of Queen of Heaven, you’ll have the opportunity to review “My Personal Checklist: Before the Study” (p. 13), which is a list of some personal benefits that we hope you will receive through this experience. You’ll have a minute or two to follow the instructions on the page.

At the end of the last lesson, you’ll have the opportunity to review “My Personal Checklist: After the Study” (p.131) so you can reflect on the areas in which you have grown personally through the study. You’ll have a minute or two to follow the instructions on the page.

*Both of these checklists are for your use only; they will not be shared with anyone else unless you choose to do so.
Here are some personal benefits you can receive through the time and focus you invest in *Queen of Heaven*. Check all those you hope to receive. At the end of the study, you’ll have a chance to review the list again to reflect on the areas in which you’ve grown.

*This checklist is for you only; it will not be shared with anyone else unless you choose to do so.*

- I want to know Mary more personally and intimately.
- I want to become more familiar with the larger plan God has for Mary.
- I want to understand better how Our Lady leads us to Jesus.
- I’d like to know how to nurture my relationship with my spiritual mother.
- I’d like to have a more maternal love and caring presence in my life.
- I’m intrigued to know more about Mary’s pivotal role in history.
- I’d like to understand why Mary is often shown crushing the head of the serpent.
- I’d like to know what it means to honor Mary as our queen.
- I want to learn more about Marian devotions to devote more time to prayer.
- I want to model my life more after Mary who said “Your will be done” to God.
- I want to engage in more effective and powerful prayer, as well as spiritual intercession for others.
- I want to learn to share my faith with those around me and with those who are most in need.
- I want to be more grateful for the gift Jesus gave us in His mother.
- I want to live my life in a way modeled more after the humility and obedience of the Blessed Mother.
- I want to reflect Mary’s loving kindness to those around me.
- I want to learn from Mary’s life of sorrows and the burdens she carried bravely and humbly so I can bear my own sorrows with more faith.
- I want to know more about the Rosary and its power and benefits.
- I’m interested to know more about the real story of Guadalupe, Lourdes, and Fatima.
- I want to become a more active member of my parish to help build the kingdom of God.
THE BATTLE BEGINS

The Woman & the Serpent

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Genesis 3:15
LESSON INTRODUCTION

Although it may seem as if Mary’s story began in Nazareth, in fact it goes back even further... before history itself.

The events that transpired in the profound abyss before time as we know it are mostly a mystery to us. Divine Revelation and Holy Mother Church give us only hints and glimpses of these events. Yet some theologians and saints have provided fascinating speculations on what might have been.

In this lesson, we are taken back into the mysterious time before time, where only God existed, as a community of persons: the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will learn how He created the angels and examine the reasons why some of them rebelled against their Creator. We will also discover the origins of the Devil’s hatred of this Woman, following him into the Garden where he corrupted our first parents. After leaving the Garden, we will learn of the Devil’s many victories found in the Old Testament. Yet within these sacred writings, we will also see foreshadowings of the Woman who would one day come to give birth to Our Savior.

LESSON READINGS

Reading these before each lesson is optional, but can help you better understand and prepare for the lessons.

• Genesis 3
• Revelation 12
• Catechism of the Catholic Church, 456–460, 488

OPENING PRAYER

Begin your first session with this prayer, evoking Mary as Our Lady, Queen of Angels, which implores her to command the angels to drive away Satan’s evil spirits.

August Queen of Heaven!
Sovereign Mistress of the angels!
Thou who from the beginning hast received from God the power and mission to crush the head of Satan, we humbly beseech thee to send thy holy Legions, that, under thy command and by thy power, they may pursue the evil spirits, encounter them on every side, resist their bold attacks and drive them hence into the abyss of eternal woe. Amen.
After Lucifer was cast from heaven, he corrupted our first parents in the Garden.

Despite the sufferings and corruption of God’s people, we see foreshadowings of Mary in the Old Testament.

Saints and theologians have pointed to God’s revelation to Lucifer of the future Incarnation as one possible reason for his rebellion.

The Church teaches that the purpose of the Incarnation included more than the redemption of fallen humanity.

The Church has labeled Mary “the predestined mother.”

Saints on Mary

“When Mary... was raised to the dignity of Queen of Heaven, the power of hell over men was weakened and dissolved.”

—St. Bernardine of Siena
We cannot enter the house without speaking first to the porter. Similarly, we cannot enter heaven without calling upon the aid of the Blessed Virgin Mary who is the Portress of Heaven.

St. John Vianney
The National Blue Army Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, USA, Inc.—or, as it’s nicknamed, “Our Lady’s Blue Army”—is a global organization run by the lay faithful that seeks to transmit the message of Fatima to the world on behalf of the Church.

The National Blue Army Shrine apostolate is recognized as a Public International Association of the Faithful under the Pontifical Council for the Laity (2010). It is unique in that it is the only Fatima organization authorized to speak “in the name of the Church” about Fatima.

The mission of the apostolate is to “help people learn, live, and spread the message of Our Lady of Fatima in communion with the Church and in concert with the New Evangelization.”

The actual shrine was built in the early 1970s. It was the fruit of the efforts of the late Rev. Harold V. Colgan, who spent his life spreading the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima to millions worldwide.

The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America is considered one of Washington DC’s “hidden gems.” The interior is fashioned in the Byzantine style, while the exterior boasts gorgeous grounds, with gardens of over one thousand roses; a Lourdes Grotto; catacombs; and a cloister walk.

The Franciscan Friars founded the monastery in 1889 with the mission to help Christians in the Holy Land. Their mission continues to this day. The site offers daily tours to people of all faiths.
Leonardo Defilippis

After years as a Shakespearean actor, Leonardo Defilippis embarked on a spiritual journey that led him to found a Catholic theater company, Saint Luke Productions, in 1980. Millions throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe have seen his work as an actor, producer, and director, both in live productions of dramas such as *Fanny* and *Maximilian: Saint of Auschwitz* and in the feature film *Thérèse*. His work has inspired vocations to the religious life, and he has won numerous awards over the decades. On August 6, 1983, the feast of the Transfiguration, Leonardo married his beloved wife Patti. They have been blessed with seven children and reside in Washington State.

Father Patrick Winslow

Father Patrick Winslow graduated from State University of New York at Cortland in 1991 with a BS in chemistry and studied for several years at Georgia Tech’s Graduate Department of Chemistry before leaving to attend seminary. In 1999 he earned his STB in theology from Catholic University of America and was ordained a priest in June of 1999. Fr. Winslow gained great popularity among Bible study students around the world through his lectures with the Catholic Scripture Study program, and his popularity again grew in the Upstate of South Carolina with his radio talk show on Catholic Radio. He currently serves as Pastor at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Special thanks to all who hosted and assisted Saint Benedict Press crews at our filming locations. These locations include not only the National Shrine, Saint John Paul II National Shrine, Blue Army Shrine and the Franciscan Monastery, but also Christendom College, Belmont Abbey College, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, and the parishes of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Ann, and St. Peter in Charlotte, NC.

A special thank you to Jacquelyn Hayes, Brandon Pettit, Susan Gibbs, Laura Loker, Peter Gervais, and Rose Barbett for all their help. Finally, thanks goes to our Saint Benedict Press Parish Sales team for all their tireless work in bringing Queen of Heaven to thousands across the country.

Father Chris Alar, MIC

Father Chris Alar, MIC, is the Director of the Association of Marian Helpers, a ministry of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. Prior to entering the Marians as a postulant in 2006, he received a BS in industrial engineering and an MBA from the University of Michigan. After working several years at a Fortune 500 company, he began his own consulting company in Charlotte, North Carolina. After answering the Lord’s call, he attended Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio for his philosophy studies and earned his MDiv from Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut. Over the past several years he has been mentored by the world’s leading experts in Divine Mercy and has spoken at over one hundred parishes to date.

David Carollo

David Carollo is the Executive Director of the World Apostolate of Fatima USA - Our Lady’s Blue Army. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Apostolate for ten years and as the National President of the organization from 2007 until he assumed the role of director in 2012. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the World Apostolate of Fatima International. David and his wife, Dorothy, live in Chicago and split time between there and New Jersey, where the apostolate is headquartered. He also oversees the apostolate’s operations in Portugal, where the organization operates a hotel retreat center.

Deacon Bob Ellis

Deacon Robert Ellis has been the National Coordinator for the World Apostolate of Fatima since 2008. He became a member of the apostolate in 1968 and was ordained a permanent deacon in 1986. He served as the Spiritual Director of the Green Bay, Wisconsin division of the World Apostolate of Fatima for over ten years. A Navy veteran and husband of forty-eight years, Deacon Ellis and his wife, Dianne, are the parents of twenty children, six of whom have already passed into eternity, and have forty grandchildren, including one Religious. They reside in Rockland, Wisconsin.
Martha Fernández-Sardina, MA

Martha Fernández-Sardina is the Founder and Director of Prepare The Way Enterprises and RememberYouAreLoved.com. She is “On A Mission of Love, Mercy and Truth” as a bilingual, international speaker, writer, teacher, and new evangelization trainer and consultant, touching thousands in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Oceania through talks, radio, television, articles, and social media.

Carrie Gress, PhD

Carrie Gress has a PhD from the Catholic University of America and is a faculty member at Pontifex University. Her work has appeared at Aleteia, Catholic Vote, Catholic World Report, The National Catholic Register, New Advent, Real Clear Religion, Reddit, Zenit, EWTN Radio, Relevant Radio, BBC and CBC television. She has lived and worked professionally in Washington, DC and Rome, Italy, and her work has been translated into seven languages. Dr. Gress is the author of Nudging Conversions: A Practical Guide to Bringing Those You Love Back to the Church, Ultimate Makeover: The Transforming Power of Motherhood, and co-author with George Weigel of City of Saints: A Pilgrim’s Guide to John Paul II’s Krakow. A mother of four, she and her family live in Virginia.

Mary Healy, PhD

Dr. Mary Healy is professor of Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit and an international speaker. Her PhD is in biblical theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. She is a general editor of the Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture and author of its volumes The Gospel of Mark and Hebrews. Her other books include Men and Women Are from Eden: A Study Guide to John Paul II’s Theology of the Body and Healings: Bringing the Gift of God’s Mercy to the World. Dr. Healy serves as chair of the Doctrinal Commission of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services in Rome. She also serves the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian unity as a member of the Pentecostal-Catholic International Dialogue. She was appointed by Pope Francis as one of the first three women ever to serve on the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

Father Jeffrey Kirby, STD

Father Jeffrey Kirby is a priest of the diocese of Charleston, South Carolina. He holds a doctorate in moral theology from the Holy Cross University in Rome. He is the author of the books Lord, Teach Us to Pray, 101 Surprising Facts About St. Peter’s and the Vatican, and The Life and Witness of St. Maria Goretti. Fr. Kirby is host of the national Christian formation program “Doors of Mercy,” and a presenter for Catholic Scripture Study and Catholic Courses. He has appeared as a guest on EWTN, CatholicTV, and Salt and Light, as well as on BBC, NPR, and ABC to discuss various issues relating to the Church.

Father Dominic Legge, OP

Reverend Dominic Legge entered the Order of Preachers in 2001 and was ordained a priest in 2007. He was raised in Seattle, Washington and, before becoming a Dominican, practiced law for several years as a trial attorney for the United States Department of Justice. He holds degrees in law, philosophy, and theology, including a doctorate in Theology from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. He serves as the Assistant Director of the Thomistic Institute and is the author of The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas (Oxford University Press, forthcoming in Feb. 2017).

Brendan J. McGuire, PhD

Dr. Brendan J. McGuire received his undergraduate education at Christendom College, graduating in 2003 with a double major in history and classical studies. He subsequently received an appointment as presidential fellow in medieval history at Saint Louis University, where he received his master’s degree in January of 2006 and his PhD in 2011. His publications include the internationally-recognized study “Evidence for Religious Accommodation in Latin Constantinople,” as well as various contributions to periodicals such as the St. Austin Review and Crisis. Dr. McGuire presently serves as the associate professor of history at Christendom College.
Jesse Romero, MA

Jesse Romero is a full-time Catholic Lay Evangelist, nationally acclaimed for his dynamic, upbeat Christ-centered preaching. He is a retired Los Angeles Deputy Sheriff, a devoted husband and father, and has been married to Anita in the Catholic Church since 1983. He is a black belt in Korean karate, a three time world Olympic Police Boxing Champion, and a former USA Kickboxing Champion. He has a BA from Mount St. Mary’s College in Los Angeles and a Masters in Catholic theology from Franciscan University in Ohio.

Tim Staples

As a young adult, Tim Staples served four years in the Marines followed by a position as a youth minister in an Assembly of God community. There he was determined to prove Catholicism wrong, but he studied his way to the last place he thought he would ever end up: the Catholic Church. He converted in 1988 and spent six years in formation for the priesthood, earning a degree in philosophy and studying theology at the graduate level. Realizing that his calling was not to be a priest, Tim left the seminary in 1994 and has been working in Catholic apologetics and evangelization ever since. He is the author of several books, including Nuts & Bolts: A Practical Guide for Explaining and Defending the Catholic Faith and Behold Your Mother: A Biblical and Historical Defense of Marian Doctrines. Tim presently serves as the Director of Apologetics and Evangelization for Catholic Answers.

Jem Sullivan, PhD

Professor Jem Sullivan holds a doctorate from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. For over a decade, she has taught graduate courses as adjunct professor in the Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, DC. She is the author of two books from Our Sunday Visitor, A Study Guide to the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults and The Beauty of Faith: Christian Art and the Gospel. Jem is a featured guest on EWTN News Nightly, a Catholic Courses professor, and has served as a docent at the National Gallery of Art. She writes for a variety of Catholic publications, including Magnificat.

Father Richard Sutter, LC

Reverend Richard F. Sutter is a native of Atlanta, Georgia and an honor graduate from Belmont Abbey College near Charlotte, North Carolina. Upon graduating from college, he served six years as a US Army Infantry Officer and two years as a Corporate Information Technology Project Manager prior to entering the Legionaries of Christ. After several years of discernment and study, he was ordained a priest at the Basilica of St. Paul’s in Rome on December 12, 2009. Since then, he has received the call to serve the Church as a diocesan priest all over the south, including in New Orleans, Atlanta, Savannah, and Charlotte and has served as chaplain at several schools and for the Atlanta Braves. He currently serves as parochial vicar at the Cathedral of St. Patrick in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Sister Mary André Thelen, OP

Sister Mary André Thelen, OP is a member of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist. The Sisters of Mary are a religious congregation devoted to contemplation and evangelization, according to the Dominican motto, Contemplata Atius Tradere: “to contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation.” Sister Mary André is currently living in Washington, DC where she studies at the Catholic University of America and works with Campus Ministry through the university’s Religious in Residence Program. While living and studying on campus, she enjoys being in close contact with the students and seeking to draw them closer to the Eucharist and to Our Lady.

Paul Thigpen, PhD

Paul Thigpen, PhD, is the Editor of TAN Books and the best-selling author, co-author, or compiler of forty-two titles. Among his most popular works are Manual for Spiritual Warfare and A Year With the Saints: Daily Meditations with the Holy Ones of God. A convert to the Catholic faith, Paul has served the Church as an award-winning journalist, historian, speaker, apologist, catechist, and member of the National Advisory Council of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. His work has been circulated worldwide and translated into twelve languages.