

RCIA BOOK CLUB

CAVIATE: this list is generated by RCIA participants as a means of sharing titles of books that may be helpful to the spiritual journey. Not all "Christian" literature is congruent with Catholic doctrine, hence discernment in reading is required. The "Rating" scale, when assigned, should indicate how helpful the book might be to a Catholic's journey of faith

TITLE	AUTHOR	COMMENTS	Priest RATING 0=poor 5=excellent NR=not rated
The Holy Bible (NRSV – New Revised Standard Version) – Catholic Edition	God	Inquirers to be given their own Bible at the Rite of Welcome in Nov	5
Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)	Holy See	A compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals – "the deposit of faith"; To be provided to each Inquirer in Dec; excellent reference; well cross-referenced to the Bible and other Catholic documents	NR
Why be Catholic	Richard Rohr	A thought provoking discussion on "why" be Catholic as opposed to anything else	4
The Holy Longing	Ron Rolheisor	Describes the natural "pull" we feel towards God	5
Catholicism for Dummies	Rev. John Trigilio & Rev. Ken Brighenti	Great reference; easy read; comprehensive summary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church; carries the "Imprimatur" and "Nihil Obstat" (note 1)	5
The Catholic Mass for Dummies	Rev. John Trigilio Jr. Rev. Kenneth Brighenti & Rev. Monsignor James Cafone	This book gives a step-by-step overview of the Catholic Mass, as well as a close look at the history and meaning of the Mass as a central form of Catholic worship. You'll find information on the order of a Mass and coverage of major Masses.	5
A Biblical Walk Through the Mass: Understanding what we say and do in the Liturgy	Dr. Edward Sri	This reference takes us on a unique tour of the Liturgy. Based on the revised translation of the Mass (Advent, 2011), this book explores the biblical roots of the words and gestures we experience in the Liturgy and explains their profound significance. This look at the Mass will deepen your faith and your devotion to the Eucharist.	5
Living God's Word: Reflections on the Sunday Readings (Three volumes): Year A Year B Year C	Rev. Terrence Prendergast SJ, Archbishop of Ottawa	This book presents great yet brief homilies on the Sunday gospel readings. Very good source for those who want greater insight into the Gospel readings.	4
Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration (2007)	Pope Benedict XVI	This series has been said to be Pope Benedict's "Magnum Opus"—the crowning jewel of his career as a theologian. If you only ever read one work about our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, this is the set to read. Deep but accessible.	5
Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem To The Resurrection (2011)	Pope Benedict XVI		5
Jesus of Nazareth: Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives (2012)	Pope Benedict XVI		5
I like being Catholic	Michael Leach & Therese Borchard	"treasured traditions, rituals & stories" from various Catholics; light-hearted read	3
Rome Sweet Rome	Scott Hahn	Co-authored by his wife Kimberly. The Hahns were Presbyterian professional clergy; the book describes their journey to Catholicism	5
Surprised by Truth (book 1)	Patrick Madrid	Describes faith journeys and conversions of several	

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& book 2)		different people	4
Faith of our Fathers	James Gibbons	Apologetics; explains the Catholic faith and why Catholics believe what they do; a classic work	NR
The Teaching of Christ – A Catholic Catechism for Adults	Bishop Donald W. Wuell (??)		NR
Jesus, Peter and the keys – A Scriptural handbook on the Papacy		History of the Papacy and early Church; demonstrates that the Bishop of Rome was the leader of the early Christian community from historical evidence.	NR
Catholicism and Fundamentalism	Karl Keating	Apologetics; answers typical questions posed to Catholics by "fundamentalists"; good book if you have difficult questions about the Church	5
Catholic Christianity	Peter J Kreeft	A complete Catechism of Catholic beliefs based on the CCC (Catechism of the Catholic Church)	5
The Seven Story Mountain	Thomas Merton	Autobiography of Monk Thomas Merton	5
An American Pilgrimage (The life you save may be your own)	Paul Elie	Vivid accounts of the great writers – Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day, Flannery O'Connor & Walker Percy. It is a story of how the Catholic faith took on forms not anticipated by their readers.	NR
Benedict's Way	Lonni Collins Pratt & Fr. Daniel Homan OSB	St Benedict's Rule combined with personal stories & illustrated with today's applications	NR
"We Believe..." – A Survey of the Catholic Faith	Oscar Lukefahr, C.M.	Takes much of the content of the Catechism (CCC) and articulates it in a readily understandable manner; cross references to CCC; inquirers will be provided with this book in Dec	NR
Mere Christianity	C.S. Lewis	very logical approach to what Christianity entails; short, but powerful read	5
The Screwtape Letters	C.S. Lewis	fiction; Humorous look at what "spiritual warfare" might be like	5
Surprised by Joy	C.S. Lewis	The conversion experience of C.S. Lewis, a former atheist; he called himself the most dejected and reluctant convert in all of England!	5
Speak LORD, Your servant is listening	Msgr David E. Rosage Published by Servant Books	An excellent guide to scriptural prayer	NR
Essential Catholic Handbook of the Sacraments	A Redemptorist Pastoral publication	A summary of beliefs, Rites & prayers with a glossary of key terms	NR
Show me the way	Henri J.M. Nouwen	Readings for each day of Lent	NR
Lessons of St. Francis	John Michael Talbot with Steve Rabey	How to bring simplicity & spirituality into your daily life	NR
Heart of compassion	Gerald Vann	The vocation of woman today	NR
Sacramental Theology – A	Kenan B. Osborne,		NR

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general introduction	O.F.M.		
Explained Faith	Leo Tresse	Priest from Notre Dame	NR
Meditated Ascetic	Salvador Canals	Publisher - Scepter	NR
Catholic Christianity	Richard Chilson	A guide to the way, the truth & the life	NR
Being Catholic Today	Laurence McTaggart O.S.B.	Faith, doubt and everyday life	NR
Bringing the Initiation of Christ into the 21 st Century	William A. Meninger	A new slant on a classic	NR
Catholic Doctrine in Scripture	Gregory Oatis	A very informative guide to the verses that are key to affirming the faith (133 pages) (approx \$16)	NR
Beginning Apologetics 1: How to explain & defend the Catholic faith	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 2: How to answer Jehovah's Witnesses & Mormons	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 3: How to explain & defend the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 4: How to answer atheists and New Agers	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 5: How to answer tough moral questions: abortion, contraception, euthanasia, test-tube babies, cloning & sexual ethics	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 6: How to explain & defend Mary	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 7: How to read the Bible	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Beginning Apologetics 8: The End times: What Catholics believe about the 2 nd coming, the rapture, Heaven, Hell, purgatory, & indulgences	Fr Frank Chacon & Jim Burnham	-From San Juan Catholic Seminars -full of Scriptural references & references to other Church documents	NR
Doors to the Sacred	Joseph Martos	Excellent historical introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church	
The Dolorous Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ	Anne Catherine Emmerich	A visionary's interpretation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (1774 – 1824)	
Compendium of the Catholic Church	CCCB	Question & Answer Catechism ISBN 0-88997-528-0 (bound); 0-88997-543-4 (paperback)	

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Peace of Soul	Bishop Fulton J. Sheen	Timeless wisdom on finding serenity & joy	
The Truth of Catholicism: Inside the Essential Teachings and Controversies of the Church Today	George Weigel	This succinct, well written book explores chapter by chapter the perennial questions surrounding the Catholic faith including the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the relationship of Catholicism to other religious communities, the meaning of freedom, the use and abuse of sex, the dignity of human life, and the role of women.	
What Catholics Really Believe: 52 Answers to Common Misconceptions about the Catholic Faith	Karl Keating	Addresses some of the most common misperceptions and misunderstandings related to the Catholic Church. Easy to read and succinct.	
On Being Catholic	Thomas Howard	Converted from a Protestant Fundamentalist background, Thomas Howard discusses Catholic teaching and practice, in particular Mass and the Eucharist.	
A Father Who Keeps His Promises: God's Covenant Love in Scripture	Scott Hahn	Hahn explores the "covenant love" God reveals to us through the Scriptures and explains how God patiently reaches out to us—despite our faults and shortcomings—to restore us into relationship with his divine family. Hahn covers God's plan for the ages, beginning with Adam and Eve and continuing down through the generations to the coming of Christ and the birth of the Church.	5
Hail Holy Queen	Scott Hahn	Easy to read, accessible to the layperson, this book explains the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our Christian faith.	5
Swear to God: The Power and Promise of the Sacraments	Scott Hahn	This book explains the meaning and importance of the sacraments in God's plan of salvation.	5
Lord Have Mercy: The Healing Power of Confession	Scott Hahn	Hahn describes how the sacrament of confession is anticipated in the Old testament, how it is presented in the New Testament and how essential it is in spiritual life today.	5
The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth	Scott Hahn	Hahn describes the vision of the early Church Fathers, explains the relationship between the Book of Revelation and the Mass.	5
Letter and Spirit: From Written Word to Living Word in the Liturgy	Scott Hahn	Letter and Spirit brings together understanding of Scripture and Liturgy and how they are integrated. A little more difficult than other of his books but well worth reading.	4
First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and the Trinity	Scott Hahn	Easy to read and understand, Hahn discusses the meaning of God, Church, marriage and family. A central theme is the Trinity as family.	4
Signs of Life	Scott Hahn	A clear and comprehensive guide to the Biblical doctrines and historical traditions that underlie Catholic beliefs and practices. Devoting single chapters to each topic, Hahn covers: the Sign of the Cross, the Mass, the Sacraments, praying with the saints, guardian angels, sacred images	5

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		and relics, the celebration of Easter, Christmas, and other holidays, daily prayers, etc. Excellent read.	
Understanding "Our Father" Biblical Reflections on the Lord's Prayer	Scott Hahn	Scott Hahn breaks open each petition in the "Our Father" with teaching and reflection. In the second part of the books he provides writings from four saints (Early Church Fathers) reflecting on the theology of this prayer.	5
Crossing the Tiber	Stephen K. Ray	Covers Ray's journey from Baptist Fundamentalist to devout Roman Catholic. In particular he looks at the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist drawing from the writings of the Early Church Fathers. This is not an easy read but well worth the effort.	
Crossing the Threshold of Hope	His Holiness John Paul II	A wonderful book. Accessible to the layperson. Pope John Paul II writes about the existence of God, the dignity of man; about pain, suffering and evil; about eternal life, hope and salvation; about relationship with other faiths. "Be Not Afraid".	
Medjugore: The Message	Wayne Weible	In 1985, Weible, a Lutheran Protestant journalist learned about a miracle that was taking place in an obscure village in Yugoslavia—since 1981 the Blessed Mother has reportedly appeared in daily apparitions to a group of six Croatian youths (her apparitions continue today 25 years later). Weible has devoted his life to bringing forward The Blessed Mother's messages and he has since converted.	
The Final Harvest	Wayne Weible	Weible chronicles the phenomenon of the apparitions of the Blessed Mother over 25 years in Medjugore as well as the impact of her messages for the visionaries, others closely associated with the apparitions, and worldwide.	
The Church & the culture war	Joyce Little	Excellent book; very thought provoking; "heady" (not a simple read)	
Prayers for the Domestic Church: A Handbook for Worship in the Home	Edward Hays	Published by Forest of Peace Books, Inc., 1979. Suggested by Meg Vail as a valuable home resource.	
My Life with the Saints	Fr. J. Martin	Very readable-funny; author talks about how he 'encountered' or came to learn of various saints throughout his life & the wonderful effect this had on him & his ministry.	5
How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization	Thomas E. Woods, Jr.	Incredible list of things, ideas, institutions, laws etc that came from Catholic life & thought that progressed humanity; from the printing press to the wine press!	5
Handbook of Prayers	Midwest Theological Forum	Ernest Reimer says its about 4" x 6" and about 3/4" thick so you can stuff it anywhere, and its jam packed with good stuff!	5
The Collegeville Bible Commentary	D. Bergant & R.J. Karris	Brian & Meg Vail highly recommend. (Meg's prof on the Bible at UofA recommends the "New Jerome Commentary" as well). These books usually have an intro on each book of the Bible that helps put it in perspective – who wrote it, when, to whom, historical context etc. Also	4

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		have analysis on details of each chapter & verse!	
Bible – NRSV Catholic Mission edition	St. Jerome Press	Brian Vail recommends – his personal favorite; paperback, newsprint paper (nice & thick); has maps, charts very helpful especially chart of the kings of Israel & Judah. Has a concordance at the beginning of the New Testament that tells you where & in which Gospel, particular stories are (eg: the prodigal son etc)	5
The Everlasting Man	G.K. Chesterton	Tracy Edmonds says this is a must read for anyone who wants to know how our faith fits into the history of the world in relation to prehistory, antiquity, other religions, other cultures, demons, philosophy, mythology, heresies etc. Tracy agrees with a quote from Henri Belloc – a voracious reader of whole libraries – who said: <i>"the only author worth reading really is G.K. Chesterton & then when you go to bed at night, the only author worth rereading is G.K. Chesterton!"</i>	5
Question Time – 150 Questions & Answers on the Catholic Faith	Fr. John Flader	Louise England recommends; an Australian book that is a great read for the new Catholic & the 'old' Catholic both!	5
The 'How to' Book of Catholic Devotions	Mike Aquilina & other	Kathy Gust highly recommends for the new Catholic to figure out what some of the 'old' Catholics are talking about half the time! (ok – those are my words, not hers)	5
The 'How to' Book of Sacramentals: Everything You Need to Know But No One Ever Taught You	Ann Ball	A concise, accurate, readable explanation of what sacramentals are ... and are not! In this guide you receive: a brief history of each sacramental; best ways to pray with a sacramental; the traditional prayer associated with a particular item or action; suggestions for incorporating sacramentals into one's own prayer life and daily routine.	
The 'How to' Book of the Mass: Everything You Need to Know but No One Ever Taught You	Michael Dubruiel	In this guide to the celebration of the Eucharist you get: -Step-by-step guidelines to walk you through the Mass -Biblical background of the prayers of the Mass -Insights from the Tradition and teaching of the Church -Practical aid to overcoming distractions -Concrete ways to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ at every Mass	
Mother Theresa: Come be my light – the private writings of the St. of Calcutta	Brian Kolodiejchuk	The internal faith struggles of Mother Theresa. I, Darlene Smigelski, highly recommend...but warn readers that this is NOT an easy read! I was quite shocked by Mother Theresa's struggles & found it quite difficult to 'carry' the painful cross with her. Ultimately, there was a real hope in this tough journey through her devoted life!	4
Good news about Sex & Marriage	Christopher West	Highly recommended by our guest speaker, Patty Schneier. I highly recommend as well. The Q&A format is great as the questions are quite blunt as those who tend to be hostile to the Churches teaches typically phrase them. The answers are well thought out & wonderfully linked almost from the 1 st question to the last. What an	5

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		awesome theology! There are 5 copies of this book available for sign out from the RCIA office.	
Theology of the Body for Beginners – a basic introduction to Pope John Paul II's sexual revolution	Christopher West	Also highly recommended by our guest speaker, Patty Schneier. There are 5 copies of this book available for sign out from the RCIA office.	4
Jesus Light of the World	Fr. Robert J. Fox	A catechism on the doctrines of the Catholic faith as made known by the Bible, the Magisterium and as contained in the Catechism. – set up as a series of lessons with review & discussion questions following	
Eucharist: Heaven & Earth Unite	Fr. Robert J. Fox	Focus on our bond with heaven through the Eucharist; (preface by Mother Angelica)	
A Priest is a Priest Forever	Fr. Robert J. Fox	Fr. Robert J. Fox's autobiography written in his 50 th year as a priest. – 48 years as a Parish priest!	
Fundamentals of Faith – <i>Digest of the Catholic Catechism – Questions & Answers</i>	Fr. Robert J. Fox	A good way to get an overview of the Catechism (only 190 pages) – very readable.	
Christ the Lord – The Road to Cana (a novel)	Anne Rice	Wonderful novel written 1 st person Jesus! I really enjoyed having 'flesh' put on the well know bible stories. Anne Rice has turned from writings on Vampires to writing about the life of Jesus. She also wrote <i>Christ the Lord – Out of Egypt</i> which is about the hidden years of the child Jesus. Cathleen Medwick, the author of Teresa of Avila wrote that Anne's work was a coming-of-age novel that is also an article of faith! I personally found it a prayerful experience to read (Darlene Smigelski)	5
Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper	Brant Pitre	Pitre explores ancient Jewish beliefs about the Passover of the Messiah, the miraculous Manna from heaven, and the mysterious Bread of the Presence. As he shows how the Passover, the Manna, and the Bread of the Presence have the power to unlock the original meaning of the Eucharistic words of Jesus. Pitre also explains how Jesus united the Last Supper to his death on Good Friday and his Resurrection on Easter Sunday.	
Jesus the Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told	Brant Pitre	Pitre looks into Jewish Scripture and tradition, and unlocks the secrets of what is arguably the most well-known symbol of the Christian faith: the cross of Christ. Pitre shows how the suffering and death of Jesus was far more than a tragic Roman execution. Instead, the Passion of Christ was the fulfillment of ancient Jewish prophecies of a <i>wedding</i> , when the God of the universe would wed himself to humankind in an everlasting nuptial covenant.	
Coming Soon: Unlocking the Book of Revelation and	Michael Barber	Coming Soon is a verse-by-verse commentary on the Book of Revelation using the Revised Standard Version:	5

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Applying Its Lessons Today		Catholic Edition of the Bible. Barber provides a Catholic interpretation (because the bible IS a Catholic book!), which sees the liturgical background of this book of Scripture-a perspective missing in many Protestant commentaries.	
The Virtue Driven Life	Fr. Benedict Groschel	"Virtue" is a misunderstood word. Father Groeschel reintroduces the seven virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, faith, hope, and charity. He makes them meaningful for modern men and women, demonstrating how each has a real role in a whole and holy life.	5
After This Life: What Catholics Believe About What Happens Next	Fr. Benedict Groschel	As a priest and a psychologist, Father Benedict Groeschel knows first-hand that most people prefer to avoid the issue of mortality. Himself the victim of a hit-and-run accident in 2004, after which he had no vital signs for thirty minutes, Groeschel explains how consoling and uplifting the truths surrounding death, judgment, Hell, purgatory, and Heaven really are.	5
Salvation is from the Jews	Roy H. Schoeman	The book covers the role of Judaism and the Jewish people in God's plan for the salvation of mankind, from Abraham through the Second Coming, as revealed by the Catholic faith and by a thoughtful examination of history. It will give Christians a deeper understanding of Judaism, both as a religion in itself and as a central component of Christian salvation. Excellent read. The author is a convert from Judaism	5
The Gift of Faith	Fr. Tadeusz Dajczer	This is a world renowned book on the internal life The insight and spiritual direction in this book are phenomenal. A wonderful book to read slowly and on which to meditate.	5
Strange Gods Unmasking the Idols in Everyday Life	Elizabeth Scalia	This book offers a surprising look at the ways in which modern people still commit the sin of idolatry in their everyday lives. While there are no more literal golden calves, the author identifies idolatry in a number of everyday experiences and points to the incarnation of Christ and authentic worship of him as a way out of idolatry and into peace, happiness, and love.	4
The Prodigal Son A Story of Homecoming	Henri Nouwen	Themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation will be newly discovered by all who have known loneliness, dejection, jealousy, or anger. Nouwen challenges us to love as the father and be loved as the son as he explores the parable known to Christians throughout time. A beautiful and powerful book.	5
The Shadow of His Wings: The True Story of Fr. Gereon Goldmann, OFM	Fr. Gereon Goldmann	The astonishing true story of the experiences of a young German seminarian drafted into Hitler's SS at the onset of World War II. Without betraying his Christian ideals, against all odds, and in the face of Evil, Goldmann was	5

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		able to complete his priestly training, be ordained, and secretly minister to German Catholic soldiers and innocent civilian victims caught up in the horrors of war. Fantastic read!	
St. John Paul II the Great: His Five Loves	Jason Evert	Key aspects John Paul's life and teachings, are covered: Theology of the Body, Divine Mercy, Total Consecration, Eucharistic adoration, and redemptive suffering. Woven throughout the book is an assortment of little know stories and facts about JP II including: how the communists actually selected him as archbishop; how one of Osama Bin Laden's "best men" nearly murdered him in the Philippines; how he had conversations with the Virgin Mary.	5
Saintly Solutions to Life's Common Problems: From Anger, Boredom, and Temptation to Gluttony, Gossip, and Greed	Fr. Joseph Esper	Fr. Esper considers over forty of life's common problems, showing how saints overcame these challenges and difficulties, and even grew holier as they did so. He explains how you can grow holier too.	4
Death on a Friday Afternoon	Fr. Richard John Neuhaus	Based on the Seven Last Words spoken by Jesus on the Cross, Fr. Neuhaus explores these words--the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ--in a way that engages the attention of believers, unbelievers, and the unsure. Spiritually and intellectually he explores of the dark side of human experience with the promise of light and life on the other side of the darkness.	5
Eucharistic Miracles and Eucharistic Phenomena in the Lives of the Saints	Joan Carroll Cruz	Cruz documents 36 Eucharistic miracles which occurred from 800 AD to the present day. She covers consecrated Hosts which have visibly turned to human flesh, have bled, levitated, and which have become hard as flint when received by a person in mortal sin. The book details the official investigations that have been made into these miracles by scientists throughout the world, and where some can still be venerated today.	
The Incurruptibles: A Study of the Incorruption of the Bodies of Various Catholic Saints and Beati	Joan Carroll Cruz	The classic book on the bodies of saints that did not undergo decomposition after death. Many have remained fresh and flexible for centuries. After explaining both natural and artificial mummification, the author shows that the incorruption of the saints' bodies fits neither category but rather constitutes a much greater phenomenon that is unexplained by modern science. The author presents the stories of 102 incorrupt canonized saints including their lives, the discovery of their incorruption, and investigations by Church and medical authorities. The incorruptible bodies of saints are a sign of Christ's victory over death, a confirmation of the dogma of the Resurrection of the Body, a sign that the Saints are still with us in the Mystical Body of Christ, and proof of the truth of the Catholic Faith—for	5

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