



THE FAITH THAT MARKS *GOD'S PEOPLE*

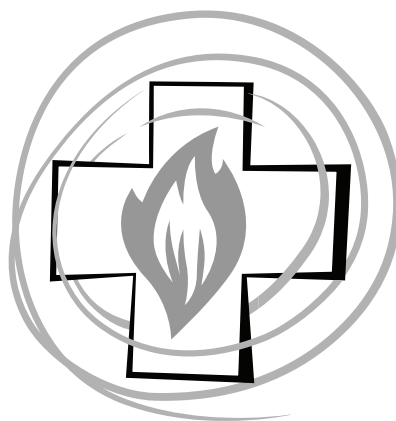
Guidelines for Catechesis: Grades 7 and 8



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OF NEW YORK

Revised 2021





THE FAITH THAT MARKS
GOD'S PEOPLE

Guidelines for Catechesis: Grades 7 and 8

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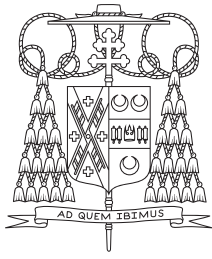
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June 29, 2021
Feast of Saints Peter and Paul
Year of St. Joseph

Dear friend in the Lord:

With prayer and confidence in your dedication to the ministry of catechesis, I promulgate these *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades Seven and Eight* in the Catholic schools and catechetical programs of the Archdiocese of New York.

This is the third edition of the *Guidelines*. It incorporates added scriptural references, protocols on catechesis issued by the bishops of the United States, and the new translation of the Roman Missal.

I thank the leaders of the Guidelines Revision Committee for their efforts: Sr. Joan Curtin, CND; Sr. Nancy Elizabeth Doran, SSC; Mrs. Linda Fitzsimmons, Chairperson; Mrs. Margaret Hoblin; Sr. Anne Massell, PBVM; Sr. Teresita Morse, RJM; Sr. Kevin John Shields, OP, and Sr. June Clare Tracy, OP.

Pope Francis spoke these words of gratitude to catechists attending the International Congress on Catechesis in Rome:

Catechesis is a pillar of faith education and we need good catechists! Thank you for your service to the Church and in the Church. Even if at times it may be difficult and require a great deal of work, and although the results are not always what we hope for, teaching the faith is something beautiful! It is perhaps the best legacy we can pass on: the faith!

Permit me to add my own heartfelt thanks. I count on you in assist me in sharing with our children and youth the faith that we were given by God in Baptism.

With prayerful best wishes, I am,

Faithfully in Christ,

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

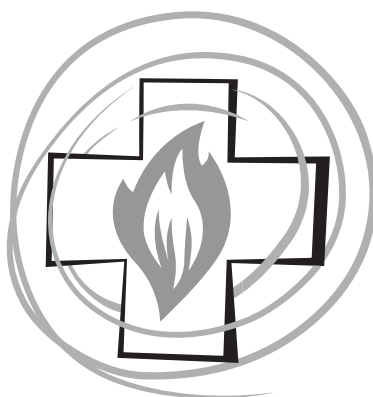
Grateful acknowledgement is hereby given to those who brought their expertise to bear on the revised *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grade Seven and Grade Eight*, 1999 edition as well as the 1990 edition: the Clergy, Directors / Coordinators of Religious Education, Catholic Elementary School Principals, and Catechists of both the Parish Catechetical Programs and Catholic Elementary Schools.

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- United States Catholic Conference: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition*, © 1994

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2021 EDITION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR CATECHESIS, GRADES SEVEN AND EIGHT

The latest edition of the *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades Seven and Eight*, correlated with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, has undergone some significant revisions. Careful examination of the 1998 edition of the *Guidelines for Catechesis* was undertaken by the Committee, the primary guidance of which being the USCCB *Protocol for Assessing the Conformity of Catechetical Materials* (for more information, go to www.bit.ly/usccb-protocol). Throughout the process, areas in the *Guidelines for Catechesis* were identified that required clarification or further explanation. The Committee recognizes the need that the young people who are served by our parishes and parochial schools be given an authentic, clear, and relevant presentation of the Faith, which would challenge them to grow as persons and believers in today's world.

The *Guidelines for Catechesis* are organized in units according to faith themes. *Faith concepts* and an explanation of how these concepts are to be lived by Catholics make up the greater part of each unit. The Committee has revisited and edited the *Prayer Experiences* found throughout each unit to include more Sacred Scripture and improved instruction and guidance for the catechist. Whenever possible, prayers said at Mass have been incorporated throughout these *Guidelines*.

As in the previous edition, each grade has an introductory unit designed to root catechesis in the life experience of the young adolescent:

- In grade seven, the introductory unit, *Personal Growth, Part I: The Human Person*, emphasizes understanding oneself as a person loved and called by God and prepares the young person to explore the themes of *Jesus and the Gospel Message, Sacraments, and Human Sexuality*.
- In grade eight, the introductory unit, *Personal Growth, Part II: The Human Community*, explores the essential role of relationships in human growth and development. The role of relationships in the life of a Christian continues to be deepened and expanded in the faith themes of *Church History, Morality, and Prayer*.

Some of the highlights of the latest edition include:


- Bibliography and referenced resources have been revisited to include Church documents consulted throughout the revision process.
- References to Sacred Scripture figure prominently throughout the 2021 edition.

- “Significant Members of the Church” (particularly those found in *Church History*) have been revisited in order to include some recently canonized saints and to better reflect the diversity of the Communion of Saints.


The *Guidelines for Catechesis* contain the basic curriculum to be taught. Implementing the sound pedagogical methods found in the textbooks and using multidimensional teaching techniques will facilitate the young adolescent’s assimilation of the content. In addition to using the *Prayer Experiences* included in each unit, the Catechist is strongly encouraged to pray with the students the formal prayers learned in the previous grades.

The latest edition of the *Guidelines for Catechesis* draws its inspiration from the previous editions published in 1989 and 1998, from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* published in 1994, from the 1993 document, *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis*, and *The Joy of Adolescent Catechesis* published in 2017.


We are confident that the following revised *Guidelines* will contribute to the ongoing effort across the nation to respond to the urgent need for adolescent catechesis as we follow the call of Jesus to, “Go, make disciples...” (Mark 28:19)



Michael Deegan
Superintendent of Schools



Sr. Joan Curtin, CND
Director, Catechetical Office



Ela Milewska
Executive Director, Department of Youth Faith Formation

SUGGESTED DIVISION OF THE YEAR'S SESSION TIME FOR EACH UNIT

| GRADE SEVEN | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| THEME | PORTION OF THE YEAR'S CLASS TIME |
| Personal Growth, Part I | One-sixth |
| Jesus and the Gospel Message | One-third |
| Sacraments | One-third |
| Human Sexuality | One-sixth |

| GRADE EIGHT | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| THEME | PORTION OF THE YEAR'S CLASS TIME |
| Personal Growth, Part II | One-sixth |
| Church History | One-third |
| Morality | One-third |
| Prayer | One-sixth |

GRADE SEVEN

PERSONAL GROWTH, PART I: THE HUMAN PERSON



The growth and change experienced during adolescence are part of the unfolding of God's plan for our development as mature Christian persons.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop in the young adolescent a sense of self-worth and self-respect nurtured and strengthened by one's knowledge of God's love.
- To acquaint the young adolescent with an understanding of the virtues necessary for a life of goodness and faith.

I. EXPERIENCES OF GROWTH: PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL, INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL

Adolescence is a period of rapid growth. It begins at a different time for each person. It is part of God's plan.

- During adolescence, our bodies grow physically and develop sexually. [362, 364, 369]
- Because our bodies are changing so quickly, we have new feelings about ourselves. [1764]
- In adolescence our minds are developing. It is a time of broadening the scope of our learning. We face different and more complex challenges in our thinking. [158-159]
- It is a time of change in our relationships with parents, friends and others, as we strive to become more independent and build lasting friendships. [2206, 2217, 2347]
- Our relationship with God changes and often deepens. We no longer take our faith and relationship with the Church for granted. [27, 33, 94, 99]

Like the rest of creation, we grow and change through predictable patterns of development. But unlike the rest of creation, we have been given free will by God, and can choose to cooperate with God in our own development or to impede growth and refuse to develop into mature human beings. [1704-05, 1707-09, 1732]

God's grace and guidance lead us to maturity according to our potential and God's plan for us. [1810, 2000, 2012]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Introduce the prayer by telling the young people of this new time of growth in their lives, of God's presence during this time of change and how God is speaking to them through sacred scripture and through others.
- Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-4.
- Invite the young people to reflect on the many ways God has been present in their lives. Ask them to write a petition for God's blessing on them at this particular time.

II. GROWTH IN THE VIRTUES

The virtues are habitual and firm dispositions to do the good. They allow us to give the best of ourselves. [1803-04, 1833]

An important aspect of spiritual growth is growth in the virtues. Virtues must be learned by deliberate, repeated actions, in which we are helped by God's grace. [1810, 1839]

There are many human virtues. Four pivotal ones (the cardinal virtues) spoken of in Scripture are: [1805, 1834]

- **Prudence:** The ability to see which course of action is good and to follow it. [1806, 1835]

- **Justice:** The firm will to give to God and neighbor what is due them. [1807, 1836]
- **Fortitude:** The determination to keep doing good in spite of difficulties that may impede us. [1808, 1837]
- **Temperance:** The ability to exercise moderation in seeking pleasure and in the use of created goods. [1809, 1838]

The root of all human virtues can be found in the virtues that reflect directly to God (theological virtues). They are: [1812-13, 1840-41]

- **Faith:** The virtue by which we believe in God and all that God has revealed. [1814-16, 1842]
- **Hope:** The virtue by which we trust in Christ's promises and desire God's kingdom and anticipate eternal life as our happiness. [1817-21, 1843]
- **Charity:** The virtue by which we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves. [1822-29, 1844]

Growth in the virtues is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹ The *fruits* of the Holy Spirit² show forth God's work in us. [736, 1830-32]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Ask the young people to think of a story when God has blessed them.
- Read Luke 2:41-52.
- After they have listened, lead them in the following reflection and questions: We, like Jesus, need to grow in wisdom, age, and favor/grace; in Luke's Gospel, this is made clear.
How have you grown in wisdom and come closer to God?
Which of the virtues would help you to grow closer to God at this time in your life?
Ask God to help you.
- Invite the young people to talk to God about the ways in which they need to continue to grow in wisdom and grace.
- After a few minutes of silence, read the following closing prayer: Jesus, you know what it is like to be growing up. Help us never to forget that you love and understand us even when we find it difficult to love and understand ourselves. Enable us each day to grow in wisdom and in your grace. Amen.

¹ See Grade 7, Sacraments, III. Confirmation, F. Living the Sacrament of Confirmation.

² Ibid.

III. CHALLENGES TO GROWTH DURING ADOLESCENCE

A. Accepting Ourselves

It is a challenge to accept ourselves when we are in a process of growth. One of the most important realizations is that our value, beauty and worth as a person comes from being made in God's image and likeness, and God loves us as we are. Accepting ourselves in the present helps us to grow into the people God calls us to be. [604, 1710, 2012, 2167]

B. Self-Direction

While much of our growth is the result of biological processes that we cannot direct, there are many aspects of our growth that we can influence. [1731]

- Our bodily well-being is fostered by eating healthful foods, getting sufficient sleep, exercising regularly, and by refusing to smoke or to abuse alcohol and drugs. [1809, 2289, 2290-91]
- Our spiritual and personal well-being is fostered by praying, by participating in the sacramental life of the Church and by using our time to develop our talents and share them with others. We do this by accepting others, being kind to them, and talking and listening to them. Avoiding excessive use of television, electronic devices and time spent on social media frees us for more creative activities (i.e., enjoyment of the natural world, developing one's mind) and learning to be of service. [294, 1838, 1879, 2725]

C. Responsibility

Our decisions have consequences not only for ourselves, but for others, especially our family and friends. [1905, 1913-14]

Learning to accept responsibility for the consequences of our actions is part of growing up. [1734, 1743, 1781]

Keeping commitments, even when they cause us inconvenience or when we would rather be doing something else, is a way to grow in responsibility. [1836, 2410]

D. Our Need for Others

Other people can help us in our emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual growth. [2038, 2223-26, 2232]

The example and experience of parents, relatives, teachers, older brothers and sisters, and other adults we know and admire can help us to understand what we are feeling or thinking. We are always free to seek out their advice. We are not alone. [1879, 1936-37]

E. Our Need for God

Our relationship with God changes and develops throughout our lives. God is always calling us to a fuller life, always sustaining and supporting us. [2560, 2567, 2591]

As we mature, we need to grow in our experience and knowledge of God in Jesus and to find new ways of relating to God, both in prayer and in our life situations. [2650, 2745]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read the following scripture passage from Ephesians (3:17-21) to the group, asking the young people to reflect on each line and its meaning in their lives:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Conclude the silent reflection with this prayer:

Loving God, help us to understand that you want each of us to grow to our full potential, rooted in your unconditional love. May Jesus be the Way for us, and may the Spirit be the power enabling us to cooperate with you and listen to your call to growth. Amen.

GRADE SEVEN

JESUS AND THE GOSPEL MESSAGE



The Gospels reveal Jesus as the Savior and Risen Lord who calls us to advance the kingdom of God through discipleship.

OBJECTIVES

- To broaden the young adolescent's understanding of the Gospels through a study of their formation, themes, message, and literary aspects.
- To help the young adolescent grow in a personal relationship with Jesus by encountering him in the Gospels and learning to live his message.

I. INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

A. Revelation

Scripture, in both the Old Testament and New Testament, contains God's self-revelation; Jesus is the fullness of that revelation. [75, 79, 108]

- God reveals himself in Scripture and invites us into a relationship of faith and love with him. [142-43]
- The Old Testament tells of God's teachings and saving actions before the coming of Jesus. It is an indispensable part of Scripture. Through the history of the Hebrew people, God reveals himself as the one and only God. [121-23, 128-30]
- The New Testament tells of Jesus' teachings and saving actions and the work of the Spirit in the Church. These represent the fulfillment of all the promises of the Old Testament. [124]
- Jesus is the fullness of God's self-revelation to us. [65]

Reading Sacred Scripture and using it for prayer can lead us to a deeper relationship with God, and thus change our lives. [104, 131-33, 141]

B. Inspiration and Authorship

Both God and human writers are truly the authors of Sacred Scripture. [105-6, 109, 135-36]

- The Holy Spirit enlightened the minds of the human authors of Scripture. This work of God is called "inspiration." [81, 106]
- The Bible imparts religious truth about God, the world, and our relationship with God and one another. This truth is free from error. [107-8, 136]
- Understanding the various literary forms and historical contexts in which the Sacred Scriptures were written helps us to grasp the truths they contain. [110]
- Tradition and Church teaching also help us to understand what the Scriptures have to say to us today. [80-83, 85-86]

C. Stages of Gospel Formation

The entire process of Gospel formation was inspired by the Holy Spirit. [75]

The Church recognizes three stages of Tradition by which the life and teaching of Jesus have come down to us. [83, 126]

- **The Life of Jesus:** From his birth to his death and resurrection and ascension.
- **The Oral Tradition:** The period of time during which the first disciples, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, gave oral witness to the life and message of Jesus.
- **The Writing of the Gospels:** The span of time in the early Christian community when the evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) put the apostolic preaching into writing.

The fourfold Gospel, according to the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is the foundation of our faith. [125, 127, 139]

Our appreciation of Scripture is enriched by Scripture scholars who work to deepen our understanding of the Word of God in accordance with the teachings of the Church. [119]

D. Literary Aspects of the Gospels

Many factors influenced the style of the different Gospels.

- The written style of each Gospel varies according to the language, background, personality and experience of the human author. [110]
- The human authors developed their themes by selecting historical details, stories and sayings from the life of Jesus. In order to interpret Scripture properly, we must always be attentive to what the human authors wanted to affirm. [109, 137]
- Each Gospel is also influenced by the needs of the community to which it is addressed. [126.3]

To convey their message, the human authors of the Gospels used various literary forms, for example:

- Narrative, such as Mark 6:53-56 and Luke 19:1-10.
- Parables, such as Mark 4:1-20.
- Passages from the Old Testament presented in a new context, such as Luke 4:16-19 and John 6:31-33.

Because the literalist and fundamentalist approaches to reading the Scriptures do not take into account either their literary form or their historical context, they are misleading. [82]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Invite the young people to reflect on the Gospels and ask them:
What Gospel story do you remember best?
What do you like about it?
How does the story make you feel: Challenged? Supported? Encouraged?
- Read John 20:30-31 to the group. Invite the young people to thank God for giving us Sacred Scripture as a true guide for life. Have them ask God for help in appreciating how the Bible leads them to know, love, and serve God better.

II. INTRODUCTION TO JESUS

In the Gospels we meet the living Jesus, a person who is fully human and fully divine. [425, 480-83, 515]

In Hebrew, the name Jesus means, “God saves.” [430]

We hear Jesus call us to be his disciples, and we learn to offer him a personal, loving response. [520-21]

Through the Gospels we encounter the Risen Lord, ever present in his Church. [639, 641, 669]

A. Jesus, Son of Mary

Jesus is fully human.

- Jesus was Jewish and was born of Mary in Palestine in the first century. Joseph was his foster father (Matthew 1:1-17; 2:1). [423, 525]
- As a human being, Jesus grew and developed naturally from childhood into adulthood, maturing physically and spiritually in age, wisdom, and grace (Luke 2:1-38; 2:39-40; 51-52). [472, 514, 518, 531]
- Jesus experienced the joys of life. He also experienced real suffering, misunderstanding and rejection (Mark 6:1-6). [461, 478, 520]

B. Jesus, Son of God

Jesus is fully divine.

- When Christians call Jesus “Lord,” we are confessing belief in his divinity.
- Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, was always God (John 1:1-5, 14). [464, 479]
- In the words and actions of his life, Jesus revealed God the Father and the love that God has for us (John 14:8-10). [458-59, 516]
- Jesus is God present in our midst (Matthew 1:23, 28:20; John 20:24-31). [444-45]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Slowly read aloud Matthew 16:13-15.
- Give the young people time to silently consider how they would answer Jesus’ question: Who do people say the Son of Man is?
- Invite them to listen prayerfully as Jesus tells them who he is: John 6:35 (the Bread of Life); John 8:12 (the Light of the World); John 10:14-15 (the Good Shepherd); John 11:25 (the Resurrection and the Life).
- Have the young people conclude by speaking to Jesus about who he is in their own lives.

III. INTRODUCTION TO EACH OF THE GOSPELS

Each of the synoptic Gospels is different in the way it helps us to grow in our understanding of the mystery of Jesus. Several distinctive features of each Gospel follow.

The Gospel of Matthew

Author: Matthew, the tax collector and apostle

Date: AD 75-85

Audience: Greek-speaking Christians of Jewish descent

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is proclaimed as the fulfillment of all the promises of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah (Matthew 2:1-12, 3:13-17, 16:16). [122, 422, 522, 1223]

Jesus is portrayed as the new Moses, bringing a new law or new commandment to the new Israel, which is the Church. Matthew gives a careful account of the teachings of Jesus and shows them to be the culmination of the Old Testament Law and the message of the Old Testament prophets (Matthew 17:1-8, 5:17). [1964, 1968-68]

Matthew's Gospel is sometimes called the "Gospel of the Church," because the community of disciples is presented as the nucleus of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 18:20). [541, 546, 763-64]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Invite the young people to listen to the parable that Jesus tells in Matthew 13:33.
- Explain what yeast does for bread and what bread looks and tastes like without yeast. Then have them consider why Jesus says that God's kingdom in this world is like yeast. Have them share their reflections in a way appropriate for the group.
- Jesus is inviting each of us to be like yeast in the world. Reflect prayerfully how God is at work building his kingdom in the world through you.

The Gospel of Mark

Author: John Mark of Jerusalem

Date: AD 65-75

Audience: Mostly Gentiles; those new in their faith and facing persecutions

Mark's Gospel is full of action. He emphasizes the many miracles of Jesus. Jesus in Mark's Gospel heals and casts out demons, revealing the power of God in this world. (Mark 1:32-34). [547-50]

Mark's Gospel is a proclamation of good news (Mark 1:14-15). The good news to be proclaimed is Jesus himself (Mark 1:1). [422, 425-26]

Yet, Jesus is presented as a mystery, and his disciples only come to understand him gradually. Often Jesus speaks in parables that not everyone can understand (Mark 4:11). Only when they have traveled the whole of Jesus' journey with him – including his journey to the cross (Mark 15:39) – do his disciples really come to know who he is. They then are able to proclaim him to the world (Mark 16:15). [515, 546]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read aloud Mark 10:46-52, the story of the man born blind, in which Jesus confronts human suffering and overcomes it.

Give the young people time for silent, prayerful reflection on:

- How the blind man asked Jesus for help
- How other people treated the blind man
- How Jesus responded to the blind man
- How the blind man's whole life was changed

Remind the young people that physical healing is only one of the ways in which Jesus can heal us. Tell them we all have "blind" spots. Give them time to think about how they've been blind to the needs and concerns of others. Remind them that Jesus always wants to help us. Take time to think and then ask how they would answer Jesus' question: What do you want me to do for you?

- Invite the young people to share with the group any of their reflections on the above.
- Conclude with the following prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to understand that you want each of us to grow to our full potential. You give us your love without conditions. You give us your Holy Spirit, who enables us to respond to your love. Jesus, be the Way for us, and may the Spirit be the power enabling us to cooperate with you. Help us to listen and follow your call to grow. Amen.

The Gospel of Luke

Author: Luke, Physician and companion of Paul

Date: AD 75-85

Audience: Gentile Christians

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is portrayed as our Savior (Luke 2:1-10). Through his life, death and resurrection, he helps us to overcome the evil of sin and its effects, including suffering and death. Jesus saves us especially from the evil of refusing God's love, as well as, refusing to love and forgive others. [430, 457]

Luke's gospel is called the Gospel of mercy or the Gospel of great pardons, because in it Jesus often shows compassion and forgiveness. He welcomes sinners and eats with them. The parables of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) and the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) are found in Luke's Gospel. [545, 588-89]

It is also called the Gospel of the poor, because in it Jesus' love for the poor and outcast is often expressed. Luke's account of the birth of Jesus shows that the poor and lowly are the first to whom God has revealed the birth of His Son and are given the greatest privileges (Luke 2:8-14), and Luke's account of the Beatitudes proclaims, "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours." (Luke 6:20). The parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in Luke (Luke 16:19-31) demonstrates the response called for by all disciples to meet the needs of the poor. [543-44, 2443-44, 2831]

A spirit of joy and wonder permeates Luke's gospel. More than any of the other evangelists, Luke notes the admiration of the crowds and individuals who meet Jesus. The songs (canticles) of Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon are all found in Luke (Luke 1:46-55, 68-79, 2:29-32). [722, 2619, 2640]

Luke's gospel is also called the Gospel of prayer and the Holy Spirit because these themes are emphasized throughout the Gospel. At every important juncture in Jesus' life, Luke shows him at prayer and gives witness to Jesus' insistence that his disciples be people of prayer as well (Luke 11:1-13, 3:21-22, 4:1, 4:14). [728, 2600, 2759]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Ask the young people to think about some people in their lives who they have helped and who have helped them.
- Read Luke 10:25-37 to the group.
- Give them time to reflect on the scripture passage by asking them to:
Think about a time when you were helped by another person. How did you feel?
Think about a time another person helped you when others didn't. How did you feel?
Think of a time when you could have helped and failed to do so. How did you feel?
- Encourage the young people to pray to Jesus for the grace to forgive those who have hurt them. Ask Jesus for the courage to help another person when others won't.

The Acts of the Apostles

Author: Luke, Physician and companion of Paul

Date: AD 80-90

Audience: Gentile Christians

The Acts of the Apostles, the fifth book of the New Testament, may also be described as the second volume of the Gospel of Luke. In Acts we see the fulfillment of the promises made by Jesus to the Apostles. One learns that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the salvation promised to Israel in the Old Testament has been extended to the Gentiles. In the book of Acts Luke describes the development of the early Church from the resurrection of Jesus to Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Read Acts 2:42-47 to the group and ask the young people to listen carefully and think about how the Church today is like the Church in the first century.
- Encourage the young people to share their reflections.
- Conclude with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, help us as we continue the work of the Church that began many years ago. Be with us as we worship and serve you and give us the courage to proclaim the Good News to those we meet. Amen.

The Gospel of John

Author: John, son of Zebedee

Date: AD 90-100

Audience: Mixed audience; mostly Jews, some Gentiles and Samaritans

John's Gospel is the most highly symbolic of all the Gospels. Rather than expressing Jesus' teachings in parables or simple moral instructions, John offers longer passages that use symbolism. Jesus describes himself, saying "I am ... the Bread ... the Light ... the Shepherd ... the Resurrection ... the Way ... the Vine ..." (John 6:51, 9:5, 10:14, 11:25-26, 14:6, 15:5). [515-516]

Jesus' words and actions found in the Gospel of John often point to the sacramental life of the Church. For example, the water turned into wine at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), the life-giving water that comes from Christ (John 3:5-7, 4:10-14, 7:37-38), and the bread that is his flesh (John 6:51). [1151-52, 1406, 1613, 2560-61]

In John's Gospel, many passages about Jesus unfold as dramatic dialogues between Jesus and someone else who asks a question, such as Nicodemus (John 3:1-8) or the woman at the well (John 4:7-14). In these dialogues, Jesus states a profound truth, and the other person misunderstands what he says, leading Jesus to delve more deeply into his subject. [728, 2560-61]

At the very beginning of John's Gospel, Jesus is proclaimed as the Incarnate Word of God, who existed from all eternity (John 1:1-3) and who speaks into our world the richness of the life of the Trinity (John 14:23-26). [241, 257, 458, 461]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Have the young people close their eyes, relax, and become aware of the quiet in the room. Remind them that God dwells within each person.
- Take some time to reflect on this and ask that they:
Think about their day so far.
How has God been present in their experiences?
Think about the rest of the day.
Consider how it could be different if one remembers that God is within each one of us, always loving us.
- Conclude by reading John 15:9 to them, slowly, and prayerfully.

IV. Paul – Apostle to the Gentiles

The letters of Paul to various early Christian communities are the earliest writings found in the New Testament. These letters give testimony to his encounter with the resurrected Jesus and his subsequent conversion from persecutor of Christians to a devout disciple of the crucified Christ. The influence of Paul's writing did much to shape the understanding of the faith among the early Christians.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Invite the group to listen as you pray:

Dear Jesus, help me to recognize God's presence in my day and in myself and others. Amen.

GRADE SEVEN

SACRAMENTS



The mystery of Christ continues in the Church through the sacraments, which are visible signs of the love and saving action of Jesus.

OBJECTIVES

- To help the young adolescent understand, appreciate, and celebrate the continuing presence and saving action of Jesus in the Church.
- To lead the young adolescent to a full and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

I. THE SACRAMENTS

Jesus, through his person, words and actions, is a sign of God's love for us. Through Jesus, God's life (grace) is shared with us. [515-16, 774]

The Church, the Body of Christ, continues the mission of Jesus, who is the Head of the Church, and is a sign of God's love for us. Through the Church Jesus shares God's life (grace) with us. [774-76, 1111]

The sacraments are signs by which Jesus, through the Holy Spirit and the Church, continue to manifest God's love. Each sacrament gives us grace. [1084, 1086, 1091, 1111, 1131]

The Sacraments of Christian Initiation are [1212]:

- Baptism
- Confirmation
- The Eucharist

The Sacraments of Healing are [1421]:

- Penance
- Anointing of the Sick

The Sacraments at the Service of Communion are [1534-35]:

- Matrimony
- Holy Orders

The sacraments both presuppose faith (the faith of the believer and the faith of the Church) and help faith to grow. [1123-1124]

II. BAPTISM

A. *Introduction*

Baptism is the foundation of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit. It enables us to receive all the other sacraments, which deepen God's life within us. [1213, 1267]

Jesus gave the apostles the mission to baptize (Matthew 28:18-19). [1122, 1226, 1276]

The Church has always affirmed that Baptism is necessary for salvation (John 3:5). Baptism may be experienced in a variety of ways: water, blood, desire. The Church recognizes that those who seek God with a sincere heart, and through ways known only to God, may achieve eternal salvation. [847-48, 1257-61, 1277, 2506]

Baptism is the sacrament of faith. The community of believers fosters growth in faith in each of the baptized. [166, 1253-55]

B. History

In the early Church, people preparing for Baptism were called catechumens. They spent a long period of time – several years if necessary – learning the Christian way of life by living it with others. [1229-30]

The process of becoming a Christian was marked by rites that gradually incorporated the catechumen into the community of faith. The culmination of the process of initiation took place at the Easter Vigil, when the catechumens received Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. [1230]

The growing practice of infant Baptism led to a change in the process of initiation into the Christian life. It became the practice that after infants were baptized, the sacrament of Confirmation would be delayed and take place at a later date. The Eucharist was received either before or after Confirmation. The process of learning the Christian way of life took place after Baptism. [1231, 1252, 1290-92]

C. Baptism Today

Adults and children over the age of seven preparing for Baptism today follow a process similar to that of the early Church. This process is called the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, and each person goes through it in four periods:

- **Evangelization:** The person is called an *Inquirer*.
- **Catechumenate:** The person is called a *Catechumen*.
- **Purification and Enlightenment:** The person is called an *Elect*.
- **Mystagogy:** The person is called a *Neophyte*.
- The *Period of Evangelization* or *Pre-Catechumenate* is the time when those interested in the Catholic faith meet members of the parish community, listen to the Word of God and ask questions about God, the Church, and how they may be called to follow Christ in their lives.
- When the inquirers decide that they definitely wish to become catechumens, the Church celebrates a ritual in which they are welcomed by the parish community and marked with the sign of the cross. From that time on the *Period of the Catechumenate* begins.
- During the *Period of the Catechumenate*, the catechumens learn to embrace the teachings of the Church, to live the Christian way of life, to take part in the liturgy, and to become active members of the community, sharing in the mission of Christ. Each one has a sponsor, a member of the parish who becomes a special friend to the catechumen through sharing his or her faith.
- When the Church judges that the catechumens are ready, they take part in a ritual with the bishop on the first Sunday of Lent, called the Rite of Election, in which the Church celebrates God's choosing of them. In that rite they sign their names in the Book of the Elect to show their commitment. The catechumens are then called the *elect*.
- The season of Lent becomes for the elect, and indeed for the entire parish, a time of prayer and spiritual preparation for the sacraments. This is called the *Period of Purification and Enlightenment*.
- On the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, the community and the elect examine their lives in light of the Gospel. These examinations are called *Scrutinies* and include prayers for the elect, asking that they be given the strength to turn away from evil and remain free from sin (exorcism).

- At the *Easter Vigil*, the elect profess their faith and receive the three Sacraments of Initiation in the midst of the community.
- The Easter season, which then follows, is called the *Period of Mystagogy*. It is a time of celebration for the parish and a time of deepening understanding of the sacraments on the part of the newly-baptized, who are now called neophytes. [1075]

In the case of infant Baptism, a simpler process is followed:

- Parents and godparents prepare to celebrate the child's Baptism by reflecting on the sacrament and on the responsibility they are taking to foster the child's growth in faith throughout life. [1250-51, 1253]
- In infant Baptism, many of the rituals that are celebrated more fully and over a longer period of time when the candidate for Baptism is an adult or older child are incorporated into a single ceremony. [1231]
For example:
 - The sign of the cross is traced on the forehead of the infant at the beginning of the baptismal celebration. Adults, however, have a separate rite for this, early in their conversion process. [1235]
 - Infants have a brief prayer of deliverance from evil (exorcism) prayed for them in the baptismal celebration, whereas adults devote three Sundays of Lent to prayers of this kind (the Scrutinies). [1237]
 - After Baptism, parents, godparents, and the parish must strive to fulfill their commitment to support the faith development of the child. [1254-55, 2220]
 - By its very nature, infant Baptism requires a post-baptismal Catechumenate. This recognizes the need for both instruction and the necessary flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth. [1231]

D. Celebration of Baptism

A profession of faith comes immediately before the Baptism. Adults and older children make this profession themselves, but in the case of infants it is made by their parents and godparents. [232, 1236-37]

The heart of the celebration of Baptism, for both infants and adults, is the immersing in or the pouring of water with the words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." [232-33, 1239-40, 1278]

A bishop, priest or deacon is the usual minister of the sacrament of Baptism; however, in an emergency, anyone may baptize. [1256, 1284]

Confirmation and Eucharist are not usually received by the newly baptized infants and these sacraments are delayed until the child has reached the age of reason. [NB: Eastern Rite Catholics, following ancient tradition, do receive all three Sacraments of Initiation at the same time: CF 1203-06, 1290-92.] However:

- The infant is anointed with sacred chrism to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly-baptized. [1241-42]
- The infant is brought to the altar to pray the Lord's Prayer in order to show the connection between Baptism and Eucharist. [1244]

Two “explanatory rites” follow the baptismal cleansing:

- Being clothed in a white garment, which symbolizes having “put on Christ” and having entered into a new way of life.
- Receiving a lighted candle which symbolizes bearing “the light of Christ” in the world. [1243, 1691-92, 1695]

In the Baptism of infants, the blessing of the mother and father has a special place. [1245]

E. Effects of Baptism

There are two principal effects of Baptism: purification from sin and new birth in the Holy Spirit. [1262, 1987]

Purification from sin:

- When we are born, we inherit the sin of our first parents, which is called original sin. [390, 404, 416-18, 1250]
- Through Baptism we are freed from original sin and our own personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. [405, 977-78, 1263]

Rebirth in the Holy Spirit:

- Through Baptism we receive sanctifying grace, the very life of God, and therefore may be called “children of God” (1 John 3:1) [1265-66, 1692]
- Sanctifying grace is infused by the Holy Spirit into the soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. [2023]
- By Baptism we become members of Christ’s body, the Church, and share in the life of the Risen Lord. [1213, 1267, 1271, 1694]
- Through Baptism we share in the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of Christ. We become part of the common priesthood of all believers, offering our lives to God united to the sacrifice of Christ. [1268, 1546-47]
- Baptism requires us to participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God. [1270]

Baptism is received only once. It seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) belonging to Christ. This new identity endures forever. It cannot be destroyed, even by mortal sin. [1246, 1272-74, 1280]

F. Living the Sacrament of Baptism

As baptized Catholics who share in Christ’s priesthood, we are called to a life of holiness and service. We respond to that call in our daily lives by all our actions. The shape and direction that our life takes – whether in the ordained ministry, as members of the laity (single and married), or in consecrated life – flows out of our Baptism. [1268-70, 1547]

We share in the mission of Christ to bring the good news of God’s love to the world. We work to foster the dignity of each person. We also do all we can to build a just and peaceful society, and to be people of justice and peace ourselves. [1270]

PRAYER EXPERIENCES

- Proclaim Matthew 3:13-17 (The Baptism of Jesus) to the group.
- Lead the young people in a renewal of their baptismal promises:
Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth? I do.
Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? I do.
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? I do.
This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Encourage each young person to learn more about his or her own baptism by suggesting the following:
To learn the date of his/her baptism and visit the church where he/she was baptized;
To ask parents, grandparents, godparents or other relatives about what happened on the day of his/her baptism.
- Lead the group in a prayer of thanksgiving for those who have brought them to faith and Baptism.
- Ask the young people to pray for those who are preparing to be baptized.
- Encourage the young people to find out when Baptism is celebrated in their parishes and participate, if possible. Encourage their participation at the Easter Vigil in their parishes when Baptism will be celebrated.

III. CONFIRMATION

A. Introduction

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation into the Body of Christ, the Church. Along with Baptism and Eucharist, it is necessary for full initiation. [1285, 1306, 1321]

Confirmation completes baptismal grace. [1285, 1316]

In Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit in a special way, helping our faith to grow and making us stronger witnesses to Jesus. [1285, 1303]

B. History

Review the history of baptism, especially the original unity of the three Sacraments of Initiation.

Confirmation continues to make present in the Church for all time the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). [1287-88, 1302]

In the early Church, the apostles laid hands on those who were baptized, in fulfillment of Christ's wish, and they received the Holy Spirit. This is the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation. [1288, 1299, 1315]

From a very early time, anointing with sacred chrism (perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop at the Chrism Mass) was added to the rite. This anointing and laying on of hands symbolize the gift of the Holy Spirit. The name “Christian” means “anointed.” [1289]

C. Confirmation Today

Every baptized person not yet confirmed can, and should, receive the sacrament of Confirmation. [1306]

The aim of preparation for Confirmation is to lead the candidate to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church, so that the responsibilities of life as a disciple and witness can be fulfilled. [1309, 1319]

Like all the sacraments, Confirmation is God’s gift. It is not earned. The fruits of the sacrament, however, depend on the disposition of the one who receives it. [1128, 1308]

The bishop is the usual minister of Confirmation. This practice emphasizes the unity of the Christian with the bishop, and therefore with the apostolic origins and mission of the whole Church. [1313]

A priest may confirm [1290, 1312-14]:

- When adults and older children are baptized or received into the Church,
- When special permission is given,
- In the Eastern Catholic Churches,
- When a Christian is in danger of death.

Under special circumstances when a priest confirms, the connection with the bishop is maintained because the oil used in the sacrament has been consecrated by the bishop. [1290, 1297]

D. Celebration of Confirmation

In Confirmation, the bishop extends his hands over those to be confirmed and prays that the Holy Spirit will descend on them. [1299]

He lays his hand on each candidate’s head, anointing the candidate with the sacred chrism as he says, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” [1300, 1320]

The sign of peace that concludes the rite of Confirmation expresses unity with the bishop and all the faithful. [1301]

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, it may take place in the context of a Eucharistic liturgy and begins with a renewal of baptismal promises, thus underlining the unity of the Sacraments of Initiation. [1298, 1321]

E. Effects of Confirmation

- Confirmation brings about a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as experienced by the apostles at Pentecost. [1302, 1315]
- It increases and deepens baptismal grace. [1303, 1316]

- Like Baptism, it imprints on the soul a permanent character or sign, which is indelible. [1304, 1317]
- It imparts a power to publicly profess faith in Christ. [1305]

F. Living the Sacrament of Confirmation

As Jesus' witnesses in the world today, we work to further God's kingdom, a kingdom marked by unity, justice, charity and peace. Accordingly, we work with others in our society to change unjust social structures and ensure that they are replaced by structures which respect the dignity of each person. [541, 1869, 1879, 2420]

When we open ourselves to receive the completion of baptismal grace in Confirmation, the Spirit works in us so that people see manifested in our lives the life of God within us. [1316]

Confirmation increases in us the *gifts of the Holy Spirit* received at Baptism. These gifts sustain our moral life. They are: *wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord*. [768, 1266, 1303, 1830, 1845]

The outward signs of the Spirit at work in us are: *charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity*. Saint Paul calls these the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). [736, 1832]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read Acts 2:1-12 (The Coming of the Spirit) to the group.

Read the following prayer (from the Rite of Confirmation) that is said by the bishop who will administer the sacrament:

*All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide.
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen!***

Pray with the young people for an increase of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

IV. EUCHARIST

A. Introduction

The Eucharist completes Christian initiation. [1212, 1322]

The Eucharist is the sacrament in which the Lord Jesus himself is present under the appearances of bread and wine. To receive Holy Communion is to receive Christ himself. [1374, 1376]

The sacrament is celebrated in the Eucharistic sacrifice, in which the redemptive offering of Christ on the cross is continually made present to the Church. [1085, 1323, 1362, 1364-68]

The Eucharist is both sacrifice and sacred banquet. Sacrifice and sacrament are inseparable parts of the same mystery. [1382-83]

Jesus instituted the Eucharist on the night before he died, at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19-20). [1323, 1337-39]

The Eucharist is the summit and source of Christian life. The Mass is the central act of worship. [1324-27]

We believe in the continuing presence of Jesus under the appearances of bread and wine which have been consecrated by the priest. The Blessed Sacrament, reserved in the tabernacle and displayed for veneration at special times, is truly the Body and Blood of Christ present in our midst. [1378, 1380]

B. History

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the early Christians met in one another's homes to celebrate through a shared meal the death of Christ and his continuing risen presence among them. Their central act of worship was the special meal of bread and wine that Jesus had commanded his followers to share in his memory (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). It was called Eucharist, which means thanksgiving. [1345, 1360]

Rather than give up the celebration of the Eucharist, early Christians were willing to face martyrdom. [2473]

From a very early time, Holy Communion was taken from the community celebration to the homes of those who were sick and dying, and were thus unable to be present at the Eucharistic celebration. [1379]

Over the centuries the Church has developed special devotions to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. Two ways this is done as Catholic communities are Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the Corpus Christi procession. [1378-80]

C. Celebration of the Eucharist

The bishop or priest presides at the Eucharist. [1142, 1411, 1552]

The Eucharist (The Mass) is one single celebration with two main parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. [1346-47]

- In the Liturgy of the Word, God speaks to us through the Scriptures from the Old and New Testaments, which are proclaimed, preached and heard as God's Living Word. The Liturgy of the Word concludes with prayers of intercession for all people. [79, 1190, 1103, 1154-55, 1348-49]
- In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, bread and wine are presented, a prayer of thanksgiving is said and through the prayer of consecration the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus and are shared in Holy Communion. [1346]

In the presentation of the bread and wine, we offer ourselves along with these gifts. A collection for those in need is also appropriate at this time. [1350-51]

The prayer of thanksgiving and consecration at the heart of the celebration is called the Eucharistic Prayer. In it the Church:

- Prays a great thanksgiving for God's work of creation, redemption and sanctification; [1352, 1359-61]
- Asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit on the bread and wine; [1104-07, 1353]
- Remembers Jesus' Last Supper when the priest speaks Jesus' own words over the bread and wine and they become the Body and Blood of Christ (transubstantiation); [1353]
- Recalls the passion, resurrection and future glorious return of Christ; [1103, 1354, 1362-64]
- Offers prayers for various members of the Christian community. [1354]

The communion rite begins with the Lord's Prayer. It is followed by the sign of peace and by the breaking of the "bread of heaven." In Holy Communion the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Christ who gave himself "for the life of the world" (John 6:51). [1355, 2770]

D. Celebrating the Eucharist Throughout the Liturgical Year

Sunday is the principal day on which the faithful gather to celebrate the Eucharist (The Mass). Every Sunday the Church celebrates the paschal mystery, that is, the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. On Saturday evening we begin the vigil for Sunday. [1067-68, 1166-67, 1193, 2177]

Over the course of the liturgical year, we celebrate the whole mystery of Christ: [1163, 1165, 1171]

- During Advent we prepare for his coming at Christmas and his coming again at the end of time. During the Christmas season we rejoice at his birth as did Mary, Joseph, the angels, shepherds and the magi. [524, 525, 1095, 1171]
- During Lent we prepare by prayer and penance to celebrate the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and to renew our Baptismal promises at Easter. We celebrate the great joy of Easter for fifty days, ending with the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. [540, 1095, 1438]
- During the rest of the year, referred to as Ordinary Time because we call each Sunday by an ordinal number (second, third, etc.), we learn more about the life of Christ and our calling to be his followers.

The heart of our liturgical year is the Paschal or Easter Triduum, which begins on Holy Thursday and comes to a joyful conclusion on Easter Sunday. The light of the resurrection fills the whole year with its radiance. [1168-69]

E. Effects of the Eucharist

- The Eucharist unites the Church as one with Christ and one another. [1108, 1391, 1396, 1398, 1416]
- It strengthens us for living the Christian life and renews and increases the life of grace begun in us in Baptism. [1392]
- It commits us to the poor. [1397]
- It cleanses and preserves us from sin. [1393-95]
- It fills us with hope of eternal life. [1402, 1407]

F. Living the Sacrament of the Eucharist

Catholics must worship at Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. According to Church law, Catholics are to receive the Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season (Can.920). Since in order to receive Holy Communion we have to be in a state of grace, we must receive the Sacrament of Penance, if necessary. [1384, 1385, 1388, 1389, 2180-83]

The Eucharistic Liturgy reminds us that we are united with God and with one another because of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nourished by the Eucharist, we work to live justly and at peace with one another, to assist the poor, and to witness the abiding love of Christ for us and for the world. [1068, 1109, 1344, 1396, 1398]

PRAYER EXPERIENCES

In consultation with your parish director or coordinator of religious education, school principal and/or parish clergy, plan to offer the following group experiences:

Visit your parish church and spend some quiet time in the presence of Jesus who is present in the Eucharist reserved in the tabernacle.

Arrange for Eucharistic Adoration (Holy Hour) during session time and have the young people pray to Jesus who is present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Encourage the young people to participate in the solemn celebration of the Easter Triduum in their parishes, which begins with the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper.

V. PENANCE

A. Introduction

When we do not live up to the demands of God's call to holiness, God does not abandon us. Instead, God calls us to conversion, that is, a change of heart. [1402-21, 1846]

The forgiveness of sins was an integral part of Jesus' ministry (Luke 5:24-25). [525, 1441, 1443]

Jesus gave to the apostles the power to forgive sins (Matthew 16:19, John 20:22-23). This same power is extended to all ordained priests today. [981, 983, 1442, 1444]

Penance is that sacrament of healing by which we receive God's merciful forgiveness for our personal sins and are reconciled with God, the Christian community, ourselves and all creation. [1422, 1440, 1469]

With each reception of the sacrament of Penance we receive the grace to more faithfully live our baptismal call to holiness. [1425, 1446]

Throughout our lives, as we become aware of our sins, the sacrament of Penance is always available to us for healing and reconciliation. [1442, 1848]

B. History

Baptism was the primary sacrament for the forgiveness of sins in the early Church. It remains the first and principal sacrament of forgiveness of sins today. [977-980]

In the early Church, when those already baptized sinned seriously, Penance gave them the opportunity to return to their baptismal covenant, fully restoring their relationship with God and with the community. Penance was rarely offered. In some places a person might receive Penance once in a lifetime. [1446-47]

Penitents confessed their sins to a bishop or priest, were assigned strenuous acts of repentance that were public and took a long time to perform. They were received back into the community with absolution. [1447]

During the seventh century, Irish missionaries introduced to continental Europe the practice of “private penance.” It was based on the experience of monks to whom people came for spiritual counsel. [1447]

The penitents confessed their sins, were given absolution and then performed a penance afterwards. Because the penances were lighter and did not have to be performed publicly, this practice led to a more frequent use of the sacrament of Penance. [1447]

The present Rite of Penance, which was revised after the Second Vatican Council, retains the order of confession, absolution and penance. It seeks, as well, to restore the public aspect of the sacrament by providing a rite to be celebrated in the gathered community. The revised rite also includes the reading of Sacred Scripture. [1447-48]

C. Celebration of Penance

We prepare to celebrate the sacrament of Penance by calling to mind our sins in an examination of conscience. Often we are helped in this by reviewing our lives in light of the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments. [1454]

A bishop or priest is the minister of the sacrament of Penance. He is a sign and an instrument of God’s merciful love for the sinner. Only priests who have received from the authority of the diocesan bishop the faculty of absolving sins can forgive in the name of Christ. However, if someone is in danger of death, any validly ordained priest can forgive that person’s sins. [1461-62, 1465-66]

After the Word of God is proclaimed, we confess our sins and express sorrow for having committed them (Act of Contrition). [1451, 1455-56]

*My God, I am sorry for my sins with my whole heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.*

We rededicate ourselves to live anew our baptismal life. As a sign of our conversion of heart, we accept the penance that the bishop or priest gives us. [1459-60]

The bishop or priest prays the following words to absolve us from our sins:

*God the Father of mercies,
through the death and resurrection of his Son,
has reconciled the world to himself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us
for the forgiveness of sins;
through the ministry of the church
may God give you pardon and peace,
and I absolve you from your sins
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. [1449]*

There are three forms of the Rite of Penance or Reconciliation. The most frequently used are the (1) *Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents* and the (2) *Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*. [See the outlines provided at the end of this section.]

The third form which is rarely used, and then only when the diocesan bishop judges that the necessary conditions are present (that is, in a time of grave necessity, for example, when there are many penitents and not enough confessors available to hear individual confessions properly). It is called the *Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution*. [1480, 1482-83]

Every Catholic guilty of mortal sin must receive the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion. Frequent reception of the sacrament is helpful for spiritual growth however, even if one is guilty only of venial sins. [1457-58, 2042]

In Penance, our confessor can help us to look honestly at our lives, and can give us advice to help us grow closer to God. [1466]

The priest (or bishop) is bound by the “Seal of Confession.” He may never reveal to anyone the sins confessed to him. [1467]

D. Effects of Penance

Baptism establishes a relationship between God and each one of us, as well as a relationship to one another in the Church. When we sin, we either break that relationship (mortal sin) or weaken it (venial sin). [1213, 1849-50, 1854-55]

Repentance that arises from faith and love of God above all else is perfect contrition. [1452]

When we receive the sacrament of Penance, our sins are forgiven and our relationship with God and with the entire Church is fully renewed. [1468-69]

We are also strengthened to avoid sin and the people, places and things which might lead us to sin (temptations). [For further information, see *Grade Eight: Morality, section III, F. and G.*] [1468]

E. Living the Sacrament of Penance

There are many forms of penance in daily life that cultivate and express the conversion of heart that comes from God. Some of these are:

- Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving;
- Works of mercy, justice and reconciliation;
- Examination of conscience and revision of life;
- Worship and devotion;
- Observing the seasons and days of penance in the liturgical year;
- Acceptance of suffering in imitation of Christ, and enduring persecution for the sake of what is right. [1428, 1434-39]

When we are reconciled to God and to the Christian community, we are better able to spread peace and reconciliation to the world. [1469]

Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents

- Reception of the penitent (Sign of the Cross, greeting, prayer);
- Reading of the Word of God (may be done in preparation);
- Confession of sins and acceptance of penance;
- Prayer of the penitent (Act of Contrition) and absolution;
- Proclamation of the praise of God and dismissal.

Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution

- Introductory rites (hymn, greeting, opening prayer);
- Celebration of the Word of God;
- Homily;
- General confessions of sins (e.g. “I confess to almighty God ...,” followed by a litany and the Lord’s Prayer);
- Individual confession and absolution;
- Proclamation of praise for God’s mercy;
- Concluding prayer of thanksgiving;
- Concluding rite (blessing and dismissal).

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Encourage the youth to reflect prayerfully each day on how they have lived or failed to live as Christians that very day. Introduce them to the Daily Examen practiced by St. Ignatius:

- Recall that you are in the presence of a God who loves you.
- Thank God for all the gifts you have received.
- Be aware of how the Holy Spirit has aided in your actions this day.
- Examine how you have lived (positively and negatively) this day.
- Ask for forgiveness, hope, and courage as you move toward tomorrow.

Pray the Act of Contrition with the young people:

*My God, I am sorry for my sins with my whole heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.*

VI. ANOINTING OF THE SICK

A. Introduction

Illness is one of the most difficult trials in human life. In experiencing serious illness, we become aware of our limitations and powerlessness and we glimpse death. Often illness provokes a search for God and for that which is truly essential in life. [1500-01]

In the midst of illness and suffering, the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is a sign of Christ's compassion. Through this sacrament, which may be received more than once, Christ continues to touch us in order to heal us in the most fundamental way: by sharing with us his victory over sin and death. [1503-04]

Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament in which the priest anoints with oil the seriously ill or the aged, so that through the power of Jesus they may be comforted and restored to health in spirit, and sometimes also in body. [1520, 1526]

B. History

In the Gospels we see Jesus cure those who were ill. When he sent his apostles out two by two, they "preached repentance ... and they anointed with oil many who were sick, and cured them." (Mark 6:12-13)

The practice of anointing the sick was continued in the early Church. In his epistle, James says: “Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the Church, and they should pray over him and anoint [him] with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, they will be forgiven.” (James 5:14-15) [1509-10]

St. Hippolytus, a bishop and martyr who lived in the late second and early third centuries, tells of the bishop consecrating the oil “that it may give ... health to those who use it.” Today, the Oil of the Sick, along with the Sacred Chrism and the Oil of the Catechumens, is consecrated by the bishop at the Chrism Mass that takes place each year during Holy Week.

In later centuries, this anointing became known as the sacrament of “extreme unction,” and was conferred on those who were dying. [1512]

The Second Vatican Council, however, reaffirmed that this sacrament is not only for those who are at the point of death. The Council restored its use to any who are sick or aged. [1513-14]

C. Celebration of the Anointing of the Sick

When people become seriously ill, or are in danger of death from sickness, old age, or an accident, it is most appropriate that they receive this sacrament. [1514-15, 1528-29]

It is especially desirable that the person be conscious and able to participate in the celebration of this sacrament. However, when there is danger of death, even if the person is unconscious, a priest should be summoned to anoint the sick. [1516]

The minister of the sacrament is a priest or bishop. [1516, 1530]

The Liturgy of the Word that accompanies the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is very important. It awakens our faith and opens our hearts to ask for the strength of the Spirit. [1518]

The essential signs of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick are:

- The laying on of hands;
- The prayer of the priest: *Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.*
- And the anointing with the oil of the sick of the forehead and hands of the sick person with the Sign of the Cross. [1519, 1531]

By the sacred anointing and the prayer of the priest, the whole Church commends those who are ill or aged to the suffering and glorified Jesus, asking that he may lighten their suffering and save them from their sins. [1499]

The sacrament is a liturgical and communal celebration, whether it takes place at home, in the hospital, or at church, with one sick person or several. It is very appropriate to celebrate this sacrament within the celebration of the Eucharist. [1517]

D. Effects of the Anointing of the Sick

- **Gift of the Holy Spirit:** Through this sacrament, a person receives grace from the Holy Spirit and is strengthened spiritually, and sometimes physically. Those receiving this sacrament are forgiven their venial sins and their mortal sins as well, if they are truly sorry for them but are unable to confess them. [1520]
- **Union with the Passion of Christ:** Strengthened by the grace of the Spirit, those who are sick, “contribute to the good of the people of God by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ.” (*Lumen Gentium*, #11) [1499, 1521-22]
- **Grace for the Whole Church:** The sick and the aged have an important role to play in the community. Through their sufferings, accepted in faith, they participate in the redemptive suffering of Christ. They complete “what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church.” (Colossians 1:24) [1508, 1522-22]
- **A Preparation for the Final Journey:** Anointing of the Sick completes the holy anointings of the Christian life that began with Baptism and strengthens us for the end of our earthly life. When a person nears death, the Eucharist given is called “viaticum,” which means Christ accompanies that person on the journey. [1523-25]

E. Living the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

When we ourselves are seriously ill, we ask for the Sacrament of the Sick and receive it with openness and faith. As members of the Christian community, we also have a responsibility to pray for the sick and the aged, to care for them and to see that they have an opportunity to receive this sacrament whenever they need it. [1503, 1509, 1516]

By treasuring life when it is most vulnerable, we show our conviction that human life is a sacred gift from God. [2258]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Proclaim one of the following Scripture passages to the group:
 - Mark 6:53-56 (The Healings at Gennesaret)
 - Acts 3:1-10 (Cure of a Crippled Beggar)
- Remind the young people that Jesus still heals today. Tell them the story of St. Bernadette and Our Lady of Lourdes.
- As Jesus did in Scripture, we, as a Church, pray for the sick in the General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful) at Mass.
- Invite the young people to suggest names of sick people they know and pray for them.
- Conclude by praying the following from the *Order for the Blessing of the Sick*:

Lord, our God, who watch over your creatures with unfailing care, keep us in the safe embrace of your love. With your strong right hand raise up your servants and give them the strength of your own power. Minister to them and heal their illnesses, so that they may have from you the help they long for. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VII. MATRIMONY

A. Introduction

Matrimony is the sacrament by which a baptized man and a baptized woman freely enter into a permanent, loving, monogamous and life-giving covenant of fidelity with each other. Thus they are united in the intimate community of life and love as husband and wife. [1601, 1646]

The mutual love of man and woman, rooted in creation, is good, very good, in the eyes of the Creator (Genesis 2:24). Sin has disrupted the original order of creation, however, including the relationships between men and women. Jesus, by coming to restore the original order of creation, gives to men and women the grace to live Marriage within the reign of God. [1603-04, 1615]

By their nature, Marriage and conjugal love are oriented both to the good of the couple and to bringing children into the world. [1601, 1660]

B. History

Jesus taught that the bond of Marriage is unbreakable (Matthew 19:5-6). This quality of being unbroken is called indissolubility. It means that the Marriage bond lasts until the death of either the husband or the wife. [1639-40, 1644, 1646]

St. Paul compares the relationship between husband and wife to that which exists between Christ and the Church. Marriage is an image of Christ's love for his people. This is what the Apostle Paul makes clear when he says: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her," adding at once: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church." (Ephesians 5:32-33) [1616]

Over the centuries, the Church grew in its understanding of the sacredness of Marriage. In the Middle Ages, it began to include Marriage in its list of the sacraments.

Later, in the sixteenth century, as a response to the teachings of various Protestant reformers, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the sacramentality and indissolubility of Marriage.

For many centuries, the legal aspect of Marriage was emphasized. In our own day, however the Second Vatican Council has underlined the covenantal aspect of Marriage. [1601, 1612]

While a covenant includes all the elements of a contract, the term covenant emphasizes the loving relationship between the two parties involved. [1612-13]

Today, two authorities sanction the union of Marriage: the Church and the State. For various reasons, the civil authority may grant to a couple a civil divorce. Such a divorce is only a civil dissolution of a Marriage and does not break the bond of the sacrament of Matrimony. [1650-51]

For serious reasons, the Church can declare certain Marriage contracts null and void. The official statement by which the Church declares a Marriage null and void is properly called a Declaration of Nullity, but is usually referred to as an "Annulment." A declaration of nullity indicates that, in fact, there never was a sacramental Marriage. [1629]

(Divorce and other serious family problems are frequent occurrences in our times. Sensitivity to these realities needs to be maintained when teaching this sacrament.)

C. Celebration of Matrimony

The essential sign of the sacrament of Matrimony is the public exchange of consent between the man and woman. They make a commitment to be faithful to each other as husband and wife for life. [1626-28]

The man and woman are themselves the ministers of the sacrament of Matrimony. The official witness of the Church is a priest or a deacon. Two other witnesses are also required. [1623, 1630]

D. Effects of Matrimony

Through the sacrament of Matrimony, a husband and wife become signs in and to the world of God's steadfast love for us. [1604, 1617, 1640, 1647]

In the sacrament, the man and woman receive the graces necessary to help them in all aspects of their married life, including raising their children as faithful Christians. Spouses help one another to attain holiness through the grace of Marriage. [1641-42]

E. Living the Sacrament of Matrimony

Like the other sacraments, Marriage has a community dimension. The husband and wife give witness to the faithful love of God. They give this witness:

- To each other
- To their children
- To the community

The community of faith gives witness and support to married couples as well. [1604, 1617, 1640, 1647]

Strengthened by the sacrament of Matrimony, the husband and wife are the first to communicate the faith to their children. [1656-57]

As part of living the sacrament of Matrimony, the husband and wife strive to create a home which reflects God's love for us. This love is shown by willingness to accept children lovingly from God, the care of members of the family for one another, and their hospitality toward others. For this reason, the family has been called "the domestic Church." [1655-57, 1666]

With other people of good will, married couples strive to promote laws and structures in society that will support the family, protect the proper role of parents, and ensure that the needs of families will be met. [2207-11]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read St. Paul's exhortation on love found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

Have the young people reflect on the sacrament of Matrimony by reading *The Nuptial Blessing* from *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*:

O God, who by your mighty power created all things out of nothing, and, when you had set in place the beginnings of the universe, formed man and woman in your own image, making the woman an inseparable helpmate to the man, that they might be no longer two, but one flesh, and taught that what you were pleased to make one must never be divided;

O God, who consecrated the bond of Marriage by so great a mystery that in the wedding covenant you foreshadowed the Sacrament of Christ and his Church;

O God, by whom woman is joined to man and the companionship they had in the beginning is endowed with the one blessing not forfeited by original sin nor washed away by the flood.

Look now with favor on these your servants, joined together in Marriage, who ask to be strengthened by your blessing. Send down on them the grace of the Holy Spirit and pour your love into their hearts, that they may remain faithful in the Marriage covenant.

May the grace of love and peace abide in your daughter, and let her always follow the example of those holy women whose praises are sung in the Scriptures.

May her husband entrust his heart to her, so that, acknowledging her as his equal and his joint heir to the life of grace, he may show her due honor and cherish her always with the love that Christ has for his Church.

And now, Lord, we implore you: may these your servants hold fast to the faith and keep your commandments; made one in the flesh, may they be blameless in all they do; and with the strength that comes from the Gospel, may they bear true witness to Christ before all; may they be blessed with children, and prove themselves virtuous parents, who live to see their children's children.

And grant that, reaching at last together the fullness of years for which they hope, they may come to the life of the blessed in the Kingdom of Heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Give the young people time to reflect upon the meaning of this prayer and how the sacrament of Matrimony strengthens the couple to face the challenges of today.

VIII. HOLY ORDERS

A. Introduction

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues in the Church until the end of time. It is the sacrament of apostolic ministry, through which Christ continues to shepherd his people. [874-79, 1536, 1591]

Following ancient tradition and the example of Jesus, who chose men to be his apostles, the Church confers Holy Orders only upon men. [1577-78]

Holy Orders today constitute the following: the episcopate (bishops), the presbyterate (priests), and the diaconate (deacons). [1536, 1593]

There is one priesthood of Christ. Through Baptism, all the faithful participate in Christ's priesthood through the priesthood of all believers. Bishops and priests, however, also take part in what is called the ministerial priesthood. The ministerial priesthood of bishops and priests serves the priesthood of all believers. [1546-47, 1591-92]

Bishops receive the fullness of Holy Orders. [1557, 1594]

- Theirs is the chief office in the Church, because they are the direct successors of the apostles. [1555-56]
- Each bishop who has a responsibility for a particular diocese serves as Christ's vicar in that diocese. He is also concerned to promote the welfare of the universal Church. [1560]
- Each bishop has a special relationship with all other bishops (collegiality) and to the Pope, who guards the unity of the whole Church. [1559]
- The Eucharist celebrated by the bishop, with the local Church gathered around him, is an expression of the whole Church and a significant image of the Church's identity. [1561]

Priests are co-workers with the bishop in carrying out the apostolic mission entrusted to them by Christ. [1562, 1595]

- In each local assembly of the Church, they represent the bishop. They depend on the bishop, have a relationship of trust with him, and promise to obey him. [1567]
- They are consecrated to preach the Gospel, shepherd the faithful and celebrate the worship of God. [1564]
- In the Eucharistic assembly of the faithful, they exercise their sacred office in its highest degree. They unite the offerings of the faithful to Christ and make present Christ's unique sacrifice on the cross. [1566]
- All priests are part of one brotherhood because of the sacrament of Holy Orders. They also are united with one another in a special way within a diocese. [1568]

Deacons are ordained to help and serve bishops, priests and the faithful. They are ordained to service, not to the priesthood. [1554, 1569, 1596]

- Deacons, like Christ, make themselves servants of all. [1570]
- Deacons are ministers ordained for tasks of service of the Church; they do not receive the ministerial priesthood, but ordination confers on them important functions in the ministry of the word, divine worship, pastoral governance, and the service of charity, tasks which they must carry out under the pastoral authority of their bishop. [1570, 1596]
- There are two ways of being a deacon: as a transitional deacon, during a period of service before being ordained a priest, or as a permanent deacon. Both single and married men may be ordained as permanent deacons. [1571]

B. History

During his life on earth, Jesus called the apostles to follow him and share in his ministry (Mark 3:13-14). After his death and resurrection, the apostles continued Jesus' ministry. [858]

The young Church community grew, and it became necessary to empower others to help minister to the People of God (1 Timothy 4:14). As time passed, in order to shepherd the growing church community and to ensure the integrity of its teachings, the roles of bishop, priest and deacon became clearer. [861-62]

St. Peter was chosen by Christ, from among the apostles, to guide the universal Church (Matthew 16:15-18). The pope, the bishop of Rome, is the successor of St. Peter and, therefore, the leader of the entire Catholic Church. [880-82]

In carrying on the Church's tradition, the bishops shared their ministry with others in a rite which became known as "Ordination." This rite included prayers, anointing, and the laying on of hands. [1538]

C. Celebration of Holy Orders

A bishop is the minister of the sacrament of Holy Orders. [1576]

Ordination should take place, preferably, on a Sunday, in the cathedral, during the celebration of the Eucharist, with as many of the faithful as possible taking part in the celebration. [1572]

The essential signs of the sacrament are:

- The laying on of hands
- The prayer of consecration [1573-74]

There is a special prayer of consecration for each of the orders: diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate. [1537-38, 1541-43]

D. Effects of Holy Orders

The person who is ordained enters into a new relationship with Christ and with the Church, and deepens his baptismal commitment. Because of Holy Orders, he participates in the priestly, prophetic, and pastoral mission of Christ in a distinctive way. [1586-89]

Like Baptism and Confirmation, the sacrament of Holy Orders imprints a permanent character, or mark, on the soul of the person receiving it. That person makes a lifetime commitment to serve the community according to the particular responsibilities of his order as bishop, priest or deacon. [1581-84]

E. Living the Sacrament of Holy Orders

Those who are ordained to the priesthood in the Latin Rite live a life of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom. [1579-80]

All deacons and priests make a solemn promise of obedience to the bishop of the diocese (the Ordinary) and his successors. [1567]

Those who receive Holy Orders are committed to a life of service to the Church. [1547]

They are also committed to a life of prayer, which includes the daily praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, in union with the entire Church. [1174-76]

PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Lead the young people in prayer for vocations to the priesthood and diaconate, reflecting upon the Solemn Blessing at the End of Mass for the Ordination of Priests:

May God, who founded the Church and guides her still, protect you constantly with his grace, that you may faithfully discharge the duties of the Priesthood.

May he make you servants and witnesses in the world to divine charity and truth and faithful ministers of reconciliation.

And may he make you true shepherds to provide the living Bread and word of life to the faithful, that they may continue to grow in the unity of the Body of Christ.

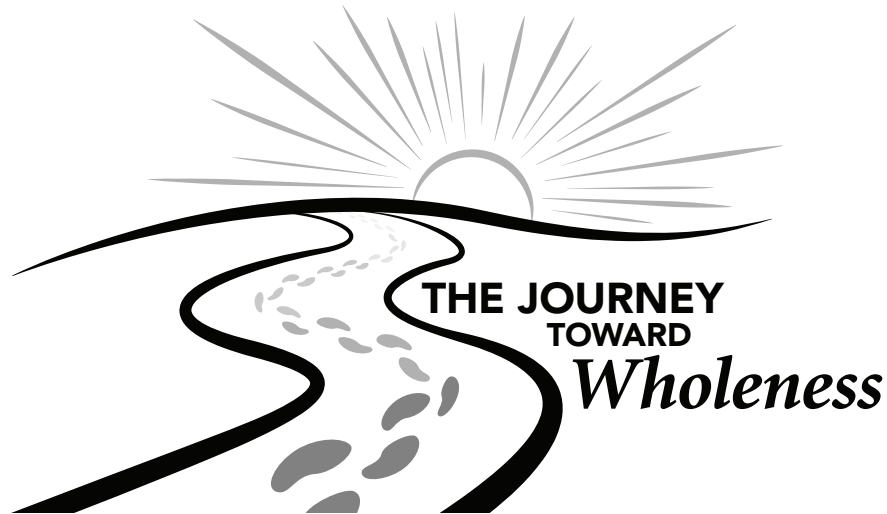
Amen.

Encourage the young people to pray by name for the bishops, priests, and deacons serving in their parishes.

Invite your pastor or other parish priest or deacon to visit the group. Ask him to share his vocation story.

GRADE SEVEN

HUMAN SEXUALITY



Sexuality is a gift from God. It embraces psychological, spiritual and physical characteristics of men and women. We human beings need to integrate our sexuality into our total personality in order to develop into the persons God has called us to be.

OBJECTIVES

- To help the young adolescent appreciate the gift of sexuality.
- To assist the young adolescent in developing correct and positive attitudes concerning sexuality.
- To clarify for the young adolescent how the gift of sexuality can be misused.

I. SEXUALITY IN THE PLAN OF GOD

A. Gift from God

Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. This means they are able to think and make choices. “Male and female, God created them.” (Genesis 1:27). God blessed them with equal dignity and enabled them to cooperate, in their sexual union, with his own creative power. [356-357, 369-70, 2331, 2334, 2393]

Human beings are the only creatures created to know and love the creator. They are willed into being by God for their own sake and called to share this knowledge and love with others.

Being male or female is a gift from God and is therefore good. Sexuality includes all that makes a person either male or female:

- Physical characteristics and responses
- Psychological characteristics
- Emotional responses
- Attitudes
- The need and capacity for intimacy
- The ability to participate in procreation

All of these things shape who we are in our relationships with God and influence our spiritual life. [369, 2332-33, 2335]

B. Adolescence and the Lifelong Process of Becoming Mature Sexual Persons

Becoming a mature sexual person is a lifelong process. Adolescence is a crucially important time in this process. [2342, 2344]

Learning to appreciate ourselves and others as whole persons (body, mind, and spirit) is essential to becoming a mature human being. [362-66, 2393]

The successful integration of sexuality within the human person – maintaining the integrity of the life and love within that person – is called chastity. The chaste person abstains from unlawful sexual activity (for example, sexual activity outside of marriage). All people are called to chastity. [2337-38, 2345, 2348]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read Genesis 1:27,31. Read paragraph 357 from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

- Ask the young people, “What does it mean to be made in God’s image?”
- Lead them in a prayer of gratitude for being created in God’s image.
- Conclude with the doxology:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

II. SEXUALITY AND THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Sexuality may be understood or misunderstood, esteemed or degraded, treated respectfully or abused. It is essential to develop correct attitudes toward sexuality. [386, 2331]

Knowing that we are made in the image and likeness of God is the basis of our respect for ourselves and others. Understanding this and esteeming our God-given dignity lead us to a proper attitude toward our sexuality. [355-57, 369-70, 2331]

A positive attitude toward sexuality includes respect for ourselves and others. It is:

- The realization that my body and the bodies of others are sacred; [364, 2258]
- The acceptance of my body and the bodies of others as good; [362]
- Care for and development of my whole self – body, mind and spirit – and the appreciation of others as whole persons; [362, 364]
- Recognition of my gifts and talents and those of others; [357-58]
- The ability to remain obedient to my conscience, even when this means withstanding the pressure of the crowd; and the refusal to tempt or pressure others to act against their conscience; [1777-78, 1784]
- Awareness of the immediate and long-range consequences of my actions in my own life and the lives of others; [1789]
- The understanding that no one has the right to use or abuse me, or use or abuse another. [377]¹

¹ N.B. Sexual abuse is a grave moral evil. The young adolescent should know that he/she has the right to resist and refuse sexual advances from any source whatsoever. Any catechist/teacher who becomes aware of sexual abuse involving a young adolescent should follow Archdiocesan policy pertaining to the notification of the proper authorities.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Show a photo, picture, or image of a baby developing in the womb.
- Pray Psalm 139:1-6, 13-16.
- Conclude with the following:
Before I was born, your love surrounded me. (young people repeat)
You turned my nothingness into something. (young people repeat)
And you created me. (young people repeat)

III. PROPER USES OF THE GIFT OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

A. Sexual Feelings

Sexual feelings remind us of the God-given potential of our sexuality. It is normal to have sexual feelings. [1768, 1770, 2333]

When we have sexual feelings, we may sometimes feel confused and ashamed. However, feelings in themselves are neither right nor wrong. [1767-68]

Our responsibility is to exercise self-control (temperance) in relation to our feelings, thoughts and desires, out of respect for God's gift and plan for us and others. [377, 2339, 2342]

A sense of modesty in dress and behavior shows respect for ourselves and others. [2522-24]

B. Relationships

We read in Genesis that, "God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27) and, "The Lord God said: 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him.'" (Genesis 2:18) As we come to know people of the opposite sex, we also come to better understand the variety and diversity of human experience. [271-72, 369, 383]

Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. All of our human relationships, whether with people of the same sex or with people of the opposite sex, are marked by our masculine and feminine characteristics. [369, 2332]

To be life-enriching, our relationships with others must be based on respect and trust. [1702, 1879]

C. Sexual Union in Marriage

Sexual union within marriage is a sign of mutual self-surrender and total self-giving. [371, 1643, 2361]

Since self-surrender and self-giving form the very basis of love, sexual intercourse is often described as making love. Sexual union in marriage is noble and honorable, bringing joy and pleasure to the spouses. [2362]

Sexual intercourse, by its very nature, is intended to enable the man and woman to cooperate with God the Creator in bearing children. [372, 2366-67]

The total self-surrender and self-gift to another (of which sexual intercourse is the sign and expression), as well as the potential to create new life, require the public unconditional commitment of a man and woman to each other which only marriage can provide. Sacred Scripture, the teaching of the Church, and the experience of the faithful over the centuries have confirmed this to be true. [1643, 2337, 2361]

Today, the need for the public commitment of marriage is challenged by many. However, only the public and lifelong commitment of the man and woman can provide the context of security and trust which is necessary for such a total gift of self. This public commitment is intended to provide the stable community of love in which children can be raised in a family and educated in accord with their God-given human dignity. [1644, 1648, 1653, 2390-91]

The sexual union of husband and wife in marriage has a two-fold purpose: the unity and good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. [2361, 2369]

Sexual intercourse in marriage deepens and uniquely expresses the love between husband and wife by: [2360-62]

- Signifying and communicating their interdependence and their mutual trust, fidelity, and acceptance; [1646, 2365]
- Establishing their relationship as unique and permanent, the primary one among all the other human relationships in their lives; [1647, 2364]
- Assisting both of them to grow in holiness and in their ability to place the needs and desires of the other above their own. [1641]

In God's plan, it is through the act of sexual intercourse that human beings are created. The husband and wife, through their sexual union, cooperate with God in the act of creation. From the moment of conception, the child thus created is to be cherished and protected. Children are a public sign of the community of life and love which a man and woman establish in their marriage. [372, 1652, 2367]

In keeping with their responsibility to provide for the well-being of the children they bring into the world, parents may at times find it necessary to use natural methods of family planning which do not abuse the life-giving dimension of sexual intercourse. [2368, 2370]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Have the young people read and prayerfully reflect upon the following Scripture passages:

And live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God. (Ephesians 5:2)

Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?” (Matthew 19:4-5)

The Nuptial Blessing from The Order of Celebrating Matrimony (see Prayer Experience, Grade 7, Sacrament of Matrimony).

IV. ABUSES OF THE GIFT OF SEXUALITY

A. Lack of Respect for Ourselves and Others

We human beings do not always use the gift of sexuality as God intended. Lack of respect for the dignity of the human person leads to wrong attitudes toward sexuality, which in turn lead to abuses of sexuality. Some abuses are:

- Using our sexuality to manipulate other people for our own purposes or pleasure
- Failing to treat others as persons, and, instead, treating them as objects
- Trying to pressure others into doing things that are against their conscience
- Disregarding the consequences of our actions
- Failing to respect ourselves as persons, and so allowing others to treat us as objects [357, 1849-50, 1865]

The most obvious examples of this lack of respect for the dignity of the human person are pornography, prostitution, human trafficking, and rape.

- Pornography, prostitution and human trafficking treat human beings as things and exploit their sexuality for pleasure, profit or power. Through these actions God’s gift of sexuality is completely debased. [2354-55]
- Rape is an act of violence that gravely injures the respect, the freedom and the physical and moral integrity to which every person has a right. It is always intrinsically evil. [2356]

Christians must do all they can to foster respect for the human person. This includes rejecting and combating:

- Everything that mocks or degrades women, [2334, 2336, 2352]
- Everything that mocks or degrades men, [2334, 2336, 2352]
- The abuse of children and youth, including sexual abuse, [2356, 2389]
- Any exploitation of sex for pleasure, profit or power. [2351-55]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Discuss what it means to manipulate and use other people.
- Have the young people give examples of ways in which someone “uses” another sexually and calls it “love.”
- Reflect on how we can treat one another with respect and dignity.
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
- Pray with the group, asking the Holy Spirit to give them strength and courage when tempted to misuse the gift of their sexuality.

B. Misuses of Sexual Activity

God has given the human person a basic need and capacity to give and receive love. Our experience of love helps us develop a sense of self-esteem and reduces our sense of loneliness. [1609, 2331]

Sometimes people use sexual activity as a substitute for a basic communication of love or to make themselves feel important, powerful or needed. Sexual activity does not, however, solve underlying problems of loneliness and self-esteem. [1606-07, 2351]

When sexual activity is experienced outside of marriage, it is fundamentally dishonest, because we are implying by our actions that we have made a life commitment when, in fact, we have not. We find ourselves feeling manipulative or used, as lonely and as empty as ever. [2337, 2348, 2390]

Sexual activity outside of marriage is morally wrong, [2337-38, 2350, 2353]

- Premarital intercourse (fornication) denies the public commitment of total self-giving which is the purpose intended by God for sexual intercourse. It thus devalues the gift of one person to another and degrades them both. [2353, 2390-91]
- Extramarital intercourse (adultery) betrays the trust and fidelity which are necessary foundations for marriage. By disrupting the community of life and love which a marriage is, adultery also threatens the well-being of the children. [2364-65, 2380-81]
- The deliberate act of masturbation is morally wrong because it is not at the service of love and life according to the design of God. [2352, 2396]

NB: At this age, masturbation can be a problem for some adolescents. The catechist/teacher should discuss it sensitively and cautiously. Although masturbation is objectively morally wrong, there are many factors which enter into the moral responsibility of adolescents in this regard. The Church recognizes that it is usually a symptom of more profound problems which cause sexual tension in the adolescent. Accordingly, the catechist/teacher should try to help the adolescents to move “toward integration, to be open and interested in others ... advancing toward self-giving love.” (CF: Educational Guidance in Human Love, #98-100).

- Homosexual activity is another misuse of God’s gift. Human sexuality is designed by the Creator to enable a man and a woman to reproduce. Homosexual activity, that is, sexual activity between a man and another man, or between a woman and another woman, contradicts this reality. [2357-59, 2360]

When people are consistently attracted sexually to others of the same sex, we speak of them as having a same sex attraction. This same sex attraction, in itself, is not sinful, and the person having this attraction is to be respected and loved as a child of God. However, such an attraction can sometimes lead to homosexual activity. It is this activity which is a misuse of God's gift. [2357-59]

Although each of us has a particular masculine or feminine identity, individuals often have traits or interests that some in society attribute to the opposite sex. This does not mean that the person is homosexual.

- The use of artificial means of birth control is a misuse of the life-giving dimension of sexual intercourse. [2370-71]
- Abortion, the destruction of human life before birth, is the ultimate abuse of the life-giving dimension of sexuality. It is the ultimate societal evil. Contrary to cherishing and protecting the life which God has created through the sexual union of the couple, the father, the mother, or other parties decide to destroy that life. [2270-72]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Tell briefly or read the story of David and Bathsheba (using 2 Samuel 11-12), noting David's temptation, his adultery, his attempt to cover up his sin by the murder of Bathsheba's husband, and the accusation by the prophet Nathan. Stress David's true sorrow for his sins and his obedience to his conscience once he recognized the wrong he had done.
- King David of the Old Testament loved God greatly, yet he sinned seriously. Invite the young people to reflect briefly on how they can love God, and yet may sin.
- Have them read together the following psalm, written by David to express his sorrow for his sin: Psalm 51:1-8, 12-14.

V. WAYS TO FOSTER SEXUAL MATURITY

Recognizing and accepting our sexuality with its strengths and weaknesses are essential to our becoming mature people. [2332-33]

Accepting our sexuality means learning to control our sexual urges. Indeed, the process of maturing includes appropriately responding to our sexual urges according to human dignity and God's plan. [1954, 2339-40, 2342, 2344, 2520]

A. Resisting Temptations

Learning to resist temptation is a necessary part of Christian living. Setting limits – that is, determining what we will do and what we will avoid doing – can help us to resist the temptations of inappropriate relationships and activities, drug and alcohol abuse and the pressure of media, music and those peers who encourage irresponsible behavior. [1809, 2339, 2342]

There are healthy ways to use our energy that will help us to avoid temptations. Some of these are to:

- Participate in sports and games,
- Develop one's talents, hobbies and interests,
- Volunteer to help others in the community. [1803, 2848]

It is always prudent to avoid those situations which may lead us to sin. Yet, even with the best intentions, we will sometimes experience temptations to use the gift of our sexuality inappropriately. Such temptations are moments of opportunity for us to be faithful to what God has called us to be. [1806, 2343, 2863]

Jesus our Savior, who has compassion for us in our weakness, will always respond to those who turn to him in prayer. The regular practice of prayer, frequent recourse to the sacraments and Sacred Scripture, and cultivating moral and religious virtues [see Grade Seven: Personal Growth, Part I: The Human Person, section II] will strengthen us to choose what is right and to resist temptation when it occurs. [1784, 1802, 1811, 2340, 2849]

Sacred Scripture and the lives of the saints provide us with excellent examples of victory in the struggle against all temptation. The Virgin Mary, our Blessed Mother, is a shining example of purity and intercedes for us in time of need. [2030, 2520]

B. Developing Friendships

Fully integrated human beings need to develop a variety of relationships with family, friends and acquaintances. We need to form friendships with persons of both genders. [2347]

Some of these relationships will be closer and more enduring than others. During young adolescence, exclusive dating should be avoided. This limits one's growth and opportunity for friendship with others. It can also lead to inappropriate relationships, greater intimacy, and temptations which young adolescents are not prepared to handle.

C. Seeking Advice

Adults can be positive role models for adolescents learning to form interpersonal relationships. Parents, catechists, teachers, priests, and religious, among others, can be of great assistance during this process of becoming sexually mature. From their own experience they are aware of the questions, fears, and struggles which young adolescents have and they can be of help by listening and offering advice and guidance. [2207, 2221-24]

D. Responding to God's Gift

In God's plan, our sexuality is intended to add to our joy and our fullness of life. [369, 384, 2331, 2333]

The Holy Spirit is present in each of us to guide, strengthen, comfort, and challenge us. [1265-66, 1742]

Through prayer we are empowered to become the fully mature person God has called us to be. [2013, 2340, 2345]

E. Sexual Activity and Love

Part of coming to maturity is the understanding of the relationship between sexual activity and love. [2332, 2346, 2360]

- Sexual activity is inappropriate for the young adolescent. True love requires us to respect this fact. [2348-2350]
- To say “no” to sexual intercourse before marriage will not lessen genuine love, but will help that love to eventually blossom into the commitment of marriage. [2350, 2391]
- The love expressed in friendship is appropriate for the young adolescent and is a good preparation for the intimate sharing of life and love in marriage. [2347, 2350]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Ask the young people what a “temple” is. (A place that is holy because God dwells there.)
- Ask them the question that St. Paul asks in his first letter to the Corinthians 3:16: “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”
- Give them some minutes of quiet to reflect on the truth that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are dwelling within their very body and this makes them a holy temple.
- Explain that the Sign of the Cross is an expression of our belief that the Trinity dwells within us. Then lead them in slowly making and saying the Sign of the Cross.

GRADE EIGHT

PERSONAL GROWTH, PART II: THE HUMAN COMMUNITY



*Developing relationships with others and God
is essential to becoming our true selves.*

OBJECTIVES

- To help the young adolescent understand the elements which are essential to developing positive relationships.
- To help the young adolescent understand that true community is built on honest, loving and respectful relationships.

I. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Throughout our lives we develop relationships with many people. To all our relationships – with God, with family, with others – we bring ourselves. Our experiences in these relationships enable us to discover who we are and how we relate to others. The various relationships we have throughout our lives, even the difficult, hurtful or disappointing ones, can be a source of growth because of God’s grace.¹ [1936, 1946, 1996-97]

A. *Created as Relational Beings*

The Book of Genesis reveals that God created us to be in relationship with God and with one another. Our seeking and needing relationships flows from our very nature as created by God. [357, 1829, 1879]

Created in the image of God, who is a Trinity of persons, we are called to mirror in our own relationships the relationship of love among the divine persons. [355, 1702, 1878, 1890, 2205]

In Baptism we are made a new creation in Christ. Our relationships with God and others are transformed and raised to a new level by grace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, it becomes possible for us to love as Jesus taught us. [1265-66, 1694-95, 1709, 1997, 1999-2000]

B. *Love: The Cornerstone of All Relationships*

Before his passion and death, Jesus said to his disciples, “I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

One of our most basic human needs is to love and be loved. When we seek to form relationships, we are trying to fulfill this need. [1826-27, 1829]

All genuine love comes from God. “God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God in them.” (1 John 4:16). [218-21, 257]

In order to love others and let others love us, we must love ourselves. Learning to love ourselves begins with the realization that God loved us first. Indeed, if God did not love us, we would not even exist. Awareness of God’s particular love for each of us leads us to appreciate that our life is sacred and we are precious in God’s sight. This awareness enables us to seek self-knowledge honestly and courageously. Self-knowledge, in turn, can help us to understand and accept ourselves as we are, even with our limitations and weaknesses. [294, 310-11, 357]

By itself, however, self-love is not enough. We are called to love others. In every stage of our lives, God gives us the grace to reach out beyond ourselves and our own concerns and to love others. However, different kinds of love are appropriate to different kinds of relationships. [1604, 1823, 1825, 1889, 2196]

- *Family Love* is shared by family members, including that of a parent for a child, a child for a parent, spouses for each other, and siblings for each other. [2227-28]
- *Friendship* is the deep, tender affection which exists between friends. Friendship includes shared interests as well as mutual trust and enjoyment of one another’s company. [2347]

¹ Difficult or hurtful experiences do not obligate one to endure bullying, abuse, or other harmful treatment from others.

- *Eros* is passionate human love which can exist between a man and a woman. *Eros* always seeks union and thus includes sexual love. [1604, 2331, 2360]
- *Agape* is a conscious choice to will the good of another. It is not a feeling. This Christian love treats all with kindness no matter what they may have done to us, no matter whether we like them or they like us. This is the love that the Holy Spirit enables us to have for others. [1935, 1939]

During our lifetime we will probably experience these different kinds of love through our various relationships. Some of our relationships may well involve more than one kind of love.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read and reflect with the young people on 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. Tell them this passage describes how God calls us to love one another.

- Have the young people rewrite verses 4 through 7 of the passage, and in place of the word “love” in each verse, have them substitute the name of someone they know whom the description fits.
- Invite them to consider what the phrase, “to endure,” means in the scripture passage.
- Invite the young people to reflect again on verses 4 through 7 and, in place of the word “love” in each verse, have them substitute their own name wherever the description fits.

Ask the young people to share what they have learned from this experience. Remind them of the early Christians and the love they had for one another. Conclude with the following prayer:

*Gracious God, may your Son, Jesus Christ, help us to grow in his way of love.
Help us to understand how others should be treated and how we should behave.
Give us the grace to love as Jesus did. Amen.*

II. THE VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS

Through our interactions with others, we can come to know ourselves better. We come to new insights as we struggle to express our thoughts and feelings. [1879-80]

As we listen to others, we grow in our knowledge of them as well. Our relationships with others widen our experience and can enrich our lives. [1931, 1936-37, 1944, 1946]

Through our relationships with others we make a contribution to the world in which we live. With others we strive to contribute to the common good and build a more just, loving and peaceful society. [1906-09, 1939-41]

Through our relationships with others, we can also come to know God better. [40, 54]

- The gifts and goodness of each person reflect something of the Creator who called that person into being. [41, 48]
- The Gospels promise us that when we relate in a loving way to those who are poor, weak, suffering or in need, we will see the face of God in them. [2443-44, 2463]

Relationships founded on justice, love and mutual respect also help to build up the Church, the body of Christ. [798, 2045-46]

- We, the Church, are called into relationship with one another by God in Christ. The Church is like a family, striving to love and encourage one another. [541-42, 775]
- Through our relationships in the Church we give witness to the world that God is in our midst: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35) [738, 767, 2044]

Through our relationships we help to build the kingdom of God, supporting one another in faith, hope and love here on earth as we look forward to the fulfillment of God’s promises in heaven. [1821, 2046, 2818]

III. FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

A. The Family in the Plan of God

It is God’s will that human life be brought into the world through the human community of the family. Christ himself was born and grew up in the heart of a human family. Our primary understanding of love and relationships comes to us through our experience of family. [531, 533, 2201-03, 2207]

A man and a woman, united by marriage, together with their children, form a family. [NB: The catechist/teacher should discuss the topic of family with pastoral sensitivity toward the actual circumstances of the young people. (CF 1649-51)] [2202]

The family is the most basic unit of society. It deserves to be respected and protected by laws and governments. [2202, 2210-11]

The family is recognized as a basic unit within the Church as well. Through their love, prayer, care for one another and acts of service and witness, the Catholic Christian family is considered to be “the domestic Church.” [2204-06]

As Catholic Christians, we understand that family relationships are characterized by rights and obligations which stem from the natural law, the Ten Commandments, Jesus’ Law of Love, and the teachings of the Church. [2214-17, 2221-29]

- Parents have a sacred duty to respect their children as children of God and as human persons. They are responsible for their children’s moral and spiritual formation and physical well-being, and for providing a home in which love, forgiveness, respect and service are the rule. [2221-30]
- Children have a sacred duty to respect, honor and obey their parents. They also contribute to the harmony of family life by treating their brothers and sisters with patience and kindness. [2214-19]

Our relationship with God is our most important relationship. But the fourth commandment makes it clear that, after God, we should honor our parents and guardians, whom God has given us. [2197, 2232, 2248]

B. Our Experience of Family

It is God’s design that our parents and guardians instill in us the values that will help us live as faithful Catholics. During adolescence, our relationship with our parents is in the process of change. We want to be recognized as maturing individuals, yet we also need and depend on our parents.

At the same time, our parents may also be struggling with our changes. While they desire to help us mature and become more independent and responsible, they also want to protect and help us.

Our relationships with brothers and sisters also change as we grow. By sharing our thoughts, feelings and interests with one another, we develop a deeper respect for and friendship with each individual in our family.

C. Friendship in the Plan of God

Friendship is a gift from God and can be a great blessing. “A friend loves at all times.” (Proverbs 17:17) [374, 1939]

Jesus used the image of friendship to describe the relationship of trust and sharing that he wishes to have with us. “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” (John 15:15) [1972, 2347]

D. Our Experience of Friendship

During adolescence we find that friends play an increasingly important role in our lives. Our choice of friends can influence us greatly; we may well value their opinions more than those of anyone else. We sometimes outgrow the friends of our childhood; our interests change and we find ourselves choosing new friends who share our newfound interests and have similar capabilities and values.

At this time in our lives, we often develop a keen sense of loyalty to our peer group and its interests. Although we are seeking to assert our independence from our family, we may actually be transferring our dependence from our family to the peer group.

We will go to great lengths to remain part of the group. We are tempted to define ourselves by who our friends are. However, we need to discover and value who we are apart from our friends. We are beloved of God in our uniqueness, with distinct gifts and talents to treasure and share. [356-58]

By accepting ourselves we become better able to be friends with others. [2340, 2347]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Lead the group in the following reflection on relationships in their lives:

- Think of the people who were most important to you when you were six years old.
- Think of the people who are most important to you now.
- Think of why they are important to you.
- In a silent prayer, thank God for each of these people and how they have helped you to grow as a closer friend of Jesus.
- How have you responded to their help?

Conclude by proclaiming Philippians 1:9-11.

IV. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND CHURCH

A. Loved by God

God loves each of us individually and personally. It is the love of God that calls each person into being and sustains that person in being. [301, 356]

In the wonder of God's original creation, our first parents, Adam and Eve, had an immediate knowledge of God's creative and sustaining love. God walked in intimacy with them in the garden and called them friends. [374-6]

However, because of The Fall (Genesis 3:1-19), the human race became confused and lost sight of this love, becoming estranged from God and from one another. [379, 389-400, 416]

Yet, God continues to seek out each and every one of us, to restore that relationship of love which alone can fulfill the deepest longing of the human heart. [410, 421]

In the fullness of time, God sent Jesus to reveal the immeasurable love that God has for each of us. [422, 458]

B. Called into Relationship with God

God invites each of us into the most important relationship of all: a relationship with himself. [27, 44-45, 54]

Our relationship with God is a gift. God freely chooses to be in a relationship with each of us, not because of anything we have done, but purely because God loves us. Even when we sin, God seeks us out and offers us forgiveness and reconciliation. [50-52, 55, 218-19, 1997]

God will never abandon us. Jesus has assured us that in spite of trials and persecutions in this life he is always with us, bringing good out of evil.

Our relationship with God is built through faith and trust. By putting our faith and trust in God day by day, through all the ups and downs of life, our relationship with God grows stronger. [153-55, 163-65]

Our relationship with the Triune God is mediated by Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity. "It is God the only Son, ever at the Father's side, who has revealed him." (John 1:18). Jesus is our way to the Father. [65, 425-26, 457-58]

Our relationship with God deepens and grows in the Church. As Catholic Christians we believe that through the Church we realize our calling to live in relationship with God. The Church is not optional to our personal faith. She is a mother, without whom we would not have life. [166, 169, 757, 781]

The five precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. [2041]

- You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.²
- You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
- You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.

² One these days, one should rest from works or activities that would prevent one from worship.

- You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
- You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church. [2042-43]

C. Our Experience of God and Church

How we relate to God and the Church changes as we grow.

- As children we usually mirror the faith of our parents. As we leave childhood and move into adolescence, we may experience new awakenings of motivation and fervor in our relationship with Jesus and the Church. [31, 35, 166, 168]
- Our ways of praying may change and develop. We seek ways of communicating with God that reflect who we are today. [28, 2559, 2569]
- As we mature in faith, questions and searching can help us to deepen our relationship with God and with the Church. [30, 32]

Growth in faith always involves searching. Sometimes our searching and our questions may cause us to think we are losing our faith. In reality our questions can be a sign that we are developing a more mature faith. [27, 30, 33]

V. Social Responsibility

As Christians we are called into a relationship of love with the whole human family. This relationship is built on justice and blossoms forth in peace. [1807, 1877, 1906-09, 2304]

- God created all peoples and Christ died and was raised up for the salvation of the whole human race. Out of love for our neighbors, therefore, we are called to reject all forms of racism and ethnic hatred, and to welcome and celebrate the diverse gifts of the human family. [301, 605, 1931, 1935]
- Certain inequalities of gifts and resources exist among people in the human community. They are part of God's plan insofar as they are an invitation to share and to help one another. But sinful inequalities of wealth and power also exist, which keep people in poverty and misery. We must seek to abolish such sinful conditions by helping the poor and working for social justice. [1932, 1936-38, 2448]
- The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers in our world, loving even our enemies. [1825]
 - We are called to work for peace in our world, helping to alleviate the conditions which lead to war, such as economic injustice and unrestrained use of power. We are called to support the efforts of nations to avoid or put an end to war. [2308, 2317]
 - We are called to work for peace in our neighborhood and city, always opposing violence and supporting the peaceful resolution of conflicts. [2302, 2255]
 - We must also avoid and oppose all social situations that lead to violence, such as participation in gangs, cults, and any groups which thrive on divisiveness or hatred. [1931, 2303]
- Reverence for the Creator and recognition of the wonders of the whole created world call us to protect and cherish the earth and to acknowledge our interdependence with all creatures. [339, 344]
- Love for our neighbors around the world and generations yet to come also demands our prudence in using natural resources. As Christians we are called to be good stewards of creation. [2415-18, 2456]

Social responsibility calls for each person to give his or her gifts for the common good in building the kingdom of God. Each person's gifts are needed. [1913-15]

There is a great joy in building the kingdom of God, knowing we are united with many people all over the world in furthering the mission of Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. [542, 849-52, 863]

VI. CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING³

The seven themes of Catholic social teaching that guide the faithful in building a just world are:

1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** All human life is sacred from the moment of conception to the point of natural death; the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society.
2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** The person is not only sacred but also social. The ways in which society is organized (e.g., economically, politically) directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community.
3. **Rights and Responsibilities:** Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met.
4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. We recall the story of the Last Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46) which instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** The economy must serve the people. Work is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.
6. **Solidarity:** We are reminded to keep in mind that all people of the world are one human family. Despite the violence and conflict that takes place throughout the world, we are each called to be peacemakers and work for justice.
7. **Care for God's Creation:** We show our respect for God, the Creator of all things, by our stewardship of creation. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

³ www.bit.ly/7-themes-social-teaching-USCCB

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Read The Last Judgment from Matthew 25:31-46 aloud to the group.
- Invite the young people to reflect and share on the following questions:

How can I welcome the outsider or those who are lonely?

How can I feed the hungry?

How can I help my neighbor in need?

How can I be a good steward of creation?

How can I be a peacemaker?

How can I work for social justice?

- Close with the prayer of St. Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassionately on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours,

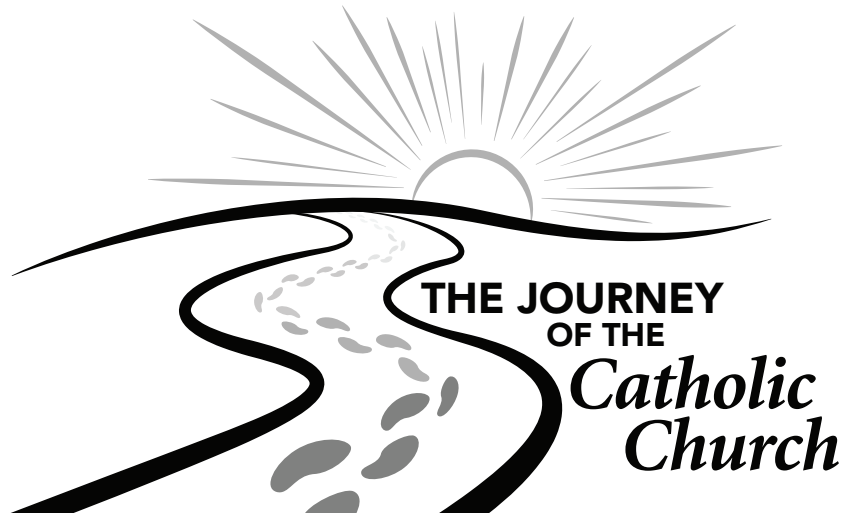
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassionately on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

GRADE EIGHT

CHURCH HISTORY



*Jesus' life and mission continue through the Church,
the community of believers called by God and empowered
by the Holy Spirit to be the sign of the kingdom of God.*

OBJECTIVES

- To deepen the young adolescent's knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church.
- To lead the young adolescent to a fuller participation in the life and mission of the Church.

I. THE JOURNEY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM THE TIME OF JESUS TO AD 100

A. The Mission of the Church

The Church was made manifest to the world on the day of Pentecost by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. [731-32, 737-41, 2623]

Immediately after Pentecost, the apostles traveled throughout Palestine spreading the “Good News” of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection to Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews). [767, 849, 858]

Small groups of Jesus’ followers continued to gather together at their local synagogues. They also began to meet in each other’s homes for prayer and “the breaking of the bread,” (Acts 2:46), the celebration of the Eucharist. [751, 949, 2178, 2624]

The apostles James and John were among the leaders of these groups, as were Paul, Barnabas, Titus, and Timothy. They traveled extensively, gathering followers of Jesus into small communities which were the beginnings of local churches. The early Church consisted of ordinary men and women who were strengthened by God’s Spirit. [777, 797-98, 833, 854, 1229, 1270]

Two great converts of this time were Paul, a Jew, to whom Jesus revealed himself in a dramatic way on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9) and Cornelius, a Gentile, who with his whole family was baptized by Peter (Acts 10:1-48). [639, 659, 761, 1226]

There was a period of dissension and debate between the Jews and the Gentiles who were embracing Christianity. Paul argued that Gentile converts to Christianity were not obliged to follow certain dietary laws and ritual practices (such as circumcision) prescribed by the Law of Moses. Some of the Jewish Christians disagreed. During this period of misunderstanding, Peter had a vision which helped him understand that God made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles who embraced Christianity (Acts 10:9-16). [761, 791, 804]

As a result of this controversy, the first General Council of the Church was called. Influenced by Peter’s speech and the witness of Paul and Barnabas, the Council of Jerusalem in AD 49 decided that:

- The followers of Jesus would not be subject to the ritual practices of the Mosaic Law.
- A Gentile could be baptized without having to observe the ritual practices.

The Council also clarified the belief that God sends the Holy Spirit to Jew and Gentile alike (Acts 15). [781-82, 799-801]

B. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

St. Stephen was the first martyr because he gave his life for his faith in Jesus (Acts 7:54-60). Before his conversion, Saul, who later became St. Paul, is identified as one of those who approved of the killing of Stephen. [2473, 2506]

Christians were persecuted in numerous ways throughout the first centuries. Nero was one of the many Roman emperors who persecuted the followers of Jesus during the first century. He falsely blamed Christians for the burning of the city of Rome in AD 64. [2472-74, 2476]

C. Significant Members of the Church

- **Mary, the Mother of Jesus (John 19:26-27 and Acts 1:14):** The mother of Jesus was a central figure at the heart of the early Christian community. From the very beginning she has been considered the Mother of the Church. [495, 501, 726, 2673]
- **St. Mary Magdalene (John 20:17-18):** After the resurrection, the Risen Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene and commissioned her to tell the “Good News” of his resurrection to the other disciples. [641, 660]
- **St. Peter and the Other Apostles (Acts 2:14-41):** From the time of Pentecost, Peter and the other apostles courageously witnessed to Jesus in word and deed. They proclaimed that Jesus brought salvation to the world through his life, death, and resurrection. [571, 642, 858]
- **St. Paul (Acts 9:1-9):** Initially a persecutor of the early Christian community, Paul was called by the Risen Lord in a vision to be an apostle and an outstanding witness to the “Good News.” His letters, included in the New Testament, are the earliest written testimony to the faith of the early Church. [639, 659, 860]
- **St. Lydia (Acts 16:11-15):** Many women believed the “Good News” and became active members of the early Christian community. Lydia, a devout woman, and a dealer in purple cloth (a valuable commodity in the ancient world), heard about Jesus through the preaching of Paul and was baptized, along with her whole household. She supported the mission of the apostles to proclaim the Gospel and welcomed them into her home. [872, 1226, 1252, 2624]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Read Acts 7:55-60.
- Ask the young people to reflect on Stephen’s spirit of forgiveness for his persecutors.
- Ask the young people to pray in their hearts for the grace to forgive someone who has persecuted or hurt them deeply. Lead them in prayer to ask for forgiveness from those they have hurt.
- Conclude the prayer experience by praying aloud the Our Father and the Confiteor:

*I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.*

II. THE JOURNEY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONTINUES FROM AD 100 TO AD 500

A. The Mission of the Church

In the period from AD 100 to AD 500 the Church spread rapidly and her doctrine continued to develop. Through God's grace, evidenced in the faith and life of her members, the Church spread throughout the Roman Empire. The seeds of the Gospel were sown in much of Europe, Northern Africa, and the Middle East. Christianity flourished in these areas. [767-68]

Christians continued to pray together and to celebrate the Eucharist, motivated by their profound love of Jesus. They were also known for their love for and service to others. In fidelity to the Gospel, they reached out to the poor, the homeless and the unwanted. Accounts of the life of the Church in the writings of the early Church Fathers, Doctors of the Church, and historians attest to the great concern of the People of God for one another. They welcomed all races and nations into their midst. [767, 852]

It is important to remember that, while the Church is always guided by the Holy Spirit, it is composed of imperfect human beings who can make mistakes and are capable of sinning. Therefore, conflicts, controversies, corruption, and even wars are found throughout the history of the Church. [386-87, 769-70, 827]

During this era, many heresies arose. Church councils were held especially to correct these false teachings concerning Christian beliefs. [88, 95, 884]

- The Council of Nicaea in AD 325 defined the Christian belief that Jesus is begotten of God, not made by God as other creatures are. Jesus, therefore, is not simply one of God's creatures, but, as God's own Son, shares in the very substance of God, consubstantial with the Father. This is why, when praying the Nicene Creed at Mass, we say Jesus is "consubstantial with the Father." [465]
- The Council of Ephesus in AD 431 declared that Jesus is truly a Divine Person and that his mother is, therefore, the Mother of God. [466, 495]
- The Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 declared that the Son of God is one Divine Person with two natures, one human and one divine. Jesus is, therefore, true God and true man. [467]

B. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

Persecutions continued throughout this era, because Christians would not worship false gods or obey unjust laws. Many Christians were martyred or sent into exile during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian. [309, 769, 2113]

The first emperor to become a Christian was Constantine. After his conversion, he issued the Edict of Milan in AD 313. This edict ended the persecution of the Church in the Roman Empire and recognized the right of Christians to worship in accordance with their faith. As a result of this new freedom, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire. [2104, 2108]

C. Significant Members of the Church

(Throughout the study of this unit, the catechist/teacher is encouraged to consult the liturgical calendar for feast days of saints of significance for the parish, school, or culture.)

- **St. Ignatius of Antioch (1st century):** The third bishop of Antioch, Ignatius was martyred around AD 110. While a prisoner on his way to Rome to be martyred, he wrote letters to some early Christian communities expressing his profound love for Jesus and urging them to be Jesus' faithful followers. [2473-74]

- **St. Perpetua and St. Felicity, Martyrs (2nd century):** Perpetua and Felicity were courageous women who suffered martyrdom in AD 202 during a persecution in Carthage, North Africa. In Eucharistic Prayer I of the Mass, the Church recalls their heroism. [2471, 2473]
- **St. Helena (250-330):** The mother of Constantine the Great, Helena was born about the middle of the third century. Of humble beginnings, she married a Roman general who divorced her. When her son, Constantine, became emperor, Helena was named empress. She converted to Christianity and performed many acts of charity. On a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Helena discovered the True Cross.
- **St. Monica (331-387):** Monica, a devout Christian from North Africa, prayed for over thirty years for the conversion of her son, Augustine. She is a model of a prayerful woman and a virtuous mother. [2232, 2683]
- **St. Jerome (347-420):** Jerome is best known for his delight in studying Holy Scripture and for translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. His translation was in use until modern times. He died in Bethlehem in AD 420. [133]
- **St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430):** Augustine, although he had a prestigious career and worldly success, led an unsettled and restless life, searching for the truth. After his conversion, he became an outstanding teacher, bishop and defender of the faith. He is one of the most influential theologians in the Western Church. [30, 32, 300, 385]
- **St. Patrick (5th century):** A man of great prayer and penance, Patrick is famous for his missionary activity among the Irish during the fifth century. In the United States, many churches, including the Cathedral of St. Patrick in the Archdiocese of New York, are named in his honor. [1428, 1430, 2683, 2745]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Invite the young people to name places around the world where the Church today continues to suffer suppression by hostile governments, terrorism, and other forms of persecution. When considering these realities, help the young people to see how the events of the present day are an important reason for each one of them to pray for those suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ, recognizing this may include us or members of our own families.

Lead the group in the following prayer from the *Mass for Persecuted Christians*:

*Father, in your mysterious providence,
your Church must share in the sufferings of Christ your Son.
Give the spirit of patience and love
to those who are persecuted for their faith in you
that they may always be true and faithful witnesses
to your promise of eternal life.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

III. THE JOURNEY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONTINUES FROM AD 500 TO AD 1000 (THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES)

A. The Mission of the Church

During the Early Middle Ages, the Church continued to spread the Gospel and, in doing so, it also preserved Western Civilization. Human beings were created to live in an organized society based on law and order and the Church did much to ensure that. [849, 1879-80]

This period is known for the barbarian invasions which were destroying the Roman Empire and disrupting the life of the Church. Some people refer to this time as the “Dark Ages.” Nevertheless, the Church remained a light in the midst of upheaval. [1884, 1897-98, 1910]

It was a period of extensive missionary activity. In the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great sent many missionaries to bring the light of faith to the barbarian tribes. Missionaries from the British Isles (England, Ireland and Wales) traveled to continental Europe to restore Christianity in those places which had been invaded by barbarians. [849, 927]

From the sixth through the eleventh centuries, monasteries for women (nuns) and men (monks) were essential to the preservation of Christianity and Western civilization. They were centers of learning and offered hospitality for travelers, the poor, and the sick. [914, 916, 1932]

By the end of this period, the Church and State had become so closely allied that the Church lost some of its independence and autonomy. As a result, the witness of Christianity was somewhat compromised. [770, 2245]

B. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

Nuns and monks courageously left their monasteries in order to spread the Gospel. These missionaries lived in situations of great hardship and suffering in order to preach and teach the Gospel among the barbarian tribes. As a result of their efforts, Christianity came to be firmly rooted in Europe. [618, 852, 2472]

In the early centuries of Christianity, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa had given the Church some of its greatest leaders (e.g., Clement of Alexandria; Tertullian). In the decades following the death of Muhammad in AD 632 however, Muslims from Arabia conquered all these areas, and within a few centuries, Christians had become a minority in these lands. [769, 798, 841]

In the early eighth century, Spain was also taken over by the followers of Muhammad, and the Christian populations of France and Constantinople were threatened by Muslim conquest as well. Nevertheless, the Church continued to grow in Europe. [769, 794, 841]

C. Significant Members of the Church

- **St. Brigid (451-525):** The pioneer of Irish monastic life for women, Brigid founded a monastery for nuns in Kildare, Ireland, in the late fifth century. She traveled widely in Ireland to evangelize the people and was known for her charity and generosity to the poor. [916, 2443-44]
- **St. Benedict and St. Scholastica (480-543):** Called the “Father of Western Monasticism,” Benedict founded the famous monastery of Monte Cassino in Italy about AD 530. The rule of life which he wrote is still

followed today by many communities of women and men religious. Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict and founded a monastery of nuns near Monte Cassino. [347, 915-16, 925-26, 2834]

- **St. Augustine of Canterbury (6th century):** Augustine of Canterbury and thirty monks were sent to England by Pope Gregory the Great in AD 596 to evangelize the Anglo-Saxons. He succeeded in persuading the king and many of his subjects to embrace Christianity, and he built England's first cathedral. He is called the "Apostle of England."
- **St. Dymphna (7th century):** Dymphna was born in northern Ireland during the 7th century. Her mother was a Christian while her father was a pagan king. Dymphna's mother died when she was 14 and this greatly distressed her father. Dymphna then dedicated herself to God and took a vow of celibacy. Her father was determined to marry her himself and, after repeatedly refusing his demands for marriage, Dymphna was beheaded around AD 620. Because her father was mentally ill, Dymphna is the patron saint of those suffering from mental illness.
- **St. Boniface (675-754):** Boniface is known as the "Apostle of Germany" because of his great missionary activity in that area. During his thirty-two years as a bishop, many conversions took place, churches were founded and dioceses were established. He was martyred with fifty-three others in AD 754. [831, 849-51, 2473]
- **Charles the Great (742-814):** Also known as Charlemagne, he ruled much of Western Europe from AD 768 to AD 814. Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne emperor of the Romans in AD 800 and, at the time of his death, his empire encompassed much of Western Europe, thus ensuring the survival of Christianity in the West.
- **St. Cyril (826-869) and St. Methodius (815-885):** Cyril and his brother, Methodius, sons of a Greek family, brought the gospel to the Slavic peoples. They developed an alphabet for the Slavic languages which is still used today, and translated the Gospels into Slavonic. Cyril died in AD 869 and Methodius in AD 885. [831, 849-50, 854, 831]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Remind the young people that God always calls individuals to help him meet the needs of his people. Ask them to reflect on the following questions:

- What needs do you see in the world today? In your community? In your family?
- Do you know someone who is helping to meet any of these needs?
- How might God be asking you to respond to some of these needs?

Conclude with this prayer from the Mass for Holy Church:

O God, in the covenant of your Christ you never cease to gather to yourself from all nations a people growing together in unity through the Spirit; grant, we pray, that your Church, faithful to the mission entrusted to her, may continually go forward with the human family and always be the leaven and the soul of human society, to renew it in Christ and transform it into the family of God.

IV. THE JOURNEY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONTINUES FROM AD 1000 TO AD 1500 (THE HIGH AND LATE MIDDLE AGES)

A. The Mission of the Church

At the beginning of this period, a reform movement arose in the Church. There was a revival of monastic life. Church leaders launched a campaign to assert the independence of the Church from secular society. The most famous leader of this reform movement was Pope St. Gregory VII. [2245-46]

During this period, there were rapid changes in society. Towns and cities grew steadily. To meet the educational needs of townspeople, cathedral schools were established in the eleventh century. A great interest in learning among Christians led to the founding of the first universities (such as those at Bologna, Italy; Paris, France; Oxford, England) in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. [30, 36-38, 50, 166]

Technical advances in architecture and engineering made possible the construction of the great Gothic cathedrals which still stand today. [1180, 1198, 2501]

Many holy men and women responded to these changes in society. Two new religious orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, were founded in the early thirteenth century to spread the Gospel in the growing cities. [927, 944]

The Black Death struck in Europe three times during the fourteenth century and, in some places, as much as one-third of the population died. The clergy were in particular danger due to their heroic efforts ministering to the sick and dying. [1503, 1509]

B. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

The Schism of 1054, often called the Eastern Schism, occurred because of cultural, political, and theological differences between Christians of the Eastern and Western Churches. The differences included, but were not limited to, disagreements concerning the place of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity and the Bishop of Rome's claim to universal jurisdiction. As a result of long years of disagreement, the Christians of the Eastern and Western world were estranged from each other. [247, 817-19, 822, 838]

The intermingling of Church and State affairs also caused bitter struggles, examples of which include the Investiture Controversy and the conflict between Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury and King Henry II of England. [2245]

Starting in 1095, Christians embarked on several military campaigns to retake the Holy Land from the Muslims. These campaigns were called the Crusades. Although many who fought in the Crusades did so out of a sincere desire to achieve a good end (for example, the safety of pilgrims who wished to visit the holy places in Jerusalem), these wars also caused much bloodshed and were unsuccessful in achieving their aim. [853]

Lack of education and widespread ignorance contributed to the growth of superstition and corruption. To combat superstition and heresy, the Church established a permanent Church court called the Inquisition. In a number of places, however, the attempts of the Inquisition to reform heretical ideas and practices led to severe and unjust sentences. [160, 853]

C. Significant Members of the Church

- **St. Dominic (1170-1221):** A renowned priest and preacher, Dominic established an order of men who traveled throughout Europe to preach and teach. This was very different from the cloistered orders in which the men lived in seclusion, away from the outside world. He also founded an order of women to pray for the apostolic work of the Dominican preachers. [425, 799, 1562, 1589]
- **St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226):** Francis was a nobleman, poet, and mystic, who greatly loved God's creation, and gave up a life of wealth in order to follow Christ. He eventually founded the Franciscan order, which brought men together to spread the Gospel and follow a simple lifestyle. He also founded the Brothers and Sisters of Penance (the Third Order) in 1221. A third order may be described as a middle state between cloistered life and the outside world. For those who were married or had other ties to the world and, therefore, were not in a position to enter a religious order, entering a third order enabled individuals to follow in the saint's footsteps. [293, 2014, 2443-45, 2745]
- **St. Clare (1194-1253):** Clare was a close friend of Francis of Assisi. Under his direction, she founded an order of cloistered nuns who are known as the Poor Clares. The lives of these holy women are characterized by fasting and prayer for the world. [1434, 2565, 2687]
- **St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274):** Thomas, a Dominican priest, was one of the greatest philosophers and theologians the world has ever known. Through his use of Scripture, Church tradition, and reason, he provided the Church with a systematic understanding of the Catholic faith (*Summa Theologica*) that still helps us today. [34, 43, 50, 94]
- **St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380):** A Dominican lay woman who lived in the fourteenth century, Catherine was a counselor of popes. Centuries later she was named a "Doctor of the Church" because of her profound spiritual writings. [313, 356, 951, 1937]
- **St. Frances of Rome (1384-1440):** A wife and mother, Frances was a courageous woman noted for her great charity to the poor and sick in Rome during the fifteenth century, which was a particularly difficult period in Rome's history. [953, 1409, 2447-48]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

In every age, God calls men and women to serve him, some in a religious vocation. Invite the young people to reflect upon the call to serve as members of a religious community, dedicating all aspects of their lives to his service.

Lead the students in the following prayer from the Mass for Vocations:

*Father, You call all who believe in you to grow perfect in love
by following in the footsteps of Christ, your Son.
May those whom you have chosen to serve you as a religious
provide by their way of life a convincing sign of your kingdom
for the Church and the whole world.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

If possible, consider inviting a religious sister, a religious brother, or a priest who belongs to a religious order to speak with the young people about their vocation and call to religious life.

V. THE JOURNEY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONTINUES FROM AD 1500 TO AD 1800

A. The Mission of the Church

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a time of renewal of the faith in the midst of religious controversies and wars.

- Some of these controversies led large numbers of Christians to protest against, and ultimately separate themselves from, the Catholic Church (Church of Rome). This widespread movement is called the Protestant Reformation. Christians who did not separate from the Church of Rome at that time became known as Roman Catholics.
- During the same period, a broad reform movement arose in the Catholic Church.
- The Council of Trent (1545-63), which addressed the Catholic Church's need for reform, sought to clarify Catholic teaching and strengthen discipline within the Church.
- Following the Council of Trent, Catholic leaders succeeded in reestablishing Catholicism in some parts of Europe that had become Protestant. This development is called the Counter-Reformation. [817-819, 834, 838, 884, 891, 1428]

In the eighteenth century the Enlightenment presented new challenges to the Church, and a gradual process of responding to the ideas of the Enlightenment was begun. The Age of Enlightenment may be defined as the intellectual and philosophical movement that emphasized the scientific method and reductionism as well as doctrines of individual liberty, the seeking of truth through unaided human reason, and the questioning of revealed truth.

Explorers and missionaries, especially from Spain and Portugal, brought Catholic Christianity to South and Central America, the Far East, and what is today the United States of America and Canada.

N.B. Missionaries of that time had an understanding of mission different from ours today, in that they identified Christianity with their culture and, therefore, frequently imposed their culture on the native peoples whom they came to evangelize. While such methods may rightly be criticized, the zeal and genuine accomplishments of these missionaries in bringing the gospel to others are, nonetheless, to be commended. [853-54, 856, 905, 927]

B. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

These centuries were marked by painful disagreements among Christians in Europe, which resulted in the separation of many people from the Church of Rome, and the rise of many different Protestant denominations, for example, Lutherans, Calvinists and Baptists. Religious fanaticism among both Protestants and Catholics resulted in hatred, persecution and religious wars in some parts of Europe. [855, 817-819]

The search for religious freedom compelled many to leave Europe and travel to America. However, even in the New World some people were still persecuted for their faith. [160, 164]

C. Significant Members of the Church

- **St. Angela Merici (1474-1540):** Angela Merici founded a group of lay women in Italy who dedicated their lives to educating poor girls. These lay women later became a worldwide order known as the Ursuline nuns. [369, 917, 2447]
- **St. Thomas More (1478-1535):** Husband, father and English statesman, Thomas More was appointed Chancellor by King Henry VIII. Because Thomas refused to cooperate with Henry's attack on the sanctity of marriage and the teaching authority of the Pope, he was martyred in 1535. [313, 2467, 2473]
- **Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566):** A Dominican priest and later a bishop, Bartolomé de Las Casas worked in Latin America in order to bring the Gospel to the Indians. He struggled to promote their civil rights and to have slavery prohibited. [853, 1586, 2414]
- **St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556):** A young Basque soldier of noble birth, Ignatius was wounded in battle. While recovering, he read about the life of Christ and of the saints, experienced a conversion, and dedicated himself to the service of the Lord. In 1534 he founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), a religious community of men noted for their missionary and educational work. His Spiritual Exercises are a great contribution to the Church's tradition of prayer. [827, 1490, 2684]
- **St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582):** A sixteenth century Spanish nun and mystic, Teresa of Avila was known for her courage, her prayer and her profound love of God. She reformed Carmelite religious life and wrote books on the spiritual life which still guide us today. She was proclaimed a "Doctor of the Church" by Pope Paul VI in 1970. [227, 1011, 1821, 2014, 2704, 2709]
- **St. Paul Miki (1562-1597):** Paul Miki was born in Japan and became a Jesuit in 1586. During a terrible persecution in that country he was martyred in 1597 – with twenty-five other religious and lay people – by being crucified. From his cross, Paul invited onlookers to accept Christianity, said he was joyfully giving his life for Christ, and forgave his executioners. [852, 1011, 2473, 2844]
- **St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622):** Francis de Sales became bishop of Geneva, a strong Protestant city, in 1602. Important in the reform movement within the Catholic Church, he was loved for his gentleness and pastoral concern. Through his writings, he taught spirituality, especially for the laity, stressing that the call to holiness is addressed to everyone. [855, 901, 2013]

- **St. Peter Claver (1580-1654):** Peter Claver was a Spanish Jesuit missionary who vowed to be forever a “slave” to his black brothers and sisters. He served in Colombia, South America, in the seventeenth century and is revered for his work among the black peoples. He died in 1654. [852, 2015, 2414]
- **St. Rose of Lima (1586-1617):** The patron saint of the Philippines, Latin America, and florists, Saint Rose of Lima was born in Peru to poor Spanish colonists. Often depicted wearing a crown of roses, she was so named due to her extreme physical beauty as a baby. Rose took a vow of chastity and went to great lengths to make her face look less beautiful. She embroidered things for sale to help her impoverished family and the poor. Mystic and visionary, she was the first social worker in the Americas, although she suffered from many afflictions. Miraculous events were attributed to her following her death. Saint Rose of Lima was canonized by Pope Clement X in 1671 and was the first person born in the Western Hemisphere to be recognized as a saint.
- **St. Isaac Jogues (1607-1646):** Isaac Jogues was a Jesuit priest, missionary, and martyr who traveled and worked among the Iroquois, Huron, and other Native populations in North America. He was captured by the Iroquois and, as a prisoner, suffered physical torment, while comforting, baptizing, and hearing confessions of the other prisoners. Isaac Jogues escaped his imprisonment and went to New Amsterdam where he was the first Catholic priest to visit Manhattan Island. He traveled back to France but was soon eager to return to the missions. He returned to Iroquois territory in the spring of 1646 and was martyred later that year by the Mohawk at their village of Ossernenon, south of the Mohawk River.
- **St. Marguerite Bourgeoys (1620-1700):** A French woman who is considered one of the founders of French Canada, Marguerite Bourgeoys opened the first school of Montreal in 1658 for French and Indian children. She also established the first religious community of non-cloistered sisters in North America, the Congregation of Notre Dame. [5, 799, 851, 927]
- **St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680):** Born near what is now the town of Auriesville, New York, Kateri was the daughter of a Mohawk chief and a captive Algonquin mother, but was orphaned at the age of four. She was baptized by a Jesuit missionary at age twenty and moved to a Christian colony of Iroquois in Canada, where her faith, gentleness, kindness and devotion to Christ crucified impressed everyone. She died of disease at age 24. Her last words were, “Jesus! Mary! I love you!” [854, 1717, 1816, 1832]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Read Matthew 28:19-20 aloud. Ask the young people what this means to them.

Tell the group that Jesus sent the first disciples to spread his message and, by virtue of our baptism, he sends each of us to continue his mission today. Ask the young people to consider how Jesus is challenging each of them to spread his message.

Lead the young people in the following prayer for missions and missionaries from the Mass for the Spread of the Gospel:

*God our Father, you will all people to be saved
and come to the knowledge of your truth.
Send workers into your great harvest
that the Gospel may be preached to every creature
and your people, gathered together by the word of life
and strengthened by the power of the sacraments,
may advance in the way of salvation and love.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

VI. THE JOURNEY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONTINUED FROM AD 1800 THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY

A. The Mission of the Church

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the expansion of the Church throughout the world. In Africa and Asia in particular, the Church grew through the efforts of missionaries. In the United States of America, the Church increased through the influx of Catholic immigrants. Dioceses, parishes, and the Catholic School system in the United States steadily expanded to meet the religious and educational needs of these immigrants. [166, 905, 927]

The First Vatican Council (1869-1870) addressed several issues, among them materialism, inspiration of Scripture, and papal infallibility.

Clergy, religious, and laity developed and fostered the social mission of the Church throughout the world, by supporting the rights of labor, minorities, and all who are oppressed in any way. [2419, 2421, 2460-63]

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was called by Pope St. John XXIII to reform and renew the Church. In a series of authoritative documents, it proclaimed the teaching of the Church for the present day. The Council called for the renewal of the liturgy, a greater participation of the laity in the Church, ecumenism, the study of Sacred Scripture by scholars and laity, and the universal recognition of the right for religious freedom. For the first time in history, a Church council addressed itself not only to the Church but to the whole of humanity. [160, 820-23, 863, 884, 905, 910, 1204-05, 2108]

The Catholic Church is now, more than ever before, a global Church, with all the fervor and zeal of young communities being added to the gifts of an older, well-established Christian civilization. The visible presence of delegates from Third World nations at the Second Vatican Council as well as the diversity reflected in the present College of Cardinals has underlined this new reality. [782, 791, 2820]

Awareness of global, economic, social and ecological issues has likewise brought a new dimension to the Church's moral teaching. [1882-83, 1906-09, 1911, 2831-32]

The ecumenical movement of the twentieth century has been a great force for reconciliation among Christian communities. Catholics continue to work with others toward Christian unity through cooperation and dialogue. Interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and other major world religions has also increased our mutual understanding and respect. [817-22, 839-45, 855, 870]

Two of the Popes of the latter half of the twentieth century, Pope Saint Paul VI and Pope Saint John Paul II, were the first to travel extensively as popes. In the twenty-first century, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis have continued to travel and show their solidarity with Catholics around the world, encouraging them in their faith. Throughout their travels, all of these popes have continually challenged unjust structures and called on all people to work for world peace. [2304, 2307, 2420, 2438, 2442]

B. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

During the modern age, the Church continued to suffer in many parts of the world due to secularism, prejudice, injustice, and persecution. [1928, 1931]

The Church, while suffering persecution in the face of Nazism, Communism, and Radical Islam, has nevertheless survived. It has sometimes even flourished as an underground Church in places such as Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Hungary, China, and Vietnam. [2242, 2244]

The Church in every age has had to face many problems; she is sustained by Christ's victory over sin and his promise to be with her for all time. Today the People of God, as they strive to live the Gospel message, are challenged by relativism, materialism, lack of respect for life and human dignity, and the erosion of religious values. [1930, 1939, 2373, 2424-25]

The continued presence of wars throughout the world, the horror of genocide, the rise of terrorism, and the grave threat posed by nuclear weapons have impelled the Church to intensify her work for peace. [2304, 2307, 2313-15, 2317]

C. Significant Members of the Church

- **Martyr Saints of China (died between 1648-1930):** The Martyr Saints of China, or Augustine Zhao Rong and his 119 companions, are known as 87 Chinese Catholics and 33 Western missionaries who, from the mid-17th century to 1930, were martyred because of their ministry and in some cases because of their refusal to denounce their faith in Christ Jesus. Many died in the Boxer Rebellion, in which 30,000 Chinese converts to Christianity along with missionaries and other foreigners were killed by revolutionaries. Anna Wang, a 14-year-old girl, was among the Chinese converts who refused to renounce Christianity and she spent the hours before her death in prayer and encouraged others to remain faithful. The Martyr Saints of China were canonized on October 1, 2000 by Pope St. John Paul II.
- **Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853):** A former slave, Pierre Toussaint was brought to New York City in 1787 and there he was apprenticed to one of New York's leading hairdressers. He earned a good living as a

hairdresser and eventually gained his freedom, later becoming a noted philanthropist to the poor of the city. Together with his wife, Juliette, Pierre Toussaint performed many charitable works. He contributed funds and helped raise money to build Old Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Mulberry Street. Pierre Toussaint is the first layperson to be buried in the crypt below the main altar of Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue.

- **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821):** Elizabeth Seton was a New Yorker, a married woman and a mother. After she was widowed, she became a Roman Catholic. Following that, she professed vows as a religious sister and founded the Sisters of Charity in 1809, and in 1817 established the first orphanage in New York City. She helped to develop the Catholic school system in the United States of America and is the first American-born person to be canonized. [5, 1814, 1915]
- **St. John Henry Newman (1801-1890):** Cardinal Newman was an Anglican priest in England who, despite personal and professional opposition, was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. His writings have done much to give people a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith. The establishment of Newman Centers (Catholic ministry centers) throughout the world for Catholic students attending secular universities was inspired by the writings of Cardinal John Henry Newman. [157, 1723, 1778, 2144]
- **St. Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870):** The “spiritual father of Cuba” was a missionary, religious founder, social reformer, and archbishop. He was a Spaniard whose work took him to the Caribbean, Canary Islands, and Europe. Ordained at 28, he was prevented by ill health from entering religious life as a Carthusian or a Jesuit. Despite this, he became one of Spain's most popular preachers. He was present at the First Vatican Council and was a staunch defender of the doctrine of papal infallibility. Anthony spent 10 years giving popular missions and retreats, always placing great emphasis on the Eucharist and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. An interest in publishing led Anthony to found the Religious Publishing House, a major Catholic publishing venture in Spain. Beginning with five priests, he also founded a religious institute of missionaries. Known today as the Claretians, they are active as missionaries in over 65 countries on five continents.
- **Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903):** A pope of the late nineteenth century, Leo XIII is best known for his commitment to the rights of working men and women. His encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) is still considered one of the classic statements on the subject of justice for workers. [1926, 2427-28, 2434-35]
- **St. John Neumann (1811-1860):** A Catholic priest from Bohemia, John Neumann immigrated to the United States in 1836 and was ordained that same year at Old St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. He received permission to join the Redemptorist order in 1840. In 1852 he became the fourth Bishop of Philadelphia and during his tenure he founded the first Catholic diocesan school system in the United States. He is the first United States bishop to be canonized.
- **St. Dominic Savio (1842-1857):** Born into a peasant family at Riva, Italy, young Dominic joined Saint John Bosco as a student at the Oratory in Turin at the age of 12. Saint John Bosco was impressed with Dominic's desire to be a priest and to help in his work with neglected boys. A peacemaker and an organizer, young Dominic founded a group he called the *Company of the Immaculate Conception* which, in addition to being devotional, aided Saint John Bosco with the boys and with manual work. As a youth, Dominic spent hours rapt in prayer and he called his raptures, “my distractions.” Even in play, he said that at times, “It seems heaven is opening just above me. I am afraid I may say or do something that will make the other boys laugh.” Dominic would say, “I can't do big things. But I want all I do, even the smallest thing, to be for the greater glory of God.” Dominic's health was always frail and, after receiving the last sacraments, he died on March 9, 1857. Due to his youth, some thought Dominic was too young to be considered a saint. Pope Saint Pius X declared that just the opposite was true and supported the cause for Dominic's sainthood, leading to his eventual canonization in 1954.

- **St. Frances Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917):** Born in Italy in 1850, Frances Cabrini founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a religious community of women who work in schools and hospitals. Mother Cabrini was the first naturalized American citizen to be declared a saint. [5, 1509, 1932, 2447]
- **Servant Of God Mother Mary Alphonsa (1851-1926):** Born in Lenox, Massachusetts, Rose Hawthorne was the daughter of the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne and his wife, Sophia. She was married while still young and, along with her husband, converted to Roman Catholicism. After her husband's death, Rose sought greater purpose in life. After spending time with the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent dePaul and training as a nurse to serve cancer patients, she joined the Third Order Dominicans. On December 8, 1900, with approval of Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan of New York, she founded a religious order which would become known as the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne. The establishment of St. Rose's Free Home for Incurable Cancer in Cherry Street in New York City housed fifteen poor women with cancer. The community eventually went on to establish seven nursing facilities in six different states. Today, Rosary Hill Home in Hawthorne, New York cares for the poor who are suffering from incurable cancer.
- **St. Katherine Drexel (1858-1955):** An heiress and philanthropist from Philadelphia, Katherine Drexel, a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament, turned away from wealth and social standing to found a missionary community serving African-Americans and Native Americans. She used her inheritance for the benefit of Native Americans, financing the printing of 500 copies of a catechism that would be used by Navajo children. Her legacy is marked by selfless service for the victims of injustice and her belief in quality education for all. She died at the age of 96 at her order's motherhouse near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- **St. Charles Lwanga (1860-1886):** Charles Lwanga was a young Christian page in the service of a pagan emperor. He protected the other pages from the emperor, who demanded that they participate in homosexual activity. Charles was martyred with twenty-one other Ugandans during the persecutions of 1886. [2357, 2472-73]
- **St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita (Ca. 1869-1947):** Born around 1869 in the Darfur region of Sudan, Josephine grew up happy and relatively prosperous. Historians believe that sometime in February 1877 Josephine was kidnapped by Arab slave traders and for the next 12 years she would be bought, sold and given away over a dozen times. As a slave, her experiences varied from fair treatment to cruel and she eventually arrived in Italy and was placed in the custody of the Canossian Sisters in Venice. While she was with the sisters, Josephine came to learn about God; she was deeply moved by her time with the sisters and discerned a call to follow Christ. Josephine's mistress could not persuade her to leave the convent and Italian authorities eventually intervened on Josephine's behalf. It was determined in the courts that since slavery had been outlawed in Sudan before Josephine was born, she could not lawfully be made a slave. Josephine was declared free and chose to remain with the Canossian Sisters. She was received into the Catholic Church on January 9, 1890 and took the name Josephine Margaret Fortunata (the Latin translation of her Arabic name, Bakhita). She received the sacraments of initiation from the Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, who would later become Pope Pius X. For the next 42 years of her life, she worked as a cook and a doorkeeper at the convent. She also traveled and visited other convents telling her story to other sisters and preparing them for work in Africa. When speaking of her enslavement, she often professed she would thank her kidnappers, for had she not been kidnapped, she might never have come to know Jesus Christ and entered His Church. In her later years, despite suffering physical pain and having to use a wheelchair, she always remained cheerful. On the evening of February 8, 1947, Josephine spoke her last words, "Our Lady, Our Lady!" In 1958 the process of canonization began for Josephine under Pope Saint John XXIII and in 1978 Pope Saint John Paul II declared her venerable. While the news of her beatification in 1992 was censored in Sudan, within the year, Pope Saint John Paul II visited that country and publicly honored her. She was canonized on October 1, 2000 and is recognized as the patron saint of Sudan.

- **St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897):** Moved by her love for Jesus, Thérèse became a Carmelite nun when she was fifteen years old. She strove to do all the small tasks of life to the best of her ability, seeing them as expressions of her love for Jesus and for the others with whom she lived. In her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, she teaches “her little way” – how to seek holiness of life in the ordinary and how to persevere in prayer even when it is difficult. Thérèse was a missionary in spirit because she prayed daily and fervently for people who did not yet know Jesus that they might be saved by His divine love. Pope Pius XI declared St. Thérèse, “Patroness of the Missions,” recognizing that some missionaries go out to evangelize in places where the Gospel has not yet taken root while others, like Thérèse, save souls by their faithful prayer for them at home. [201, 258, 826, 2710, 2742]
- **Pope St. John XXIII (1881-1963):** Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, one of fourteen children born to poor parents in Sotto il Monte, Italy, would eventually become one of the most influential popes in recent history. He was ordained a priest in 1904 and served the Church in many ways throughout the early part of the 20th century and after the Second World War. He became a cardinal in 1953 and upon the death of Pius XII in 1958 was elected pope. Shortly after his election, Pope John XXIII called for an ecumenical council which would come to be known as Vatican II. He was canonized a saint by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014.
- **St. Pio of Pietrelcina [Padre Pio] (1887-1968):** Francesco Forgione was born into an Italian farming family devoted to their Catholic faith. From a young age he had a strong personal relationship with the Lord and wanted to be a priest. When he joined the Capuchin Franciscan Friars, he was given the name Padre Pio. He suffered much throughout his life – physically as well as spiritually – and he always offered his sufferings to the Lord for the sake of saving sinners. His physical difficulties never prevented him from continuing his ministry of compassion for the sick and the suffering. He was a profound mystic – a person of deep prayer who experienced the presence of God. One day in 1918, as Padre Pio was making his thanksgiving after Mass, he had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the “stigmata” – the wounds of Christ Crucified – in his own hands, feet, and side. Padre Pio used his extraordinary spiritual gifts to express Jesus’ compassion. Thousands of people flocked to him to receive the Sacrament of Penance. All day long, 10 hours a day, he would hear their confessions. The people often said that he knew details of their lives that they never told him, and that he understood their souls.
- **Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro (1891-1927):** “¡Viva Cristo Rey!” – Long live Christ the King! – were the last words Pro uttered before he was executed for being a Catholic priest and serving his flock. Born into a prosperous, devout family in Guadalupe de Zacatecas, Mexico, Miguel entered the Jesuits in 1911. Three years later, because of religious persecution in Mexico, he fled to Spain. After he was ordained in Belgium in 1925, Father Pro immediately returned to Mexico where he served a Church forced to go underground. He clandestinely celebrated the Eucharist and ministered the sacraments to small groups of Catholics. He and his brother, Roberto, were arrested on false charges of attempting to assassinate Mexico’s president. While Roberto was spared, Miguel was sentenced to face a firing squad and was executed on November 23, 1927. His funeral became a public demonstration of faith. Miguel Pro was beatified in 1988.
- **St. Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1901):** Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish Catholic priest who fulfilled the Gospel message by laying down his life for another. During the Second World War, he was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. He volunteered to die in the place of another prisoner, who, when chosen to die, had sighed, “My poor wife, my poor children!” [609, 1826, 2002]
- **Venerable Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979):** Archbishop Fulton Sheen was known for his preaching and especially his work on television and radio. The host of the television program *Life is Worth Living* from 1952 to 1957, Archbishop Sheen’s legacy endures as these episodes continue to be rebroadcast. In 1952 he won an Emmy Award for his efforts, accepting the award by saying, “I feel it is time I pay tribute to my four writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.”

- **Pope St. Paul VI (1897-1978):** Pope St. Paul VI continued the Second Vatican Council that was started by his predecessor, Pope St. John XXIII. His chief concern was that in the 20th century the Catholic Church should continue to be a faithful witness to the teachings of the Church, recognizing their relevance in the present time. Upon conclusion of the Council, Paul VI moved to interpret and implement the mandates outlined in the documents of the Council. He was canonized by Pope Francis on October 14, 2018.
- **Servant of God Dorothy Day (1897-1980):** A convert to Catholicism (she was, in fact, an agnostic), Dorothy Day experienced a period of searching for the meaning of life. After the birth of her daughter, she began a period of spiritual awakening which led her to the Catholic faith; Dorothy was baptized on December 29, 1927 at Our Lady Help of Christians Church on Staten Island. She was a lay woman who, by her example, encouraged many to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Founder of the Catholic Worker movement, she labored most of her life in New York City and died there in 1980. [544, 1929-31, 2306, 2446]
- **St. Teresa of Los Andes (1900-1920):** As a young girl growing up in the early 1900's in Santiago, Chile, Juana Fernandez read an autobiography the French-born saint, Thérèse, popularly known as the Little Flower. This experience deepened her desire to serve God and clarified the path she would follow and at 19 Juana became a Carmelite nun, taking the name of Teresa. The convent offered the simple lifestyle Teresa desired and the joy of living in a community of women completely devoted to God. She focused her days on prayer and sacrifice. "I am God's," she wrote in her diary. "He created me and is my beginning and my end." Toward the end of her short life, Teresa began an apostolate of letter-writing, sharing her thoughts on the spiritual life with many people. At age 20 she contracted typhus and quickly took her final vows. She died a short time later, during Holy Week. Known as the "Flower of the Andes," Teresa remains popular with the estimated 100,000 pilgrims who visit her shrine in Los Andes each year. Canonized in 1993 by Pope John Paul II, she is Chile's first saint.
- **St. Maria Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938):** Born into a poor, religious family in Poland, at an early age Faustina felt called to a religious life. She was so poor that she was not admitted to the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy until she saved enough money to pay for her religious habit. It was during a period of recuperation from illness that Faustina was visited by Jesus, the "King of Divine Mercy." She kept a diary, which was a record of her conversations with Jesus. Beginning in July of 1937 and throughout the 20th century, the image of and devotion to Divine Mercy has spread throughout the world.
- **St. Teresa of Calcutta [Kolkata] (1910-1997):** A native of Albania, Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her charitable work. She was vocal in her opposition to abortion and was admired by many and honored around the world for her care of the dying. The Missionaries of Charity, with several thousand sisters and a presence in many countries, manages homes for people dying of HIV/AIDS, soup kitchens, orphanages, and schools.
- **Thomas Merton (1915-1968):** Having been previously baptized in the Church of England, Thomas Merton was received into the Catholic Church on November 16, 1938 at Corpus Christi Church in Manhattan. He was a Trappist monk and gifted writer who wrote extensively about the spiritual life, monasticism, and the need for world peace. He was also committed to dialogue with Eastern religions on the subject of mysticism. His autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, tells his conversion story. [843, 925-26, 2304, 2687]
- **St. Oscar Romero (1917-1980):** Oscar Romero, Archbishop and martyr, was assassinated in 1980 while celebrating Mass because of his stand on human rights and his work to promote justice and peace in his country, El Salvador. [1907-09, 1912, 2473]
- **Pope St. John Paul II (1920-2005):** Karol Josef Wojtyla was born in Wadowice, Poland. His early life was very hard. His mother died when he was 9 and his older brother when he was 12. When he was 19 the

Nazis invaded Poland and he and his father had to go into hiding. He became a Catholic priest during the years when the Communists were taking control of Poland. Later, as Pope, he was instrumental in ending the Communist rule in Eastern Europe. Pope John Paul II was the longest-serving pope in modern history – from 1978 to 2005. During his pontificate, he travelled extensively throughout the world, presenting the Church’s teachings in many countries with their vastly different religious traditions and cultures. He had a special love for youth and they for him and in 1985, he began the World Youth Day movement. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which provides the basic content for all Catholic education, was published under his direction. His teachings on the Theology of the Body provide the Catholic context for teaching human sexuality. In 1983 he promulgated the *New Code of Canon Law*. Just three years after he became pope, John Paul II was shot in St. Peter’s Square by a Turkish political extremist. After his recovery, he visited his would-be assassin in prison and forgave him.

- **St. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962):** While pregnant with her fourth child, Gianna Molla, a medical doctor, refused medical treatment, knowing that doing so could result in her own death, which later occurred in 1962. Her medical career was marked by adherence to the teachings of the Catholic Church. She dedicated herself to charitable work and was involved in the work of both Catholic Action and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Read Matthew 25:35-36 to the group.
- Ask them to reflect on Jesus’ questions and think about the times they encountered someone who was hungry or thirsty. What did they do? How did they welcome the stranger?
- What did they do to meet the needs of one who needed adequate clothing? How did they help one who is ill or injured? For those who are suffering, how can we let them know we care?
- Lead the students in the following prayer from the Mass for Refugees and Exiles:

*Lord, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care.
In your kindness, watch over refugees and exiles,
those separated from their loved ones,
young people who are lost,
and those who have left or run away from home.
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be
and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and to those in need.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

VII. CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

As the Catholic Church continues in the 21st century, the faithful continue to seek a relationship with Jesus Christ in the face of continued persecution, secularism and indifference. Realities such as the increasing presence of technology in everyday life, the investigation of cases of sex abuse in the Church and society, the attempts of followers of radical Islam to terrorize Christians, and the acceptance of assisted suicide have, at

times, presented obstacles to effective evangelization and catechesis. Regardless of one's state in life, whether ordained, lay or religious, through daily life one is bound to share the Good News in word and deed for the building up of God's kingdom on earth.

A. The Papacy at the beginning of the 21st century

Following the death of Pope St. John Paul II on April 2, 2005, a papal conclave was convened during which Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was elected pope. During his papacy, Benedict XVI advocated a return to fundamental Christian values to counter the increase in secularism that was taking place throughout the world.

Encyclicals written by Pope Benedict XVI include:

- *Caritas in veritate* (Charity in Truth): June 29, 2009
- *Spe Salvi* (Saved by Hope): November 30, 2007
- *Deus Caritas Est* (On Christian Love – God is Love): December 25, 2005

On February 11, 2013, Pope Benedict announced his resignation that would become effective later that same month on February 28. He would be the first pope to resign since Gregory XII in 1415, and the first to resign of his own volition since Celestine V in 1294.

The conclave that followed Pope Benedict XVI's resignation resulted in the election of Jorge Mario Cardinal Bergoglio, who would become Pope Francis. The papacy of Francis was marked by a number of firsts. He was the first pontiff to hail from the Americas and the first South American pope. He was also the first Jesuit pope and the first to choose the name Francis.

From the beginning of his papacy on March 13, 2013, Pope Francis maintained that the Catholic Church should be more open and welcoming. Noted for his humility and emphasis on God's mercy, Pope Francis broke from tradition when he chose to reside in the Domus Sanctae Marthae guesthouse rather than the papal apartments of the Apostolic palace, the traditional living quarters of previous popes. Pope Francis has traveled extensively and has exhibited a deep commitment to interfaith dialogue.

The first encyclical of Pope Francis was issued on June 29, 2013. *Lumen fidei* (The Light of Faith), issued in conjunction with the Year of Faith proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI (October 2012 to November 2013), was the first encyclical in the history of the Church that was written by two popes.

The Jubilee of Mercy was formally declared through Pope Francis' papal bull, *Misericordiae vultus* (The Face of Mercy), issued on April 11, 2015. Beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 2015, the Jubilee of Mercy concluded on November 20, 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. During the Jubilee the faithful were reminded of the importance of mercy and that the Church is more open to all people.

Papal documents that reflect the Holy Father's vision for the Catholic Church as well as the whole world include:

- *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel): Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (November 24, 2013).
- *Laudato si'* (Praise be to You!): Pope Francis' first encyclical concerning care for the planet (June 18, 2015).
- *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love): Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on love in the family (March 19, 2016).

- *Gaudete et exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad): Apostolic Exhortation on the call to holiness in today's world (March 19, 2018).
- *Christus vivit* (Christ is Alive): Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People and to the entire People of God (March 25, 2019).
- *Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazon): Post-Synodal Exhortation to the People of God and to All Persons of Good Will (February 2, 2020).
- *Fratelli Tutti* (All Brothers): Encyclical letter on fraternity and social friendship (October 3, 2020).

B. Significant Members of the Church

- **21 Coptic Martyrs:** On February 15, 2015, a video was shared that showed 21 men in orange jumpsuits being forced to the ground in Libya and then beheaded by ISIS-affiliated militants. These men were killed because they were Christians. Reaction throughout the world was swift and condemning. Pope Francis called the killings “barbaric.” He said further that, “The flood of our Christian brothers is testimony that cries out. Be they Catholic, Orthodox, Lutherans, it doesn’t matter. They’re Christian.”

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

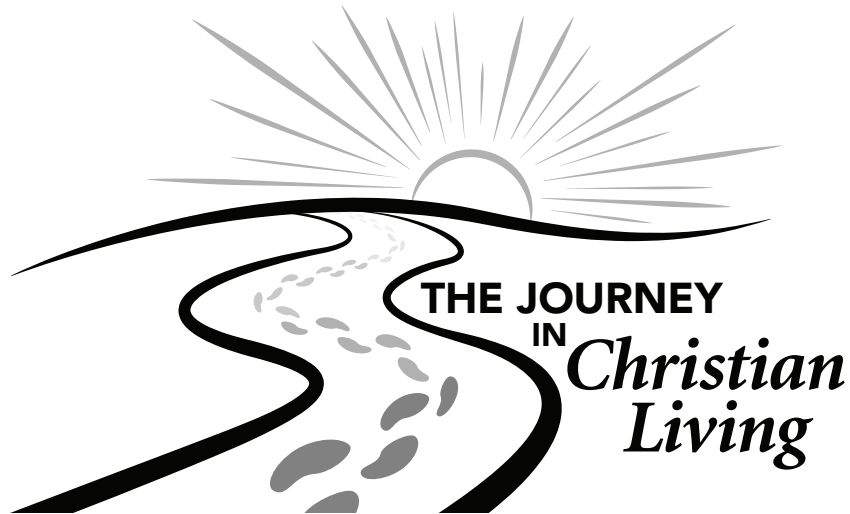
Read Romans 10:13-15 to the group. Give them some time to reflect upon the questions that are being asked. Encourage those who wish to share their thoughts.

Conclude by praying the *Prayer for the New Evangelization* (USCCB):

*Heavenly Father, pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with these words from Holy Scripture.
 Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith
 and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ
 so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News.
 Open my heart to hear the Gospel
 and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.
 Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth
 and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.
 In moments of hesitation, remind me:
 If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?
 If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?
 If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?
 God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit
 I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith,
 grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel
 and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, forever and ever. Amen!*

GRADE EIGHT

MORALITY



Through our relationship with Jesus, we grow in an ever-deepening awareness of who God is, who we are, and how God calls us to live. Catholic Christian morality gives direction to our response to God's call.

OBJECTIVES

- To help the young adolescent grow in an understanding of the moral responsibilities arising from one's relationship with Jesus.
- To help the young adolescent understand what conscience is and how to form his or her conscience according to the Catholic faith.
- To help the young adolescent learn basic concepts of morality and develop skills for moral decision-making.
- To help the young adolescent to recognize the role of the Holy Spirit and the witness and guidance of the Catholic Christian community in moral living.

I. DEFINITION OF MORALITY

As Catholic Christians, we need to remember the great dignity we possess through our Baptism. We have become temples of the Holy Spirit and share in the life of the risen Lord. We must live in accordance with that dignity through our moral conduct. [1691-92, 1694-95]

Morality is the quality of our actions whereby they are right or wrong. Actions are morally right when they are in agreement with God's law and will. [1749, 1786, 1950]

God's will for us is that in our lives we become like Jesus. God's will is always for our good. "God wants you all to be holy." (1 Thessalonians 4:3) [50, 218, 271]

Jesus is the model for morally right living. He most effectively teaches us how to live in harmony with the Creator, others, ourselves, and indeed the whole created world. [459, 520, 1693]

II. THE BASIS OF CATHOLIC MORALITY IN THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS

A. Jesus' Relationship with God the Father

Throughout his years on earth, Jesus lived in an intimate relationship with God, his Father, and was always obedient to God's will. This faithful response is revealed throughout Jesus' life as well as in his death and resurrection. [516, 615, 1693]

Jesus invites all people to that same kind of fidelity. He is the model for Christians, for he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6) [519, 1596, 1698]

B. Jesus' Teaching on the Commandments

In his teaching, Jesus builds on the covenantal relationship between God and the people of Israel, revealed in a particular way in the Ten Commandments. The first three commandments concern our relationship with God. The last seven concern our relationship with our neighbor.

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

(Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21) [1961, 1964, 2057, 2060, 2067]

These commandments are summed up by Jesus in the Great Law of Love: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37-39; see also Mark 12:28-31) [1822, 1967]

C. Jesus’ Teaching on Love

Jesus adds to this teaching a radically new dimension:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48) [1826-28, 1972]

Jesus is the perfect model of this unconditional love and calls each Christian to follow him in living this love. [520, 1823]

D. Jesus’ Vision of the Kingdom

Jesus describes God’s kingdom as a place where justice, peace and love reign. While the fullness of this kingdom will only be found in heaven, it has already begun here on earth, wherever God’s will is being carried out. [1717, 1721, 1726, 2046]

The Beatitudes reveal the way of living that characterizes God’s kingdom:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven ... (Matthew 5:3-12) [1716-17, 1719]*

E. Jesus’ Invitation to His Disciples

All people are created with the gift of freedom (the power to act or not to act, according to reason and will). This freedom is meant to be a force for growth and good. [1704, 1712, 1731]

However, in all human beings an attitude of self-centeredness often dominates (e.g. “what’s in it for me”). A life marked by choosing the good as God sees it and putting God and others ahead of ourselves is not easy. It calls for a turning away from our basic tendency toward self-centeredness. [1432, 1714, 1739]

Jesus calls his disciples to use their freedom to choose to follow the way of love rather than the way of selfishness. [1730-31, 1749]

Through conversion we turn away from selfishness and the isolation to which it leads. Conversion is the life-long process of responding to God's call to "change our heart." Jesus calls each of us to discipleship through conversion. [1427, 1431, 1721, 1888, 1949]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Remind the young people that before his conversion, Zacchaeus the tax collector was cheating people. Invite the young people to listen as you read the story of how Jesus called Zacchaeus to change (Luke 19:1-10).

Ask them to think of times when their conscience has caused them to stop in the midst of what they are doing and called them to change.

Saint John Henry Newman said, "Once we become friends with Jesus our lives change." Ask the young people to think about ways they may act differently because they are friends of Jesus.

Conclude with the Prayer of St. Francis:

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

III. LEARNING TO CHOOSE

A. Fundamental Choices

The book of Deuteronomy sets before the people of God the challenge to make a fundamental commitment to a life centered on God:

Hear then, I have set before you life and prosperity, death and doom. If you obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I enjoin on you today, loving him, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees, you will live and grow numerous, and the Lord, your God, will bless you ... If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen, but are led astray and adore and serve other gods, I tell you now that you will certainly perish ... I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him ... (Deuteronomy 30: 15-20) [1696]

Created with free will, we choose how we will live. Our choices affect not only our life here on earth, but also our life hereafter. [1724, 1732]

Jesus confirms this in his depiction of the Last Judgment:

Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me ...’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, ill and in prison and you did not care for me ...’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. (Matthew 25: 34-36, 40-43, 45-46) [1696]

Self-centered living leads to unhappiness in this life and ultimately to eternal punishment: separation from God. [1696, 1861]

Choosing to lead a God-centered life is not easy. At its heart is the call to conversion. As Jesus said, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) [618, 2002]

God-centered living inevitably bears fruit in love, joy and peace in this life, and leads finally to eternal life with God and the saints in heaven. [1709, 2012-13]

B. Definition of Conscience

Conscience is the inner sense or power by which we judge an act to be right or wrong. [1776-78, 1796]

As Catholics our conscience is based on:

- The natural law, that is, the basic awareness of right and wrong written by the Creator in the hearts of all people and found in the Ten Commandments (Decalogue), and
- Our understanding of right and wrong as expressed in the laws of God, the laws of the Church, and the laws of a just society based on Catholic Social Teaching. (1780, 1952, 2030)

C. The Development of Conscience

Learning to know and to choose the good which God desires is for each of us a lifelong process of conscience formation. Our conscience helps us to make good moral choices. [1730, 1784, 1798]

The process of conscience formation involves learning to know and understand both God’s law and the Church’s teaching. [1783-85, 2039]

- The law of God is found in our hearts and is revealed to us in Scripture. [1785]
- The Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, plays an essential role in helping us to know the morality of various actions and attitudes. The Church’s magisterium – the Pope and bishops in their role as teachers – preach to the people of God the faith which is to be believed and applied in moral life and continue to address new moral dilemmas as they arise. Guided by the commandments, the beatitudes, Jesus’ law of love, all of revelation, our Catholic tradition and the community’s experience, the Church gives direction to our choices. [1785, 2032, 2034, 2037]

Conscience formation also entails our own personal openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In Baptism and Confirmation we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to help us discern and do what God requires of us in a particular circumstance. [1266, 1302-03, 1785, 2038]

We develop our conscience by integrating into our thoughts, decisions, and our very being what the law of God and the teachings of the Church tell us. [1786-88, 1794]

It is our duty to develop our conscience according to the laws of the Church.

Legitimate authority is necessary in every human community. It is our responsibility to obey the just laws of society. [1897-99, 1916, 2239]

Nevertheless, when we make choices according to our conscience, we will at times find ourselves in direct conflict with the society around us. [1869, 1903, 2244]

- The fact that something is legally acceptable does not necessarily make it morally right. [1902, 2050]
- What is identified as morally wrong by the natural law, the law of God, the teaching of the Church, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit may be condoned by our society or even protected by its law, for example, abortion. [2256, 2270-71]
- As authentic teachers, the bishops pronounce on moral questions that fall within natural law and reason. [2050]
- We are called by our baptism to build a just and peaceful society. This involves not only choosing what is morally right for ourselves, but also working to make laws which reflect moral goodness. [1915-16, 2255]

D. Elements of a Moral Decision

There are three elements in a moral decision: the *object*, the *intention* and the *circumstances*. [1750]

- The ***object*** is the action itself, the thing which is done. [1751]
- The ***intention*** refers to the person's goal or purpose in doing the action. [1752]
- The ***circumstances*** are the particular features of each individual situation in which an action is taken. [1754]

The object may be good or evil in itself. For example, it is good to give to the poor. Lying is evil. [1751]

The intention may also be good or evil. [1752]

- A good intention does not make something which is evil into something good, however. For example, lying with the intention of obtaining something good does not make it good to lie. The end does not justify the means. [1753]
- A bad intention, furthermore, can make something which is ordinarily good into something evil. For example, pretending to be a friend to someone, for the sake of gaining some advantage for ourselves, makes a friendly action hollow, deceptive, and therefore morally wrong. [1753]

All morally good decisions are both good in their object and in their intention. [1755]

The circumstances, including the consequences, do not make a bad action good or a good action bad, but they may increase or decrease the good or evil of the action. For example, Jesus points out that the widow who gave two small coins, which was all she possessed, was more generous than the rich people who gave large sums (Mark 12:41-44). [1754]

Circumstances can affect the degree of responsibility one bears as well. For example, the responsibility of those who act out of fear or ignorance is less than that of those who make a deliberate choice without fear, knowing what they are doing. [1754]

E. The Process of Making a Good Moral Choice

Throughout our lives, we will be faced with situations which require of us a moral choice. Sometimes, especially if we are in the habit of doing good, these choices may seem simple and we are able to make them without a great deal of reflection: We decide to tell the truth rather than to lie, we decide to be kind rather than to be cruel, we decide to be fair rather than to cheat. [1777, 1804]

At other times, however, moral decisions can be complex and difficult, and the temptations to choose other than the good can be great. Having formed our conscience, we must listen to it as we utilize the following decision-making process:

- Reflect on all aspects of the situation and the various possible courses of action open to us.
- Pray for the help of the Holy Spirit.
- Recall God's law and the Church's teaching.
- Consider the consequences of the choice.
- Seek trusted, respected, and competent advice when necessary.
- Remember Jesus is with us and speak with him about the choice.
- Recall that our decision will affect our relationship with God and others. [1787-89]

In utilizing this decision-making process, we must make every effort to arrive at a decision of conscience which is correct and certain.

- A decision of conscience is correct when it is in conformity with the will of God.
- It is *certain* when we have no serious doubt about the rightness of our decision.

Once we have confronted a situation that requires a decision and have followed a process of discerning God's will in that situation, making every effort to arrive at a correct and certain decision of conscience, then we are obliged to act in accordance with that decision and trust in God's mercy. [1790, 1800]

F. Dealing with Temptation

Often we feel drawn to make selfish choices which are against the will of God. This experience is called temptation. [2846-47]

In itself, temptation is not a sin. Still, it is the responsibility of every person to recognize and avoid the persons, places, things and situations which might lead us into temptation. [2848]

The Gospel account of Jesus' temptations in the desert shows that the devil uses many means of tempting. Jesus is our model, because he turned away from what the devil offered and chose the will of God. [2849]

G. Failure to Choose the Good as God Sees It

Sin is deliberately choosing not to do God's will. Some examples are:

- Instead of honoring the Lord's Day, some choose not to participate at Mass.
- Instead of respecting the property of others, for example, we cover it with graffiti or destroy it.
- Instead of recognizing people's rights to their own property, we steal it.
- Instead of safeguarding and respecting human life, assisted suicide, euthanasia, and abortion are tolerated and murders take place.
- Instead of telling the truth, we tell lies.
- Instead of honoring God's name, we use it to curse others or to express our anger.
- Instead of trusting in God's providence and care for us, we put our faith in superstitious practices.
- Instead of respecting and caring for our bodies, we abuse drugs, alcohol, food and sex.
- Instead of respecting and obeying those in authority, we show contempt for them and disobey them.

In other words, instead of doing what God wants, we choose what we have convinced ourselves is good. [1707, 1847-50, 1871]

Mortal sin is the complete turning away from God and God's law. This free, deliberate refusal to accept God's will causes a spiritual death or separation from God. A sin is mortal if the three following conditions are met:

- The action is a grave evil in itself.
- The person has a clear knowledge of the action, that is, one fully understands the evil he or she would be doing.
- The person gives it his or her full consent, that is, one makes a sufficiently deliberate personal choice to sin. [1854, 1856-61, 1874]

Venial sin is not serious enough to break our relationship with God, but it weakens that relationship because it is an action we know is wrong yet freely choose to do it. The continual committing of venial sin can lead us to commit mortal sin. A habit acquired by repeated sin engenders vices. [1854-55, 1862-63, 1875]

Capital sin is the name given to the seven basic tendencies which are part of our sinful nature and the chief sources of sin in our lives. [1865-66]

- *Pride* is a disordered action in which one is seeking praise and honor, and a denial of the real nature of our relationship as obedient children of a loving God. [2094, 2540]
- *Covetousness (Greed)* is a disordered desire for possessions and material things. [2514, 2536]
- *Lust* is a disordered desire for sexual pleasure. [2351, 2529]
- *Envy* is the resentment of another person's talents, personal success or good fortune. [2538-40, 2553-54]

- *Gluttony* is a disordered desire for food and drink. [2290]
- *Anger* is disordered rage which causes one to seek revenge or desire injury to another. [2259, 2262, 2302]
- *Sloth* is a disordered desire to avoid our duties and responsibilities toward God and others. [2094, 2733]

Sin not only jeopardizes our relationship with God, it also has an impact on the entire community. Failure to love lessens the bond of love among us all. [1440]

Sins of individuals can give rise to social situations and institutions opposed to God's goodness, such as slavery, child labor, prostitution, human trafficking, racism, ecological abuse, and the exploitation of third world countries for profit. Structures which perpetuate violence, injustice, and other disorders in society are called "social sin." Social sin is an outgrowth of personal sins, and leads its victims to do evil. [408, 1869]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Lead the young people in an examination of conscience based on the Stations of the Cross. After each question, allow time for silent reflection.

- *Jesus was accused unjustly.* Has this ever happened to you? How did you deal with it? Have you ever accused someone unjustly?
- *The cross that Jesus carried was very heavy.* Do you ever feel as if you carry a heavy burden which causes you to feel sad or upset? What do you do at a time like this? Have you ever caused someone to carry a heavy burden?
- *On the road to Calvary, Jesus fell three times.* Have you ever been made to feel like a failure, as if you had not done your part? How did it feel? Have you ever made others feel like failures, making fun of them, or abandoning them?
- *Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus to carry his cross.* Have you ever neglected to help someone when you could have done so?
- *As Jesus hung on the cross, he forgave those who put him to death.* Have you ever been unable or unwilling to forgive someone who hurt you?

Through all his suffering, Jesus trusted that his Father would deliver him. Let us trust that God is always loving, saving, and forgiving us. Conclude by praying the Jesus Prayer:

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the living God,
Be merciful to me, a sinner.*

IV. THE SUPPORTS FOR MORAL LIVING

All people are called to live a moral life. We support one another in living out this calling. [1949, 2030, 2045]

A. Personal Prayer and Openness to the Holy Spirit

The development of a life of prayer is one of the best supports for a moral life. God is with us and, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we discover within ourselves the ability to choose God's will regardless of the cost, even if it be the cost of our very life. [1811, 2544, 2745]

B. The Witness of the Community

All Catholic Christians belong to a community of faith. All the members of the community (our families, the people in our parish, our friends and teachers in our school or parish religious education program) are called to support us with the witness of their lives. Together we strive to be faithful to the love of God in Jesus Christ. [1253, 2030, 2044-46]

C. Sacraments as Nourishment and Strength

The sacraments of Penance and Eucharist are graced events which develop and nourish our moral life. [2031, 2040-41]

The sacrament of Penance gives us the opportunity to receive God's merciful forgiveness and be reconciled to God, the community, and ourselves. [1468-69]

In the sacrament of the Eucharist, we hear anew the call to love, we remember Jesus' willingness to embrace death to save us from our sins, and we receive the real presence of Jesus, his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity as strength for our journey. [1391-1395, 2031]

As we live out our baptismal calling day by day, we become for others a sign of Christ's presence in the world. The more we share the life of Christ and progress in his friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from him by mortal sin. [1253-54, 1395, 2073]

D. The Communion of Saints

We also have the support of the Communion of Saints, that is, the whole community of the disciples of Jesus: those on earth, those in heaven, and those who are being purified in purgatory before coming into glory, and living face-to-face with God. We can call on them to pray for us as we struggle to live the life Jesus calls us to live. At the Eucharist when we eat the Bread of Life we are called to pray for one another and for those who have died. [954-57, 1474-75]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

In consultation with your parish director or coordinator of religious education, school principal, and/or parish clergy, plan a celebration of the Sacrament of Penance using the Rite outlined below and involve the young people in the planning. Encourage them to go to confession during the celebration.

Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution:

- Introductory rites (hymn, greeting, opening prayer)
- Celebration of the Word of God
- Homily
- General confessions of sins (e.g. “I confess to almighty God ...,” followed by a litany and the Lord’s Prayer)
- Individual confession and absolution
- Proclamation of praise for God’s mercy
- Concluding prayer of thanksgiving
- Concluding rite (blessing and dismissal)

GRADE EIGHT

PRAYER



Prayer is an expression of our awareness of and response to God's presence, love, goodness, and saving power.

OBJECTIVES

- To assist the young adolescent to grow in a desire for and appreciation of prayer as essential to the Catholic Christian life.
- To help the young adolescent, through the presentation and experience of a variety of prayer forms, to develop the ability to pray.

I. RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

A. The Nature of Friendship

Friendship is a gift from God. It is one of the most beautiful and challenging ways of relating to another person. [733, 2010, 2347]

Friendship needs time and patience and requires communication which consists of listening, responding and sharing concerns. [1971, 1939, 2469]

Friends need to be “in touch” and to share the joys and sorrows of life. Friends are open to each other when they allow the other person to be himself or herself and desire the very best for the other. [1789, 1803, 1905]

Friends are loyal, faithful and forgiving. [1823, 1829]

B. Friendship with God

God wants to be our friend. In our relationship with God, we are invited not only to do what God asks of us, but also to experience God as the one who loves us beyond any human experience of love. God chooses to love each one at every moment. [277, 374, 396]

God wants our friendship in return. God is always faithful in friendship, and so the challenge is for us, in turn, to be faithful to God. As in all friendships, this relationship develops over a lifetime. It calls for patience and perseverance, and demands communication, which we call prayer. [2558, 2725, 2742]

All people are called to prayer. Deep within the human person is hidden a yearning to communicate with God. This yearning or desire is placed there by our Creator, who wants to be in communion with us. [2506, 2560, 2565]

Yet we are sometimes not aware of our own deep longing to encounter God. We must discover what we really want. We must discover the longing for God, which dwells within us and calls us to prayer. [2560, 2567-68]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Recount to the young people some of the ways in which Jesus was a friend to those around him. For example:

- He calmed the sea when his disciples were afraid; when we are afraid, we pray and ask for help (Matthew 8:23-26);
- He fed the hungry people (Matthew 14:13-21);
- He appeared to two discouraged disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32);
- He rejoiced at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:1-11);
- He wept when his friend Lazarus died; we, too, mourn when we suffer a loss (John 11:32-35);
- He shared a meal with his disciples (John 21:1-13).

Then read the following passage:

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13)

Invite the young people to write a prayer, thanking Jesus for being a friend in good times and in difficult times.

II. NATURE OF PRAYER

Prayer is a loving, honest conversation with God which is prompted and made possible by the Holy Spirit within us (cf. Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:26). We respond to the mystery of God’s love by praying often, not just when we have a special need. [683, 742, 2697]

There are many ways of praying to God. Our prayer can be personal, that is, an interior communication with God not shared with others, or it can be communal, that is, a communication with God experienced together with others. [2655, 2664]

At times of prayer, we open ourselves to God. We listen to God, and God listens to us. We deliberately choose to spend time in prayer so as to know God more intimately. This knowledge leads us to love, and love in turn leads us to service of God and others. [1695, 2745]

Sometimes prayer is spontaneous: we speak from the heart without planning or preparation. “Pray at every opportunity in the Spirit.” (Ephesians 6:18) [2659-60, 2697, 2742-43]

Just as we make time for our friends, we make time for God. In order to grow in our relationship with God, it is important to set aside time each day for prayer. [2697-98]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE – COMMUNAL PRAYER

Help the young people to enter into a prayerful atmosphere by listening to a recording of instrumental music, lighting a LED candle, or viewing a picture or image. Pray aloud that the Holy Spirit will guide each member of the group.

Read aloud one of the following passages of Scripture:

Isaiah 43:1

Isaiah 49:13-16

Matthew 6:9-13

Matthew 18:19-20

Luke 11:11-13

John 15:9-11

After a period of silence and time for reflection, encourage each young person, if he or she wishes, to share a personal thought or reflection they have on the passage with the group.

Conclude by reading Ephesians 3:20-21:

*Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine,
by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

III. BASIC ELEMENTS OF PRAYER

Prayer is a necessary means for growth in our intimate relationship with God. There are several basic elements of prayer, which are given various expressions in different places and times [2644]. These basic elements are listed below along with examples, most of which are from the mass prayers as found in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal:

- *Adoration*: an attitude of humility and awe before the wonder and greatness of God; [2626-28]
 - *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*
 - *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*
- *Thanksgiving*: an expression of gratitude for the generosity and graciousness of God; [2637-38]
 - Any one of the Eucharistic Prayers recited at Mass.
- *Contrition*: an expression of sorrow for the sinful, hurtful and selfish acts we have committed; [2631]
 - *Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.* [Matthew 8:8]
 - *I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault,*

through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

- *Petition: asking for the help and support of God, for myself; [2629-33]*
 - *Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.*
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.
 - *The Lord's Prayer (Our Father, who art in heaven...)*
- *Intercession: asking for God's help on behalf of another; [2634-36]*
 - *Prayer of the Faithful*
- *Praise: giving glory to God joyfully, just because of who God is. [2639-42]*
 - *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.*
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

IV. WAYS OF PRAYING

All prayer involves our heart, mind and soul. It is the whole person who prays. Scripture emphasizes that the source of prayer is the heart, because the heart is the center of the whole person. If prayer is not an expression of the heart, its words and gestures are meaningless. [2562-63]

Frequently, prayer involves our body as well, through posture, gesture and the use of our voice. In some kinds of prayer we pray aloud; in others, we pray silently. [2590, 2702-03, 2717]

The *Liturgy* is the official prayer of the People of God, the Church, publicly worshiping God in the celebration of:

- The Sacraments
- The Eucharistic Liturgy (the Mass)
- The Liturgy of the Hours

In the Liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal. [1073, 1113, 1174, 2698]

The Eucharistic liturgy is the central act of worship and prayer of our faith. To be a faithful Catholic obliges one to participate at Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation.

Devotional prayer helps us to personalize the mysteries of faith. [1178, 1674-75, 2678]

Some examples of devotional prayer are:

- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- The Stations of the Cross
- The Rosary
- Novenas
- Pilgrimages
- Veneration of Relics

Prayer Groups are intentional gatherings for shared prayer, which may include hymns, readings from Sacred Scripture and other Christian sources, personal reflections, and silence. [2689]

Hymns are religious songs or scriptural verses set to music. [1156-58]

All Christian prayer, which is always personal, includes one or more of the following: [2699]

- *Vocal prayer* puts into words, whether silently or aloud, the prayer of our heart. [2700-04]
- *Meditation* is a prayerful reflection on a passage of Sacred Scripture, another inspirational text, an event, or the wonders of creation. God speaks to us through whatever we are meditating on, and we listen. [2705-08]
- *Contemplation* is the silent awareness of the presence of Jesus, our loving friend. It is the simplest expression of the mystery of prayer. [2709-19]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE – MEDITATIVE PRAYER

To assist the young people in developing a better appreciation of the practice of regular prayer, review the simple steps for personal prayer:

- Select a passage from Sacred Scripture (some examples are Deuteronomy 7:9; John 15:9-17; Ephesians 2:4-5)
- Create a calm environment and situate oneself in a quiet place
- Reflect on the presence of God with us
- Read the selected Scripture passage
- Meditate on the passage, asking oneself, “What is the Lord saying to me?”
- Express thanksgiving to Jesus and conclude with the Lord’s Prayer

After explaining the above steps, lead the youth through the prayer experience.

V. QUALITIES OF PRAYER

Prayer, in any form, is relational. As a good relationship between trusting friends has particular qualities, so does genuine prayer. [2560, 2565]

Genuine prayer is characterized by the following qualities:

- *Attention*: concentration on the presence of God and attentive listening to God speaking to us. [2612]
- *Confidence*: turning to God with an abiding trust that God loves us, listens to us and will give us what is best for us. [2606-10]
- *Perseverance*: faithfulness to prayer even when we do not feel like praying, when we feel we are too busy or when it is difficult to pray. [2742]
- *Devotion*: a deliberate choice to spend time with God in prayer because God is our Creator and Redeemer and we are God's people, who need God at every moment. [2650]

Prayer affects our relationships with others as well as our relationship with God. True prayer arises from and leads to a life of justice, mercy and love. [2745, 2764, 2818, 1831]

PRAYER EXPERIENCE – JESUS SPEAKS TO US THROUGH SACRED SCRIPTURE

Create a calm environment and ask the young people to think about God's presence within each one of them. Choose one or more of the following Scripture passages to proclaim to the group:

- Luke 11:5-10 (Further teachings on prayer)
- John 14:12-13 (Last Supper Discourses)
- John 15:5-7 (The Vine and the Branches)

As they listen to Scripture, ask them to think about Jesus speaking these words to them in their lives. After proclaiming the Scripture, invite anyone who wishes to do so to share what God might be saying to him or her. Conclude by giving thanks to Jesus and praying the Lord's Prayer as a group.

VI. DISTRACTIONS IN PRAYER

We are often distracted in prayer, even when we are in a prayerful atmosphere and have the best intentions. Distractions are thoughts or feelings that draw our attention away from God. [2729-30]

Sometimes our distractions have a message for us, reminding us of some need or desire of our heart that we can place before God in humility. At other times, distractions call for self-discipline, asking God to help us refocus on our prayer. By making an effort to set aside the distraction, we recommit ourselves to concentrating on God. [2729, 2732]

VII. PEOPLE WHO SHOW US HOW TO PRAY

Many people of the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Moses, Miriam, David, Esther, Elijah, Hannah and the writers of the psalms, show us how to pray. The psalms are prayers of the community of faith. [2570-89]

Jesus offers us the perfect model of how to relate to God, our loving Father. Sacred Scripture reveals what Jesus said about prayer and shows us the way he prayed. Jesus was always aware of the presence of God, his Father. He prayed in times of joy, sorrow, pain, and fear. He asked for strength, gave thanks and rejoiced in the love of his Father. [2599-2605, 2620, 2765]

Jesus teaches his followers to pray with:

- Faith: Matthew 21:22
- Persistence: Luke 11:5-8
- Simplicity: Luke 11:11-13
- Directness: Matthew 6:7-8
- Forgiveness: Mark: 11:25 [2607-15]

Jesus teaches us the fundamental prayer of the Church, the “Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4), which is a summary of the whole Gospel. [2759, 2761, 2764, 2766]

Jesus teaches us to pray with others as well as alone:

“If two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”
(Matthew 18:19-20). [1373, 2623]

The Church teaches us there is no other way of Christian prayer than Christ. Regardless of the type of prayer (communal or personal, vocal or interior) it has access to the Father only if we pray in Jesus’ name. The sacred humanity of Jesus is the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father. [2664]

We can invoke God as “Father” because he is revealed to us by his Son become man and because his Spirit makes him known to us. [2780]

Mary offers an outstanding example of how to pray. In the face of many challenges, she offered her whole self to God in faith (see Luke 1:46-55). [2617-19, 2673-74, 26790] We are encouraged to pray in communion with Mary, entrusting to her our needs and the needs of others to her intercession.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was given the great privilege of being the mother of God. Over the centuries she has been given various titles to honor her and throughout the world many cultures recognize the help Mary offers to them. Some of the titles that we may use when speaking of or praying to the Blessed Mother are:

Our Lady of Good Counsel
Our Lady of Good Help
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Our Lady of Lourdes

Our Lady of Fatima
The Immaculate Conception

[Note to the Catechist/Teacher: A project to consider would be to research some of the many titles of the Blessed Mother, particularly those that have a cultural relevance for the young people in your group.]

Today, in our own parishes, neighborhoods and families, there are many people of prayer who can be models for us. They might also be sources of help and support to us as we grow in our life of prayer. [2685-90]

Our Catholic tradition provides us with some significant witnesses who point the way to prayer [2683-84]; the saints presented below are examples of young people for whom prayer was very important:

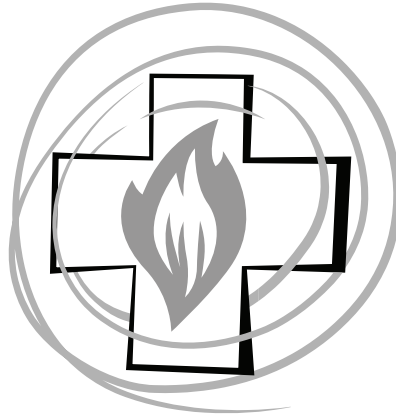
- **St. Francis Xavier (16th century):** The great courage and zeal that Francis Xavier brought to his work as a Jesuit missionary priest came from a life of prayer. Born in Spain, he preached in India, Malaya, the Moluccas, and was the first missionary to enter Japan. He died while seeking admittance to China to spread the Gospel there. [428-29, 852, 2611]
- **St. Martin Deporres (17th century):** A Peruvian lay brother of the Dominican order, Martin spent many hours in meditation after a long day of caring for the sick and the poor. His prayer strengthened him as he reached out to those in need. [2447-49, 2705-08, 2745]
- **St. Maria Goretti (20th century):** As a young teenager, Maria was busy taking care of her brothers and sisters, because her mother had to work. Even so, she prayed often and taught her brothers and sisters to pray. [2204-05, 2685, 2745]
- **Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, TOSD (20th century):** Pier Giorgio was born into a prominent family in Turin, Italy. His life was cut short by polio when he was only 24, but his deep love for the Lord, developed through prayer and the reception of Christ in the Eucharist, brought him to great holiness in a short time. As a student, he was active in Catholic youth groups working for charitable causes and social reform. He was a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic and of the Apostleship of Prayer, which helped him to grow in his life of prayer and discipleship to Jesus. His athletic prowess, especially as a hiker and mountain climber, were greatly admired but when polio caused the loss of these activities which he so enjoyed, his faith-filled acceptance of this suffering brought even greater admiration. Pier Giorgio was outstanding in his love for the poor and from his childhood he never ceased helping them. In fact, after his death it was the poor of the city who petitioned the Archbishop of Turin to begin the cause for his canonization.

PRAYER EXPERIENCE – IMAGINATIVE

- Create a prayerful setting and atmosphere.
- Pray aloud to the Holy Spirit asking for guidance that each young person may hear the Lord speaking to them.
- Read one of the following scripture narratives:
 - Emmaus event: Luke 24:13-35
 - Jesus and Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10
 - Call of the first disciples: Luke 5:1-11
 - Recognizing Jesus: Matthew 16:13-17

Then ask the young people to imagine themselves in the story and reflect on:

- The setting, the people, the conversation, and the details of the story
- Its meaning and how it touches their lives today
- Have the young people thank Jesus for these insights and the experience of his presence during prayer
- Conclude with the Lord's Prayer



SELECTED GLOSSARY



7TH AND 8TH GRADE GUIDELINES

AD / BC

From the Latin, *Anno Domini* or Year of the Lord, “AD” refers to years that come after the birth of Jesus Christ. The abbreviation of Before Christ, “BC,” refers to the time in history before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Agnostic

The view that the existence of God, the divine, or the supernatural, is unknown or unknowable.

Atheism

The denial in theory and/or practice that God exists; atheism is a sin against the virtue of religion required by the first of the ten commandments of the law (2124-5).

Baptism (of Water)

The first of the seven sacraments, and the “door” which gives access to the other sacraments. Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ, who died for our sins and rose from the dead. Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on the head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (977, 1213 ff.; 1275, 1278)

Baptism of Blood

The obtaining of the grace of salvation by suffering martyrdom for the faith of Christ.

Baptism of Desire

The perfect contrition of heart, and every act of perfect charity or pure love of God which contains, at least implicitly, a desire of baptism. It may also be described as a full and deep desire to belong to God and be with God.

Baptism (Emergency)

Administered to a person in danger of death; can be performed by one who is not the ordinary minister of the sacrament (bishop, priest, or deacon). In a case of necessity, any person, even a non-Catholic or non-Christian, who has the necessary intention (“to do what the Church does” through the rite of baptism) may baptize.

Bishop

One who has received the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which unites and incorporates him into the community of all bishops throughout the world, and a successor of the Apostles. (1557; cf. 861, 886).

Cardinal

A high ranking bishop who ranks next below the pope and is appointed by him to assist him as a member of the College of Cardinals; his duties include participating in Papal consistories and Papal conclaves.

Character (Sacramental; Permanent)

An indelible spiritual mark on a person’s soul which is the permanent effect of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, by which a person is given a new permanent configuration to Christ and a specific standing in the Church; these sacraments may only be received once (1272, 1304, 1582).

Chrism (Sacred)

It is the fragrant oil, consecrated by the bishop, which signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit. Chrism is used for consecration in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders (1241, 1289, 1291, 1294).

Consubstantial

From the Nicene Creed, we pray Jesus is “begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.” This means the Son and the Father are of the same substance, nature, or essence.

Contemplation

A form of wordless prayer in which mind and heart focus on God’s greatness and goodness in affective, loving

adoration; to look on Jesus and the mysteries of his life with faith and love (2628, 2715).

Covenant

A solemn agreement between human beings or between God and a human being involving mutual commitments or guarantees. The Bible refers to God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses as leader of the chosen people, Israel. In the Old Testament or Covenant, God revealed his law through Moses and prepared his people for salvation through the prophets. In the New Testament or Covenant, Christ established a new and eternal covenant through his own sacrificial death and Resurrection. Christianity is the new and definitive Covenant which will never pass away (56, 62, 66).

Deacon; Diaconate (Permanent)

Holy Orders include the bishops (episcopate), priests (presbyterate), and deacons (diaconate). The deacon is ordained not to priesthood but for ministry and service. Deacons are ordained to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity. In the Roman Catholic Church, the permanent diaconate was reestablished by the Second Vatican Council (1569, 1571).

Disciple

Those who accept Jesus' message to follow him and his teachings are called his disciples. Jesus revealed to his disciples the mystery of the Kingdom and gave them a share in his mission, his joy, and his sufferings.

Doctor of the Church

A title given by the Catholic Church to saints whom they recognize as having been of particular importance, especially regarding their contribution to theology or doctrine.

Ecumenism

Promotion of the restoration of unity among all Christians, the unity which is a gift of Christ and to which the Church is called by the Holy Spirit. For the Catholic Church, the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council provides a charter for ecumenical efforts (816, 820-22).

Episcopate

Pertaining to the office of the bishop (Greek: episkopos), hence Episcopal consecration, the Episcopal college, Episcopal conferences (883, 887, 1557). "Episcopate" is a collective noun referring to all those who have received sacramental ordination as bishops.

Exorcism

The public and authoritative act of the Church to protect or liberate a person or object from the power of the devil (e.g., demonic possession) in the name of Christ (1673). A simple exorcism prayer in preparation for Baptism invokes God's help in overcoming the power of Satan and the spirit of evil (1237).

Fundamentalist (Approach to Scripture)

Fundamentalist interpretation starts from the principle that the Bible, being the word of God, inspired and free from error, should be read and interpreted literally in all its details. But by "literal interpretation" it understands a naively literalist interpretation, one which does not take into account the Bible's historical origins and development, or the use of any other scientific method for the interpretation of Scripture. It is not an approach that is supported by the Catholic Church (from "Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1994).

Gentiles

The term that commonly means non-Jew. Other groups that claim Israelite heritage sometimes use the term to describe outsiders.

Grace

The free and undeserved gift that God gives us to respond to our vocation to become his adopted children. As sanctifying grace (grace received from the sacraments), God shares his divine life and friendship with us in a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that enables the soul to live with God, to act by his love. As actual grace, God gives us the help to conform our lives to his will. Sacramental grace and special graces (charisms, the grace of one's state of life) are gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation (1996, 2000; cf. 654).

Heresy

The belief or opinion contrary to Catholic doctrine. (2089; cf. 465)

Laity

It is the body of the baptized faithful, as distinct from the clergy.

Litany

A liturgical prayer consisting of a series of petitions recited by a leader alternating with fixed responses by the congregation. A solemn prayer of supplication; a public or general supplication to God, especially in processions.

Magisterium

The living, teaching office of the Church, as promulgated by the pope and bishops, whose task it is to give an authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether in its written form (Sacred Scripture) or in the form of Tradition. This body of knowledge, the Magisterium, ensures the Church's fidelity to the teaching of the Apostles and their successors in matters of faith and morals (85, 890, 2033).

Martyr

One who is a witness to the truth of the faith, in which the martyr endures death to be faithful to Christ. Those who die for the faith before having received Baptism are said to have received a "baptism of blood," by which their sins are forgiven and they share in the death and resurrection of Christ (1258, 2473).

Materialism

A belief system that maintains the only or the highest values or objectives lie in material well-being and in the furtherance of material progress.

Monastic Life (Monasticism)

A religious way of life where one lives in a monastery and devotes oneself fully to God through prayer and spiritual works.

Pagan

A term first used by early Christians for populations of the Roman Empire who practiced polytheism (belief in many Gods) and who did not believe in the God of the Bible.

Presbyter (Priest); Presbyterate

Presbyters or priests are co-workers with their bishops and are dedicated to assist their bishops in priestly service to the People of God (1567). Through the ministry of priests, the unique sacrifice of Christ on the cross is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church (1554, 1562).

Relativism

A belief system that maintains there is no universal or objective truth. Each point of view has its own truth and denies the existence of absolute values.

Schism

The public refusal of submission to the Pope by a strongly opposed faction of the Church (2089). The formal division within the Church over some doctrinal difference and refusal of submission to the Pope.

Secularism

The view that religious considerations should be excluded from civil affairs or public education.

Temptation

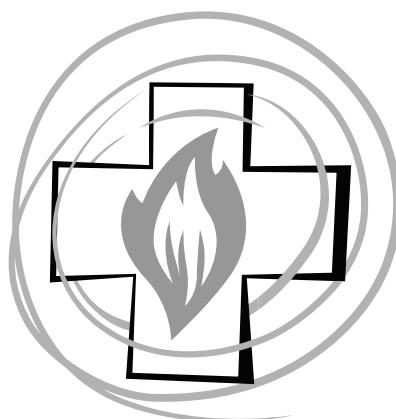
An attraction, from outside oneself or from within, to act contrary to right reason and the commandments of God. Jesus himself during his life on earth was tempted, put to the test, to manifest both the opposition between himself and the devil and the triumph of his saving work over Satan (538).

Tradition

The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church. The oral preaching of the Apostles, and the written message of salvation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Bible), are conserved and handed on as the deposit of faith through the apostolic succession in the Church. Both the living Tradition and the written Scriptures have their common source in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ (75-82, CCC).

Triune; Trinity

The mystery of one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The truth of the Holy Trinity was revealed to us by Jesus. The mystery of the Trinity could not be known without divine revelation. It is at the very root of the Church's living faith as expressed in the Creed. One cannot with one's own mind understand the mystery of the Trinity. (232, 237, 249, 253-6).



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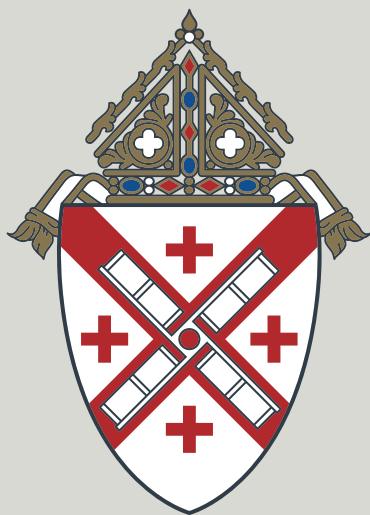
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