

The Faith That Marks God's People

Guidelines for Catechesis

Grade Seven and Grade Eight

Archdiocese of New York

Revised 1998

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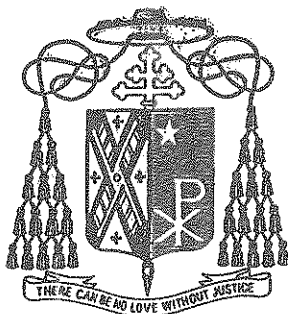
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January 6, 1999

Dear Friends in Christ,

On the occasion of the feast of the Epiphany, it seems most appropriate to publish the revised *Guidelines for Catechesis: Grade Seven and Grade Eight* correlated with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I know these *Guidelines for Catechesis* will be a great asset to you as you strive to hand on the faith with excellence to the young people of the Archdiocese. Only through Christ can we who are so culturally diverse journey together in faith in the new millennium.

You have a vital role in forming the youth who are the future of the Church. I am well aware that you make every effort to live the faith, to be well educated in the faith and to be well prepared to teach the faith. This is an enormous consolation to me as I try to fulfill my responsibility as the principal catechist of the Archdiocese.

I am deeply grateful to those members of the Archdiocesan Department of Education who have spent countless hours over several years revising these *Guidelines for Catechesis*. I am confident that these *Guidelines* will be enthusiastically implemented throughout the Archdiocese of New York.

May all of us called to the great work of handing on the faith be renewed in our commitment to share the Word of God with courage, fidelity and joy.

Faithfully in Christ,

Archbishop of New York

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Bibliography

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THE FAITH THAT MARKS GOD'S PEOPLE

Introduction

The revised *Guidelines for Catechesis, Grade Seven and Grade Eight* correlated with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, were developed to assist young adolescents in their lifelong journey toward Christian maturity, the journey of coming to understand and live more deeply the Catholic Faith. These revised *Guidelines for Catechesis* are a response to the concern of our bishops, pastors, parents, and those in the Catechetical ministry, that young people be given an authentic, clear, and relevant presentation of the Faith which would challenge them to grow as persons and believers in the twenty-first century.

These *Guidelines for Catechesis* are organized in units according to faith themes. Each of the units is developed according to the following format:

*The **Basic Teachings** section presents the faith concepts and explains how these concepts are to be lived by Catholics.

*The **Prayer Experience** section gives the students the opportunity to spend time with God in order to integrate the truths of the faith into their everyday lives.

Each grade has an introductory unit designed to root catechesis in the life experience of the student. 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 students to explore the themes of "Jesus and the Gospel Message," "Sacraments," and "Human Sexuality." In Grade Eight, the introductory unit, "Personal Growth 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".

Within each unit the extensive Sacred Scripture references pertain to passages where the Basic Teachings are imaged or taught.

These *Guidelines for Catechesis* are not intended for use as a textbook; rather, they are the basic curriculum to be taught. Implementing the sound pedagogical methods found in the textbooks and using multidimensional teaching techniques will facilitate the students assimilation of the content. A spiral curriculum is used throughout the *Guidelines for Catechesis* in order to build upon the foundation laid in the revised *Guidelines for Catechesis*, Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Six. 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 six grades.

These revised *Guidelines for Catechesis*, Grade Seven and Grade Eight draw their inspiration from the original *Guidelines for Catechesis* published by the Archdiocese of New York in 1989, from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* published in 1994, and from the 1986 document, *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis*.

It is our hope that the following revised *Guidelines for Catechesis* will contribute to the ongoing effort across the nation to respond to the urgent need for adolescent catechesis as we begin the third millennium of following the call of Jesus to "Go, make disciples..." Mark 28:19.

Monsignor Thomas Bergin
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**Suggested Division of the Year's
Session Time for Each Unit**

Grade Seven

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Portion of the Year's Class Time</u>
Personal Growth, Part I	one-sixth
Jesus and the Gospel Message	one-third
Sacraments	one-third
Human Sexuality	one-sixth

Grade Eight

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



Theme:

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

OBJECTIVES:

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

Basic Teachings

Notes

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 too are developing. It is a time of broadening the scope of our learning. We face different and more complex challenges in our thinking. 158-59
- 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

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-4.

Invite the students 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.

Basic Teachings

Notes

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 relate 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. The *fruits* of the Holy Spirit show forth God's work in us. 1830-32, 736

Basic Teachings

Notes

Prayer Experience

Read Luke 2:41-52. After the students have listened to the passage, invite them to reflect silently on the following question:

How have you grown in wisdom and come closer to God?

Invite the students 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.

III. Challenges to Growth During Adolescence

A. Accepting Ourselves

It is a challenge to accept ourselves when we are in a process of growth. Yet we are made in God's image and likeness, and God loves us as we are. By accepting ourselves in the present helps us to grow into the people God calls us to be.

604, 2167, 2012, 1710

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 and exercising regularly, and by refusing to smoke or to abuse alcohol and drugs.
2290-91, 2289, 1809
- Our spiritual and personal well-being is fostered by prayer and by using our time to develop our talents and share them with others. Avoiding excessive use of television and other entertainments frees us for more creative activities and forms of service.
294, 2725, 1879, 1838

C. Responsibility

Our decisions have consequences not only for ourselves, but for others, especially our family and friends.

1905, 1913-14

Basic Teachings

Notes

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. 2410, 1836

D. Our Need for Others

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

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

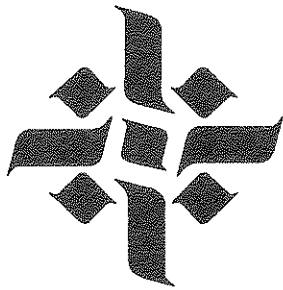
Prayer Experience

Read Ephesians 3:17-21.

Ask the students to spend some quiet time reflecting on how God loves each one of us, and desires us to grow in our awareness of this love.

Conclude the silent reflection with this prayer:

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



Theme:

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; and Jesus is the fulness 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. The history of the Hebrew people reveals God in a privileged way. 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 fulness 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 so change our lives. 131-33, 141, 104

B. Inspiration and Authorship

Both God and human writers are truly the authors of Sacred Scripture. 105-06, 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. 107-08, 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, 81-83, 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 in 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 understanding is enriched by scripture scholars who have worked to discover how the apostolic preaching was shaped into the gospels. 119

D. The 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 author. 110
- The 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, gospel authors used various literary forms, for example:

- *Narratives*, such as Luke 19:1-10, and Mark 6:53-56
- *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 students to do the following:

Select the passage that you remember best from the gospel and write it in your own words. Write what message it has for you. How does this message make you feel: e.g. challenged, supported, encouraged, criticized?

Read to the students John 20:30-31.

Give the students an opportunity to speak to God in their own words.

Encourage them to thank God for giving all people Sacred Scripture as a true guide for life.

Have the students 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, 515, 480-83

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.

- He 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, he 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, 518, 531, 514
- Jesus experienced the joys of life. He also experienced real suffering, misunderstanding and rejection (Mark 6:1-6).
461, 520, 478

B. Jesus, Son of God

Jesus is fully divine.

- 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 he revealed God the Father and the love God has for us (John 14:8-10). 516, 458-59
- Jesus is God present in our midst (Matthew 1:23, 28:20; John 20:24-31). 444-45

Prayer Experience

Read aloud slowly Matthew 16:13-15.

Give the students time to consider silently how they would answer Jesus' question.

Invite the students to listen prayerfully as Jesus tells them who he is: John 6:35, 8:12, 10:14-15, 11:25.

Have the students conclude by speaking to Jesus about who he is in their own lives.

III. Introduction to Each of the Gospels

Each of the 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

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). 522, 122, 422, 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, 1967-68

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). 763-64, 541, 546

Basic Teachings

Notes

Prayer Experience

Invite the students 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 with one another.

Invite them to reflect prayerfully about themselves as yeast in the world and to consider how God is at work building his kingdom in the world through them.

The Gospel of Mark

Mark's gospel is full of *action*. He emphasizes the many miracles of Jesus. Jesus in Mark's gospel is full of power to heal and to cast out demons (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 blind man, in which Jesus confronts the evil of human suffering and defeats it.

Give the students 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 students that physical healing is only one of the ways in which Jesus can heal us. Then ask them how they would answer Jesus' question: "What do you want me to do for you?"

Invite the students to share with the class any of their reflections on the above. Conclude with the following prayer:

God, our Father, we are grateful for the love and power of your Son Jesus at work in our own lives. We have seen how he desires to respond to our needs and to help us overcome the evils we face. Help us to put our faith and hope in him and allow him to be "Good News" for us. Amen.

The Gospel of Luke

In Luke's gospel Jesus is portrayed as our Savior (Luke 2:11). 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. 588-89, 545

It is also called the "*gospel of the poor*," because in it Jesus' love for the poor and outcasts is often expressed. Luke's account of the birth of Jesus shows that the poor are given the greatest privileges (Luke 2:8-14), and his account of the beatitudes proclaims "Blessed are you poor..." (Luke 6:20). The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is found in Luke (Luke 16:19-31). 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). 2640, 2619, 722

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). 2600, 728, 2759

Prayer Experience

Ask the students to think about some people in their lives who have hurt them and whom they might, therefore, call "enemies."

Read Luke 6:27-37 to the students.

Give them time to reflect on the scripture passage, especially with regard to the people they have identified as those who have hurt them.

Encourage the students to pray for the grace of being able to forgive someone who has hurt them.

The Gospel of John

John's gospel is the most highly *symbolic* of all the gospels. Rather than expressing Jesus' teachings in parables or simple moral instruction, John offers longer passages that use involved symbolism. Often in John's gospel 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

Many of the "signs" found in John's gospel 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, 1613, 2560-61, 1406

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

In 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). 461, 458, 241, 257

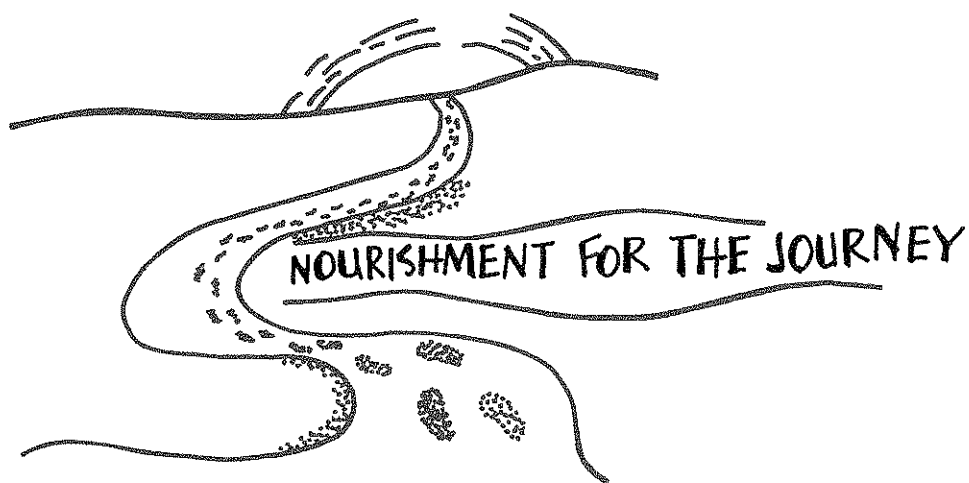
Prayer Experience

Have the students close their eyes, relax, and become aware of the stillness in the room. Ask them to think about the truth that God dwells within each of us; have them imagine God within them. (*Pause*)

Give the students time to envision the rest of their day and to consider how it could be different if they remembered that God is within them, always loving them.

Read John 15:9 to them slowly and prayerfully.

Grade Seven Sacraments



Theme:

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. 774, 516, 515

The Church continues the mission of Jesus, 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, continues to manifest God's love. Each sacrament gives us grace. 1111, 1084, 1086, 1091, 1131

The Sacraments of Christian Initiation are:

- Baptism,
- Confirmation, and
- the Eucharist. 1212

The Sacraments of Healing are:

- Penance, and
- Anointing of the Sick. 1421

The Sacraments at the Service of Communion are:

- Matrimony, and
- Holy Orders. 1534-35

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). 1257-61, 1277, 847-48, 2506

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

Basic Teachings**Notes****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 was the Easter Vigil, when the catechumens received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

1230

The growing practice of infant Baptism led to a change in the process of initiation into the Christian life. After infants were baptized, the bishop would confirm them 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.

1290-92, 1231, 1252

C. Baptism Today

Adults and older children 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:

<u>Period:</u>	<u>The Person is Called:</u>
Evangelization	Inquirer
Catechumenate	Catechumen
Purification and Enlightenment	Elect
Mystagogy	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 second period, 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 simple 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
- Infant Baptism condenses into one celebration many of the rites that are celebrated fully and over a long period of time when the candidate for Baptism is an adult or older child. 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 may 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

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.
1236-37, 232

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."
1239-40, 232-33, 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 [*N.B. Eastern rite Catholics, following ancient tradition, do receive all three Sacraments of Initiation at the same time: cf 1203-06, 1290-92.*]; these sacraments are delayed until the child has reached the age of reason. 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 for the praying of the Lord's Prayer, in order to show the connection between Baptism and Eucharist.
1244

Two "explanatory rites" follow the baptismal washing:

- Being clothed in a white garment, which symbolizes having "put on Christ" and entered, therefore, 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 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

Basic Teachings

Notes

Purification from sin:

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

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
- 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, because it changes our soul permanently, identifying us as 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. Our life choices are also rooted in Baptism. The shape and direction that our life takes — whether in the single life, the married life, the vowed religious life, or the ordained ministry — flows out of our Baptism. 1268, 1547, 1269-70

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

Lead the students 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.

- Ask the students to pray for those who are preparing to be baptized.
- Encourage the students to attend a celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism in their parish.
- Encourage the students to attend an Easter Vigil at which baptism will be celebrated.
- Encourage the students to pray in thanksgiving for those who have brought them to faith and Baptism.

III. Confirmation**A. Introduction**

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Along with Baptism and Eucharist, it is necessary for initiation. 1285, 1321, 1306

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 1288, 1302

In the early Church, the apostles laid hands on those who were baptized, and they received the Holy Spirit. This is the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation. 1315, 1288, 1299

Basic Teachings

Notes

From a very early time, anointing with sacred chrism (consecrated perfumed oil) 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

Even in those cases when a priest confirms, the connection with the bishop is maintained, because the oil used in the sacrament has been consecrated by the bishop.
1297, 1290

A priest may confirm:

- when adults and older children are baptized or received into the Church,
- when special permission is given,
- in the Eastern Catholic Churches, and
- when a Christian is in danger of death.
1312-14, 1290

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

Basic Teachings**Notes**

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, it takes 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 full outpouring of the Holy Spirit. 1302, 1315

It increases and deepens baptismal grace. 1303, 1316

Like Baptism, it imprints on the soul a permanent character or sign. 1304, 1317

It imparts a power to profess faith in Christ publicly. 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 evil social structures and ensure that they are replaced by structures which respect the dignity of each person. 541, 1879, 2420, 1869

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.* 1303, 1266, 1830, 1845, 768

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). 1832, 736

Prayer Experiences

Encourage the students to be present the next time Confirmation is celebrated in their parish.

Pray with the students the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of that same Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in his consolation, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pray with the students for an increase of the gifts and fruits of the Spirit in their lives.

IV. Eucharist

A. Introduction

The Eucharist completes Christian initiation. 1322, 1212

The Eucharist is the sacrament in which the Lord Jesus himself is present under the appearances of bread and wine. To receive 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. 1323, 1362, 1364-68, 1085

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. 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. 1380, 1378

B. History

The origins of our Eucharistic prayer may be found in the table prayers which were required at every Jewish meal. The father of the family or the presiding member of the community prayed blessings over bread and wine which were then shared among those present. 1096, 1334

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 of these are Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the Corpus Christi procession. 1378-80

C. Celebration of the Eucharist

The bishop or priest is the presider at the Eucharist. 1411, 1552, 1142

The Eucharist 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 a living word. The Liturgy of the Word concludes with prayers of intercession for all people. 79, 1348-49, 1154-55, 1103, 1190
- In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, bread and wine are presented, a prayer of thanksgiving and consecration is prayed, and communion is shared. 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

Basic Teachings

Notes

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; 1353, 1104-07
- remembers Jesus' Last Supper (the priest speaks Jesus' own words over the bread and wine, and they become the Body and Blood of Christ); 1353
- recalls the passion, resurrection and future glorious return of Christ; 1354, 1362-64, 1103
- and 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" and the pouring of the "cup of salvation." In communion, the faithful receive the Body and Blood of Christ who gave himself "for the life of the world" (John 6:51). 2770, 1355

D. Celebrating the Eucharist Throughout the Liturgical Year

Sunday is the principal day on which the faithful gather to celebrate the Eucharist. Every Sunday the Church celebrates the paschal mystery, that is, the death and resurrection of Jesus. On Saturday evening we begin the vigil for Sunday. 1166-67, 1067-68, 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 shepherds and the magi. 524, 1171, 1095
- During Lent we prepare by prayer and penance to celebrate the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, and to renew our Baptism 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

Basic Teachings

Notes

- 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 Eucharistic Communion

Eucharistic communion unites the Church as one with Christ and one another.

1391, 1396, 1398, 1416, 1108

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. According to Church law, Catholics are to receive the Eucharist at least once a year during Easter time. Since in order to receive communion we have to be in a state of grace, we must receive the Sacrament of Penance if necessary.

2180-83, 1388, 1384, 1389, 1385

The Eucharistic Liturgy reminds us that we are united with God and with one another because of the cross and resurrection of Christ. Nourished by the Eucharist, we work to live justly and at peace with one another, and to witness to the abiding love of Christ for us and for the world.

1396, 1398, 1344, 1068, 1109

Prayer Experiences

Prepare a Eucharistic celebration with the class. Involve the students in the planning, and encourage them to participate as fully as possible in the celebration.

Encourage the students to be present at 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. 1420-21, 1446

The forgiveness of sins was an integral part of Jesus' ministry (Luke 5:24-25). 545, 1441, 1443

Jesus gave to the apostles the power to forgive sins (Matthew 16:19, John 20:22-23). 1442, 1444, 981, 983

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 live more faithfully 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. 1848, 1442

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. 977-80

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 offered seldom. 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. 1461-62, 1465-66

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

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

He says 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. The most frequently used are the *Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents*, and the *Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*. [See the outlines provided at the end of this section.]

Basic Teachings**Notes**

There is a third form which is rarely used, and then only when the diocesan bishop judges that the necessary conditions are present (that is, 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

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; and
- 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 confession 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 Experiences

Pray the Act of Contrition with the students.

*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.*

Encourage the students to reflect prayerfully each day on how they have lived or failed to live as Christians that very day.

If possible, plan a celebration of the sacrament of Penance using the *Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*. Involve the students in the planning, and encourage them to go to confession during the celebration.

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, 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. 1526, 1520

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). 1503, 1506

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 century, tells of the bishop consecrating the oil "that it may give . . . health to those who use it."

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 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 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 oil 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 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). 1521-22, 1508

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. 1509, 1503, 1516

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

Prayer Experiences

Encourage students to participate with the sick at the next communal celebration of the Anointing of the Sick at their parish.

Join in spirit with the children at the local hospital and pray for them.

Point out that we pray for the sick in the General Intercessions at Mass, and have the students remember at that time someone they know who is suffering from illness.

Have the students compose a litany of prayer for sick people they know, and pray the litany together.

VII. Matrimony

A. Introduction

Matrimony is the sacrament by which a baptized man and a baptized

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woman freely enter into a permanent, loving, and life-giving covenant of fidelity with each other. Thus they are united as husband and wife.

1601, 1646

The mutual love of man and woman, rooted in creation, is good, very good, in the Creator's eyes (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.

1660, 1601

B. History

Jesus taught that the bond of Marriage is unbreakable (Matthew 19:5-6). This "unbreakableness" is called *indissolubility*. It means that the Marriage bond lasts until the death of either the husband or the wife. It is not an arrangement "until further notice."

1644, 1639-40, 1646

Saint 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 a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church. . . . [The husband] should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband" (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.

1612, 1601

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

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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

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, 1640, 1647, 1617

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, and
- to the community.

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

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 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 Experiences

Have the students reflect on the Rite of Matrimony by reading to them the marriage vows. Give them time to consider how these vows should be lived out by the Catholic Christian couple.

Read Saint Paul's exhortation on love found in 1 Corinthians 13.

Encourage the students to attend a celebration of the sacrament of Matrimony.

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.
1536, 874-79, 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 constitutes the following: the episcopate (bishops), the presbyterate (priests), and the diaconate (deacons). 1536, 1593

There is one priesthood of Christ. 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 fulness of Holy Orders. 1557, 1594

- Theirs is the chief office in the Church, because they are the direct

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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 whole Church gathered around him, is an especially 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 assist the bishop and priests in the liturgy, in ministries of the Word, in pastoral governance, and in various ministries of charity. 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. 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, the roles of bishop, priest and deacon became clearer. 861-62

Saint 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 Saint 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 on a Sunday, in the Cathedral, in the context 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, and
- the prayer of consecration. 1573, 1574

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

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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

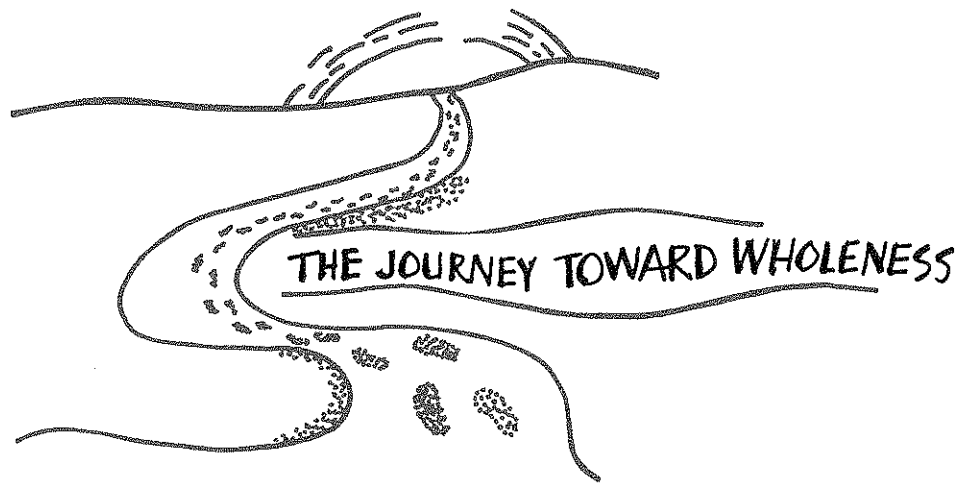
Prayer Experiences

With the students, prepare and participate in a prayer service for vocations to the diaconate and priesthood.

Encourage the students to attend an ordination in the diocese.

Encourage the students to pray by name for the bishops, priests and deacons serving in their parish.

Grade Seven Human Sexuality



Theme:

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. "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. 369-70, 2331, 2334, 2393

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, and
- the ability to participate in procreation.

All of these things shape who we are in our relationship 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. 2393, 362-66

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

Prayer Experience

Read Genesis 1:26-28

- Have the students reflect on what it means to be made in God's image and likeness.
- Have them pray silently, thanking God for their being made male or female.

Conclude with the doxology: "Glory to the Father..."

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. 2331, 386

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 begins with a positive attitude toward ourselves and others. Respect for ourselves and others includes:

- 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
- a 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; and 1789
- the conviction that no one has the right to use or abuse me or use or abuse another. 377

N.B. Sexual abuse is a grave moral evil. The students should know that they have the right to resist and refuse sexual advances from any source whatsoever. Any catechist who becomes aware that a student is the subject of sexual abuse should notify the proper authorities.

Prayer Experience

If possible, show a video of a baby developing in the womb.

Pray Psalm 139:1-6, 13-16.

Conclude with the following prayer:

Before I was born, your love surrounded me. (students repeat)

You turned my nothingness into something. (students repeat)

And you created me. (students 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. 2333, 1768, 1770

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 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 see in Genesis that we are created to be with other people (Genesis 2:18). As we come to know people of the opposite sex, we also come to understand better the variety and diversity of human experience. 369, 371-72, 383

All of our human relationships, whether with people of the same sex or with people of the opposite sex, are marked by our distinctively masculine or feminine personality. 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, 2361, 1643

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. 2337, 2361, 1643

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. 2390-91, 1648, 1644, 1653

The sexual union of husband and wife in marriage has a two-fold purpose: the 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; 2365, 1646
- establishing their relationship as unique and permanent, the primary one among all the other relationships in their lives; 2364, 1647
- 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 the man and woman establish in their marriage. 372, 2367, 1652

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 students read and prayerfully reflect upon the following passage taken from Ephesians 5:25:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her.

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; and
- failing to respect ourselves as persons, and so allowing others to treat us as objects.

357, 1849-50, 1865

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

- Both pornography and prostitution treat human beings as things, and exploit their sexuality for profit. 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, 2352, 2334, 2336
- everything that mocks or degrades men, 2352, 2334, 2336
- the abuse of children and youth, including sexual abuse, and 2389, 2356
- 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 students give examples of ways in which someone "uses" another sexually and calls it "love."

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Pray to the Holy Spirit with the students, asking that when we are tempted to abuse the gift of our sexuality, we will remember the presence of Jesus' Spirit within us.

B. Misuses of Sexual Activity

God has given the human race 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. 2331, 1609

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. 2351, 1606-07

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. 2348, 2337, 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 necessary context for sexual intercourse. It thus devalues the gift of one person to another and degrades them both. 2353, 2390-91

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- 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

- Masturbation is morally wrong because it is not at the service of love and life according to the design of God. 2352, 2396

N.B. At this age, masturbation can be a problem for some adolescents. The 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 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. 2360, 2357-59

N.B. When people are consistently attracted sexually to others of their same sex, we speak of their having a homosexual orientation. This orientation, in itself, is not sinful, and the person having this orientation is to be respected and loved as a child of God. However, such an orientation 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 society attributes 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 is the ultimate abuse of the life-giving dimension of sexuality. Instead of cherishing and protecting the life which God has created through the sexual union of the couple, the father and/or the mother 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 students to reflect briefly on how they, like David, love God, and yet may sin.

Have the students 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 is essential to our becoming mature people. 2333, 2332

Accepting our sexuality means learning to control our sexual urges. Indeed, the process of maturing includes using our sexual urges appropriately. 1954, 2339-40, 2342, 2344, 2520

A. Sexual Activity and Love

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

- 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 blossom eventually 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

B. 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

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relationships and activities, drug and alcohol abuse, and the pressure of media, music and those peers who encourage irresponsible behavior.

1809, 2342, 2339

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,
- to develop our talents, hobbies and interests,
- to volunteer to help others in our 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 on 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 virtue [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 is a shining example of purity, and intercedes for us in time of need.

2520, 2030

C. 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 sexes.

2347

Some of these relationships will be closer and more enduring than others. During young adolescence, we need to avoid exclusive dating, which limits our own growth and our opportunities for friendship with others.

D. Seeking Advice

Adults can be positive role models for adolescents learning to form interpersonal relationships. Parents, catechists, 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 by offering advice and guidance.

2207, 2221-24

E. Responding to God's Gift

In God's plan, our sexuality is intended to abound to our joy and our fulness 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.

2340, 2013, 2345

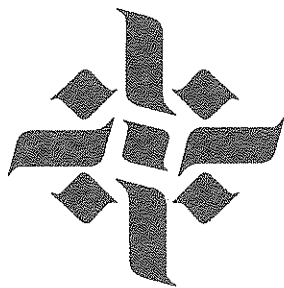
Prayer Experience

Have the students remember or talk about the most beautiful church they have ever seen. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Further their meditation by saying the following:

Return in your imagination to the beautiful church you remembered. Recall everything about it. Transfer the scene into your heart. Invite the Spirit into that beautiful place within you.

After a moment of quiet, sign the students individually with the sign of the cross, saying "You are a temple of the Holy Spirit."



Grade Eight

Personal Growth II:

The Human Community



Theme:

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.

Basic Teachings

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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. 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, 1879, 1829

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, 2205, 1878, 1890, 1702

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 God loves. 1265-66, 1997, 1999-2000, 1694-95, 1709

B. Love: The Cornerstone of All Relationships

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. 1829, 1826-27

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. 357, 294, 310-11

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

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Notes

kinds of love are appropriate to different kinds of relationships.

1823, 1825, 2196, 1889, 1604

- *Family Love* is the love of a parent for a child, a child for a parent, spouses for each other and relatives for one another. 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
- *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
- *Agapé* 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 on 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

- Have the students 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 the students 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 students to share what they have learned from this experience.

Conclude with the following prayer:

O God,
may your Son, Jesus Christ help us
to grow in his way of love.
Give us the grace to love as he 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

Basic Teachings

Notes

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. 2045-46, 798

- 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). 2044, 767, 738

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. 2818, 2046, 1821

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.
2207, 531, 533, 2201-03

Basic Teachings

Notes

A man and a woman, united by marriage, together with their children, form a family. [N.B. The catechist should discuss the topic of family with pastoral sensitivity toward the actual circumstances of the students (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 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 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, whom God has given us for our good. 2232, 2197, 2248

B. Our Experience of Family

During adolescence, our relationship with our parents is in the process of change. We want to be treated as mature individuals, yet we also need and depend on our parents.

At the same time, our parents may be struggling, too. 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). 1939, 374

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.

- 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.

Our choice of friends can influence us greatly. We may well value their opinions more than those of anyone else.

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 students in the following reflection on relationships in their lives:

- Think of the people who were most important to you when you were six.
- Think of the people who are most important to you now.
- Think of what each of them has done for you.
- In a silent prayer, thank God for each of these people and for all they have given you.

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. 356, 301

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.

374-76

Because of the Fall however (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 fulness 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, 218-19, 55, 1997

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. 154-55, 153, 163-65

Our relationship with God is mediated by Jesus Christ. "No one has ever seen God. 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 an "extra," an "add on" to

Basic Teachings

Notes

our personal faith. It is like a mother, without whom we would not have life. 166, 781, 757, 169

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 passion in our relationship with Jesus and the Church. 31, 35, 166, 168
- We seek ways of communicating with God that reflect who we are today. Our ways of praying may change and develop. 28, 2659, 2559
- 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 frighten us, because we think we are losing our faith. In reality, they 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. 1877, 1807, 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, 1935, 1931
- 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. 1936-38, 1932, 2448
- The gospel calls us to be peace-makers in our world, loving even

Basic Teachings

Notes

our enemies.

1825

- We are called to work for peace in our world, helping to alleviate the conditions which lead to war, such as sinful pride and economic injustice, and supporting 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 for those outside the group. 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

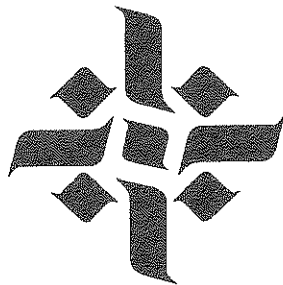
There is great joy in building the kingdom of God, knowing we are united with many people all over the world in furthering the mission of Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. 542, 849-52, 863

Prayer Experience

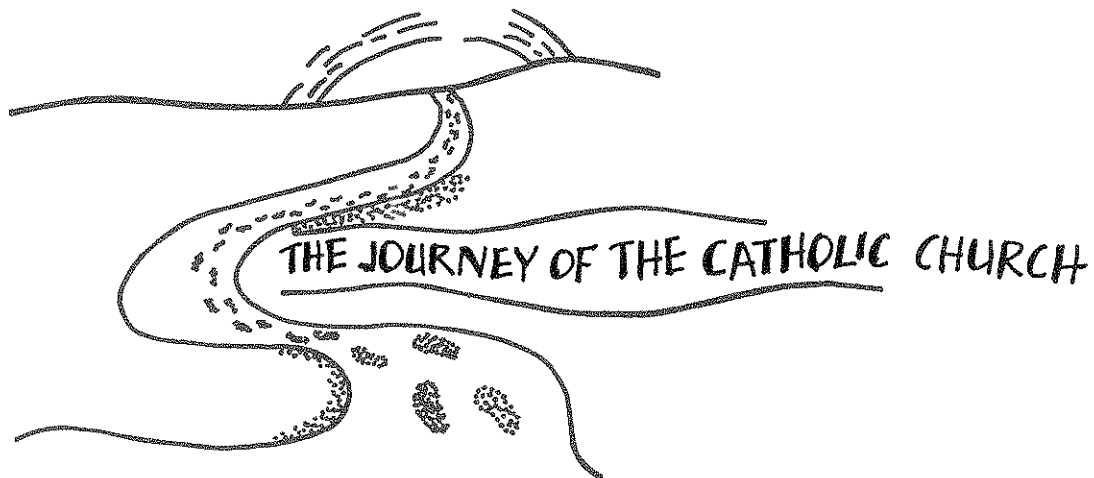
Have the students read aloud together the story of the Last Judgment from Matthew 25:31-46.

Invite the students to reflect and share on the following questions:

How can I reach out to others? 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?



Grade Eight Church History



Theme:

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

OBJECTIVES:

- To deepen the young adolescent's knowledge of the history of the 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 100 AD

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. 767, 849, 858

Small groups of Jesus' followers continued to gather together at their local synagogues. They also began to meet in each others' homes for prayer and "the breaking of the bread" (Acts 2:46). 949, 2178, 751, 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, 854, 1229, 1270, 833, 797-98

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 the 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 49 AD decided that:

- the followers of Jesus would not be subject to the ritual practices of the Mosaic Law, and
- a Gentile could be baptized without having to observe them.

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

B. 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

SAINT 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 disciples. 641, 660

SAINT 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 has brought salvation to the world through his life, death and resurrection. 858, 571, 642

SAINT 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

SAINT LYDIA (Acts 16:11-15)
Many women believed the "Good News" and became active members of the early Christian community. Lydia, a devout pagan, and a dealer in purple goods (a valuable commodity in the ancient world), heard the preaching of Paul and was baptized, along with her whole household. She supported the mission of the apostles and welcomed them into her home. 2624, 1226, 1252, 872

C. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

Saint Stephen was the first person reported in the Scriptures to give his life for his faith in Jesus (Acts 7:54-60). Saul, who later became Saint 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 64 AD. 2472-74, 2476

Prayer Experience

Read Acts 7:55-60: the martyrdom of Saint Stephen.

Ask the students to reflect on Stephen's spirit of forgiveness for his persecutors.

Ask the students to pray for the grace to forgive someone who has persecuted or hurt them deeply.

Have the class conclude the prayer by praying aloud the "Our Father."

II. The Journey of the Catholic Church Continues from 100 AD to 500 AD

A. The Mission of the Church

In the period from 100 AD to 500 AD 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.

769-70, 386-87, 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 Nicea in 325 AD 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. 465

- The Council of Ephesus in 431 AD declared that Jesus is truly a divine Person as well as fully human and that his mother is, therefore, the Mother of God. 466, 495
- The Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD declared that the Son of God is one Person with two natures, one human, one divine. Jesus is, therefore, true God and true man. 467

B. Significant Members of the Church

SAINT IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

The third bishop of Antioch, Ignatius was martyred around 110 AD. 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

SAINTS PERPETUA AND FELICITY, MARTYRS

Perpetua and Felicity were courageous women who suffered martyrdom in 202 AD during a persecution in Carthage, North Africa. In Eucharistic Prayer I of the Mass, the Church recalls their heroism. 2471, 2473

SAINT JEROME

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 up until modern times. He died in Bethlehem in 420 AD. 133

SAINT MONICA

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

SAINT AUGUSTINE

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 the most influential theologian in the Western Church. He died in 430 AD. 30, 32, 300, 385

SAINT PATRICK

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 the Archdiocese of New York, are named in his honor. 2683, 2745, 1428, 1430

C. 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. 2113, 309, 769

The first emperor to become a Christian was Constantine. After his conversion, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. 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

Prayer Experience

Invite the students to name places around the world where the Church today continues to suffer suppression by hostile governments, terrorism and other forms of persecution.

Lead the students 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 500 AD to 1000 AD (The Early Middle Ages)

A. The Mission of the Church

During the Early Middle Ages, the Church continued to spread the gospel. It also preserved Western Civilization. 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, 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. Significant Members of the Church

SAINT BRIGID

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

SAINTS BENEDICT AND SCHOLASTICA

Called the "Father of Western Monasticism," Benedict founded the famous monastery of Monte Cassino in Italy about 530 AD. The rule of life which he wrote is still followed today by many communities of women and men religious. Scholastica was the sister of Saint Benedict and founded a monastery of nuns near Monte Cassino. 2834, 347, 915-16, 925-26

SAINT AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY

Augustine of Canterbury and thirty monks were sent to England by Pope Gregory the Great in 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." 888, 2686

SAINT BONIFACE

Boniface is known as the "Apostle of Germany" because of his great missionary activity in that country. 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 754.

849-50, 831, 851, 2473

SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS

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 869 and Methodius in 885. 849-50, 854, 856, 831

C. 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. 2472, 852, 618

In the early centuries of Christianity, Syria, Egypt and North Africa had given the Church some of its greatest leaders. In the decades following the death of Muhammad in 632 however, Muslims from Arabia conquered all these areas, and within a few centuries, Christians had become a minority in these lands. 798, 769, 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, 841, 794

Prayer Experience

Remind the students that God always calls individuals to meet the needs of his people. Ask them the following questions:

- *What needs do you see in the Church today?*
- *Where do you feel that God may be calling you?*

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.*

IV. The Journey of the Catholic Church Continues from 1000 AD to 1500 AD (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 Saint 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, Paris and Oxford) 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. 944, 927

The Black Death struck in Europe three times during the fourteenth century. Along with many of the laity, many of the clergy — as much as one third in some places — died as a result of ministering to the sick. 1503, 1509

B. Significant Members of the Church

SAINT DOMINIC

A renowned priest and preacher, Dominic established an order of men who traveled throughout Europe to preach and teach. He also founded an order of women to pray for the apostolic work of the Dominican preachers. He died in 1221. 799, 1562, 1589, 425

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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 died in 1226. 2014, 2745, 293, 2443-45

SAINT CLARE

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. Clare died in 1253. 1434, 2687, 2565

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

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 that still helps us today. He died in 1274. 50, 34, 43, 94

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

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. 951, 313, 356, 1937

SAINT FRANCES OF ROME

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, 2447-48, 1409

C. 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 East and those of the West. As a result of long years of disagreement, the Christians of the Eastern and Western world were estranged from each other. 817-19, 822, 838, 247

The intermingling of Church and State affairs also caused bitter struggles. 2245

Starting in 1095, Christians embarked on several military campaigns to reconquer 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.

853, 160

Prayer Experience

Lead the students in the following prayer from the Mass for the Unity of Christians:

*Lord,
lover of all,
fill us with the love your Spirit gives.
May we live in a manner worthy of our calling;
make us witnesses of your truth to all
and help us work to bring all believers together
in the unity of faith and the fellowship of peace.
Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever. Amen.*

**V. The Journey of the Catholic Church Continues from
1500 AD to 1800 AD**

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 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 gone over to Protestantism. This development is called the Counter-Reformation.

834, 838, 817-19, 1428, 884, 891

In the eighteenth century the Enlightenment presented new challenges to the Church, and the Church began a gradual process of responding to the ideas of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment included such ideas as:

- seeking truth through unaided human reason, and questioning revealed truth,
- looking to science to solve human problems, and

- placing great emphasis upon individual liberty.
37-38, 215-17, 2293-94, 1739-40, 2126

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 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.

905, 927, 853-54, 856

B. Significant Members of the Church

SAINT TERESA OF AVILA

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.

2014, 2709, 2704, 1821, 1011, 227

SAINT THOMAS MORE

Husband, father and English statesman, Thomas More was appointed Chancellor by King Henry VIII. Because he 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

SAINT ANGELA MERICI

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. Angela died in 1540.

2447, 369, 917

SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

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.

1490, 827, 2684

SAINT PAUL MIKI

Paul Miki, born in Japan in 1564, 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, 2473, 1011, 2844

BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS

A Dominican priest and later a bishop, Bartolomé de Las Casas worked in Latin America to bring the gospel to the Indians. He struggled to promote their civil rights and to have slavery prohibited. He died in 1566.

1586, 853, 2414

SAINT PETER CLAVER

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.

852, 2414, 2015

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

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

SAINT MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS

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.

851, 5, 799, 927

BLESSED KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Born near the town of Auriesville, New York in 1656, 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

C. 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.

817-19, 855

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

Prayer Experience

Ask the students if they know of any missionaries. Have them share something they have learned about these missionaries.

Lead the students 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 Continues from 1800 AD to the Present Time

A. The Mission of the Church

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen the expansion of the Church throughout the world. In Africa and Asia in particular, the Church has grown through the efforts of missionaries. In the United States, the Church has increased through the influx of Catholic immigrants. Dioceses, parishes and the Catholic school system in this country have steadily expanded to meet the religious and educational needs of these immigrants.

905, 927, 166

Clergy, religious and laity have 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 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. Among other things, it called for the renewal of the liturgy, a greater participation of the

laity in the Church, ecumenism, and the universal recognition to 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.

884, 1204-05, 863, 905, 910, 820-23, 160, 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 older, well-established Christian civilizations. The visible presence of delegates from Third World nations at the Second Vatican Council 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.

1911, 1906-09, 1882-83, 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, 855, 839-45, 870

Two of the Popes of the latter half of the twentieth century, Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II, have been the first Popes to travel extensively. In doing so, they have shown their solidarity with Catholics around the world and encouraged them in their faith. As they traveled, they continually challenged unjust structures and called on all people to work for world peace.

2420, 2438, 2442, 2307, 2304

B. Significant Members of the Church

SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON

Elizabeth Seton was a New Yorker, a married woman and a mother. Originally an Anglican, she became a Roman Catholic after she was widowed. She founded the Sisters of Charity in 1809. She helped to develop the Catholic school system in the United States and is the first American-born person to be canonized.

1814, 5, 1915

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Cardinal Newman was an Anglican priest who became a Roman Catholic in 1845. His writings have done much to give people a deeper understanding of the Catholic faith.

157, 1723, 1778, 2144

SAINT FRANCES XAVIER CABRINI

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. 1932, 2447, 5, 1509

SAINT CHARLES LWANGA

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

POPE LEO XIII

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.

2427-28, 2434-35, 1926

SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

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, 2002, 1826

THOMAS MERTON

A Trappist monk and gifted writer, Thomas Merton 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. He died in 1968.

2687, 925-26, 2304, 843

DOROTHY DAY

A convert to Catholicism, Dorothy Day 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, 2446, 1929-31, 2306

ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO

Archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero was assassinated in 1980 because of his stand on human rights and his work to promote justice and peace in his country, El Salvador.

1907-09, 1912, 2473

C. Struggles and Upheavals of the Church

During the modern age, the Church continues to suffer because of secularism, prejudice, injustice and political persecution in many parts of

the world.

1931, 1928

The Church, while suffering persecution, for example, under both the Nazis and the Communists, has nevertheless survived. It has sometimes even flourished as an underground Church in places such as Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Hungary, China and Vietnam.

2244, 2242

The Church in every age has had to face particular problems, sustained by Christ's victory over sin and his promise to be with us for all time. Today the People of God, as they strive to live the gospel message, are challenged by materialism, lack of respect for life and human dignity, and the erosion of religious values.

2424-25, 2373, 1930, 1939

The continued presence of wars throughout the world, the horror of genocide and the grave threat posed by nuclear weapons have impelled the Church to intensify her work for peace.

2304, 2307, 2313-15, 2317

Prayer Experience

Lead the students in the following prayers: the first from the Mass for Refugees and Exiles, and the second from the Mass for Promoting Harmony:

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.

and

God our Father,

source of unity and love,

make your faithful people one in heart and mind

that your Church may live in harmony,

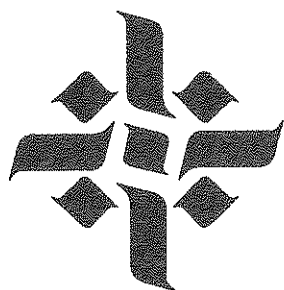
be steadfast in its profession of faith,

and secure in unity.

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.



Grade Eight Morality



Theme:

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 enable the young adolescent to recognize the role of the 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). 271, 218, 50

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. 1693, 520, 459

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. 1693, 516, 615

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). 1696, 519, 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) 2057, 2060, 2067, 1961, 1964

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. 1823, 520

D. Jesus' Vision of the Kingdom

Jesus describes God's kingdom as a place where justice, peace and love reign. While the fulness 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

If we accept Jesus' vision of the kingdom, expressed in the Beatitudes, we are called to make decisive moral choices. The Beatitudes ask us to purify our hearts and direct our actions toward building God's kingdom.

1723, 1728

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.

1712, 1731, 1704

However, in all human beings an attitude of self-centeredness, or "what's in it for me," often dominates. 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.

1714, 1739, 1432

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 lifelong process of responding to God's call to "change our heart." Jesus calls each of us to discipleship through conversion.

1427, 1888, 1949, 1721, 1431

Prayer Experience

Remind the students that before his conversion St. Paul was persecuting the Christian community. Read them the story of how God called him to change: Acts 9:1-19.

Ask them to think of times when they have been stopped in the midst of what they are doing and called to change. Encourage them to talk to Jesus about these times and to listen to what he says to them.

Conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

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:

Here 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.

1732, 1724

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).

2002, 618

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.

2012-13, 1709

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
1776, 1954, 1956
- our community's understanding of right and wrong as expressed in the laws of God, the laws of the Church, and the laws of society.
1780, 2030, 1952

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 — that is, the Pope and bishops in their role as teachers — continues 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. 1785, 2038, 1266, 1302-03

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

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.

1903, 2244, 1869

- The fact that something is legally acceptable does not make it morally right. 1902
- 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 laws, for example abortion. 2256, 2270-71
- 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, 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. 1804, 1777

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 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.

1788-89

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.

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.

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, we have abortions and commit murders. 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 and alcohol. 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.

1847-50, 1871, 1707

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.
- We have a clear knowledge of the action, that is, we fully

understand the evil we would be doing.

- We give our full consent, that is, we fully intend the evil we would be doing.

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. The continual committing of venial sin can lead us to commit mortal sin.

1854-55, 1862-63, 1875

Capital sin is the name given to the seven basic tendencies in us which are the chief sources of sin in our lives.

1865-66

- *Pride* is a disordered seeking of praise and honor, and a denial of the real nature of our relationship as obedient children of a loving God. 2540, 2094
- *Covetousness* is a disordered desire for possessions and material things. 2536, 2514
- *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, 2302, 2262
- *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, and 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.

1869, 408

Prayer Experience

Lead the students 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 times 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 fallen down on the job? How did it feel? Have you ever made others feel like failures, making fun of them or abandoning them?
- *Simon the 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?

Conclude with the following:

Let us ask God's forgiveness 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. Others support us, and we support others in living out this calling. 1949, 2045, 2030

A. Personal Prayer and Openness to the Holy Spirit

The development of a life of prayer is one of the best supports for a Catholic's moral life. God is with us and, through the empowerment of the 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, 2745, 2544

B. The Witness of the Community

We 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. 2030, 2044-46, 1253

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 Bread of Life and the Cup of the New Covenant 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. 1253-54, 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 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. 954-57, 1474-75

We, in turn, may support by our prayers other members of the community, both those who are living, and those who are in purgatory. 954-57, 1474-75

Prayer Experience

Plan a celebration of the sacrament of Penance using the *Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution*. [For an outline of the celebration, see the end of Section V in *Grade Seven: Sacraments*.] Involve the students in the planning, and encourage them to go to confession during the celebration.

Grade Eight Prayer



Theme:

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 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

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. 2347, 2010, 733

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

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. 1905, 1789, 1803

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. 374, 277, 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. We call this communication prayer. 2742, 2725, 2558

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. 2566, 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 that lives in our heart, and calls us to prayer. 2567, 2568, 2560

Prayer Experience of Meditation

Recount to the students 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 (Matthew 8:23-26);
- he fed the hungry people (Matthew 14:13-21);
- he appeared to two disheartened 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 (John 11:32-35); and
- 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 students to write a reflection on the ways Jesus has been a friend to them, and one way in which they might respond to Jesus.

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. 2745, 1695

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

Experience of Communal Prayer

Invite the students to assume a comfortable position. Help them to enter into a prayerful atmosphere by, for example, listening to a recording of instrumental music, lighting a candle, or viewing a picture or slide. Pray aloud that the Holy Spirit will guide each member of the group.

Read aloud one of the following passages of Scripture:

Isaiah 43:1-3
Matthew 6:9-13
Luke 11:11-13
Matthew 18:19-20
John 17:18-21

After a period of silence, encourage the students to share with the group a personal thought or reflection they have on the passage.

Conclude either by singing a hymn together or by inviting the students to offer spontaneous prayers of thanksgiving.

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

- *adoration*: an attitude of humility and awe before the wonder and greatness of God; 2626-28
- *thanksgiving*: an expression of gratitude for the generosity and graciousness of God; 2637-38
- *contrition*: an expression of sorrow for the sinful, hurtful and selfish acts we have committed; 2631
- *petition*: asking for the help and support of God, for myself; 2629-33
- *intercession*: asking for God's help on behalf of another; and 2634-36
- *praise*: giving glory to God joyfully, just because God is God. 2639-42

Prayer Experience Using a Psalm

Explain to the students that the Book of Psalms is in the Old Testament and that there are 150 psalms. Some of these were written by King David. Give each student a copy of Psalm 23. Explain the role of the shepherd and that Jesus spoke of himself in the New Testament as the Good Shepherd who loves his sheep and keeps them from all harm.

Pray Psalm 23 with great reverence. A recording of harp music can be used as background for this.

Then invite the students to pray the psalm antiphonally: left side of the group prays one verse, the right side prays the other.

Pause for a few seconds. Ask the students:

How does Jesus the Good Shepherd "guide [each of us] along right paths"?

In the last line of the psalm, what does "the house of the LORD" mean?

In conclusion, recite the doxology with the students. ("Glory to the Father...")

IV. Ways of Praying

All prayer involves our heart and mind. It is the whole person who prays. Scripture emphasizes that the source of prayer is the heart. 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 worshipping God in the celebration of:

- the Sacraments
- the Eucharistic Liturgy (the Mass), and
- the Liturgy of the Hours.

In the Liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal.

1113, 1174, 1073, 2698

Devotional prayer helps us to personalize the mysteries of faith. Some examples of devotional prayer are:

- adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,
- the Stations of the Cross,
- the Rosary,

- novenas,
- pilgrimages, and
- veneration of relics. 1178, 1674-75, 2678

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 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 Using the Rosary

Invite each student to bring a rosary to class. Review how to pray the rosary. Choose one of the Mysteries of the Rosary and tell its story. If possible, display a picture which illustrates that Mystery.

Help the students to reflect on the Mystery as all pray a decade of the Rosary.

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, 2609-10

- *perseverance*: faithfulness to prayer even when we do not feel like praying, 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, 2831

Prayer Experience Using a Parable

Reflect on the parable of the friend who went at midnight to request a favor (Luke 11:5-10). Using this parable as a model, write about a time when you (or someone else) persisted in prayer and eventually became aware of how God answered that prayer.

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. 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.

2620, 2765, 2599-2605

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

He teaches us the fundamental prayer of the Church, the "Lord's Prayer" (Luke 11:2-4, and Matthew 6:9-13), which is a summary of the whole gospel.

2759, 2761, 2764, 2766

He 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

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, 2679

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.

- **FRANCIS XAVIER (Sixteenth Century)**
The great courage and zeal that Francis Xavier brought to his work as a Jesuit missionary 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. 2611, 852, 428-29
- **MARTIN DE PORRES (Seventeenth Century)**
After a long day of caring for the sick and the poor, Martin spent many hours in meditation. His prayer strengthened him as he reached out to those in need. 2447-49, 2705-08, 2745
- **THERESE OF LISIEUX (Nineteenth Century)**
When she was fifteen, Thérèse became a Carmelite nun. Every day the Carmelites spend a long time in contemplative prayer.

Thérèse loved this time of prayer. Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, shows us that she persevered even when prayer was difficult for her. 2710, 258, 201, 826, 2742

- MARIA GORETTI (Twentieth Century)
As a young adolescent, 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. 2685, 2204-05, 2745

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

Prayer Experience Using the Imagination

Create a prayerful setting and atmosphere.

Pray aloud to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

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 students to 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 students thank Jesus for these insights and the experience of his presence during prayer.

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