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The Letter to the Romans

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

Exploring the Questions

The rhetorical questions which Saint Paul poses in this letter are worth a lifetime of exploration. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke once offered advice in his correspondence saying, “Live the questions!” He meant that throughout life there are difficult questions posed by circumstances and relationships to which we do not always have the complete answers. Life is a mystery that we will never completely understand. But that does not mean we cannot celebrate the questions, living through them and with them.

This is what Saint Paul seeks to do in the Letter to the Romans although he does respond to these rhetorical questions. As we read his letter, we seek to apply what Saint Paul has to say to the ever-changing situations in our own lives.

Because our lives are not static, we will continue to apply, reapply, and find new significance in the questions Saint Paul poses and the answers he gives. We will constantly be proclaiming this good news for ourselves and others and therefore always celebrating



those critical questions which he sets before us in his letter.

A Potent Question to Ponder

Of all the questions Saint Paul asks in Romans, the most potent one is: “Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). This question is worth a lifetime of prayer and contemplation. Each new day that we are given by God, we could try and put into practice our answer to this question.

A Mature Faithfulness

Saint Paul challenges his original readers and us to a certain maturity in faith. This maturity is fostered by a crystal clear awareness of the effects of

Baptism. It is also fostered by our efforts to appropriate the effects of Baptism in our lives.

A hallmark of mature baptismal faith is manifested in our close cooperation with other members of the Church. Why? We rise from the baptismal font incorporated into the Church. We are no longer isolated by original sin or focused solely on ourselves. Baptism joins us to the Body of Christ, the Church. We are to treat other members of the Church with the respect and affection due to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Reborn in Baptism, we die to self and rise to newness of life in Jesus. We practice that newness of life, intimately bound together in the communion of the Church. We celebrate the rich wealth of relationships we have been given as a baptismal gift: our bond to Christ and our bond to each other as members of the one Body of Christ, the Church.

FOR REFLECTION

What questions about life and about faith do you put before the Lord in prayer?

How would you describe the role that the community of faith plays in your discipleship?

Catechist to Catechist

Growing in Faith

Each time we encounter Jesus—in prayer, through the Scriptures, in a conversation with another person, by reading, or by listening to a homily or to other presentations on the faith of the Catholic Church—we deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ. Every time we encounter Jesus, it is a moment of conversion. Our conversion to Christ happens many times throughout our lifetime.

A Lifelong Journey

Help the young people appreciate that our many moments of conversion are just as important as Saint Paul's dramatic conversion to Christ on the road to Damascus. Unlike Paul, most of us are not struck by a bolt of spiritual lightning that dramatically moves us to a deeper faith in Christ. Help your group see each moment of conversion as a small "jolt" in a lifelong journey of coming to know and love God.



The Church Teaches . . .

The apostolic exhortation *On Evangelization in the Modern World* [Evangeliu Nuntiandi] teaches:

Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God.

EN 14

Saint Paul and the other Apostles went from port to port to teach and preach. This chapter studies how the writings of the four Evangelists and Saint Paul guided the early Church and still guide her today.

See the Catechism . . .

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on Sacred Scripture, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 105–107 and 515.

CATECHIST PRAYER

*Holy Spirit,
enflame our hearts with your love,
deepen our understanding
of your love,
strengthen our wills with your love.
Amen.*

LESSON PLANNER

FOCUS To describe the importance of grace in our lives

Engage

Page 73

Focus

To assess the young people's knowledge and understanding of Saint Paul's letters

Teach and Apply

Pages 74–78

Focus

To discover that grace is a total gift that God freely gives out of love to make us holy and help us live holy lives

Connect

Pages 79–81

Focus

To understand that evangelization is the central work of the Church and to describe a life lived with God's grace

Pray

Page 82

Prayer Form

Profession of faith

Prayer

Lead the group in the "We Believe" prayer.

Pray Together

Discussion

What do you know about Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans?

Presentation

Read, discuss, and summarize content.

Scripture

Romans 6:1–2, 3–11, 14, 15–23; 8:14

Did you know?

- Paul of Tarsus
- Christian Initiation

Faith Connection

- Describe how you would answer a non-Christian teen who asked you about Jesus Christ.
- Identify a time when God's grace gave you strength to live your faith during a difficult time.

Our Church Makes a Difference

The work of evangelization is the central work of the Church.

What Difference Does Faith Make?

There are different ways you can live a life with God's grace and grow in faith.

Activity

Respond to the activity alone; then share your responses with others.

Faith Decision

Decide what you will do this week to identify signs of grace in your life.

Review

- Use the review to reinforce the main concepts of the lesson.
- Point out the "Family Discussion" question and encourage the students to share it with their family this week.

Materials

pens or pencils

Enriching the Session

Blackline Masters

Activities and Assessment Tools booklet:
Chapter 7
Called to Prayer and Liturgical Lessons:
Junior High
Use appropriate liturgical year and prayer pages.

Enriching the Lesson (CG page 147)

Being Persuasive
Recognizing the Power of Grace
Designing a Good News Web Page

Music Connection (CG page 147)

www.FaithFirst.com



We update the *Faith First* Web site weekly. Check each week for new content and features. Here are some places to begin:

Catechists and Teachers

- Current Events
- Chapter Downloads
- Catechist Prayer

Faith First for Families

- Bible Stories
- Family Prayer
- Make a Difference

Teen Center

- Faith First Activities
- Chapter Reviews
- Game Alley

Don't Forget! You can make lesson planning a breeze—check out the **Online Lesson Planner**.

The Letter to the Romans



FAITH FOCUS

Why is grace important?

FAITH VOCABULARY

epistles
Gentiles

Pauline letters
grace

How do you make new friends? What do you do? What do you talk about?

There are a lot of factors involved in forming new friendships. As new friends spend time with each other comparing interests, they find they have differences as well as similarities. Eventually, because of their friendship, they talk about things that are important to them.

In the Letter to the Romans Saint Paul introduced himself to the Church in Rome and explained the teachings that were handed on to him by the Apostles. He tried to get them to see the true teaching of the Church about the way to salvation in Christ.

What do you know about Saint Paul's letter to the Romans?

Saint Paul the Apostle,
stained glass

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Romans 8:14

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PRAY

- Gather the young people for prayer and invite them to calm themselves and be open to the Holy Spirit.
- Have a young person proclaim Romans 8:14.

FAITH FOCUS

Read aloud and invite brief responses to the "Faith Focus" question. Explain that in this chapter the group will learn about Saint Paul and the Letter to the Romans.

DISCOVER

Assess the young people's prior knowledge and understanding of Saint Paul's letters.

- Write the "Faith Vocabulary" terms on the board. Ask the young people to share what they already know about the meanings of these faith terms.
- Write key words and phrases shared by the group next to the terms on the board that clarify the meaning of each of the terms.
- Read aloud the opening paragraph to the young people.
- Ask volunteers to discuss how they make new friends.
- Invite the young people to share what they know about Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans.
- Point out the stained-glass image on the page and explain that Saint Paul is frequently portrayed in Christian art with paper and a writing instrument.

Background: Scripture

Why We Read Scripture. The Scriptures are the living memory of the Church. Reading the Scriptures regularly nourishes our faith. The more we read, the more we come to know our Lord and our Savior. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 131–133.)

FOCUS

Remind the young people that Saint Paul's intent in writing to the Romans was to help them see the truth about the way to salvation in Christ. Explain to them that these pages will introduce them to the New Testament letters and to the structure and purpose of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans.

DISCOVER

- Read aloud to the young people "New Testament Letters."
- Discuss with them the meaning of the word *epistles* and add new words or phrases to the vocabulary words on the board.
- Divide the class into four groups and have each group silently read and discuss one of the characteristics of Saint Paul's epistles found on pages 74 and 75.
- Have each group select a spokesperson and have that person report to the class what they have learned about that characteristic of Saint Paul's writings.

New Testament Letters

After his Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus appeared to Paul (Saul) and called him to be his follower. Saint Paul responded, became an Apostle, and preached and taught people about Jesus. Because of his work, Saint Paul the Apostle was always meeting new coworkers and making new friends.

Saint Paul did his work as an Apostle in many ways. He preached in temples and marketplaces. He taught in homes and places of worship. He also wrote **epistles** and other types of letters. In Saint Paul's time an epistle was a type of formal letter.

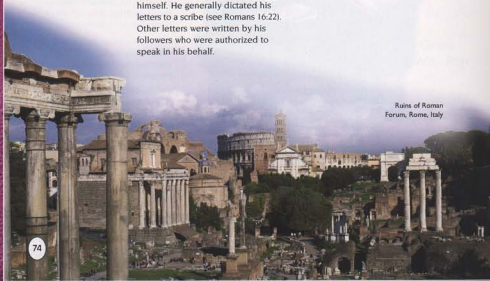
There are thirteen letters in the New Testament attributed to Saint Paul the Apostle. These letters are called **Pauline letters**. The Church teaches that some of the letters were not directly written by Paul himself. He generally dictated his letters to a scribe (see Romans 16:22). Other letters were written by his followers who were authorized to speak in his behalf.

The Epistle to the Romans

The Letter to the Romans is the longest epistle in the New Testament. It also represents the most complete presentation of Saint Paul's understanding of Jesus Christ. This is why, although it was not the first letter written by Paul, it is the first letter that appears in the New Testament.

Time and Audience

Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans was written sometime between A.D. 56 and 59. Up to this point in his work as an Apostle, Saint Paul himself had not visited Rome, but Romans 16 tells us that he knew several individuals there who previously had been his coworkers.



Ruins of Roman Forum, Rome, Italy

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Background: Scripture

Saint Paul's Use of Rhetoric. Saint Paul was a native of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, a province of what was then Syria. Tarsus was a great city with a university, although we do not know that Paul studied there. But Tarsus was a stronghold of Stoic thought, a feature of which was the diatribe. A brilliant youth, such as Paul, would have been aware of this literary device. Saint Paul also traveled widely in the Hellenistic world and had a great curiosity and the gift of absorbing knowledge from his wide experiences. He took a popular philosophical device and adapted it to his purposes in the Letter to the Romans.

Did you Know...

Paul of Tarsus

Saint Paul the Apostle was a Jew born and educated in Tarsus, a seaport city located in southern Turkey about ten miles from the Mediterranean Sea. Tarsus was respected for its schools, and it was there that Paul was educated by Gamaliel, a renowned Pharisee and Jewish teacher of the Law. After his baptism, Saint Paul had to flee from Damascus to Tarsus because he was so distrusted and feared by the Christians in Damascus. (See Acts of the Apostles 9:27-31.)

Purpose

In the Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul introduced himself to the Church in Rome, corrected misunderstandings about his preaching, and celebrated their faith in Christ. He helped the diverse community of Christians in Rome understand that the Holy Spirit calls both Jews and non-Jews, or Gentiles, to faith in Christ and Baptism. Because of his work among non-Jews Saint Paul is known as the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Structure

Romans is both like and unlike the standard formal letter of those days. Like other formal letters of its time, Romans consists of three basic parts. They are:

- an Introduction (Romans 1:1-17)
- a body (Romans 1:18-15:13)
- a conclusion (Romans 15:14-16:27)

In addition to these standard parts, Romans contains some distinctive and unique features. For example, the introduction includes a thanksgiving to God (Romans 1:8-17), and the conclusion has a benediction, or blessing (Romans 16:20).

Writing Style

Saint Paul's writing style in Romans conforms to a special type of public speaking and writing called rhetoric. The purpose of rhetoric is to persuade

others. The speaker would first pose a question and then would answer it, hoping to convince the readers or listeners of the logic of the argument.



FAITH CONNECTION

Work with a partner. Imagine you are traveling in a land where the majority of the people are non-Christians. You are approached by a non-Christian teen who asks, "Who is this Jesus Christ you believe in?" Write an outline of your response in this space.

Affirm appropriate responses.

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REINFORCE

Read aloud the "Did you know . . ." sidebar to share more information about Saint Paul.

INTEGRATE

- Have the young people work with partners to imagine that they are traveling in a land where the majority of people are non-Christians.
- Have partners brainstorm responses that they might have to a non-Christian teen who asks them who Jesus Christ is.
- Invite partners to write an outline of their responses in the space provided in the "Faith Connection" activity.

Background: Scripture

Paul of Tarsus. Saint Paul was a man who felt things deeply. He had strong passions, yet was very disciplined. He was a born leader and highly organized. He was warm and outgoing and a good friend to others. He seems to have been equally at home with Jews and Gentiles. He preferred cities and is perhaps the most cosmopolitan of all New Testament figures. He had both a sturdy mind and a strong body, and he seems to have been short in stature. Certainly the most striking thing about Saint Paul is his commitment to Jesus Christ and his zeal to proclaim the Gospel, a commitment he carried through to his martyrdom in Rome.

FOCUS

Remind the young people that Saint Paul used rhetoric as a writing style to persuade others. Point out that these pages will explore further how Saint Paul's use of rhetoric appears in the Letter to the Romans.

DISCOVER

- Invite the young people to imagine themselves as members of the early Church in Rome.
- Read aloud "New Life in Christ" on page 76 and have the young people highlight images that speak to them from Romans 6:3–11, 14.
- Discuss with the young people the law that Saint Paul is describing.
- Have the young people silently read page 77 and continue to highlight images that speak to them.

New Life in Christ

Using the literary style of rhetoric, Paul asked and then answered his own questions to persuade his readers and listeners. Take a look at Romans 6:1–23 to see Paul's use of this writing style.

Saint Paul asked a series of questions:

What then shall we say? Shall we persist in sin that grace may abound? Of course not! How can we who died to sin yet live in it?

ROMANS 6:1–2

He then answered the questions: Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more, death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all, as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

... [S]in is not to have any power over you, since you are not under the law but under grace.

ROMANS 6:3–11, 14



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Teaching Tip

A Moment of Silence. Sometimes young people have difficulty responding to questions in class. Be sure to give the young people time to think about how they will respond. Help them learn to be comfortable with silence as they think about their responses. One technique is to pause before you respond to their questions. This provides a model of responding reflectively that the young people can follow.

Saint Paul then asked a new series of questions:

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?

ROMANS 6:15

He again responded to his own questions to persuade his readers: Of course not! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted. Freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your nature. For just as you presented the parts of your bodies as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness for

lawlessness, so now present them as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness. But what profit did you get then from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit that you have leads to sanctification, and its end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:15-23

Saint Paul included powerful images to make his argument. He wrote that in Baptism we were "buried with Christ." This is a strong, striking phrase. It says that joined to Christ in Baptism we are radically cut off from the forces of sin and evil!

What are some of the challenges you face in being dead to sin and living for God in Christ?

Affirm appropriate responses.



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Special Needs

The Challenge of Including All Learners. Many young people have disabilities that affect their concentration. Implement the following strategies to help the young people focus:

- Give the young people specific roles in group activities, for example, a timekeeper or recorder.
- Allow the young people a choice of activities whenever possible.
- Be very clear when giving group instructions and, when it is possible, write them out for the young people to use as they are working.

Need: Young people with attention deficits

REINFORCE

Ask volunteers to read aloud the passages from the Letter to the Romans on page 77 and then discuss how these are examples of the literary style of rhetoric.

INTEGRATE

Ask volunteers to share some of the challenges they face in being dead to sin and living for God in Christ.

TEACH

FOCUS

Remind the group that the Letter to the Romans speaks about what it means to be baptized into Christ. Explain to the young people that this page will explore grace as a gift given to us in Baptism.

DISCOVER

- Reread for the young people the final paragraph on page 77.
- Ask volunteers to read aloud page 78 and have the young people highlight the main points as they read along.

APPLY

REINFORCE

- Read the "Did you know . . ." sidebar to reinforce the connection between the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation.
- Add new words or phrases to the vocabulary words on the board.

INTEGRATE

- Ask volunteers to share when the gift of grace empowered them to live their faith with courage.
- Invite them to write their responses in the space provided in "Faith Connection."

Understanding the Word of God

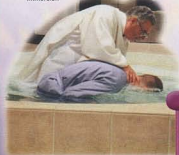
Did you Know...

Christian Initiation

The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. "In the sacraments of Christian Initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection."

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Baptism by immersion



FROM "GLOSSARY" IN
Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Gift of Grace

Saint Paul celebrates God's grace given in Baptism. God freely gives the gift of grace. Grace is not the result of anything we do to deserve or earn God's grace. Grace is a total gift that God freely gives out of love, making us holy and helping us live holy lives.

The Church uses the terms *sacramental grace*, *actual grace*, and *sacramental grace* to describe the ways that God's grace works in our lives. As sanctifying grace, God shares his divine life and friendship with us in an habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that enables the soul to live with God, to act by his love. As actual grace, God gives us the help to conform our lives to his will. Sacramental grace and special graces . . . are gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our Christian vocation.

Baptized Into the Death and Resurrection of Christ

In Baptism we die to sin and rise to new life in Christ. We receive the grace of new life in Christ and become adopted sons and daughters of God the Father. We are made sharers in the power of both Christ's Crucifixion and his Resurrection. We have died to sin. We are freed from the power of sin.

Baptism by immersion dramatically and visually makes present the reality and transforming power of Baptism. Those being baptized are submerged in the waters of Baptism three times, signifying their sharing in the death of Christ and their death to sin. They then emerge from the waters, signifying their sharing in the Resurrection and their new life in Christ.

Floving from the image of burial and resurrection, Paul assures us that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too are raised up by God's grace. We walk in the paths of new life, not under the law but under the power of grace.

FAITH CONNECTION

In this space or in your journal, describe a time when the power of God's grace gave you the strength to live your faith during a difficult time.

Responses will vary.

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Background: Doctrine

More About Baptism. Baptism is the seal of eternal life. Those Christians who remain faithful to their baptismal promises will be able to depart this life marked as people of faith. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1274.)

OUR CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE



The Church's Work of Evangelization

Saint Paul the Apostle traveled from port to port, from city to city, from Jerusalem to Tarsus to Rome. He preached to Jews and Gentiles, to believers and nonbelievers with a single-minded purpose. He was intent on evangelizing, or announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all and inviting them to be baptized.



This work of evangelization is the central work of the Church.

[The Church] "exists in order to evangelize" (*Evangelii nuntiandi* 14), that is "the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of [all people] and renew the human race" (*Evangelii nuntiandi* 18).

GENERAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHISTS 46

Through the ministry of evangelization the Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, spreads the Gospel to all nations. Evangelization has three objects:

- to proclaim the Gospel to nonbelievers for the first time.
- to instruct those who have experienced conversion and wish to prepare for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.
- to help faithful members of the Church come to a more mature understanding of the Gospel.

The people of your parish take part in this work of evangelization. They preach and teach about Jesus and the Gospel. They celebrate the sacraments. They live the Great Commandment and practice the works of mercy.

How can you participate in the work of evangelization?

Affirm appropriate responses.



Signing the Book of the Elect during the "Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names," Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

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CONNECT

HIGHLIGHT

Remind the young people that wherever Saint Paul the Apostle traveled he reminded the people of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Point out that the central work of the Church is to evangelize, to preach and teach about Jesus.

DISCOVER

- Read aloud or paraphrase "The Church's Work of Evangelization."
- Discuss with the young people the three objectives of evangelization.
- Ask them to share how they see these objectives at work in the parish.
- Point out the photos on the page and ask the young people to share how these can be examples of the Church's work of evangelization.

INTEGRATE

Invite the young people to discuss ways they can participate in the work of evangelization.



Teaching Tip

Sharing the Gospel. One way for the young people to practice living the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to reach out to one another. Suggest that the young people think about someone who seems to be feeling lonely and make a commitment to reach out to that person. Encourage them to spend time with, make a call, or send a card to that person. Showing their genuine concern is a way to practice sharing the Gospel.

HIGHLIGHT

Remind the young people that the central work of the Church is evangelization. Share with them that just as the early Christians were called to a new life in Christ, their Baptism calls them to live a graced-filled life.

DISCOVER

- Brainstorm with the young people ways they live with God's grace and grow in faith. Write their responses on the board.
- Ask volunteers to read aloud pages 80 and 81.
- Have the young people add to the list on the board.

INTEGRATE

- Ask volunteers to share what the gift of grace empowered them to live their faith with courage.
- Invite them to write their responses in the space provided in "Faith Connection."

WHAT DIFFERENCE

Does Faith Make in My Life?

The Life of Grace

God's grace makes us his adopted children. We are privileged and expected to live accordingly. Realizing the enormity of God's kindness and generosity, we want all people to know that they too are called to such a graced life.

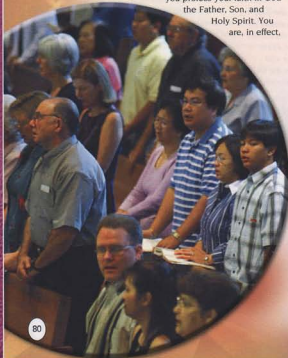
Every time you take part in Sunday Mass and pray the creed, you profess your faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are, in effect,

renewing your baptismal profession of faith. Praying the creed gives voice to our faith in God. It also celebrates God's vision that we are a holy people. We are the Church, the new People of God, who strives to live up to the gift the Lord has given us.

What is the basic shape of a life lived with God's grace? What can you do to grow in faith?

○ **Take an active part in the life of the Church.** Join with other members of the Church. In a world that sometimes is contrary to our Catholic faith, we need the strength and support of others who share our faith and life in Christ. We share in the Eucharist and other sacraments. We take part in other types of Catholic gatherings to encourage one another in the faith.

○ **Give thanks for God's love shared with the world in Christ.** Salvation, redemption, a life free of the power of sin, and resurrection to a life of eternal happiness with God cannot be earned. They are free gifts of God to undeserving humans who first turned their back on his love. We need God. Show your gratitude by seeking God first and above all else.



Teaching Tip

A Life of Grace. Take the time to emphasize that God is always with us, guiding us and encouraging us to make decisions that reflect our love for him, for others, and for ourselves. In other words, God gives us the grace to make good decisions. The news media often fill our minds with the power of evil at work in our society. Strangely, stories of grace take place every day but rarely make the headlines and serve as lead stories in the media. Encourage the young people to evaluate the media's choice of news and its portrayal of people. Emphasize that God's grace is always at work in the world.

○ **Serve others.** Jesus has told us that when we actively serve the hungry and thirsty and all in need, we serve him. We are indeed blessed by God. We are the recipients of his grace and goodness. How can we refuse others in need? Each day presents new ways by which we can share with others God's goodness and kindness.

○ **Respect life.** All life comes from God. Think about the value God places on your life. God the Father sent his only Son, who freely chose to suffer and die that all people may enjoy a life of happiness forever with God. What does that say about the way you are to treat your life? What does the good news of the value God places on your life tell you about the way you are to treat the lives of others?

It takes a lifetime to grow in living the life of grace. The wonder of it all is that we can only grow in the life of grace because God freely wants us to and gives us the ability and power to do so.



Faith Decision

Read and respond to this activity alone. Then share appropriate responses with others.

Saint Paul tells us that there are signs in our lives that show we are growing in the life of grace. Among these signs are joy, peace, patience, kindness, and generosity. (See Galatians 5:22.)

- Where and when do you see these signs in your life?
- What positive effects might these signs have in your life?

This week I will

Affirm faith decisions.

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INTEGRATE

- Have the young people work in small groups and, using newspapers and magazines, create a collage of words and pictures showing people living the signs of grace in their lives.
- Ask volunteers to share why they selected the pictures and words used in their collages.

CHOOSE

- Have the young people prayerfully reflect on making their faith decision and then write what they will do this week.
- Encourage them to be signs of grace for others.

Catholic Social Teaching

Life and Dignity of the Human Person. All humans are created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, all life is sacred. Every person's basic dignity demands our respect. Here are some of the Catholic Church's teachings that flow from this principle: Direct abortion, euthanasia, suicide, and assisted suicide are inherently evil; human cloning and genetic engineering threaten the uniqueness of each human life; the death penalty can seldom if ever be justified; war should be a last resort in the resolution of differences. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2258–2317.)

Tips: Invite the young people to complete a “gifts inventory” listing one positive quality about each other person in the group.

PRAY

- Gather the young people for prayer and select someone to be the leader for the prayer.
- Together pray “We Believe.”

REVIEW

- Have the young people share definitions for each of the faith vocabulary terms. After several volunteers have shared, compare their definitions with those in the Glossary on pages 147–149.
- Use the “Main Ideas” and the “Critical Thinking” sections to clarify any questions the young people may have concerning what they have learned in the chapter.
- Remind the young people to discuss with their family ways they show that they belong to God in Christ.

Before Moving On . . .

As you finish today’s lesson, reflect on the following question before moving on to the next chapter.

What student could use more praise from me?

PRAY and REVIEW

We Believe

Leader:

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

All: I do.

Leader:

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?

All: I do.

Leader:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

All: I do.

Leader:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

“PROFESSION OF FAITH,” FROM RITE OF BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

82

FAITH VOCABULARY

Define each of these faith vocabulary terms:

1. epistles p. 74
2. Pauline letters p. 74
3. Gentiles p. 75
4. grace p. 78

MAIN IDEAS

Choose either (a) or (b) from each set of items. Write a brief paragraph to answer each of your choices.

1. (a) Describe the purpose of the Letter to the Romans p. 75
- (b) Discuss the literary style Saint Paul uses in the Letter to the Romans p. 75
2. (a) Discuss what Saint Paul means when he teaches that the baptized are “not under the law but under grace.” p. 77
- (b) Compare the sacrament of Baptism and the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. p. 78

CRITICAL THINKING

Using what you have learned in this chapter, briefly explain these Scripture verses:

“You received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’ The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” ROMANS 8:15–17

Affirm appropriate responses.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

How does our family show that we belong to God in Christ?

For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the “Faith First for Families” page at www.FaithFirst.com. Also click on “Life Timelines” on the Teen Center and check out timelines of saints’ lives and other historic events.



Evaluate

Take a few moments to evaluate this week’s lesson. I feel (circle one) about this week’s lesson.

- a. very pleased
- b. OK
- c. disappointed

The activity the students enjoyed most was . . .

The concept that was most difficult to teach was . . .

because . . .

Something I would like to do differently is . . .

ENRICHING THE LESSON

Being Persuasive

Purpose

To reinforce that Saint Paul's writing style conforms to a special type of public speaking and writing called rhetoric (taught on page 75)

Directions

- Have the young people work with partners to outline a speech they would deliver to friends reminding them to seek God first and above all else.
- Remind the young people to capture the attention of their friends with a question and then proceed to answer the question, convincing them of the logic of their arguments.
- Have the young people present their questions and provide at least two of their arguments that answer the questions.
- Invite the young people to suggest other arguments for the questions.

Materials

paper and pens

Recognizing the Power of Grace

Purpose

To reinforce that grace is a total gift that God gives out of love and that it takes a lifetime to grow in living the life of grace (taught on pages 78–81)

Directions

- Invite the young people to think of times that they recognize the power of grace in their lives. Remind them of the signs of joy, peace, patience, kindness, and generosity in their life that show they are growing in the life of grace.
- Invite each young person to begin to write their autobiography in which each sign of grace is one of the chapters in their autobiography.

- Have the young people decide on one of the signs and write the opening paragraph for the first chapter, describing how that sign helps them grow in faith.
- Invite volunteers to share their stories.

Materials

paper and pens

Designing a Good News Web Page

Purpose

To reinforce the many ways that we share the good news of God's gift of grace (taught on pages 80 and 81)

Directions

- Have the young people work in small groups to design a Web page for their peers.
- Remind them to use words and pictures that illustrate the different ways to grow in faith.
- Invite the young people to share their Web page with the entire group.

Materials

construction paper
markers or crayons



Music Connection

- "Amazing Grace," New Britain, CM. *Gather Comprehensive* #612.
- "The Love of God," P. Tate. *Voices As One (VAO)* #89.
- "Prayer of St. Francis/Oraçion de San Francisco," S. Temple. *Spirit and Song* #199.
- "Waters of Life," Kutscher. *VAO* #95.