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UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Unit Objectives

1. To examine the early Christians' attempts to imitate Christ's example of giving to others.
2. To study the communal life of the early Church.
3. To examine the prejudice shown by the Hebrew-speaking Christians toward the Greek-speaking Christians.

LESSON 4: GIVING IN CHRIST

Lesson Objectives

1. To examine the idea of giving;
2. To discuss Peter's first miracle, relating it to the theme of giving;
3. To introduce the concept that giving as Christ gave makes one more Christlike.

Correspondence to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Charity: CCC 1822-29. 1844

Church as the People of God: CCC 781-86, 802-4

Love for the poor and the Works of Mercy: CCC 2443-49, 2462-63

Mystery of the Church: CCC 770-76, 779-80

Sacrifice: CCC 2099-2100

Vocation of the laity: CCC 782-86, 898-913, 940-43

Preparation

Bibles are needed for this lesson.

Proclamation

"I command you, You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land" (Deut 15:11).

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Explanation

Have the students read and complete the exercises on textbook p. 7.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

LESSON 4: GIVING IN CHRIST

By His example, Jesus taught us to give to others. We can give of ourselves by giving of our time, talents, and treasure for the good of others. Giving benefits both the one who gives and the one who receives.

Explain how, in the following situations, giving might benefit both the giver and the receiver.

Giving up some of your free time to help your younger brother or sister with homework.

This helps your brother or sister by _____

This helps you by _____

Giving up some of your time to help an older person with yard work, errands, or housework.

This helps the older person by _____

This helps you by _____

Giving money to a favorite charity.

This helps the charity by _____

This helps you by _____

Who do you think benefits the most in any act of giving, the giver or the receiver? Why do you think so?



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Ask: What are some examples of Jesus' giving to others? *Giving His life for us; giving His time to talk to people; giving His love to work miracles, etc.*

Discuss the students' responses to the situations listed on textbook p. 7. Accept all appropriate responses.

From a different point of view, it can be said that Mary's Immaculate Conception was the beginning of the Church. As the Preface for the feast of the Immaculate Conception states, "For you preserved the Most Blessed Virgin Mary from all stain of original sin, so that in her, endowed with the rich fullness of your grace, you might prepare a worthy Mother of your Son and signify the beginning of the Church, his beautiful Bride without spot or wrinkle."

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Have the student read and complete the exercises on p. 8.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH



The Church was born on Pentecost. The mission of the Church is to reveal Christ to the world. One day, shortly after the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles, Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. They crossed the court of the Gentiles. This was one of the outer parts of the temple, where the money changers and the sellers of doves and pigeons were allowed to do business. Peter and John saw a crippled man begging for money. Peter and John immediately felt compassion for the lame man and wanted to help him. Being poor, however, they had no money to give him.

Read Acts 3:4-10 to see what happened, and summarize the passage on the lines below.

In Acts 3:4-10 we read that Peter and John had no money (dinars) for the beggar, so they gave him what they did have: a cure, done in the name of Jesus the Nazarene.

Peter and John, representing the Church, chose to think and act as Christ did when He walked on earth. Read the following passages in Scripture: Mark 2:1-12, Mark 3:1-6, and John 5:1-8. Write a paragraph describing how Jesus healed the suffering people during His public life.

Answers will vary. Accept all appropriate answers.

Jesus is alive and active on the earth today through His Church. Who makes up the Church today? You might answer this by thinking first of the Pope, the bishops, priests, sisters, and other religious. One important person you may not have thought of is you! You are a very important part of Jesus' Church.

The temple in Jerusalem was divided into three sections: an outer section, called the court of the Gentiles, which both Jews and non-Jews could enter; an inner section in the center of the court, which only those of the Jewish faith could enter; and the innermost section, called the Holy of Holies, where, according to Jewish belief, God dwelled. Only specially selected high priests could enter the Holy of Holies to offer worship to the Lord. It was probably in the court of the Gentiles that Jesus overturned the moneychangers' tables the week before He died.

Optional: The students may be interested in how the ancient world measured time. Ask them what the "ninth hour" means. (Many will probably say it means 9:00.) Tell them that, because people then used sundials to tell the time, the first hour of the day began at sunrise. The period of time between the sun's rising and setting was divided into twelve equal segments called "hours". Because in the spring sunrise usually occurs around 6:00 A.M., the ninth hour of the day was at approximately 3:00 P.M.

Have the students look up the three Scripture passages on p. 8 (Mark 2:1-12, Mark 3:1-6, and John 5:1-8) and note the similarities between Jesus' curing people while He was on earth and the cure of the crippled man through the intercession of Peter. Although Jesus is not with us today in the same way as He was two thousand years ago, He is with us through the Church. Through the Church, Jesus touches many more people than He did when He walked on earth.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Application

Have the students read and complete the exercise on the top half of textbook p. 9.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

When you choose to give of yourself in love to others, you are giving of your life. This is the love that Jesus gave to us through you. In a special way, you are Christ to other people.

In Acts 3:4–10, we read that Peter and John did not have any money to give to a crippled man who was begging. They could have given him some of the silver coins they had on them. However, the love they had for Christ and the love they had for the beggar led them to give him something else. They gave him the love of Jesus, which is the love that we are to have for one another. Sometimes we too cannot help people in the way they want to be helped. However, if we try to think of alternative ways to help those in need, we are choosing to act as Christ need.

Let your solutions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. There is a special collection in church for a cancer hospice in your town, but you have no money with you.

2. Mr. Dvorak, a 65-year-old man who lives next door, asks you to mow his lawn today. But your team is scheduled to play an important game, and you are a starter on the team.

3. On a Saturday afternoon, your sister asks you to help her address and mail her wedding invitations. But you have just been hired to work at the local fast-food restaurant, and Saturday is your first day on the job.



Learn more about the importance of Works of Mercy by reading CCC 2447 and YOUCAT 449.

LESSON 5: HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

The period of Church history starting shortly after the death of Jesus (c. a.d. 30) and ending approximately a.d. 600 has been called by many historians "The Golden Age of Christianity." It was a time in the Church's life when people tried to live Christ's example of giving and sharing to the highest degree. Not since then has Christianity seen such an all-out commitment by almost all its members to a life of giving and sharing with others in need.

The early Christians lived in communities. These communities were groups of people that had common ownership of certain pieces of property. In other words, anyone in the community could use these goods when they needed them, as long as they respected the rights of others and caused no damage. An example of this idea today might be a town- or city-owned park, or swimming pool, or

Possible solutions are given for the exercise on student textbook p. 9. Accept all appropriate answers.

1. There is a special collection in church for a cancer hospice in your town, but you have no money with you.
Go home and get your money. Drop off your donation at the parish office, or mail it directly to the cancer hospice; volunteer some of your spare time to visit the patients or to help at the cancer hospice.
2. Mr. Dvorak, a 65-year-old man who lives next door, asks you to mow his lawn today. But your team is scheduled to play an important game, and you are a starter on the team.
Ask a trustworthy friend to mow the lawn; ask if you could mow the lawn after the game on the next day.
3. On a Saturday afternoon, your sister asks you to help her address and mail her wedding invitations. But you have just been hired to work at the local fast-food restaurant, and Saturday is your first day on the job.
Have a certain number of invitations set aside for you to do later when you get home from work; ask if there is another day that you can help with the invitations; ask if there is another kind of help you could give.

Have students share their solutions with the class. Discuss the alternatives with the class.

★ Ask students to read and discuss CCC 2447 or YOUCAT 449.

Extending the Lesson

1. Helping each other as Christ would: Have the students write about situations in which they gave of themselves to help another. Have them indicate how they felt, knowing they had helped another person as Christ would have.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

- 2. The Infant Church:** Have students complete the optional worksheet for Unit 2 on p. 192 in the appendix.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Unit 2 – The Informati on

You have just won the lottery or the superlottery! You have won one million dollars tax free. The only catch is that you must keep any of the money. You must give it all away or spend it on others. Answer the following questions.

What are your priorities?

Answers will vary.

What is the first thing you want to do?

To which charities will you contribute?

How will you spend your money to help others?

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LESSON 5: HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

Lesson Objectives

To study the "Golden Age of Christianity":

Correspondence to the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Charity: CCC 1822-29, 1844

Common good: CCC 1905-12, 1924-27

Communal character of the human vocation: CCC 1877-85, 1890-92

Communion in spiritual goods: CCC 949–53, 961

Love for the poor and the Works of Mercy: CCC 2443-49, 2462-63

Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson include one sheet of notebook paper per student. An optional material for this lesson is a video about Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

Proclamation

"Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God" (CCC 1822).

Celebration

Lead the students in praying an Act of Love (Prayers to Know, student text p. 105).

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Explanation

Write the term “Golden Oldies” on the board.

Ask: What does the term “Golden Oldies” usually refer to? *The best of the songs dating from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.*

Explain that, just as gold has always been considered a precious metal because of its lasting beauty and rarity, many of the songs from that era are also considered to be special. In the same way, the earliest years of Christianity are called “golden” because they were a time of total giving and sharing. Many believers throughout the ages have seen in this age valuable examples of faith.

Have the students read and discuss the bottom of textbook p. 9 and complete the exercise on the top of textbook p. 10.

LESSON 5: HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

The period of Church history starting shortly after the death of Jesus (c. A.D. 30) and ending approximately A.D. 60 has been called by many historians “The Golden Age of Christianity.” It was a time in the Church’s life when people tried to live Christ’s example of giving and sharing to the highest degree. They shared their property and possessions with one another and had an all-out commitment by almost all its members to a life of total sharing of property, money, and time.

The early Christians lived in communities. These communities were groups of people that had common ownership of certain pieces of property. In other words, anyone in the community could use these goods when they needed them, as long as they respected the rights of others and caused no damage. An example of this idea today might be a town- or city-owned park, or swimming pool, or

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UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

library. Anyone living in that town or city would be entitled to use its facilities. The people of the early Church acted in much the same manner, with one difference: they shared everything they owned. Clothes, money, houses—everything they owned was either shared with or given outright to others.

Read Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-37 to see how Saint Luke describes the sharing actions of the early Church members. In Acts 4:36-37, we read about a farmer named Barnabas who sold his field and gave the money to the Apostles so that they could distribute the money to the poor.

Read Luke 10:29-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan, and write a paragraph describing how we can be “good Samaritans” today.

Answers will vary. Accept all appropriate answers.

Learn more about communion in charity by reading CCC 953 and VOUCAT 146.

Countries and societies in other eras have tried to put into practice the idea of common ownership. Even communism (based on the word “community”) in its original form was supposed to be a society based on equal ownership of all things by everyone.

Application

If you are teaching in a rural area, ask the students who live on farms what is the price of an average-sized field today. This will serve to bring home the generosity of Barnabas’ gift to the Apostles.

To help your students understand how goods were shared in common in the Christian community, have them imagine that their family has a brand new sports car worth \$70,000. Use your imagination to describe the car in detail—color, leather interior, etc.—making it as glamorous and appealing to the students as possible. No one else in the neighborhood has a car. Whenever any of the neighbors wants to run an errand, the student’s father willingly hands over the keys to the car. Discuss the students’ reactions to this scenario.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Remind the students that lending a valuable car is much less than what the early Christians did. They gave their possessions.



Ask the students to read and discuss CCC 953 and/or YOUCAT 146.

Extending the Lesson

Have the students write a paragraph detailing how they could give to others (what activities they could volunteer for, what projects they could assist with) in their parishes, in their families, and in their communities.

Show a video about Blessed Teresa of Calcutta or read a story about her. Mother Teresa and her sisters are modern examples of Christlike sharing with others. One recommended video is *Mother Teresa*, directed by Frabrizio Costa (20th Century Fox, 2006), DVD.

Celebration

Lead the students in praying an Act of Hope (Prayers to Know, student text p. 105).

LESSON 6: LACK OF GIVING— LACK OF LOVE

Lesson Objectives

To examine prejudice and discrimination.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Church as one: CCC 813–22, 866

Equality of and difference between man and woman in creation: CCC 369–73, 383

Meaning of “catholic”: CCC 830–31, 868

Respect for the human person: CCC 1929–33, 1943–44

Role of deacons: CCC 1569–71, 1596

Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson include dictionaries and one sheet of notebook paper per student. Optional materials for this lesson include videos or stories about Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Saint Maximilian Kolbe, or Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.

Proclamation

“The Church is one: she acknowledges one Lord, confesses one faith, is born of one Baptism, forms only one Body, is given life by the one Spirit, for the sake of one hope, at whose fulfillment all divisions will be overcome” (CCC 866).

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Explanation

Have the students read and complete the exercise on the bottom of textbook p. 10.

LESSON 6: LACK OF GIVING—LACK OF LOVE

The early days of Christianity were not all trouble-free. As the Church carried out her mission of evangelism, she encountered many difficulties. One of the first Christian groups was composed of Jewish converts who spoke Hebrew. A second group was composed of Jewish converts who spoke Greek. To us living in the world today, this seems to be no big problem. Between these two groups living more than two thousand years ago, however, their different languages and backgrounds soon became a source of prejudice and discrimination.

Define "prejudice" and "discrimination" in your own words.

Because we are all created in God's image, we each reflect God in our own way. When we show prejudice or discrimination toward someone, we choose not to see the person as an image of God. Prejudice is a judgment about another person that is usually made before all the facts are known. Often this type of judgment leads one person to distrust or dislike another or to act unjustly toward another (discrimination). We should never judge or discriminate against anyone in this way. This always hurts both people, because it is a failure to act as an image of God should.

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Have several students volunteer their definitions for the class. Lead the students to the following conclusion: Prejudice is a dislike or hostility resulting from a preconceived opinion not based on reason or fact. Discrimination is unjust behavior toward another based on prejudice. After students share their definitions, have them look up the definitions of these two words in a dictionary.

Prejudice and discrimination usually result from differences among people. Have the students list some of the differences that may cause prejudice and discrimination—for example, race, religion, nationality, and language.

Have the students complete the exercise on the top of textbook p. 11.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Read Acts 6:1-2. Answer the following questions.

How did the prejudice and discrimination shown toward the Greek-speaking Christians hurt them?

This discrimination hurt the Greek-speaking believers because some of them were hungry. They may have sensed in them feelings of anger, distrust, and, perhaps, a prejudice on their part toward the Hebrew-speaking Christians.

How did this prejudice and discrimination cause problems for the Apostles?

It meant that the Apostles had to take time away from their main task of spreading God's Word to settle petty arguments in the community. It probably also saddened the Apostles to see the early Christians already falling away from the example of giving shown by Christ.

How did this prejudice and discrimination hurt the Christian community as a whole?

The community as a whole was weakened because of the ill-feelings of some of the members toward the others.

To remedy the evil of prejudice and discrimination among the early believers, the Apostles asked that seven holy men be selected to become deacons. These men would deal with the problems between the Greek- and Hebrew-speaking Christians and allow the Apostles to continue their main task of spreading God's Word. The Holy Spirit showed that God could minister to His people. Once again God was showing His goodness and love to the Church.



Read Acts 6:3 and list below the names of the seven deacons chosen by the early Christian community.

Stephen	Nicanor
Philip	Timon
Prochorus	Parmenas
	Nicolas of Antioch

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UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

In Acts 6:1–2 we read that, as the number of Christians grew, the Hebrew-speaking Christians discriminated against the widows and orphans of the Greek-speaking Christians by not allowing them their fair portion of the food distributed by the Church community to the needy.

Application

Tell the students that, by introducing deacons into the Church, the Apostles were acting as Jesus would have acted. In fact they acted in the Person of Christ. God can and will bring good out of evil. From the evils of prejudice and discrimination the Church drew the good of the diaconate. Deacons are still very active today helping the modern Church by assisting in parishes, hospitals, and schools. God always provides for His Church.

Have the students read and complete the exercise at the bottom of textbook p. 11.



Ask the students to read and discuss CCC 1930 and YOUCAT 280.

Extending the Lesson

Invite a deacon to come and speak to the class about his vocation.

Show a video or read a story about Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., a major figure in the fight against prejudice and discrimination in the 1960s.

Show video or read a story about Saint Maximilian Kolbe. Discuss with the students how he gave the ultimate gift—his own life—for God and for others. Discuss how Saint Maximilian Kolbe's attitude followed Christ's example.

Show a video about Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. One possibility is *Edith Stein: The Seventh Chamber*, directed by Marta Meszaros (Ignatius Press, 2010). DVD. Discuss how prejudice and discrimination cost her and millions of others their lives.

Celebration

Lead the students in praying the following vocations prayer.

Leader: Let us ask God to grant more holy vocations to His Church.
Students: O God, we earnestly beseech You to bless this local church with many priests, brothers, and sisters who will love You with their whole strength and gladly spend their entire lives to serve Your Church and to make You known and loved.

Leader: Bless our children, bless our families.

Students: Choose from our homes those who are needed for Your work.

Leader: Mary, Queen of the Clergy,

Students: pray for us. Pray for our priests, deacons, and religious. Obtain for us many more.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Have the students complete the Review Questions on textbook p. 12.

UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

The names of the seven men show that they all came from a Greek-speaking background. The Church was making sure that the early Christians would form a community where all would feel welcome. The Word of God and the love shown by His Church are for all people for all time.

Learn more about the dignity of the human person by reading CCC 1930 and YOUCAT 286.

Review Questions

1. What did Peter and John give the crippled man begging at the "Beautiful Gate"?

A cure in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

2. Who makes up the Church today?

All baptized people who follow the Holy Father and believe what the Church teaches.

3. What period of time was the "Golden Age of Christianity"?

The period of Church history starting shortly after the death of Jesus and ending approximately A.D. 60.

4. What was an example of prejudice among the early Christians?

Discrimination by the Hebrew-speaking Christians against widows and orphans of the Greek-speaking Christians.

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Family Notes

Make copies of the Unit 2 family notes (in the appendix) and send them home for students to discuss with their parents.

Assessment

Make copies of the Unit 2 Assessment for each student.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Unit 2—The Infant Church

Write a brief answer to the following questions and complete the statements.

- What period of time was the "Golden Age of Christianity"?
The period of Church history starting shortly after the death of Jesus and ending approximately A.D. 60.
- What did the appointment of deacons do for the Apostles?
The deacons dealt with problems between the Greek- and Hebrew-speaking Christians and allowed the Apostles to continue their main task of spreading the gospel.
- We can give of ourselves by giving of our (A), (B), and (C) for the good of others.
(A) Time
(B) Talents
(C) Treasure
- What did Peter and John give the crippled man begging at the "Beautiful Gate"?
A cure in the name of Jesus the Nazarene
- Between the Greek- and Hebrew-speaking Christians, their different (A) and (B) soon became a source of (C).
(A) languages
(B) backgrounds
(C) prejudice
- When we show prejudice toward someone, we choose not to see the person as an image of God.
- A judgment made about a person before all the facts are known is called prejudice.

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UNIT 2: THE INFANT CHURCH

Answer each of the following with a short essay.

8. Who do you think benefits more in any act of giving, the giver or the receiver? Why do you think so?
Accept any reasonable answer.

9. Describe how the early Christians lived.

The early Christians lived in communities and shared everything they owned.

10. Define prejudice in your own words.

Accept any reasonable answer.
